



Proceedings of the Conference

**CHILD MALTREATMENT &
WELL-BEING:**

Contemporary issues, research
and practice

**CMW
2017**

Editors:

Stjepka Popović, Gemma Crous, Noam Tarshish,
Lucienne Van Erwegen & Friederike Lorenz

University of Rijeka, 2019

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CHILD MALTREATMENT & WELL-BEING:

Contemporary issues, research & practice

Proceedings of the 1st International
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Editors: Stjepka Popović, University of Rijeka, Croatia
Gemma Crous, University of Girona, Catalonia, Spain
Noam Tarshish, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
Lucienne Van Erwegen, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom
Friederike Lorenz, Free University of Berlin, Germany

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PREFACE

The first interdisciplinary international conference on “Child maltreatment and well-being: Contemporary issues, research and practice” (CMW 2017) was held in Rijeka, July 7-8, 2017. The aim of the conference was to bring together an interdisciplinary community of scientists and professionals working in the field of child maltreatment and child well-being and to exchange the latest research, good practice, strategies and policies on children’s welfare. Host institutions of the 2017 conference were the School of Medicine and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Rijeka, Croatia, and the conference was sponsored by the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education and the Ombudsman for Children.

The conference was organized by an international group of PhD students and young scholars who won a very competitive scholarship to the Haruv Institute young researchers’ workshop on child maltreatment a couple of years ago. The main aim of the conference was to develop a network of scholars across the world who are doing research on different topics in the field of child maltreatment & wellbeing as the first step of future collaboration and international research projects.

Organizing institutions were University of Rijeka, Croatia; Free University of Berlin and the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany; University of Groningen, The Netherlands; University of Girona, Catalonia, Spain; Queen’s University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom and The Haruv Institute, Jerusalem, Israel.

Participants from 12 countries presented and more than 80 participants (active and passive) attended at the CMW 2017. A total of four invited lectures and 33 contributions were presented. Therefore, we are proud to present our first conference proceedings book. Many participants who presented at the conference already published papers in international journals so this first edition brings six previously not published articles and one previously published translated article regarding child maltreatment and well-being. The proceedings book used a double-blind review process for each published article, so we are very grateful to our reviewers who made this issue possible. A total of five original research articles, one professional article, and one translated article are published in this conference proceedings. You can read about violence against children in residential care, characteristics of child sexual abuse police data, children’s knowledge of court proceeding and their perception of courts, inclusion and resilience for young people with learning difficulties, media presentation of children refugees and media’s influence on understanding child sexual abuse, possibilities of introducing a restorative justice framework in institutions caring for children and youth. Papers published are locally focused, mostly dealing with the situation in Croatia, Germany, Ireland, and Singapore.

Finally, it is our pleasure to announce that the CMW 2017 was only the first conference and that the second conference CMW 2019 “Child maltreatment and well-being: challenges across borders, research and practices” will be held at Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), March 21-22, 2019. The conference will be on the current circumstances in which children and young people are growing up, focusing on challenges concerning child maltreatment and well-being. This will be done by considering contemporary social developments across borders as well as current political frameworks. In this setting, we would like to discuss current circumstances and interexchange experiences from professional observations and scientific work. You can find a call for abstracts in the supplement. We are inviting you to join us and to become a part of our growing network of researchers from Social Work, Educational Sciences, Sociology, Psychology and other disciplines!

Sincerely yours,
Editors



ARTICLES

Friederike Lorenz

Free University of Berlin, Germany

Meike Wittfeld

University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, meike.wittfeld@uni-due.de

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES COMMITTED BY STAFF IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

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ABSTRACT

In many European countries during the last years, there has been a broad public debate on violence against children in institutions. In this context, professionals are required to deal with the risk of violent assaults against children by their colleagues. In our paper, we aim to discuss professional's struggle to find words to talk about perceptions of violence by their colleagues in residential care.

The article is based on a broader qualitative research project from Germany which analyzes the circumstances of a case of systematic violence by professionals in residential care for children with disabilities. In the articles study narrative interviews are analyzed with professionals who worked in the organisation during the violent team constellation. Data interpretation is done according to the grounded theory.

The results point out that violence committed by colleagues seems to be unspeakable even if concrete disconcerting situations have been observed in the interaction between professionals and children. Staff member's perceptions of violence and reasons for not discussing and disclosing are emphasized.

The article concludes that the perception of violence is dependent on the context in which it takes place; therefore it must be reflected who is in power to define violence in professional settings and in research.

Keywords: perceptions of violence by colleagues; staff violence; violence against children in residential care; violence against children with disabilities

INTRODUCTION

How do pedagogues in residential care for children with disabilities perceive violence against children committed by their colleagues? This is the leading question of this article. It is thus about violence within organisations that are commissioned to support young people in their daily routine, to foster them and sometimes also to protect them from violence in their respective families of origin.

Regarding the broader context of residential youth care, numerous cases of sexual and physical violence by professionals came to light in the last years, paradoxically in such organisations with mandates of fostering and protection. For one decade, these cases have prompted a discussion in different countries about preventive strategies and risky constellations in residential care organisations, focusing on prevention of especially sexual violence (for an international overview: Andresen, 2015). Furthermore, in the field of residential care for children with disability diagnoses there is a possibility of increased risk for children to experience staff violence. For children, research finds disability to be a factor which leads to a 3.7 times higher

risk of becoming a victim of any sort of violence compared to children without disability diagnoses (Jones et al., 2012). National commissions on sexual abuse point out that young people in institutions for children with disabilities are specifically at risk of being victimised, e.g. they are not the target of national protection plans, they live in closed contexts, more often, they need much more one-to-one interaction (Llewellyn, Wayland & Hindmarsh, 2016; UNICEF, 2013). At the same time there is a lack of research on children with disabilities perspective on staff violence in institutions, because the focus is on residential care institutions for children without disability diagnoses (Struck, 2014; FRA, 2015; Llewellyn, Wayland & Hindmarsh, 2016).

In order to work professionally with children with disabilities, more research on violence committed by professionals in residential child care must be done. One of the problems that have to be tackled is the possibility of colleagues' violent behaviour which assumes detection of such behaviour.

This article gives an insight on perceptions of violence by professionals in an organisation in Germany. The article's research is part of the broader research project "Violent Constellations in Residential Care – A Single Case Study", which was carried out from 2013 until 2016 at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Kessl & Lorenz 2016). In the research project behind the study of this article, professionals of residential care for children with disability retrospectively narrate their perception of actual abuse within their institution. The study of this article points out contexts that determine whether and to what extent professionals identify situations in their daily routines as violence. The study's findings lead to reflections on what determines and impedes the perception of or the capacity to speak about violence by colleagues¹.

CONCEPTUALISING VIOLENCE

In order to gain knowledge about the perception of violence, it is necessary to keep in mind that violence cannot be perceived unambiguously and objectively, but the interpretation of violent acts is closely tied to context. Margit Brückner (2001) points out from a feminist perspective that the boundaries between violence and non-violence are perceived in specific historical contexts and related to cultural definitions. If we follow Brückner's argument, definitions of violence can never be universal but are "always linked to social values as well as the interests of those defining it" [own translation] (p.723.). The "power to define physical contact and access [...] does, in accordance with societal power structures, only exist graduated by gender, age and social status"² [own translation] (p.724). Likewise, violence in residential care groups for children with disability that is of interest for this article is characterised by a specific power structure: adults, as professionals in an institution, hold an institutionalised position of power towards children and youths who, in their role as residents, are present in the same institution. Constructed lines and boundaries of differentiation concerning mental and physical health are utilised for conception of groups and placement of certain children and youths in organisations of residential care for children with disability diagnoses. Concerning individual adults' social status, there are differences in their power of interpretation that can be linked to their institutional role. Such structural power relations do not necessarily produce the kind of violent acts that the study addresses and reconstructs, respectively. Consequentially, power relations should not be considered equal to violent constellations, much rather are they to be analysed contextually. The term 'violence' underlying the research project must then be clarified. We are interested in what situations the members of staff consider violence. Therefore, we approach the material with a concept of violence including different forms of physical, emotional, sexual, verbal and structural violence. These being analytical distinctions, different forms and layers of violence may be merged or intertwined. All forms of violence within pe-

1 Our special thanks goes to Matthias Wittfeld for the English proofreading and the English translation of the interview data for the article.

2 The concept of definatory power in this domain was developed in feminist debates. Thus, those affected by sexual violence define themselves which actions they experienced to be violence (Hagemann-White et al., 1992). Equally, approaches of anti-discrimination work assume the definatory power of discrimination is with those experiencing it (Anti-Bias-Werkstatt, 2007).

dagogical organisations have in common their nature as an exploitation of a surplus of power (Wolf, 2010) and are thus harmful. While a definition this broad must necessarily remain vague, it enables us to reconstruct concepts of violence from the material. Our reconstructions and classifications, in turn, are certainly influenced by concepts of violence predominant in society.

RESEARCH METHODS

The below presented data is part of a qualitative research project on an organisation, concerned with physical abuse of children and youths in residential care for children with different disability diagnoses (Kessl & Lorenz, 2016). Staff members of the organisation initiated the study after the disclosure of the violence. A summary of the case is done to contextualize the data.

THE CASE: A VIOLENT CONSTELATION IN RESIDENTIAL CARE

The case is about a team that was responsible for two residential groups with 6-8 children and adolescents who were classified by professionals as extremely challenging. Most of the children had multiple diagnosis and were not able to verbalise themselves comprehensively with words. In the respective residential groups, under the veil of a concept of behavioural therapy³, young people were maltreated mentally and physically daily over the course of several years. Those staff members who exerted violence exploited the fact that the children and youths in the respective groups were largely unable to express themselves verbally and thus could not verbalise their experiences of violence. In the years 2008/2009, by initiative of team members as well as staff from neighbouring groups, the situation was gradually disclosed, which resulted in the organisation's self-indictment and criminal investigations.

The research project about the case is done on an organisational level with a practice theore-

tical perspective. The data analysis is based on 16 narrative interviews, four expert interviews, ethnographic observations in the organisation and document analyses of concepts and the team's documentation.

THE STUDY: PERCEPTION AND DISCUSSION OF VIOLENCE

For the study of this article we analysed parts of the 16 narrative interviews with staff who worked in the organisation during the violent team constellation. The narrative interviews were chosen because they „can reveal the tensions of the field [...]. Narratives allow researchers to go beyond the transmission of information or content, making the experience revealed, which involves fundamental aspects to understanding both the subject interviewed individually as the context in which she/he is inserted “(Muylaert et al., 2014, p. 188).

The study of the interviews gives deep insights in both the circumstances of the violent acts as well as the subjective perspectives of the staff. Therefore there are two main aims of this article: 1. To classify how staff member's perceive violence; 2. To understand staff member's reasons for not speaking about and disclosing violence.

Data interpretation was completed according to the paradigm of data coding from grounded theory methodology (Clarke, 2012; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). That means that we coded the data openly and deductively according to the research questions and sub questions of the project. Data analyses in interpretation groups, writing analytical memos and linking the data to theories on organisational practices, violence against children with disabilities and power abuse in residential care lead to our conclusions. In this article we present the analysis of the staff members' perception and classification of violence committed by staff.

RESULTS

The results of the study show that even if professionals do perceive violence committed by colleagues, the context influences if and how discussing of violence happens. The data shows

³ The group's behaviouristic concept was developed based on "IntraActPlus" approach (Jansen & Streit, 2006). For criticism on IntraActPlus' inherent "Körperorientierte Interaktionstherapie" (body oriented interaction therapy, KIT), which in a violent manner was realised in the groups see Benz (2005). For the methodology of practice theory see Reckwitz, 2002.

how perceiving violence does not mean speaking about violence. Many interviewed staff members, who worked in neighbouring groups while the violent constellation was in effect, were concerned whether they should then have identified and mentioned the situations that they, with their contextual knowledge, would classify as violent today.

CLASSIFICATION OF STAFF MEMBER'S PERCEPTION OF VIOLENCE

Based on excerpts of the groups' documentation and interviews, the violence within the groups can be differentiated into three practices, differing in the way the violence was legitimised to the outside. In reality, these forms of violence are blended into each other. Analytically, they can be separated into:

1. Practices of violence on a vague borderline between legitimate interventions, illegitimate sanctioning and exertion of violence;
2. Specific violent practices which were legitimised to the outside with reference to the behaviouristic approach while concealing the actual form of realisation;
3. Violent practices which, even under the veil of a supposed behaviouristic approach, can no longer be presented as legitimate strategies of therapy and intervention and thus were actively kept a secret by the team.

Regarding this article's leading question, the first form of 'borderline violent practices' is especially of interest, as these practices were perceived most plainly from outside of the violent team constellation. These practices can be reconstructed by situations that are recalled by professionals from the neighbouring groups, dating from the time before the behaviouristic concept was officially approved. This period can be classified as the violent team constellation's constituting phase.

The interviewees remember situational perceptions that they classify as practices of penalisation only with today's explicit knowledge of the history of violent acts within the organisation. Interviewees recall how they themselves or their colleagues back then noticed not seeing individual residents for several days or even weeks at a time, just as if individuals would 'disappear'

and suddenly resurface. Retrospectively, such situations are reclassified in the light of the groups' revealed penalisation practices of confinement. The effects of a violent penalisation praxis – not seeing a resident over an extended period of time – had been perceived. Yet for lack of contextual knowledge or because there was no assumption of such contexts, these perceptions were not classified as violence at the time.

From the same period of time, however, interviewees do remember perceiving some practices in a negative manner and in part classifying them as violence. Staff members who were then newly introduced to the respective part of the organisation noticed that

many of the caretakers ((deep breath; uh:m)) of the residential group [name of group] (1) had a: very (.) rough way of interacting with their residents (pedagogic staff)

The concrete realisation of the interaction is either witnessed personally or narrated by staff members of the violent team constellation. In joint situations, such as waiting for the residents' school buses in the morning, members of the respective team talk of sanctions which their colleagues from neighbouring groups already back then perceived to be inappropriate. Within their groups, the colleagues afterwards discussed these narrations. These sanctions consisted of, for example, withholding and strictly regulating food in order to suppress undesired behaviour patterns.

[...] that there were some things they said that (.) they would break such and such behaviour by always giving them food that they don't like and stuff like that so: uhm where you just swallowed hard and thought uhm (pedagogic staff)

Here, the professional from a neighbouring group remembers irritation about the described penalisation practice. The discomfort remains on an intellectual level, though, because the professional "swallowed" the notion and does not address it towards the team in question. With the knowledge regarding the violent realisation of the behavioural therapy, the professional retrospectively notices the behaviourist logic in the described praxis: In order to suppress behaviour patterns (conditioning), negative sanctions are applied. This reveals a logic that laid the gro-

und for the behaviouristic concept's subsequent official implementation in the groups. The professional had, at this point, no knowledge about the radical way the behaviourist logic would be applied in the groups, but the description had been perceived as inappropriate nonetheless. The interviewee, as do other interlocutors, goes on to relate inappropriate, mocking and in part humiliating ways of addressing the children and youths.

with some colleagues there often was such an ironic tone [...] that our disabled residents often don't even understand [...] so i often thought like (.) oh (.) like (.) they don't you know they don't understand that, what sort of tone is that but hm then again you did have to laugh about one sentence or another there (pedagogic staff)

With today's knowledge about the violence exerted in the groups, it becomes clear that the irritating "tone" was a characteristic culture of interaction with the residents in the respective team constellation, which laid the ground for the excessively violent practices that were to become daily routine within the groups. At this point, however, the interviewee was unaware of the latter. In retro perspective, the professional mainly recalls feeling ambivalent: on the one hand the colleagues' mocking tone was deemed inappropriate, on the other hand they were spontaneously perceived as amusing. This reaction may be interpreted as trained praxis of distancing oneself from routine work, which may well contain ironic elements. In the present case, though, this distancing by means of irony may have resulted in dampening the critical impulse. Mutually laughing about the irony forms a bond and thus makes criticism of the very same remark more difficult.

Apart from mocking ways of addressing the residents, a domestic management staff reports depreciative talk about residents amongst individual professionals of the violent team constellation (Names are changed).

sometimes the residents were also (.) derided (.) in that they would parrot them [...] i didn't observe (.) attacks (.) at least not in (.) physical action (.) just those verbal ones that i really find uh (.) these are attacks to me thats (.) yeah that- thats violence (.) against children because there they are helpless the-

re (.) right i can remember one incident there is this resident he was called [name] (.) and uh [name] was supposed [...] to be driven somewhere (.) and two caretakers from (.) uh his group from [name of group] well they were (.) there a:nd uh:m (.) one of the caretakers said to his colleague (.) uh almost literally now 'for this trip we could just (.) leave the rear door open so when we get there we'll be rid of [name] for good' [...] and he's standing right next to the boy (domestic management staff)

The staff member describes an exemplary situation for what is meant with "violence". This and similar practices of the professionals that could be observed in the daily routine are retrospectively classified as "violence" and "attacks", explained with children's helplessness. The domestic management professional remembers assessing situations as distinctly inappropriate back then, even without the contextual knowledge:

what i didn't like there at all for example there were things (.) in my opinion that you don't use even with healthy (.) children that's something like irony ((breathes)) that uh that only confuses them frightens them here they often dropped ((breathes)) ironic remarks i found that very out of place (domestic management staff)

These memories differ from the abovementioned distanced positioning of the pedagogic professional regarding mocking speech praxis of former colleagues. This difference is explicable by the speaker's position: compared to their direct colleagues, the domestic management professional is further away from the pedagogic professionals' praxis, which may provide a chance to regard this praxis with a more distanced view. Simultaneously, the status within the organisation as non-pedagogical staff keeps the domestic management professional from reporting those perceptions to pedagogic professionals or heads of staff, as is related in another sequence:

but of course i as a domestic management professional am not in a position to somehow uh ((breathes)) to- to even notice that (.) yes you are sort of only the (.) personnel that has to function (.) in the background but ((breathes)) uhm uh concerning the pedagogical situation mh by all means (.) isn't supposed to uh form any opinion whatsoever right let alone ((breathes)) have a conversation about it with anyo-

ne ((breathes)) that is simply not our department (1) so then we often (.) uhm talked about it informally. (domestic management staff)

The verbal violence in the groups is certainly being noticed and discussed amongst the domestic management staff. This form of discussion remains ineffective: institutional roles and hierarchies outweigh the perceived wrongdoings and prevent their mentioning with pedagogic professionals or heads of staff. Following the argumentation of Margit Brückner (2001) as mentioned at the beginning, the domestic management professional in her institutional status has no power to rate actions of pedagogic staff as appropriate or inappropriate.

STAFF MEMBER'S REASONS FOR NOT DISCUSSING AND DISCLOSING VIOLENCE

Many interviewees are concerned with the fact that, even without today's contextual knowledge, many of the situations were perceived as inappropriate and caused unease. One professional recalls that staff members of the violent team constellation addressed a certain resident with his last name only, and comments on this memory in the interview:

but i could have said: 'he's got a first name, you know'; then you would have made your position clear. (pedagogic staff)

The 'swallowing' of critical impulses, and hence the failure to disclose those situations which are retrospectively classified as violent, is connected to the organisation's climate as it is portrayed for the respective period of time. Before and during the time of the violent constellation, the management's agenda was oriented towards economically profit while pedagogical questions were disregarded. Partially caused by this, in the organisation's section in question a culture was predominant, where the colleagues' pedagogic work and decisions were not to be commented or questioned. A professional illustrates this in the interview, depicting the residents as "personal front yard" of the respective main caretaker

well (1) the main caretakers saw the children they were responsible for (.) as their personal front garden i always called that the 'garden gnome discussion'

(.) just for myself (.) if (...) no questions may be asked within the team (.) like [...] how are you treating that child (.) why didn't the doctor's visit happen [...] or whatever why isn't the report being written (.) why d- wh wh wha what what are you even writing into that report at all (.) I see the boy very differently (.) and then it's 'hold it please (.) that is my personal front garden (.) you have nothing to say about it (pedagogic staff)

The climate that is outlined here is one where colleagues best keep their observations and mutual perceptions to themselves, and in connection with it the children's and youths' situation as well. In consequence, the team's practices that were prone to violence had certainly been perceived, yet often those perceptions were not verbalised and disclosed. In this manner, deficiencies cannot become subject to reflections, in the worst case violent actions remain concealed, as they did in the case of this organisation.

Additionally, within the violent team constellation strong legitimisations of the violence prevailed, which presumably caused many of the professionals, at least for an extended period of time, not to perceive their acts of violence for what they were. The interviewed heads of staff and professionals from neighbouring groups explained the phenomenon this way, that due to the implementation of the behaviouristic concept, the team acquired interpretive patterns by which the violence was reinterpreted as help:

saving these autistic children (.) from a:: (1) from psychiatry (.) i think they were (.) inspired by the idea that that was their mission (management staff)

they really were incredibly convinced that they were doing (.) the right thing (pedagogic staff)

During the course of the violent constellation, the neighbouring groups increasingly noticed that something was "odd" in the residential groups in question. The perceptions were reported to the heads of staff – but for a long time these reports remained ineffective:

and then: we kept picking up stuff that (2) well (.) seemed odd to us and ((breathes)) and i did point them out others did too i know that but you (.) it didn- (1) somehow it didn't go anywhere (pedagogic staff)

Both the professionals' institutional status and the status of those residents who are considered "especially difficult" protected the violent constellation for a long period of time. They seemed to justify the "odd" procedures and provided the team with support by the section's heads of staff. Thus, the responsible heads of staff rejected reports about observations of irritating situations. It remains unclear to what extent the heads of staff had insight into the groups' daily routines. The fact, however, that perceived irritating situations had been reported to the management well before their public disclosure, suggests that the violent constellation within the organisation was not uncovered abruptly, but rather that there was a vague awareness of some of their practices. Reports of such perceptions were considered ineffective over a long period of time, partially they were even considered a risk to the position within the organisation. Two dynamics become apparent that caused the prevention of the violence's disclosure even though irritating situations had been perceived. For one, colleagues who raised their voices critically remained unheard. In addition, many a critical impulses never became a voice but were "swallowed".

It becomes clear that individual professionals' perception of violence in organisations does not automatically lead to its discussion and subsequent termination of the violent constellation. In the present case, it is nonetheless a long-term process of reassuring the own perception and mutual confirmation that did finally produce an effective discussion:

so there is this feeling now if i m concerned there is something wrong here right its always bigger and then you started talking to each other (pedagogic staff)

In the end, during an advanced training outside of the organisation, three staff members of the violent team constellation themselves who exchange their views on their own team's work routines and classify them as violence. They involved a colleague from a neighbouring groups' assistance and initiate the beginning of a disclosing process by giving the management a striking account of distinctly violent acts. A mutual reassurance of the own perceptions was necessary in order to effectively discuss violence.

DISCUSSION

At first glance, the empirical example approaches the question of perception of violence from very different angles. The common point of origin is the question in which ways teams of residential care handle the requirement to perceive, interpret and discuss (potential) violence. A dependence on (historical, structural, social) context in the interpretation of situations as (non-) violent is to be assumed (Brückner, 2001). Despite the conditionality of the term 'violence', the study shows that the professionals differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate actions, considering for example evaluation of ways of addressing the young people and sanctions in a group's daily routine. Classification of violence is done either on the basis of criteria that are of professional nature, e.g. if a certain way of addressing a resident is considered inappropriate for his or her state of developmental status, or by means of other normative, often implicit valuation systems. As described above, these are never independent of historic, structural and institutional circumstances. At the same time, however, there are border areas, where actions cannot be allocated unambiguously. These areas often indicate a conflict between different valuation systems. An action may be professionally justifiable, but against the backdrop of ethical aspirations of human sympathy it may well be considered violence, and vice versa. In the study a situation's classification as violent is closely tied to a speechlessness that hampers the ability to discuss the own perception and evaluation. Notions about verbal violence are then "swallowed". But even if actions can be classified as exertion of violence, as seen in the second part of the analysis, and even if this classification is reported to the management, institutional and structural frameworks may impede further discussion. Thus, amongst others, the institutionalisation of a concept impeded effective disclosure of perceptions of violence, in connection with the institutional support of the specialised group and hence their constructions of "especially difficult" residents, who supposedly require extraordinary methods.

The interviews with staff members convey how heavily they are burdened by the imagination or knowledge respectively, that violence was or might be exerted in their own organisation.

It becomes apparent that situations of violence cannot always immediately, unambiguously and without contextual knowledge be classified as such. For example, when children had not been seen outside for weeks at a time, knowledge of the penalisation praxis behind it is essential in order to immediately connect the children's disappearance with violence. Perceiving those children's deviant behaviour who suffered violence requires the conception that they were violated within the organisation. Without critically inquiring the own, personal setting, children's signals are likely rather associated to the predominant image of the "difficult" child.

CONCLUSION

Despite the difficulties and because of them, the cases of violence committed by professionals in organisations demand the development of criteria to help discern violent actions. In order not to resort to standardised procedures, which in turn may become violence, and in order to take into account powerful constellations in the definition of violence, it seems reasonable to follow reflections on power of definition (Hagemann-White et al., 1992) and to let children's and youths' assessments and perceptions serve as a rule for both operational praxis and research.

This emphasises for further research not only to simply talking to professionals, but instead indicates the necessity to give children and youths in residential care the opportunity to verbalise what they consider violence. Having the here analysed case with children with disabilities in mind, this opens up new questions for research. How can voices of children who are limited in articulating themselves be considered by research on power abuse in institutions and staff violence? Research on their specific situation and perspective on this issue is needed.

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CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO INCLUSION AND RESILIENCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN RURAL IRELAND

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences of young people with learning difficulties in finding pathways to resilience growing up in contemporary rural Ireland. Some young people with learning difficulties thrive while others do not seem to cope. It was the aim of this study to find contributing factors for the development of resilience and inclusion.

In seeking to adopt an inclusive approach to listening and hearing the voices of young people, including those with limited verbal skills a participatory approach was implemented. Participatory work and observations were completed with thirty young people with learning difficulties aged between 15 and 18 years of age in a special school. A way to communicate was developed together with the group to enable participation.

Although different factors were confirmed to have a relationship with the development of resilience, it was found that it could either promote or prevent resilience, depending on the person and the circumstances. Inclusion and allowing people to participate remains one of the barriers for young people with learning difficulties in building resilience. At a time when there is big pressure from policymakers and others to close the exclusion gap, it may be said that it is more complex than some theories might imply.

As there is a high percentage of young people with learning difficulties living in rural Ireland, and, the subject of resilience was not researched before with such a group in this area, it was important that such a study took place. It shows the complexity of achieving inclusion and resilience for the young participants.

Keywords: resilience, young people, coping skills, young people with learning difficulties

INTRODUCTION

The principle of resilience is mostly defined as the ability to bounce back from stress, adjustment, or disruption. The term resilience comes from the Latin term: 'resilire' and was used originally to point out elastic and pliant qualities of material (Joseph, 1994).

Although the word resilience seems to be a common word in the English language, the meaning of resilience does not remain the same across different cultures. Approximately fifty years of researching resilience have resulted in various perceptions and perspectives on the subject (Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Taylor & Wang, 2000; Thomsen, 2002; Ungar, 2005). However, among the different researchers no consensus was ever reached on a single definition of resilience, rather there are multiple views on how to define the concept of resilience (Carle & Chassin, 2004). Almedon & Glandon (2007, p. 127)

claim that researchers, politicians and practitioners have long enough, in their own interest, defined what resilience or health should mean. Nevertheless, resilience is most often explained as a construct of two dimensions: on the one hand the exposure to risk or adversity and on the other hand positive adjustment to that exposure (Luther & Cicchetti, 2000). Whilst the construct of resilience has been researched across multiple projects, there is little agreement on the definition of adversity, and similarly, there is no consensus on what exactly is meant by positive adjustments. Some researchers see school achievements as a sign of positive adjustment (Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999), while Masten (1994) refers to patterns of recovery from trauma as a sign of resilience. Garmezy (1993) suggests characteristics of protective factors should be examined. Werner and Smith (1992) contended that a resilient child is: "one who loves well, works well, plays well and expects well" (Werner & Smith, (1992, p. 10)). Masten (1994) argues resilience is a process and should be viewed as an interchange between some characteristics of the child and the wider environment; it is a balance between stressors and coping abilities. Masten (2001) uses the term "ordinary magic" when referring to the resilience process in which she explains it can just be an ordinary thing or encounter that may lead to resilience. Current researchers view resilience more and more as a set of processes that can be nurtured and cultivated (Masten, 2001; Padron, Waxman & Huang, 1999). The interactive process between the person and his or her environment, and between protective factors and risk, are emphasised (Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Garbarino, 1995). The triadic model from Garmezy (1991) which studies the dynamic interactions between risk and protective factors in three different fields (Individual, family and environment) is used by several researchers (i.e. Gordon & Song, 1994; Morales & Trotman, 2004). Lynch and Cicchetti (1993) in their work emphasise how a diversity of contexts (such as culture, family and where they live) interact and can increase or obstruct the development of a person's resilience. Often resilience is defined as the ability to bounce back, but some of these young people can't go back to their previous "normal" life, the metaphor "bouncing forward"

by Walsh (2002) may be more appropriate. What we need to understand if we accept resilience to be a dynamic process is that this "bounce-back-ability" can either grow or degenerate over time, again depending on the interactions taking place for the individual between his environment and the protective and risk factors involved (Borman & Rachuda, 2001; Werner & Smith, 1992). Resilience in young people or the process of adapting well to adverse circumstances is no longer understood being an individual construct (Theron et al., 2013). Current research studies are more focused on a social-ecological resilience perspective which regards resilience as a process of dynamics between the young people and their socio-cultural interactions (Ungar, 2011). This connotes resilience to be a process that is influenced by the cultural and contextual experiences of the youth (Ungar, 2011; Masten & White, 2010).

Ungar (2008, p. 165) suggested resilience to be the *capacity of the individual to navigate a way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain wellbeing* but at the same time having *the capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in a culturally meaningful way*. Theron, Liebenberg and Mlandi (2014, p. 254) defined resilience in a similar way when they contended resilience to be *a culturally and contextually relevant process in which children and the varying systems they shape and are shaped by, are partners with a shared goal of positive adjustment*.

This study was mostly concerned with hearing the voices of young people with learning difficulties and their understanding and development of resilience in rural Ireland. 30 of the participants to this study were young people with learning difficulties. Since no previous research on resilience with young people with learning difficulties was conducted in this part of the country, they became the focus of this study. Children and young people with disabilities have the equal right to be heard and listened to (UNICEF, 2013). This should apply to their meaningful participation in research studies, both as participants and, ideally, as collaborators in the research process and intervention design.

To meet the focus of this research study a qualitative methods approach was designed including the use of research methods suitable to open up communication with young people with learning difficulties of whom some had limited or no verbal skills.

METHODS

This research study is embedded in the new sociology of childhood, meaning it moved away from 'structure' to that of 'agency' where children and young people are seen as agents in their own right. Recent International policy agreements such as the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Human Rights 'Act defend that the views, wishes and feelings of children are to be taken into account in child protection and family support decision-making (Kilkelly, 2000; Munro, 2011). This should be extended to research undertaken with children, more specifically the participation of children with learning difficulties in social research and their right to do so. Considering age and/or capacity all children should have an active voice in relation to research

A participatory approach, involving observations, creative work, more in-depth one to one interviews and reflective practice was used to explore contributing factors and barriers for the development of resilience in young people with learning difficulties. In order to develop the instrument for this study, the results of a previous study on resilience of young people in rural Ireland were used. Participatory work was conducted from half February 2015 until end of April 2015 with 30 young people with learning difficulties attending a special school. Please find mode of participation in table 1 below.

A reflective journal was used from the start of the fieldwork with young people with learning difficulties. The initial purpose of this journal was to get more clarity in finding a way to respectfully communicate with these young people. No notes were taken during the actual observations because: a) giving the young people undivided attention was prioritised; b) the young people should not be distracted, and c) to break down the power differential between researcher and participant.

The observation-notes were recorded in journals as soon as the fieldwork day was finished,

Table 1. Mode of Participation

| Methods | Mode | Purpose |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Observation | Participatory work with three groups of young people with learning difficulties | Provide information to participants Enhance communication |
| One to one meetings | Individual interviews between researcher and three young men with learning difficulties | Providing information Drawing up a timeline with each participant |
| Focus group research | Group meetings with researcher and three groups of participants with learning difficulties | Participating in research study in group by people with learning difficulties, using pictures exchange |

projects that concern them. Lundy (2007) and Lundy & McEvoy (2009) argued that listening to children and young people alone is not enough and that the views of children should be taken seriously. We can only really listen to children when we speak their language, allowing for mutual understanding. In the case of children with very limited verbal skills finding an alternative, non-verbal way of communication is imperative.

usually in the evening. Some reflections were made on what had been observed and what personal thoughts were on the subject. These reflective thoughts were kept separate from the actual observation journal.

The initial observations were quite general. This time was needed to get to know the participants: i.e. where they were sitting in the classroom, how they presented themselves, which of them had well, or less good verbal skills, how



Figure 1. Example of Communication Board.

Questions asked were:

- Have you ever been hurt by someone?*
- Did someone help you?*
- Who did help you?*
- Do you know where to get help?*
- Where would you get help?*
- Did you feel better afterwards?*

they took care for their school uniform etc. To allow an open mind on the direction of the study there was no interruption on the normal flow of a school day. This way the researcher could see and learn how to best communicate with the participants, especially those with no or little speech. At the same time opportunities were looked for when they arose to communicate with the participants about the role of the researcher and to reassure that young peoples 'decision to participate in the study was an informed one.

Observing the interactions of the teacher and the SNA (special needs assistant) with the young people during the day, and reflecting on these observations in the evening during the journal writing up time supported the process in finding a way to better communicate with this special group of young people. After the initial few weeks of just general observation and

participation in whatever was happening in the class, there was a better general understanding of who these people were, and the researcher had started to build some rapport with them. A better focus was obtained and observations became more structured. It was during this time that it was decided to focus the daily observations at one person at a time, rather than the whole group, in order to get an idea of how that individual felt about things that concerned him/her. A decision was made to keep a second journal in which reflections were recorded and ideas about what was observed and what was thought to be observed, taking time later on to interpret what it all meant. At times it was difficult to make a distinction between the actual observations and the interpretation of the observed. It was at these times that keeping two separate journals paid off as it allowed to critically reviewing the observations and the reflections.

After some more weeks of observing, writing up and reflecting on all this, some patterns or themes started to emerge, and that was the time that a third interpretive journal was started. In this journal a combination of the records of what had been observed with reflections to also include an interpretation were documented. This systematic approach to record keeping allowed for the development of a suitable communication system with a set of visual images, communication boards and social stories and developed a structure very similar to PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). This is a system which is utilised when teaching people with autism and/or developmental delays to communicate needs and wants and was developed in 1984 by Frost and Bondy.

It was not until the use of the communication tool that verbal data collection with this group of young people could begin. Direct questions could now be asked using pictures and the participants could answer doing the same. Because there was a more direct way of questioning and answering the researcher was less relying on observations for interpretation of this very simple interview technique.

An example of a communication board that was used can be seen in Figure 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The young people with learning difficulties not necessarily recognised the family as their primary source of support, for some there was even a negative relationship. They were often chaperoned everywhere, it did not provide them with a lot of opportunities to learn from their mistakes. This was clearly the interpretation of one of the participant's story. For ease of presentation this participant was named David. When David's father at times behaved badly, David felt lost but there was evidence to suggest that David did value his father and loved him no matter what. Other participants told similar stories, showing how they kept loving and longing for their family even after having been abandoned by them.

This study confirmed that a big part of the study participants got great support from the schools. The young people in the advisory group reported the school to help them to get through

difficult times. This was also true, to some extent for the young people attending the special school. They reported at one to one meetings that when the young people with learning difficulties were attending mainstream schools their needs were not met. This made it difficult for them to cope in the schools, which often led them to behave in a way that was not tolerated by the schools. The schools felt their only option was to have these students removed, as within the schools the needs of the latter group could not be met; and consequently these young people were sent to a special school. So for the youth with learning difficulties, who participated in this study, mainstream education did not work and prevented the development of resilience at that stage. When they started to attend a special school, this was a turning point for them and things changed significantly.

Only seven of the thirty young people participating suggested that they would look for support from friends when in trouble, or when having difficulties. I also found that the meaning of the word "friend" was not so clear-cut. They did not always have the ability to form trusting relationships. It was beyond the scope of this study to explore whether this was a consequence of an individual or innate limitation, or a lack of parental/caregivers skills. However, it was noticed as a concern; as the young people were putting themselves at risk. They told the researcher at their regular one to one meetings that this had happened with many of them when in mainstream education, thus could be seen as a reason why friends were not their first port of call when in need of support. The concept of "friends" clearly was difficult for them to understand, this may have been because they were unable to differentiate between "friends" and "acquaintances". It also suggested that people with learning difficulties may be more vulnerable to abuse than their peers without these limitations. Of the participants with learning difficulties some had no speech, which made it very hard for them to express their feelings or understand each other's feelings. Due to their communication difficulties, these young people were relying on non-verbal communicators of emotions, which made social interaction very confusing for them. This study found that there was a relationship between the capacities to

make friends and building resilience; conversations with young people with learning difficulties suggested it was not always a positive one. This was specifically the case in the context of the difference in living experiences and the different realities the young people were faced with. In other words the results suggested that factors promoting resilience for one part of the participants might in fact not be useful for another group, confirming the importance of the context in resilience.

As the work was done with a group of young people attending a special, segregated school community inclusion was not readily available to the participants with learning difficulties in this study. Notwithstanding there has been a lot of pressure and shifts in policies to increase the presence of people with intellectual disabilities in the community. Institutional care provision was cut back in Ireland over the last two decades. But somehow some participants lost out on this. Although they were taking part in activities in the community, and, they were using local facilities, this was not necessarily leading to meaningful social contact with the non-disabled population. They went dancing and swimming and sporting at facilities in the local community, but often organised by disability service providers, or the special school, or a friends and parents group attached to one of the providers. They were depending on others to make strategic decisions. The evidence suggested a new way of exclusion has developed over the last few years. Indication for this was the life stories this group of young people shared during the research project.

From the meetings and conversations with the advisory group evidence was provided that the community was important to those young people because it made them belong. The observations with the young people with learning difficulties, however, confirmed that the lack of contact with the local community, and therefore not being able to develop social skills, had an influence on their whole being. This made them more vulnerable to be misunderstood and misinterpreted, which directly affected their ability to develop proper meaningful relationships, so much needed in their path to resilience. It was also confirmed in this study that attachment has a role to play in developing resilience. The

findings on this subject were confirmed by the group of young people attending the special school during observations, and one to one conversations. It tells us about the importance of being accepted without condition. The conversations undertaken in the special school demonstrated that when life gets tough, but there is a person willing to walk with them (either an SNA in the special school, or a primary carer), they had a better chance to get through this. For some it even meant a turning point in their life. Keeping an open mind and just letting the conversation flow provided new deeper insight on the subject. It showed how powerful very basic support, such as listening to someone and sharing mutual respect can be. How easily this may get overlooked, when professionals, look for high spec interventions which may cost a lot of money, and forget the very basics in care such as being unconditionally available for someone, or small daily things such as being attentive or friendly. Masten (2001) claims this as "ordinary magic" that may lead to resilience.

FACTORS PROMOTING RESILIENCE

Most of the findings were consistent with previous resilience research but added richer, deeper insight into what was already known. Evidence was found of a relation between resilience development and relationship with caregivers, depending on the situation of the young person, his/her capacity, and his/her environment. This confirms studies undertaken by Ungar (2004), Tnsley et al. (2007), Myers & Taylor (1998), Henry (1999), and other scholars, who found a relationship with caregivers to be important, even when the family was malfunctioning (Ungar, 2004). In this study the young people were sometimes too much pampered, not allowing them to make mistakes and learning from this. It endorses Michael Ungar's (2004) suggestion that children learn from their own mistakes if we let them. However, the overall findings were consistent with several empirical longitudinal studies (Fergusson & Horwood, 2003; Losel & Bliesner, 1990; Seifer, 2003; Werner & Smith, 1992, 2001), and confirmed a relationship between the development of resilience and primary caregivers, be it positive as well as negative. Even malfunctioning families

can offer a degree of protective processes for young people.

This study provided evidence that attachment is a powerful factor that may promote resilience. This was consistent with what was found in previous studies on the subject such as Howe (2005), Cairns (2002), Bowlby (1980), Howe (1980), Schore (2001), and many others. This attachment may be with a member of the family, a member of staff, or another responsible adult in the child's life.

Kiswarday (2010) suggests another major influence on resilience in young people is the school they attend. This study confirmed that a big part of the study participants got great support from the schools. However attention was drawn to the needs of the young person attending the schools, and the appropriateness of the schools, especially where people with learning difficulties were involved. This confirms Gains (2008) view that inclusion should not be a "one-off, cure-all solution". Also Farrell (2004) cautioned for this approach when he suggested it might lead to the needs of the students involved to be overlooked. That was exactly what the results of this study suggested had happened with the young people participating in this study. Byrne (2013, p. 1) argues that on the matter of education for people with disabilities international law is constitutive of hidden contradictions and conditionality. She further explains that the conceptualisation of "inclusion" is too much focused on individual impairment or 'deficit' rather than upon the extent of the institutional or structural deficit (Byrne, (2013, p. 1)) and implementing a "welcome to my world" attitude. This may be one of the explanations why although education of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and learning difficulties is one of the key policy objectives in many countries (Lindsay, 2007; NCCA, 2009; Plan International, 2016; Department Onderwijs en Vorming, 2017). It does not seem to have properly worked. Notwithstanding that in current years the acceptance of having children with so-called intellectual disabilities segregated in special schools has shifted to a more inclusive holistic education in the mainstream. Most countries in the European Union have designed legislation promoting or requiring inclusive education which is seen as a human right. Stri-

ving for an education system to promote tolerance, diversity and equality has been widely recognised; however achieving this in practice is a bigger challenge. Conversations with the participants about attending mainstream education provided evidence that the experience was not positive. They only recalled negative things, such as being bullied, being laughed at, being different and not belonging. Evans and Lunt (2002) and Farrell (2000) suggested there might be a small minority of children for whom it could be too difficult to be included in mainstream schools. For the young people attending the special school, this seemed to have been the case. The reason for this seems to be a lack of developing personal centered plans rather than system centered plans in mainstream education. During observations it was confirmed that it was because/with the support of this "special" school the young people who took part in this study had turned their life around, and they were on a path to less stressful and more "socially acceptable" behaviour. Hope is created at least for some of them to live a fulfilled more resilient life.

BARRIERS OF RESILIENCE

At times where there is so much policy pressure for minority groups to be included in the community and for young people with learning difficulties to be included in mainstream education, this research demonstrates that for some groups this may only mean lip service. The results showed that the community plays an integral part in the development of resilience in young people, but it was found that the lack of community access, and meaningful participation were a barrier for the development of self-worth for a minority group taking part in this project and hence this meant it was a potential threat to the development of resilience.

A question to be asked here is how much attention has been paid to the needs of the young person attending the schools, and the appropriateness of the school, especially when the person involved has learning difficulties. Finding the right balance between ability and limitation may in practice be a difficult one. But as long as the main focus is on the deficits of people with learning difficulties rather than on

the abilities and strengths of the individual these problems will persist.

Due to their communication difficulties, these young people were relying on non-verbal communicators of emotions, which made social interaction very confusing for them. This underpins a study undertaken by McKenzie & colleagues (2000) and concurs with Arthur's findings (2003) and those from McKenzie et al. (2000) who argue that people with learning difficulties can only develop these social skills, when it is done in the context of shaping an environment supporting social inclusion. That brings this study back to the inclusion debate; it is now social inclusion that has given some food for thought.

From the meetings and conversations with the advisory group evidence was provided that the community was important to those young people because it made them belong. Vrey's (1992) and his relation theory suggests one of the main developmental tasks of a young person in the age of adolescence is to develop an idea of who they are, and that the only way this could be achieved is by doing that in relation to others, and in positioning themselves towards the world surrounding them. Vrey's observations were confirmed in this study. It also confirmed research done by Bernard (1998), Henderson (2002), Masten et al. (2008), Byrne (2013) when they provided evidence on the importance of the community and the development of resilience.

Another finding that emerged was the one of the relationship between the capacity to make friends and building resilience, but living experiences and different realities people were faced with often made it very difficult for them. This confirmed the importance of the context in resilience research, being one of Michael Ungar's (2005) key focuses on resilience research. Friends and the wider community had a role to play for the young people, participating in this project, on their path to resilience. However the lack of real community access and real participation in the community may have hampered the development of resilience in young people especially where capacity and innate skills were limited. Although there are stated policy objectives (Commission of the Status of People with Disabilities, 1996; National Disability Strategy, 2004; Towards 2016, Ten Year Framework Soci-

al Partnership Agreement 2006-2015) for inclusion of minority groups into mainstream service provision, the findings of this study suggested there still is a big gap between what has been aimed for and what has been achieved.

CONCLUSION

Overall this research project has demonstrated that in contemporary rural Ireland schools and communities have a large part to play in building resilience in young people. The subject of inclusion and allowing people to meaningfully participate remains one of the barriers for young people with learning difficulties. It is drawing from this that a better understanding of pathways to resilience for young people with learning difficulties is achieved.

We all have a responsibility towards the most vulnerable in our society because it shapes how our community functions, how we all take responsibility for each other's needs. It is not so much a challenge to change policies towards "vulnerable people", or a lack of positive solutions, such as having vulnerable people involved in research or including young people with learning difficulties in real community-based programmes, or mainstream education; but it is the will to implement what we already know on a scale this is needed. Therefore to close the exclusion gap, promoting young people with learning difficulties to grow up more resilient it is suggested to be more complex than some theories might imply.

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Vesna Katalinić,

Brave Phone, Zagreb, Croatia, vesna@hrabritelefon.hr

Jana Kujundžić,

University of Essex, England

Božidar Nikša Tarabić,

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Lana Petö Kujundžić,

County court in Zagreb, Croatia

SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPIL'S KNOWLEDGE OF COURT PROCEEDING AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF COURTS WITHIN CROATIAN LEGAL SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to make an initial assessment of pupil's perception of courts and basic knowledge of court proceeding within Croatian legal system.

Pen-and-paper form questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, with the emphasis on the latter. Subjects were 113 conveniently sampled 14-to-18 years-old secondary school pupils with no prior legal knowledge education (77.2%) or real-life court proceedings experience (90%).

Only a part of the results are presented. In all, 68.3% of the pupils consider their legal knowledge as being insufficient. Only 5.9% knew the age of the threshold of the majority, and they prefer being questioned by one as opposed to multiple experts. The overwhelming majority believes that minor perpetrator should be accompanied to the court by their parents and the defence attorney. Principal components analysis of the court-related anticipated negative emotions yielded two emotional clusters with the first delineating behaviourally passive but cognitively more self-directed and reflective orientation and the other behaviourally more proactive. Pupils report wanting to be included in decision making, their voice to be heard and

at the same time seem to displace their liability to their parents. They believe the court is important, just, sometimes scary, without prejudice, formal and cold.

Pupils demonstrate a low level of court-related knowledge even when it comes to basic concepts and at the same time express the need to be given an active role in court proceedings.

Keywords: children; legal knowledge; perception; court proceeding

INTRODUCTION

Traditional beliefs hold that courtroom context, with its emphasis on formality, the seriousness of the task, consequences and error promotes eyewitness testimony (Saywitz & Nathanson, 1993). However, this is put under scrutiny when the witness is a child. Courtroom setting and procedures, while possible agents in promoting testimony validity, reliability and relevant information retrieval in adults, being unfamiliar and incomprehensible to the child, might be distracting, confusing and hence stressful, interfering with information retrieval (Nathanson & Saywitz, 2003), resulting in lower testimony reliability and perceived validity. In a mock trial study by Saywitz and Nathanson (1993) children, aged eight to ten, questioned at court showed impaired memory performance as opposed to

those questioned at school. Authors also found a negative correlation between perceptions of courtroom related stress and number of correct items reported during free recall. Similar results were obtained while testing another group of eight to ten-year-olds two-week period memory accuracy of a staged event, involving physical touch, with questioning taking part in courtroom versus small private room. Nathanson and Saywitz (2003) found that courtroom environment was associated with higher heart rate, greater heart rate variability (as a proxy for anxiety) and impaired memory performance (less information recalled). What is even more striking, "27% of children interviewed in the courtroom failed to recall the staged event at all in response to free-recall instructions in comparison with only 7.5% of children interviewed in the private room." (p. 82), $\chi^2(80) = 5.29, p < .05$. They also revealed low-to-medium negative association ($r = -.27$) between heart rate reactivity and correct responses to specific, closed-ended, questions.

In a study by Flin, Stevenson and Davies (1989) children expressed concerns that they would feel "worried", "nervous", "scared" and "frightened". In general, it seems that children perceive court as a stressful place (Freshwater & Aldridge, 1994) for a myriad of reasons. However, some of them seem to be more prominent than others. Flin, Stevenson and Davies (1989) noted children find that the main reasons for such concerns were: "'fear of not being believed' and (often as a consequence) 'fear of being sent to jail'". Other reasons were: "(a) not being able to understand or answer the questions correctly; (b) not knowing what to do; (c) fear of being on their own and of not knowing anyone in the court; (d) having to speak up in front of a large adult audience and (e) fear of seeing the accused or of retribution from the accused." (p. 292-293); as well as the lack of respect for the child's integrity (Back, Gustafssona, Larsson, & Berteröc, 2011). In a study by Freshwater and Aldridge (1994) 50% or more children expressed being very scared of the "The accused being found not guilty", 'Not being believed by the judge" (p. 189), and not knowing what is expected of them in the courtroom. Lack of understanding and negative attitudes towards courts

are common (Block, Oranb, Oranc, Baumrindd, & Goodmane, 2010).

One of the culprits might be the lack of legal knowledge. Even the ones working directly with children, such as guardians ad litem, seem to overestimate children's legal knowledge, which might lead to less than optimal preparation for their involvement in subsequent legal proceedings (Eltringham & Aldridge, 2000). This can be addressed with pre-trial preparation program consisting of legal knowledge education (roles and functions of courtroom participants), stress inoculation training, and a mock trial which are found to result in significant decrease in children's (4-17 years old) anticipatory anxiety (Nathanson & Saywitz, 2015). Adequate explanation resulting in understanding could even promote involvement in children under ten years old (Thomas & O'Kane, 1999). Some authors, therefore, conclude that legal knowledge education might help lower the stress and potential trauma experienced by child witnesses (Davies, Devere, & Verbitsky, 2004). Even if that is not the case, i.e. where no association was found between anxiety levels, legal knowledge and past court experience, "children with greater understanding and exposure use the "I don't know" response less frequently, report more information in free recall, and provide more correct responses to specific questions." (Nathanson & Saywitz, 2003, p. 87).

Knowledge of legal terms commonly used with children in court appears to advance with age. Flin, Stevenson and Davies (1989) conclude that ten-years-olds seem to be almost as competent as the adults. It seems this improvement happens regardless of, e.g. television viewing (Saywitz, Jaenicke, & Camparo, 1990), which might imply more emphasis should be given on cognitive development and the importance of preparing children for court using the age-appropriate language and way of presenting that is well informed in both child's cognitive and emotional development. Through an examination of age-related patterns of errors, Saywitz et al. (1990) also outline a potential legal terms knowledge acquisition pattern (with no intervention/education) where "children move from the lack of understanding to misperceptions before finally reaching an accurate understanding" (p. 532). Besides age itself, direct expe-

rience also seems to be related to the accuracy of children's legal knowledge (Cooper, Wallin, Quas, & Lyon, 2010). However, it is argued that the mere exposure is still not enough and that even the children involved in legal proceedings need help understanding some aspects of the process (Cooper et al., 2010).

Expanding children's knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, legal terms and proceedings might play a vital role, way beyond lowering children's anxiety levels and promoting information recall. One study shows that fifteen-year-olds, provided with the information about their rights in counselling, were capable of recognizing their rights violation and form the ideas of how to protect them (Belter & Grisso, 1984), which also might be generalized on the courtroom settings. Educating children on legal proceedings as part of the curricula might advance this course of development, enabling children to understand not just of how legal system works, but additionally empowering them by improving their understanding of how the world works as well.

At times, general knowledge debate is sometimes downsampled to children's rights debate. While trying to summarize different approaches, elaborating on the balance between the child's right of self-determination (wishes, interests, goals, etc.), and the adults' duty to protect the child, by doing what is in child's best interest, Thomas and O'Kane (1998) find themselves entangled in what sometimes can be seen as incomprehensible reticulum of many possible and often opposite views. However, it is beyond doubt that: "Children need to know what will take place in the courtroom, who will be involved and exactly what is expected of them" (Flin, Stevenson, & Davies, 1989, p. 286).

Only recently had it became the focus of interest that when considering the possible outcomes, we should consider child's well-being beyond the period of involvement in legal proceedings, with its impact on child's entire life (Walsh, 2015). Therefore the shift towards integrated collaboration between clinicians and courts in promoting long-term child well-being seems to be promising (Casanueva et al., 2013). The first step in achieving that is undoubtedly giving the child an opportunity of being listened to. While social workers perception of why children want

to be included in decision-making was that they just want to get what they want, children, on the other hand, gave substantially more emphasis on being listened to, expressing their opinion and being supported (Thomas & O'Kane, 1998). Children often wish to have a more significant influence on court decisions (Block et al., 2010), they want a chance to have a say (Cashmore, 2002), want to be included and given information (Thomas & O'Kane, 1999).

According to the Guidelines of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on child-friendly justice (Council of Europe, 2010), adopted by the Committee on the 17th of November 2010, child-friendly justice takes care of the children before, during and after the court proceedings. It is especially important that the child is informed and counselled from the first interaction with the legal system or other governmental bodies such as the police, immigration office, educational, health or social welfare institutions. Children need to be informed about their rights, especially about the specific rights in the court or administrative procedures that they are a part of, or they could be a part of. Children need to be aware of available resources which can prevent violation of their rights. Relevant information for children needs to include expected duration of the procedure, types and ways of using legal remedies and other complaint mechanisms. Children should be informed about the legal system and procedures and their role at every stage of the process. Information should also include the opportunities of support in the judicial and administrative proceedings provided to children. The child should be informed of available services from the organizations dealing with health, psychological help, social welfare and translation and how they can use these services.

According to the European Law, the right to express one's opinion includes the right to have your an opinion and to obtain relevant information and data without the influence of the public authority and regardless of frontiers (Council of Europe, 1950, Article 10). According to the decisions and the legislation of the Council of Europe, the right of expression is guaranteed by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950) and this right may be restricted only in the manner pres-

cribed by law. The United Nations Handbook for Professionals and Policymakers on Justice in matters involving child victims and witnesses of crime (The United Nations, 2009), points out that the right of the child to get information, consists of two parts: the right of the child to receive the appropriate assistance, to be informed, and the second part refers to information on the actual procedure in which the child participates. It is essential that the information is provided to the child in a language that he/she understands and that such information is understandable to him/her according to their age. Recommendations and guidelines indicate that it is necessary for all institutions to enable the child to be informed of the procedures through leaflets, brochures, verbal explanations which should be provided by teachers, doctors, non-governmental organizations, police, lawyers, judges and the same should be incorporated in the legislation of national states. The results the Flash Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2008 (European Commission, 2008) showed that 76% of the children surveyed were unaware of their rights and 79% did not know who to contact in need of defending their rights. Children were also asked what should the European Union do to promote and protect the rights of children, 88% of respondents said that at EU level there should be more readily accessible information for children.

Most of the references used in this article already represent comprehensive literature overviews regarding children participation in legal proceedings. The reader is therefore encouraged to consult them directly, for he will find them to be the invaluable source of information. These are therefore used only to make a general outline of the field. Therefore, our research aimed to make a broad assessment of children's perception of courts and their knowledge of legal proceedings in Croatian context.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

The research was conducted on 113 conveniently sampled secondary school pupils from two secondary schools in Zagreb (Graphic school and First Gymnasium). Pupils mean age was

$M = 15.91$, $SD = 1.010$ (Min = 14, Max = 18), of which $nf = 48$ female and $nm = 60$ male. Only 8 (6.7%) of the pupils report having had prior court experience (unspecified).

PROCEDURE

Data was gathered as part of the initial knowledge assessment prior to the implementation of "The Right(s) court for children" (JUST/2014/JPP/AG/CHIL/6931) project. The holder of this Project is Terre des Hommes Foundation "Lausanne" in Hungary, and for implementation of the Project in Croatia is responsible NGO Brave Phone. The project is co-funded by European Commission. Two-thirds of the pupils included in the sample did not take part in the program.

Pupils were given pen-and-paper form questionnaire which consisted of multiple choice and open-ended questions covering various basic aspects of their knowledge regarding the juridical procedure, of which only a part is presented in this report.

RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Legal proceedings related knowledge

Pupils perception of courts regarding respecting children's rights and being child-friendly with favourable outcomes ranges from mildly positive to neutral (Table 1). Beyond that, they do not seem to be very informed. This is, at the most basic level, also evident from what they think the typical courtroom looks like or how much time, on average, a person (witness) spends talking to the judge (Table 2). This may come as a result of their lack of real-life experience with courts as opposed to "fiction" (e.g. TV shows) depicting what is, considered in Croatian terms, mostly not even the remote representation of courtroom setting or legal process.

The majority of pupils $f = 88$ (77.2%) report not having learnt anything about their rights regarding the legal context, as a part of, or during their course of formal education; and $f = 41$ (68.3%) consider their knowledge as being insufficient whilst at the same time, on average, not being especially interested in acqui-

Table 1: Mode of Participation

| | M | SD | C | D | S | K | n |
|--|------|-------|---|---|-------|--------|-----|
| Courts respect children rights. | 3.61 | 1.153 | 4 | 3 | -461 | -511 | 111 |
| Courts are "child-friendly". | 2.85 | 1.084 | 3 | 3 | 092 | -337 | 112 |
| Courts have harmful effects on children. | 2.64 | 1.313 | 3 | 3 | 352 | -877 | 111 |
| I would like to know more of what goes on in the courts. | 3.21 | 1.402 | 3 | 3 | - 180 | -1.153 | 101 |

M – mean, SD – standard deviation, C – median, D – mode, S – skewness, K – kurtosis; Min = 1, Max = 5

ring additional knowledge/information on the matter (Table 1).

Accordingly, only $f = 7$ (5.9%) pupils knew that, in Croatia, the threshold of majority is 14 years of age, and just $f = 4$ (3.4%) were aware, that legally, this means they are no longer considered children and are held accountable of any form of misdemeanour or criminal activity.

Despite their lack of even the basic knowledge regarding legal process, they firmly believe that children should be given an active role, i.e. that

their voice (opinion) should be heard and taken into consideration, especially on the matters that involve direct repercussion on their own lives, such as parenting arrangements or dependency process ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.78$, $Min = 1$, $Max = 5$, $n = 113$).

Court-related Affect

When considering how taking part in court trial would affect them emotionally pupils anticipate somewhat lower comfort levels while talking to multiple experts than only one (e.g. social worker, psychologist or a judge), with the overall anticipated comfort levels being neutral (Table 3).

They also, indirectly, report the importance of fostering the basic need for safety via the perceived importance of a trusting person (in this case parent) accompanying minor perpetrators to the court (Table 4).

Authors also considered different negative emotional clusters that may arise when being called to court. Pupils were therefore asked to approximate each of the nine listed emotions perceived intensity, ranging from 0 – not at all to 10 – high intensity, amongst which fear was perceived as potentially the most intense emotion they would feel (Table 5). The data was analysed using principal component analysis with Promax rotation (kappa 4). To determine the number of components following criteria were used: Kaiser's eigenvalue greater than one, parallel analysis (Hayton, Allen & Scarpello, 2004) and MAP test (Velicer, Eaton & Fava, 2000).

Table 2. Basic courtroom space (inventory) and time perception

| Typical court inventory | f | % |
|---------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Judge bench | 117 | 98.30 |
| Court reporter table | 96 | 80.70 |
| Jury box | 87 | 73.10 |
| Public gallery | 23 | 19.30 |
| Witness stand | 111 | 93.30 |
| Prosecutor table | 115 | 96.60 |
| Defence attorney table | 111 | 93.30 |
| Time spent talking to the judge | f | % |
| Few minutes | 21 | 20.19 |
| Half an hour | 44 | 42.31 |
| About one hour | 20 | 19.23 |
| More than one hour | 19 | 18.27 |

multiple answer questions, checkbox

All of the estimates converged, supporting two-

Table 3. Univariate Analysis of Variance of anticipated comfort level while talking to various experts inside or outside the courtroom

| | | M | SD | N | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------|-------|-----|-------------------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Social worker or psychologists | subset I (Scheffe) | 5.21 | 2.656 | 233 | 249.950 | 2 | 124.975 | 16.062 | .000 |
| Judge | | 5.16 | 3.056 | 233 | | | | | |
| Multiple experts | subset II (Scheffe) | 3.91 | 2.624 | 230 | | | | | |
| Inside courtroom | | 4.66 | 2.780 | 347 | 6.982 | 1 | 6.982 | .897 | .344 |
| Outside courtroom | | 4.86 | 2.911 | 349 | | | | | |
| Social worker or psychologists | inside courtroom | 5.22 | 2.686 | 116 | 4.588 | 2 | 2.294 | .295 | .745 |
| | outside courtroom | 5.20 | 2.637 | 117 | | | | | |
| Judge | inside courtroom | 4.97 | 2.935 | 116 | | | | | |
| | outside courtroom | 5.34 | 3.174 | 117 | | | | | |
| Multiple experts | inside courtroom | 3.78 | 2.509 | 115 | | | | | |
| | outside courtroom | 4.03 | 2.740 | 115 | | | | | |

Min = 0 (very uncomfortable), Max = 10 (very comfortable);
 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances F = 2.037, df1 = 5, df2 = 690, p = .072

component structure (Table 5). Component 1 - is mostly saturated with feelings of fear, guilt and shame; which may be a sign of behaviourally passive but cognitively more self-directed and reflective orientation, while Component 2 - might be a more behaviourally proactive - fight orientation (Table 6).

Interestingly, girls score higher on Component 1 while boys on Component 2 (Table 7). However, due to the small sample size, all of the observed differences were not found to be statistically significant.

Table 4. Number of pupils believing it is important for a minor perpetrator (person between 14 and 18 years of age) to be accompanied to the court by:

| | f | % |
|---|-----|-------|
| ... their parents. | 108 | 90.80 |
| ... their defence attorney. | 99 | 83.20 |
| ... social worker. | 67 | 56.30 |
| ... doctor (general practitioner or paediatrician). | 8 | 6.70 |

multiple answer questions, checkbox

Table 5. Principal components analysis (variance explained and number of components assessment) and descriptive statistics

| Emotion | Communalities | | Eigenvalues | Paralel test | | MAP test | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | M | SD | C | D |
|---------------|---------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-------|----------|----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------|------|-------|---|----|
| | Initial | Extraction | | M | p | χ^2 | χ^4 | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Promax | | | | |
| Fear | 1 | .641 | 3.443 | 1.207 | 1.276 | .121 | .030 | 38.26 | 38.26 | 31.1 | 6.42 | 3.026 | 7 | 10 |
| Shame | 1 | .625 | 1.891 | 1.138 | 1.176 | .077 | .012 | 21.01 | 59.27 | 26.8 | 4.92 | 3.557 | 5 | 0 |
| Surprise | 1 | .202 | .986 | 1.088 | 1.125 | .055 | .007 | | | | 4.68 | 3.051 | 5 | 5 |
| Anger | 1 | .675 | .654 | 1.037 | 1.074 | .092 | .021 | | | | 4.66 | 3.330 | 5 | 0 |
| Guilt | 1 | .541 | .587 | .994 | 1.022 | .132 | .033 | | | | 4.59 | 3.405 | 5 | 0 |
| Sadness | 1 | .597 | .516 | .954 | .987 | .210 | .109 | | | | 4.49 | 3.230 | 5 | 5 |
| Desperateness | 1 | .678 | .397 | .909 | .939 | .303 | .171 | | | | 4.34 | 3.315 | 5 | 0 |
| Hatred | 1 | .743 | .310 | .864 | .897 | .442 | .334 | | | | 3.91 | 3.444 | 4 | 0 |
| Disgust | 1 | .632 | .215 | .808 | .857 | 1.000 | 1.000 | | | | 3.81 | 3.523 | 3 | 0 |

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .736;
 Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approximation Chi-Square = 342.837, df = 36, p = .000

Table 6. Principal components analysis: Component and Promax-rotation (pattern and structure) matrices

| Emotion | Component Matrix | | Pattern Matrix | | Structure Matrix | |
|---------------|------------------|--------|----------------|--------|------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Fear | 0.598 | 0.532 | 0.839 | -0.205 | 0.776 | 0.051 |
| Shame | 0.682 | 0.400 | 0.802 | -0.041 | 0.790 | 0.204 |
| Guilt | 0.642 | 0.360 | 0.743 | -0.024 | 0.735 | 0.203 |
| Sadness | 0.750 | 0.187 | 0.693 | 0.190 | 0.751 | 0.402 |
| Desperateness | 0.823 | -0.017 | 0.595 | 0.416 | 0.722 | 0.598 |
| Surprise | 0.113 | 0.435 | 0.409 | -0.350 | 0.302 | -0.225 |
| Anger | 0.620 | -0.539 | 0.055 | 0.803 | 0.301 | 0.820 |
| Hatred | 0.612 | -0.606 | -0.001 | 0.862 | 0.262 | 0.862 |
| Disgust | 0.443 | -0.660 | -0.166 | 0.830 | 0.087 | 0.779 |

Table 7. Average score and standard deviation on each component regarding gender

| Component | Gender | N | M | SD |
|-----------|--------|----|------|-------|
| 1 | Male | 44 | 4.67 | 2.185 |
| | Female | 58 | 5.35 | 2.202 |
| 2 | Male | 44 | 4.19 | 3.026 |
| | Female | 57 | 3.93 | 2.713 |

QUALITATIVE DATA

Open-ended questions covered four domains, the meaning of: "child in judicial procedure", "court", "judge" and "state attorney". The responses were analysed using thematic analysis approach.

The child in a judicial procedure

While describing what means being a "child" in a juridical procedure, pupils mostly relate to the aspect of age: "P25 Being younger than 18, being a minor". They also see their age as the main determinant of which rights they have been given or are jet to obtain as they are coming of age. They seem to be strong advocates of both children's rights in general "P96 Yes, we are minors, but never the less we have our own rights.", "P91 ... to be acknowledged having your children's rights"; and age-related/dependant rights of a child such as participation in decision making, the right to education, to play, to love and be loved, to childhood and freedom.

Some of them even consider the notion that having certain rights also conveys some form of "obligation" "P114 Under-age person with its rights and obligations". However, most of them still does not seem to be thinking in terms of duties/responsibilities with only one pupil claiming the full responsibility for one's acts emerging from being given the freedom of making their own choices "P97A child is a minor who can act voluntarily, but may also be responsible for its actions.". At the same time other pupils are more eager to shift their liability to their pa-

rents "P110 That means that I am a minor and that my parents have to take the responsibility for my actions", or at least being liable to a lesser extent themselves "P112 Being a minor means being not fully responsible for some criminal offenses", "P53 (...) tolerating criminal offenses", "P53 ... lower penalties when not abiding the law". There are also more pessimistic ones, claiming that being a child means "P34 This means having no rights, not being heard or given proper respect".

Besides the fact that some see parents as their proxies when it comes to liability, parents and their roles, in general, seem to be a somewhat important emerging theme "P19 Being a child means having parents, that are taking care of me", "P52 Being a child means having someone who cares about you and is responsible for you.", "P117... up until the age of 18, parents are your legal guardians".

Pupils also seem to be, at least in part, aware of the developmental perspective "P41 Person who is not developed fully (physically and psychologically)", "P66 Person who is still growing up, getting to know the world that surrounds her", "P29 Not being able to understand the law and comprehend the danger", "P118 It means you are not aware of what you are doing and that you see the world as a joke".

Although, as a group, pupils demonstrate the ability to cover various important aspects of contemporary issues concerning of what it means to be a child in a juridical procedure, these seem to be a product of "shared cognition", with an individual pupil in most cases mentioning and elaborating only one of them. This either might be indicative of the lack of overall understanding or focusing on just those aspects they find personally important.

The Court

When describing how they see courts, pupil's descriptions were mostly marked by a negative emotional charge. Although pupils find the court to be important "P34 Important decisions are made there, it's a big and reverberative room." , just, "P68 The court is fair, just.", "P115 Just (but not always), sometimes scary (depending on whether you are a perpetrator or a victim)", formal and without prejudices "P7 It does not

treat people differently regarding their age or gender." With a substantial number of answers relating to fear "P3, A court is a serious place. I believe that people going to court feel terrified.", anxiety "P63 I have no idea. I do not think I would feel comfortable in the court.", "P59 (...) and a terrible atmosphere. I mean, I cannot know, I have not been in court yet.", coldness "P82 The court is cold, dreary.", "P113 (...) It seems like a cold place, mostly with brown (dark) furniture.", tension and stress "P29 Court table, jury boxes, witness stand, a prosecutorial and defence table, it's stressful."

The Judge

Pupils see the judges like the ones making the decisions "P87 A person who decides in court.", assessing and determining if someone's guilty "P20 legal professional that judges who is and to what extent guilty of committing a criminal offense." and accordingly, if the person is found guilty, punish the accused (perpetrator), "P54 The judge is the person who decides the culprit and the innocent and then punishes him.". Although not part of Croatian legal practice, some of the pupils also mention the jury, as a party in the decision-making process "P117 Judge bench with court reporter table, prosecution and defendants benches, witness stand and the jury box.", "P49 The judge prescribes the sentence unless the jury is present (jury trial)". Again, only a small number of pupils gave what can be seen as somewhat comprehensible description, "P41 A person who knows the law, respects human and children rights, makes reasonable decisions, without taking sides", which include mechanisms and procedures such as physical and non-physical evidence, "P119 A person who makes a decision based on the evidence and witness testimony", as the basis upon which the judge, in accordance with the applicable law regulations "P9 The judge is the person who prescribes the sentences for criminal offenses", comes to a legally binding decision.

The State Attorney

The state attorney is described as a lawyer who is paid by and appointed by the State, and who either represents States interests "P4 This is a person who, regardless of the subject of the

crime, always represents the state and is on its side.", or the interests of the party to which he was, due to financial inability to pay a lawyer themselves, appointed to (victim, witness, perpetrator, etc.). "P95 The lawyer they give you when you cannot afford a lawyer, so the state provides one to represent you." In addition to advocacy, they perceive the state attorney as someone who decides to initiate a lawsuit.

DISCUSSION

What reader has to bear in mind is that more than 90% of the pupils that participated in the study have never had any real-life experience with courts, which has been, besides age, seen to be related with children legal knowledge (Cooper et al., 2010). No direct exposure may also account for their lack of interest on the matter seeing it as not relevant enough, and contrary to previous research (e.g. Block et al., 2010), having no clear attitudes towards courts, with the majority of them rating their own knowledge as insufficient. This probably suggests that, although the information is available, in combination with it not being delivered as part of the curricula, they rarely ever engage in or have the opportunity to explore general characteristic of the juridical system further. While that may seem like a minor problem it might result in long-term aversion towards legal system and overall ignorance and lack of understanding of what is considered legal, what constitutes an offence, what is the scope of one's rights and where lies the delineation between rights and responsibility, how to protect ones' and others rights and how to keep oneself from engaging in behaviors that might be considered as the breaching of law. It almost seems as we are letting young people develop their moral and legal reasoning by trial and error, social learning and other implicit means of knowledge transfer and acquisition (highly dependent on the context they live in) whilst expecting them to take full responsibility for their deeds, without giving them proper education on the matter – never really preparing them to be full-fledged citizens explicitly informed of what is expected of them.

It is therefore no wonder that, in line with the previous research (Flin et al., 1989; Freshwater & Aldridge, 1994) the most anticipated emoti-

ons when called to court were fear, sadness and surprise, with two emotion cluster orientation emerging, one which presumes passive and the other more active and aggressive orientation, almost as they were referring to the primal, “fight-or-flight / freeze” reactions. This might, in the most part be mediated by pupils lack of overall understanding of the legal process resulting in the absence of more elaborate cognitive and behavioural problem solving and stress management strategies in the legal proceedings context. It should be noted that what seems to be the average level of emotional intensity, when it comes to a mere prediction, as what is the case in this study, might actually be higher in a mock trial or real-life court preceding participation. Subsequent inquiries, when exploring expected emotions and their intensities, should also make a distinction of the role in which the child (pupil) would imagine himself or herself in: e.g. victim, perpetrator, witness, etc.

Pupils need to be supported and protected by important (trusting) others is also evident from the overall majority of the pupils expressing they find it important for a minor perpetrator to be accompanied to the court by their parents and defence attorney.

Having only a limited understanding of what various experts roles are, it comes as a no surprise the only anticipated comfort level differences were found in terms of being more comfortable with being questioned by one as opposed to multiple experts.

When it comes to legal knowledge, pupils seem to understand that children, due to their age (cognitive and emotional development) are treated differently within the legal system than adults, or at least should be. While not showing a complete understanding of what that might mean, they seem to pinpoint one of the main issues when it comes to children in legal proceedings - their need to be involved in the process and the right to be heard (Thomas & O’Kane, 1999; Cashmore, 2002; Block et al., 2010) as supported by the Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (The United Nations, 1989). Their overall legal knowledge seems to be quite basic, reflecting mostly what can be extrapolated from the limited exposure, such as TV shows.

This study, intended as a research report on which further course of exploring pupils’ knowledge and perception of legal system will be planned, almost makes it questionable if a more detailed research design if similar to this one, given the overall lack of pupils knowledge of legal system would result in any further and meaningful advances in our understanding. Combination of a mock trial with a staged event and legal knowledge acquisition program intervention might be more insightful and is proposed instead. One should also, when possible, conduct interviews for they might result in more detailed descriptions than responses made in writing, which although being elicited with open-ended enquires provide no easy way of inviting pupils to further explore and elaborate their views at the same time resembling school exams structure, which on itself may be a source of stress, especially on something they had no prior education on.

Also, almost non-to-little contemporary literature offers extensive cross-disciplinary, theoretical integration, by which we mean including psychological theories, beyond moral reasoning, covering overall cognitive and emotional development and its repercussions on children participation in legal proceedings. This article does not do it either, it rather serves as a brief research report, an initial exploration on which such extensive integration through further research planning and data gathering is yet to be made.

CONCLUSION

Pupils rate their legal knowledge as insufficient and are only partially interested in advancing it, probably resulting in what seems like not clearly defined attitudes whether courts are child-friendly or harmful to the children. When it comes to their active participation, they emphasize the importance of being involved and having an opportunity to have a say, while feeling more comfortable talking to one than multiple experts. They express the importance of social support and expect to be treated differently than adults. In sum, pupils overall lack of knowledge regarding legal terms and proceedings seems to make them not very informative

participants and illuminates the need for educational programs on what might be one of the basic pillars of modern society – law and order.

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Irma Kovčo Vukadin,

University of Zagreb, Croatia, irmakv@yahoo.com

Jadranko Mesić,

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia

Vedran Žgela,

Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE CASES REPORTED TO THE CROATIAN POLICE

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ABSTRACT

Studies based on official data on child sexual abuse (CSA) are scarce due to their limitations. Nevertheless, their use is justified because they provide information that is not susceptible to memory bias as those in retrospective studies.

The main objective of this study is to investigate characteristics of CSA cases reported to the police in three groups of variables: (1) criminal offense, (2) victim, and (3) offender and to identify possible gender differences in reporting CSA. Descriptive statistics, chi-square and T-test were used in data analysis.

The most prevalent criminal offence was sexual intercourse with a child; and the majority of the criminal offences were reported to the police within one year. The criminal offence was committed with the use of force in more than half of cases and victims did not suffer physical injuries. The results show that male victims made up 22.1% of all victims, and victims' age ranged from 3 to 17 years. The majority of victims attended elementary schools and in almost 95% of cases, the victims knew the perpetrator. More than half the amount of victims tried to resist the offender. Male offenders made up 94.8% of all offenders and their age ranged from 11 to 72. The majority of the offenders did finish secondary school, were unemployed, unmarried, and were first time offenders. Gender differences were found in several variables – the natu-

re of the offence, the number of perpetrators, victims' age, education, re-victimisation and resistance, offenders' gender, education and employment status.

The results indicate that there is a need for further studies in this area in Croatia, raising awareness of CSA, strengthen capacities of professionals working with children for better identification of abused children, as well as more educative programs for parents for preventing extra familial CSA.

Keywords: child sexual abuse; Croatia; police data

INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a gross violation of children's rights, and a public health problem that occurs in every country in the world. Sexual victimisation of the child brings serious short- and long-term consequences and can heavily impact on the life of the child. Although those consequences have been well documented, only 37% of 133 countries have implemented a large scale national strategy to prevent CSA (World Health Organization, 2014). World Health Organisation (1999) defined CSA as *"the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse*

is evident by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person." Three main forms of CSA are usually noticed: 1) the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in unlawful sexual activity, 2) the exploitation of a child in prostitution, and 3) the exploitation of a child in pornography. The Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (CETS No. 201) differentiates two main categories in this field: sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Article 18 defines sexual abuse as follows: "(a) engaging in sexual activities with a child who, according to the relevant provisions of national law, has not reached the legal age for sexual activities"; and: "(b) engaging in sexual activities with a child where: use is made of coercion, force or threats; or abuse is made of a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the child, including within the family; or abuse is made of a particular vulnerable situation of the child, notably because of mental or physical disability or a situation of dependence."

It is extremely difficult to get real picture of the CSA prevalence. The literature review shows that there are differences in prevalence rates reflecting different methodological approaches. Two main methodological approaches are used in this area – prevalence studies and analysis of official data. Although population-based self-report surveys are essential component of obtaining a more comprehensive picture of CSA (Tanaka, Suzuki, Aoyama, Takaoka & MacMillan, 2017), several objections can be made to this approach in terms of possible generalisation and comparisons. Cross-sectional design is the most used design in self-report data while only a few studies used longitudinal design, although the last design gives a much better picture of the problem (Tychey, Laurent, Lighezzolo-Alnot, Garnier & Vandelet, 2015). Those studies are mostly retrospective which raises the question of memory bias and possible social desirability in responses. In addition, different researcher use different samples – some are with adult population (e.g., O'Leary & Barber, 2008), some with adolescents (in schools) (e.g., Karayani, Fanti, Diakidoy, Hadjicharalambou & Katsimicha,

2017), with college students (e.g., Okur, Van der Knaap & Bogaerts, 2015), and some with parents / caregivers as a sample (e.g., Kohn Makovich-Fong & Jaffee, 2010). Studies involving adolescent samples bring many ethical questions (Bowman, 2008) in terms of sensitivity of the topic and consequently risk and benefits for adolescents participating in those studies, question of informed consent and parental consent, which is problematic when researching interfamilial abuse. Another issue in self-report studies is operationalization of CSA. Some authors study certain form of CSA – contact, noncontact or penetrating CSA, while others may include several forms of CSA. There are also differences in age difference between a child and the perpetrator. Some researchers include peers as a perpetrator (e.g., Priebe & Svedin, 2008) while others excluded them (e.g., Lam, 2014). In addition, there are differences in the number of items employed to study CSA as well as the exact wording in those items.

Another, even more criticized methodological approach is official data study. Official data are heavily influenced by criminal legislation (what behaviour is defined as a criminal offence) policy changes and willingness to report CSA case. Official data refer only to reported cases (police files), to sanctioned offenders (court case), or provided service / treatment (social care, medical care). It is believed that official data represent only the most severe cases of CSA, which make them (among other issues) hardly comparable to population-based surveys.

So, what is the extent of CSA worldwide according to population-based studies? Work of some researchers (Pereda, Guilera, Forns & Gomez-Benito, 2009a; 2009b) indicate that worldwide CSA rates for females are 18-20%, and for males 8%. Stoltenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2011) provide similar rates for contact CSA for girls (21.2%) and boys (10.7%) and for penetrative CSA (15.1% for girls and 6.9% for boys), based on the more recent international meta-analysis of 217 publications with 331 independent samples that estimated the lifetime prevalence of CSA. Tanaka et al. (2017) conducted a systematic review of the epidemiology of CSA in Japan and found that the range of the contact CSA for females was 10.4% - 60.7% and the rate for

males was 4.1% while the range of penetrative CSA was lower for both females and males (1.3%- 8.3% for females and 0.5% - 1.3% for males). Kloppen, Haugland, Svedin, Maele and Breivik (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of published studies to examine the prevalence rates of CSA in Nordic countries. They found that prevalence rates vary between 3-23% for boys and 11-36% for girls. Concerning specific types of CSA, they found the prevalence rate of contact abuse to be between 1-12% for boys and 6-30% for girls, and in penetrating abuse 0.3-6.8% for boys and 1.1-13.5% for girls. In a representative sample of 11,364 sixth and ninth graders in Finland, Lahtinen, Laitila, Korkman and Ellonen (2018) found that 2.4% of children had sexual experiences with a person at least five years older at the time of the experience. Price-Robertson, Bromfield and Vassallo (2010) reviewed Australian studies on CSA and concluded that the prevalence of CSA among general population for males is approximately 4-8% for penetrative abuse and 12-16% for non-penetrative abuse. The prevalence of CSA for females is 7-12% for penetrative abuse and 23-26% for non-penetrative abuse. Nikolaidis et al. (2018) conducted a study on children's exposure to different forms of violence in 9 Balkan countries. Their findings for lifetime prevalence of sexual violence show the highest figures in Bosnia and Herzegovina (18.6%) and the lowest in Macedonia (7.6%). Figures for lifetime contact sexual violence were the highest in Bosnia (9.8%) and the lowest in Romania (3.6%). In respect to past-year sexual violence and contact sexual violence, the prevalence data were the highest in Bosnia (13.6 and 7.7% respectively) and the lowest in Romania (5.0 and 2.1% respectively). For Croatia, Bilić, Buljan Flander and Hrpka (2013) noted findings of the study conducted in 2006 by Child protection centre and Brave phone among 4191 secondary school graduates (18 years old). According to strict criterion 13.7% of respondents were exposed to sexual abuse. Ajduković, Sušac and Rajter (2013) conducted the most recent epidemiological study of CSA prevalence in Croatia within broader study on child abuse and neglect. They used nationally representative probabilistic stratified cluster sample of pupils aged 11, 13, and 16 years in Croatia. Three items were

used for non-contact sexual abuse (speaking to a child in a sexual way or writing sexual things about a child; forcing a child to watch pornography; forcing a child to look at someone's private parts or showing their own private parts), and two for contact sexual abuse (touching private parts of a child or wanting them to touch private parts of another person, the attempt to have sex with a child without their consent) and found that 10.8% of children experienced some form of sexual abuse. No gender differences were found in the prevalence of contact sexual abuse, while more girls than boys experienced non-contact sexual abuse.

Studies based on official data give a more detailed picture of some aspects of CSA and, as well as population-based studies, reflect methodological or sample differences. Snyder (2000) analysed sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement using data from The National Incident-Based Reporting System. Two research databases were extracted-one data base contained information for victims and the other one contained information for victim-identified offenders. The data were gathered for 12 USA states (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia). Four crimes were analysed: forcible rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object and forcible fondling. Almost all forcible rapes involved female victims while the majority of victims of forcible sodomy (54%) were males. The author found that for all offence categories, the proportion of female victims increased with the age of the victim. He also found a majority of cases of a single sexual assault – only 5% for female and 3% for male victims experienced multiple offences. CSA victimisation usually occurred at some resident location, especially in cases with young victims. Weapons were rarely used in CSA (with no gender differences). Sladović and Družić (2000) analysed police data for CSA cases in Croatia for the period 1990 – 1998 and found that manual and oral abuse were the most frequent types of CSA. Girls were predominantly victims and males were predominantly offenders.

Fontanella, Harrington and Zuravin (2000) analysed 74 charts of early childhood victims (pre-schoolers) that were treated in mental

health clinic and found that boys were more likely to experience fondling and oral intercourse than girls, while girls were more likely to experience penetrative abuse. Kohn Maikovitch-Fong and Jaffee (2010) analysed data from the sample of children investigated by the United States child welfare services for alleged sexual abuse and found that girls were more likely than boys to experience penetrative abuse. Soylyu et al. (2016) have also found gender differences in the type of victimization – they analysed gender-based differences in CSA among children who were referred to six different child psychiatric departments in Turkey for treatment and judicial report from 2010 to 2013 and found that boys were more often victimized by penetration, force, and physical violence than girls. Girls were more often victimized by family members, familiar persons, and multiple persons than boys.

Many researchers found males to be dominant offenders in CSA. The proportion of female offenders varies according to the methodological approaches. Dube et al. (2005), in a retrospective cohort study conducted from 1995 to 1997 among adult HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) members in San Diego, California, found that male reported female perpetration of CSA in nearly 40% of the time while female reported female perpetration of CSA in 6% of the time. McLeod (2015) found 20.9% female perpetrators listed as one perpetrator in a data set of child sexual abuse cases that were reported to child protective services in the United States in 2010. This proportion rose to 42% when two perpetrators were listed. Female offenders are usually connected to a younger age of the victims and to male victims (Snyder, 2000). McLeod (2015) found the same tendency for the victims' age but not for the victims' gender – female offenders in his sample showed greater tendency to victimize female victims. He also found that female sex offenders are more likely than males to victimize their own children, as well as adopted children and children for whom they are the caretaker.

With regard to specific risk factors for victimization, several researchers provide evidence that child's disability poses a risk factor for CSA due to three factors: dependency, institutional care, and communication difficulties (Berliner, 2011;

Collin-Vézina, Daigneault & Hébert, 2013; Euser, Alink, Tharner, van Ijzendoorn & Bakemans-Kranenburg, 2016; Olafson, 2011; Putnam, 2003; Westcott & Jones, 1999). The proportion of sexually abused children is influenced by the analysed sample.

There are some disputes about disclosure rates of CSA (Olafson & Lederman, 2006). London, Bruck, Wright and Ceci (2008) noted that disclosure rates vary very much - between 24% and 96%. Many retrospective studies highlight the problem of nondisclosure of childhood sexual victimization to anyone or non-disclosing / none reporting the victimization to adults or authorities. Consequences of CSA may be severe and may have long-term impact on the child in his/her adulthood (Bilić, Buljan Flander & Hrpka, 2012; Cashmore & Shackel, 2013; Dube et. al., 2005; Saunders, Kilpatrick, Hanson, Resnick & Walker, 1999). Nondisclosure prevents the child from seeking help and helps the offender to avoid criminal prosecution and sanction. It is believed that interplay of different factors influence victimization disclosure and that they can be grouped in several ecological categories: child characteristics, family environment, community influences and societal attitudes (Alaggia, 2010). One of the latest systematic reviews on barriers and facilitators of CSA disclosure (Morrison, Bruce & Wilson, 2018) revealed reasons for not-disclosure: fear of what will happen; other's reaction: fear of disbelief; emotions and impact of the abuse; an opportunity to tell, concern for self and others; and feelings toward abusers. Many authors note that male victims are more reluctant to disclose their victimization than female victims because of their fear of being labelled as homosexual, feeling of stigmatization (in cases with male perpetrators) or because of the lack of recognizing sexual abuse (in cases with female perpetrators) (Alaggia, 2005; Dorais, 2009; Easton, 2013; Gagnier & Collin-Vézina, 2016). Male victimization by female offender may even be perceived as a "normal" and "desirable" experience in adolescence (Spataro, Moss & Wells, 2001). The age of the victim, as well as of the offender is found to be associated with disclosing CSA to adults. Lahtinen et al. (2018) found greater disclosing rate when CSA experience included the perpetrator to be at least 30 years of age. In

respect to the victims' age, they found younger victims to disclose their experience more often to an adult.

Police data are part of the official criminal justice data on child sexual victimization. One of the positive elements of this kind of data is that it gives a very detailed picture about the dynamics of certain criminal offenses in this field (data about the victim, the perpetrator, the criminal event and the immediate consequences) that can serve as a basis for developing preventive programs. On the other hand, criminal justice data is connected with many limitations. The main limitation is that data from criminal justice sources (police, courts, correctional facilities) provide information about reported and thus selected cases. In cultures with lower levels of sensibility to CSA, it is logical to assume that these cases would involve only the most severe cases of CSA and, due to the media presentation of these cases, it can have a silencing effect of victims of CSA that do not "fit" to the media created picture of CSA. Moreover, the case that is reported to the police may not reach the court due to insufficient evidence. Another limitation refers to the purpose of the data in police / court files and the quality of these data. Data collected during criminal investigation and criminal procedure is supposed to provide evidence that a criminal offence has happened and to establish victimization and offender's guilt. Those data are not collected or documented for research purposes and may not be gathered in a standardized form needed for a quantitative or qualitative study. Quite often, some data are missing and it is very difficult to create an instrument that would be appropriate for all police files.

The purpose of this study is to analyse CSA cases reported to the police in two police administrations and to expand knowledge about possible gender differences in officially recorded child sexual victimisation. This study adds additional value to the existing cross cultural literature, since studies of official data of CSA are scarce and their findings are inconclusive. In addition, this is the first study of the official police data on CSA in Croatia for the period 1998 - 2012. The main aim is to investigate characteristics of CSA cases reported to the Croatian police (criminal offense, victim and offender

and to identify possible gender differences of reported cases.

METHODS

SAMPLE

Police case files were analysed in this study. The case files included CSA reports for 154 victims from police administrations of two counties – Karlovac (n=60), and Sisak-Moslavina (n=94). Children are defined in this analysis as persons under 18 years. Criminal offences that were included were rape, sexual intercourse with a helpless person, sexual intercourse by abuse of position, sexual intercourse under duress, and sexual intercourse with a child¹. Those were all cases of contact (penetrative) CSA that these two police administrations reported in the period from 1998 to 2012². It is important to note that we included all cases with child victims for which the police conducted criminal investigation, irrespective of the perpetrator's age. In cases where a perpetrator is under 14 (14 is the age of the criminal responsibility in Croatia), the police submits "a special report" to the Public prosecutor's office and the case is diverted to the social service. There were eleven cases with perpetrators under the age of 14 (7.1% of the total number of perpetrators).

Police administrations were selected as a convenient sample³. Both police administrations are a third category of police administration (there are four possible categories) which implies similar territorial size, population size and crime rate. They are neighbouring police administrations in the central part of Croatia. This specific period was chosen because it covers the period of enforcement of the Croatian Criminal Code of 1997, which was in force until January 1st 2013. The new Criminal Code brought certain changes in sexual offenses incrimination and direct comparison would not be suitable.

1 Sexual intercourse with a child represents „statutory rape“ – it prohibits any sexual activity with a person under 14 years of age. It also regulate other sexual offences against children under 14 years of age – forcible sexual intercourse, sexual intercourse by abuse of position, as well as aggravating circumstances.

2 The exceptions were nine cases in Sisak-Moslavina police administration – those cases were not available due to the flooding of police premises.

3 Two authors are employees of these two police administrations.

During the study period 1998-2012, the sexual criminal offenses against children in our sample accounted for an average of 12.4% of all such offences at the national level.

Male victims made up 22.1% of all victims, and the mean age of all victims was 12 (age range: 3-17; SD=3.4).

INSTRUMENT

Three groups of data were collected for this study: 1. data about the criminal offence, 2. the victim, and 3. the offender.

The following variables were analysed:

Criminal offence: the nature of the offence (criminal offence according to Croatian Criminal Code), who filed a report about the crime (victim and his/her parents, state institutions, or other institutions), the time of the disclosure (how much time elapsed between the event and the disclosure), the number of perpetrators, which day in a week and at what time, and the type of location of the victimisation (private or public), modus operandi (use of physical force or threat), means of coercion (physical force, firearms, other weapon), the number of criminal activities, and the consequences for the victim (injuries).

Victim: gender, age, education level at the time of the event, former sexual victimisation (yes/no), relationship with the perpetrator (friends, relatives, parents etc.), developmental problems (intellectual disability, physical disabilities, psychological problems), the victim's alcohol intoxication tempore criminis, and the victim's resistance (victim tried to resist the offender).

Offender: gender, age, education, employment, marital status, and recidivism (prior sex offences, prior other offences).

PROCEDURE AND ANALYSIS

In order to get access to the police files, the approval of the Croatian Ministry of the Interior Affairs was obtained. Beside descriptive statistics for investigating the characteristics of CSA, a chi-square test (for categorical variables) and a t test (for continuous variables) were used to examine the gender differences in three groups of variables.

RESULTS

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CRIMINAL OFFENCE

Table 1 presents a gender comparison for the nature of the offense. Both genders were mostly victims of sexual intercourse with a child and ¼ were victims of rape. Male victims were more often victims of sexual intercourse with a child (91.2% versus 59.2% respectively, $p < 0.05$, Fisher's exact test) and less often victims of rape than female victims (8.8% versus 48.1% respectively, $p < 0.05$), and males haven't experienced victimisation of three other types of criminal offences.

Table 1. Nature of the offense

| N=154 | M | F | Total |
|--|----|----|-------|
| Rape | 3 | 39 | 42 |
| Sexual intercourse with a helpless person | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Sexual intercourse by abuse of position | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Sexual intercourse under duress | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Sexual intercourse with a child (under 14) | 31 | 71 | 102 |

In more than 1/3 of the cases (37.7%) the victim (or her/his parent) filed a report about the crime, in 32.5% of the cases it was someone else (medical staff, school teacher or pedagogue), and in 29.9% of the cases some state institution filed a report (Department of Social Services). The victims mostly reported a crime by coming to the

Table 2. Who filed the report and how

| | N | Police station | Phone call | Other |
|-------------------|----|----------------|------------|-------|
| Victim | 58 | 93.1 | 6.9 | 0.0 |
| State institution | 46 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 95.6 |
| Other | 50 | 24.0 | 52.0 | 24.0 |

police station, the state institution used other forms of reporting (official report regarding suspected CSA), and others mainly reported by phone call (Table 2).

Within the time frame, several variables were analysed: the day in the week, the time of the day, and the time between crime and crime report. In 57.1% of the cases the exact day of the week was not available (the exact date of the offense was not available in the police case file – in some cases it meant that the crime occurred more than once). Weekly distribution of known cases indicate a slightly higher occurrence during the weekend (Figure 1).

Data regarding disclosure of the criminal offence were also analysed and they showed that in the highest number of cases victimisation was reported within one year (38.4%) and over one year (25.3%). A much smaller number of victims reported their victimisation immediately after the victimisation (9.6%), within 24 hours (11.6%), within one week (8.2%), or within one month (6.8%). The most frequent reason cited for delaying a report was fear of the offender.

The mean number of the perpetrators was 1.29 (range: 1–4; SD= .773), male victims (M=2.06; SD=1.254) were victimised by more perpetrators than female victims (M=1.07; SD=.336) ($t=4.568$; $p<.01$).

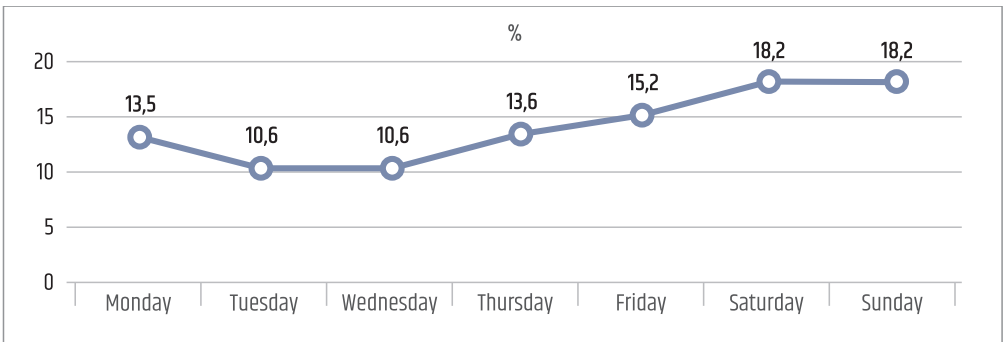


Figure 1. Weekly distribution of victimisation (%)

For the 59 cases for which the time of the day of the victimisation was available, the most frequent time of victimisation was between 6 and 11.59 pm (49.1%) while the least frequent time was between 6 and 11.59 am (6.8%) (Figure 2).

Almost 2/3 of criminal offences (65.6%) in our sample occurred at private locations.

Two types of offences' modus operandi were analysed (as they are legally described): use of physical force, and use of threat. Force was

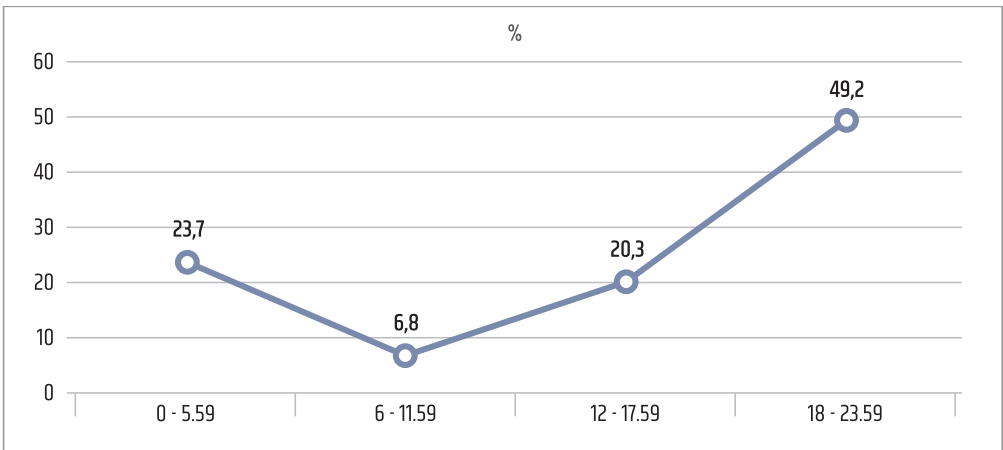


Figure 2. Daily distribution of victimisation (%)

used in 47.7% cases, and threat in 16.9% of cases. Although the data presented in the Table 3 indicate a higher use of force, and threat toward male victims, those differences are not statistically significant.

Table 3. Modus operandi of the offence

| N=154 | Male | Female |
|-------------------|------|--------|
| Use of force (%) | 58.8 | 44.2 |
| Use of threat (%) | 26.5 | 14.2 |

The most prevalent mean of coercion was physical force (46.8%), firearms were not used in criminal offences in our sample, and the cold weapons were used in 0.6% of all cases.

The majority of cases (80.4%) included one criminal activity while in 19.6% of cases there were two criminal activities.

In half of the cases (51.1%) the offence happened in one occasion, and in 48.1% it happened in more than one occasion.

In a small number of cases (5.2%) the victims suffered mild injuries, none of the victims suffered severe injuries or fatal injuries (death), while 7.1% of female victimisation led to pregnancy.

VICTIMS' CHARACTERISTICS

In our sample, the age of the victims ranged from 3 to 17 years (M=12; SD=3.42). Male victims (M=8.82; SD=3.818) were younger than female victims (M=13.15; SD=2.617) ($t=-6.208$; $p<0.01$).

The majority of the victims had attended elementary school at the time of the offence (57.1%). A small proportion of victims (girls) had no education, meaning that they never attended elementary school or had finished just few years of formal education before dropping out of school (4.5%), 3.9% have finished elementary school (and haven't continued formal education), 19.5% had attended high school, while 14.9% were preschool children. Data about victim's educational level of boys and girls are presented in the Table 4.

In the majority of cases in our sample (82.5%), the victims were not re-victimised. The male

Table 4. Victim's educational level

| | N | |
|-----------------------------|------|--------|
| | Male | Female |
| N=154 | | |
| Preschool child | 17 | 6 |
| No school/few years | 0 | 7 |
| Attending elementary school | 15 | 73 |
| Completed elementary school | 1 | 5 |
| Attending high school | 1 | 29 |

victims experienced prior sexual victimisation more often than the female victims ($\chi^2=31.595$; $df=3$; $p<0.01$), and victimisation included the same and some other perpetrator.

No prior relationship between the victim and the perpetrator was found in 5.8% of the cases in our sample, while relationship included friends/acquaintances (42.9%), relatives - parents and step parents, siblings, uncles, grandparents, cousins (26.6%), intimate relationship (16.2%), and some other kind of relationship - neighbour, parent's friend, godfather, and foster parents (8.4%). Additional analysis revealed that 28.6% of victims experienced victimisation within family relationship (parents/step parents, foster parents, siblings, grandfather, uncle) while 71.4% experienced extra-familial victimisation.

The majority of the victims had no developmental problems (84.4%). Intellectual disability was recorded among 9.1% of the victims, 4.5% of the victims had some psychological problems while 1.9% of the victims had a physical disability.

Information about the victim's alcohol intoxication during the offence was available in 64 cases. In those cases, 29.7% of the victims were under the influence of alcohol, and they were all female.

Almost half of the victims in our sample (49.2%) tried to resist the offender - this was more often the case for female victims (53.8%) than male victims (32.1%) ($\chi^2=4.157$; $df=1$; $p<0.05$).

OFFENDERS' CHARACTERISTIC

The majority of the reported offenders in our sample were male (94.8%). Male victims (20.6%) were victimised by female offenders more often than female victims (0.8%) ($\chi^2=20.994$; $df=1$; $p<.01$).

The offender's age ranged from 11 to 72 years ($M=28$; $SD=14.01$). The offender's age did not differ between male and female victims ($t=-1.158$; $p>.05$). There was no significant correlation between the victim's and offender's age. The educational level of the reported offenders was low – 33.1% had finished high school, 14.2% was still attending high school, 25.0% had finished elementary school, 10.1% was still attending elementary school, 16.2% had no education or few years of elementary school, while only 1.4% had obtained a higher education level. For both male and female victims the dominant educational level of the offender was high school; male victims were more often victimised by offenders attending elementary school (29.4% versus 4.2%), and female victims by offenders who have finished elementary school (27.5% versus 11.8%).

The employment status of the offender was available in 133 of the cases. More than 1/3 of the offenders (36.8%) were unemployed, 30.8% were still students, and 25.6% were employed while 6.8% were retired. Male victims were victimised by offenders who were still students more often than female victims (51.6% versus 24.5%).

Data about the marital status of the offender showed that almost 2/3 of the offenders (64%) were unmarried, 28.7% were married or cohabitating, 6.7% were divorced while 0.7% were widowed.

Less than 1/3 of the offenders (30.5%) were recidivists, in the most cases prior offences were not sex crimes.

DISCUSSION

The highest frequencies of analysed characteristics provide a specific picture of CSA cases reported to the Croatian police.

Male victims made up 22.1% of all victims in our study which is in line with many other studies

noting smaller proportion of male victimisation in CSA (Karayianni et al., 2017; Kloppen et al., 2016; Sladović & Družić, 2000; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011; Tanaka et al., 2017). It is interesting to note that Ajduković et al. (2013) haven't found gender differences in contact forms of CSA in epidemiological study conducted in Croatia. This may be a result of different methodological approaches and different operationalization of CSA. It also emphasises the necessary caution in generalisation of results.

Children were victims of criminal offence "sexual intercourse with a child" (under 14 years of age), the criminal offence was reported by a victim and/or parents by coming to the police station. Data regarding the nature of the victimisation in our sample are hardly comparable with other studies because of differences in national legal definitions of contact sexual abuse.

Criminal offence "sexual intercourse with a child" represents "statutory rape" and protects sexual integrity of children under 14 years. It may be that parents can better observe indicators of CSA in this age group and report the criminal offense. The victimization mostly happened during weekend (Saturday and Sunday) between 6 and 12 pm. In terms of the day when the victimization occurred our findings are very similar to those found by Hassan, Gary, Killion, Lewin and Totten (2015) and Finkelhor, Ormrod and Turner (2009) indicating that victimization occurs most frequently on weekends.

Victimisation was reported to the police within one year, included one perpetrator, and occurred at private location. Our results of the timing of filing a report to the police are similar to a certain degree with the Kogan's (2004) result. He examined the timing of disclosure of unwanted sexual experiences in childhood or adolescence in a sub-sample (adolescent women aged 12 to 17) of the National Survey of Adolescents in the USA. Kogan's (2004) results showed that 26% of the participants never told about their victimisation, 43% told someone within one month, 12% told someone within one year and 19% told someone after one year of the incident. On the other hand, our findings are different from the Goodman-Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones and Gordon. (2003) who used a more similar sample – district attorney files of 218 children. The majority of their vic-

tims (64%) disclosed victimisation within one month, while 29% disclosed victimisation within six months. They also found that families who represented those victims were more likely to represent those children who experienced abuse by someone outside the family which is in line with our finding (71.4% extra-familial victimisation). This information should be bared in mind when interpreting data from the samples of recorded abuse, especially when victims are younger. In cases of victimisation of young children it is usually the parents who notice only extra-familial abuse, while familial abuse remains hidden. The national survey of adolescents conducted by Priebe and Svedin (2008) in Sweden showed that only 6.8% of participants reported their experience of sexual victimisation to the social authorities or police. That finding emphasizes the necessity of caution in generalisation of data revealed from criminal justice data.

Our finding that children were mostly victimised by one offender is similar to finding of Hassan et al. (2015). They have found that 93% of victims were abused by one perpetrator.

Private location of CSA is reported in several studies. Singer and Uzelac (2005) analysed 86 court cases of forcible sexual intercourse and lewd acts (including attempts) committed against juveniles in Zagreb from 1992 to 2002 and found private locations as most dominant location. Our results regarding victimization location indicate that private locations are not safe locations for children to be promoted in prevention programs. Use of force was registered in almost half of the cases, while threat is used in a smaller proportion of cases. This is in line with a frequent notion that only severe cases that include presence of violence and serious threats are officially reported. Physical force was the most frequent mean of coercion. In almost half of the cases, the offence happened in more than one occasion. The majority of cases included one criminal activity, and the most victims did not suffer physical injuries. The use of force or threats in CSA was also reported in other studies (Elliott & Briere, 1994; Saunders et al., 1999; Singer & Uzelac, 2005).

The mean age of the victim was 12, the majority of them attended elementary school. The results about the victims' age are similar to those

found by Hassan et al. (2015) in a convenient sample of 95 hospital health records of sexually abused children and Nordic countries (Kloppen et al., 2016). On the other hand, Karayianni et al. (2017) found that participants in their study experienced different forms of victimisation between 12 and 18 years. Sladović & Družić (2000) found lower mean age for Croatian CSA victim in the previous period (1990-1998).

The majority of the victims had no prior sexual victimisation experience. They were victimised by a friend/acquaintance. Karayianni et al. (2017) also found different results for relationship between victim and perpetrator (in cases of direct victimisation) – contrary to our findings which contradict the “stranger-danger” thesis, they found that 36% of perpetrators were stranger, 32% were friend/acquaintance, and 8% were family member. Our results are in line with many other studies concluding that children are victimised by someone they know (Behere & Mulmule, 2013; Behere, Sathyanarayana & Mulmule, 2014; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner & Humby, 2011; Haile, Kebeta & Kassie, 2013; Miller-Perrin & Perrin, 2007; Rittossa, 2007; Štimac, Profaca & Buljan Flander, 2015). Unlike some other studies (Collin-Vézina et al., 2013; Putnam, 2003), we did not find high proportion of victims with developmental disabilities.

Our finding about victims' resistance is very similar to those found by Hassan et al. (2015) who have found that almost half of the victims resisted the offender. This also raises the question of nature of the official data and the probability that cases that involved resistance to the offender would be more likely reported to the police.

Findings of many studies, as well as our study, indicate that men are dominant perpetrators of CSA (Essabar, Khaiqallah & Dakhama, Subra2015; Karayianni et al., 2017; Sladović & Družić, 2000; Soylu et al., 2016). The offenders in our study seem to be younger than offenders in other studies where the majority of the offenders are middle-aged (Sinanan, 2011; Singer & Uzelac, 2005; Usta & Farver, 2010), but are similar to findings of Hassan et al. (2015).

In relation to characteristics of the criminal offence, we found gender differences in two of twelve characteristics in our sample: the nature

of the offence and the number of perpetrators. Male victims were more often victims of sexual intercourse with a child, and less often victims of rape than female victims. Levesque (1994) also found that boys and girls were subjected to different kinds of sexual abuse: boys were more likely victims of oral and anal intercourse and no touching offences (exhibitionism and exposure to pornography), while girls were more likely victims of penetration than boys.

Contrary to results of Levesque (1994), we did not find gender differences in use of force or threats, and physical injury; and we did find gender differences in the number of perpetrators. Also contrary to our findings, Levesque (1994) found differences in crime location in a way that girls were more often abused in their own homes, while boys were more often abused in the offender's home or in a public place.

Concerning characteristics of the victim, we found gender differences in four of total seven characteristics: age, education, re-victimisation and resistance. Male victims were younger (finding consistent with the findings of Soyulu et al. (2016) in a Turkish sample) and more often at preschool level than female victims; they experienced prior sexual victimisation more often than female victims. On the other hand, female victims resisted the perpetrator more often than male victims did. Our finding about victims' resistance is in line with Levesque (1994) findings and can be explained by the type of victimisation (female victims were subjected to rape more often than male victims). We found no gender differences with regard to relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (different from Levesque, 1994 and Soyulu et al., 2016), and victim's developmental problems.

With regard to characteristics of the offender, we found gender differences in three of six characteristics: perpetrators' gender, education, and employment. Male victims in our sample were more victimised by female perpetrators than female victims did. Our finding of greater proportion of females who victimised male victims is in line with some other studies (Graystone & De Luca, 1999; Snyder, 2000). We found no differences between male and female victims in the perpetrator's age, marital status and recidivism.

STRENGTH AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The main strength of this study is that it analysed all cases of reported child sexual victimisation in two police administrations. The study provides a clear picture of the type of the victimisation that is reported to the police.

Nevertheless, the results of this study must be viewed with caution due to its limitations. This study analysed reported cases of CSA in two police administration and are not representative of all CSA cases in Croatia (it accounts for 12.4% of the same offences at the national level). In addition, it is important to keep in mind that this study focused on police case files. Objections for law enforcement files have been well noted (Olafson & Lederman, 2006). However, their use is justified because they provide information that is not susceptible to memory bias as those in retrospective studies. Also, they rely on legislative definitions of CSA.

CONCLUSION

As many authors noted, especially for countries with traditional cultural beliefs, it is important to remember that a significant number of children (especially male) do not disclose experiences of sexual abuse until adulthood and that adult study results also suggest that a significant number of adults have never disclosed childhood victimisation (McElvaney, 2015). Keeping in mind the traditional Croatian culture, it is important to design a study with rigorous methodology to provide an evidence based knowledge for effective societal interventions in CSA prevention. Findings of studies that are relying on official data of CSA victimisation should be interpreted with caution while they may not represent the comprehensive picture of this problem. They may give a distorted picture of CSA and support existing stereotypes in this field. Findings of our study showed that male and female victims of CSA share the same experience in certain number of characteristics, while their experience varies in other. In this respect, it is necessary to conduct further studies. Beside studies, it is important to raise public awareness about CSA (especially for male victimisation) and strengthen capacities of professionals

working with children for better identification of abused children. In order to prevent extra familiar abuse, more educative programs for parents are needed.

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INTRODUCING A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK IN INSTITUTIONS CARING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Restorative justice has evolved from the criminal justice system to various other settings such as the prisons, the residential institutions and the schools. The concept aims to resolve the harm caused by a conflict or a crime by involving all stakeholders in the conflict resolution process. By incorporating the values of restorative justice namely respect, responsibility, reintegration and restoration, the concept seeks to heal the relationship caused by a conflict.

There are several studies that highlighted the positive impact of restorative justice. These studies reflected the benefits and potential of restorative justice in different settings. Considering the benefits of restorative justice, this article suggests a restorative justice framework in working with children and young people in a residential institution. The framework intends to support social workers in addressing behaviours of children and youth differently. The framework aims to create a restorative environment where relationship is critical and by doing so, there is a greater prognosis of guiding children and youths towards leading a good life. To ensure successful implementation of the framework, some strategies are proposed as well.

Keywords: restorative justice; institution; children; youth

INTRODUCTION

Restorative justice focuses on the process of justice, involving all stakeholders affected by a conflict, to come together, to collectively address the harm caused by a conflict or a crime (Marshall, 1999; Braithwaite, 1999). Within the juvenile justice system, the concept has proven to be effective in reducing unlawful behaviours (Barrett & Katsiyannis, 2016; Clough, Bullock, & Ward, 2006; Rodriguez, 2007). The concept is expanding rapidly and is commonly used in schools, in residential institutions, in prisons and in commercial organisations (Hayden & Gough, 2010; Holmes-Bonney, 2010; Nielsen & Parker, 2009; Shaw, 2007).

The application of restorative justice in an institutional setting provides an alternative to the traditional, punishment based model of managing institutional misbehaviours. There are different types of residential institutions to serve the different needs of children and young people. This article will focus on institutions that protect the safety of children and young people. Despite the status of these children and young people in need of care and protection, it is possible for misbehaviours and conflict to occur in such environment (Hayden & Gough, 2010; Marsh, 2008).

Restorative justice is beneficial in reducing conflict and in managing behaviours (Braithwaite 2002; Hayden & Gough, 2010). As highlighted by Hayden and Gough (2010), addressing conflicts in a restorative manner can prevent the

escalation of unlawful conduct amongst the residents in an institutional setting. The concept involves all affected parties in the conflict resolution process and it helps to restore relationship with other members of the institution (Braithwaite, 2002). Involvement of the larger community provides the opportunity for the perpetrator to be reintegrated into the community. By adopting a mutual set of values, the perpetrator is held responsible for his behaviour not only towards the victim but the community at large. When a conflict arises, the restoration is not only towards the victim but also towards the larger community (Okimoto, Wenzel & Feather, 2009).

Considering the potential of restorative justice in an institutional setting, this article introduces a restorative framework in addressing conflict and misbehaviours. It is suggested that the framework to be grounded in the key values of restorative justice. This article will first provide an overview of the care and protection system in Singapore. Following this, it will discuss restorative justice before introducing the framework and its incorporation in an institutional setting. Finally, the implications of the framework will be highlighted before concluding the article with recommendations for further research and collection of empirical evidence.

CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SINGAPORE

The safety and welfare of the children and young people are taken care of by the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore. As stipulated in the 2003 Children and Young Persons Act, the Ministry has the statutory duty to protect children (below the age of 14) and young people (between the age of 14 to below 16) from abuse and neglect. There are 21 institutions in Singapore that provide residential care for children and young person who come from dysfunctional families and in need of shelter or in need of care and protection (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2017). In 2016, the Ministry reported 623 children and young people residing in institutions.

Matters related with children and young people is under the purview of the Youth Court. The

Youth Court promotes the use of restorative justice in working with children and young person. One key initiative is the family group conferencing that reaches out to the children and young person and involves them in the decision-making process. There are also options such as mandatory counselling that aim to facilitate future restoration and reintegration of the children and youth.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice is not a completely new concept. It is a justice model, originating from ancient ideologies of social justice, grounded in cultural practices and religious teachings. The concept has evolved from traditional Aboriginal philosophies of conflict resolution, relationship building, communitarianism and reintegrative shaming (Christie, 1977; Wenzel, Okimoto, Feather, & Platow, 2008). The values of restorative justice are based in religious teachings of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism (Qafisheh, 2012; Schweigert, 1999; Zehr & Mika, 1998). The concept is not just popular in the Western world, it is also found in Asian countries such as Thailand, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines (Chan, 2013).

Restorative justice focuses on what is best for all the stakeholders affected by a conflict. This includes the victims, the perpetrators and the related community. Restorative justice challenges the conventional assumption of breaking the ties or connection between the perpetrator and the victim. The concept also places the victim at the centre of the adjudication process (Braithwaite, 2002; Wenzel et al., 2008). Restorative justice works on the perspective of victims, not always seeking retribution and that punishment may not necessarily stop the perpetrator from further misbehaving. The process of restorative justice benefits the perpetrator as it aims to educate, influence and prevent further misbehaviours (Armstrong, 2012).

Restorative justice restores justice by incorporating different strategies in dealing with the perpetrators, victims and related stakeholders. The main objective is to heal rather than hurt through punishment and this differentiates the

concept from the traditional form of justice. As argued by Tracy (1998, p. 275):

“crime is an act against a person rather than against the State, crime control is a community responsibility rather than a government responsibility, assuming responsibility and repairing harm replaces punishment, victims are central to the process of resolving a crime rather than being mostly ignored, and dialogue and negotiation, rather than an adversarial relationship, are emphasised”.

The positive outcome of restorative justice principles and practices is evident within the criminal justice system. As argued by Choi, Green, & Gilbert (2011) and Sherman & Strang (2004), restorative justice can deliver benefits which the traditional criminal justice process cannot; in areas such as victim satisfaction and in reducing offender recidivism. It works fairly well in preventing further misconduct or offending (Trimboli, 2000; Standing, Fearon & Dee, 2012). As argued by Armstrong (2012), initial analysis of victims' perception of restorative justice has been positive. Positive outcomes in the application of restorative justice are also noted in Singapore. Restorative justice practices such as family conferencing has provided favourable outcome in managing the offending behaviours of young offenders (Ozawa, 2002; Chan, 2013).

The concept is constructively applied in the school setting as well (Standing et al., 2012). For instance, the principles and values of restorative justice are incorporated in programmes and in dialogues known as restorative circles. All parties affected come together to resolve the conflict and this process indirectly mend the relationship between the stakeholders. Restorative justice is used informally by the teachers when they address misbehaviours or when they communicate certain issues related to the students (Shaw, 2007). Restorative justice approaches in the context of a children's home, residential care setting or institution, are often used in the area of conflict resolution, used by staff to challenge anti-social behaviours or used to prevent tension amongst the residents. As argued by Littlechild and Sender (2006), restorative justice approaches can address both criminal and challenging behaviour.

Restorative justice practices were also observed within organisations in the area of conflict reso-

lution (Fehr & Gelfand, 2012), in the promotion of organisational justice (Kidder, 2007) and in ensuring compliance to various rules and regulations (Abdul Rahim, 2017; Okimoto & Wenzel, 2014).

There is no one way of assessing restorative justice approaches and different models are used globally to promote restorative justice. Marshall (1995) indicated many varieties of restorative justice and these include face to face conferencing or mediation with the key stakeholders such as victims, perpetrators and other related parties, sentencing circles or indirect informal diplomatic mediation.

This part of the article highlighted the evolution of restorative justice in various contexts. The next part of the article will discuss the four values of restorative justice namely respect, responsibility, reintegration and restoration as assessed from a research study that examined the potential of restorative justice in commercial organisations based in Singapore (Abdul Rahim, 2015).

THE VALUES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice values may be termed differently by different researchers. For instance, Dignan (2005) and Marshall (1999) identified values such as accountability, reintegration, reparation and respect as critical components of restorative justice practices. The terms used may differ as with the strategies and implementation of restorative justice but the values of restorative justice are common (Morris & Gelsthorpe, 2000; Wenzel et al., 2008). The values of restorative justice can be explained by reviewing its practices that are commonly found within the criminal justice system. In the United Kingdom, the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act highlights the need for reparation as part of the restorative justice process. In New Zealand, most young offenders are required to undergo the family group conferencing. This was noted to be the first step towards a restorative way of adjudicating justice and values such as responsibility is exhibited in such conferences. In the context of family conferencing and victim-offender mediation in Singapore, there is an emphasis on restitution and reintegration (Ozawa, 2002; Chan, 2013).

CONTEXTUALISING THE VALUES INTO PRACTICE

To contextualise the exhibition of these values, a hypothetical case study of a child called Samuel will be discussed. Samuel was placed in a children's home at the age of one. He was placed on a statutory care and protection order as his parents were incarcerated for drug related offences. He grew up in the home with no interaction with his parents or extended family members. At the age of fourteen, he started misbehaving. The misbehaviours were amplified as he failed to follow the rules and regulations in the children's home. For instance, he was required to attend school daily and return to the home within a stipulated timeframe.

To further explain the values of restorative justice, the discussion will focus on one of his major misconduct that involved other residents. Samuel got into a fight with a group of peers that insulted him for not receiving any visits. They called him names and told him that he was an unwanted child. From the perspective of the social worker supervising Samuel, it was important to control and contain any conflict between Samuel and other residents.

The main objective is to safeguard Samuel and prevent him from getting into further trouble. The residents that teased and provoked Samuel were told to stop insulting Samuel. Samuel was counselled to behave in a pro-social manner. He was also punished for fighting with the other residents. The system as it appears in the context of an institution is fair since the rules of residency were clearly explained to all residents. However, it is argued that the outcome may be better for all parties involved including Samuel, his victims and his social worker if the restorative justice values were adopted. The restorative justice framework aims to prevent further misbehaviours by getting all parties in the institutional setting to understand the differing perspectives and respond in a restorative manner.

For restorative justice practices to be successful, the social worker and the system within the institution has to operate based on the key values of respect, responsibility, restoration and reintegration. Respect can be integrated into

the system by allowing the child the opportunity to speak and by allowing the others within the system to treat him as an individual instead of merely focusing on his act of misbehaving. As indicated by Braithwaite (1998), it is important to heal the perpetrator by rebuilding his moral and social selves and this can be done by treating the perpetrator with respect. Braithwaite (1998) also highlighted the need for the victims to heal and for the perpetrator to undo the hurt. By getting the perpetrator to be accountable for his action and work towards finding ways to repair the harm done highlights the value of responsibility. Responsibility is not just given to the perpetrator but to all parties including the victims and the social worker. The resolution requires efforts from the perpetrator in understanding the impact of his action on the victim and to be responsible to rectify the situation.

Restorative justice tries to repair relationships (Goodstein & Aquino, 2010; Kidder, 2007). The value of reintegration is important to address the harm and preserve a relationship. The perpetrator should be given consequences for his action and not isolated or prevented from reunification with the larger community. By involving the perpetrator, there is an increased level of acceptance and the perpetrator can be reintegrated back to the community. In the context of Samuel, he will be given the opportunity to repair the relationship with the victims and continue residing in the home.

Another aspect of relationship building is to consider the underlying issues that resulted in the conflict. Restoration should be targeted and the agreement to make amends should also focus on mending the relationship. Restoring the harm that affected the victims also requires restoration of the hurt in the perpetrator's life. For instance, the perpetrator can be restored by allowing him to voice out his feelings and share openly the reason he reacted negatively. Samuel sharing his story can be the starting point for him to heal from the hurt caused by his parents.

The four values of restorative justice come together in ensuring the successful implementation of the restorative justice process. The concept looks forward and adopts a problem-solving model by involving the victims and by restoring and integrating the perpetrator into

the community (Marshall, 2003). The next part of this article highlights why the values of restorative justice should be embedded in an institutional setting that cares and rehabilitate children and youth.

IMPLICATIONS OF A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

As noted by Littlechild and Sender (2010) the challenging and disruptive behaviour of the residents are often linked to the environment of an institution. To curtail and protect the residents, the institution often follows strict rules and punitive consequences for breaking the rules. However, the management of these rule-breaking behaviour must be done in a fair, sensible manner to prevent further misbehaviours. If the residents were to suspect biasness or if the punishments were meted out unfairly, they are likely to mistrust and misunderstand the system (Littlechild & Sender, 2010).

It is argued that adopting a punitive approach in disciplining children and youth perpetuates misbehaviours. Furthermore, children and youth are amenable and easily influenced. Sinclair & Gibbs (1998) found in their study the link between the characteristics and attitudes of the social worker and the reactions of the residents. They concluded that the immediate environment shaped the young people's behaviour in some ways. It is important to consider the influence of peer relationships and group dynamics within the residential context in developing a holistic rehabilitation plan. The interaction with the system in a residential setting, with other residents and with the social workers, contributes to the development of identity, personality and perception of the social world (Layder, 1993). Parker (1988) highlights that different regimes affects the children's behaviour differently and that the best results are achieved by child-oriented rather than institution oriented practices.

Some of the issues in an institutional setting can be addressed by adopting a restorative justice framework. There are several reasons for a restorative justice framework. Firstly, the disciplinary issues within the institution can be managed without involving the police and without the children or youth getting entangled with the criminal justice system. Though some of the

misbehaviours can be considered serious and may require criminal sanctions, the children and youth in an institutional setting can be diverted towards a restorative justice approach that may result in positive outcomes. The intention of such a framework in an institution is to stop the misbehaviours by highlighting the impact of an action on the community, for all parties to come together and work towards repairing the harm and mending the relationship. This framework promotes collective responsibility for all to do their part in an institution, it is not just for the perpetrator to be punished and merely follow rules subsequently.

Secondly, the children and youth in an institution require fair treatment as perpetrators and victims. Restorative justice is constructive in administering justice as it seeks to get the perpetrator to take responsibility for his action. The victims are not neglected and they are given the opportunity to voice out their feelings. By doing so, the system is developing empathy which is critical in promoting positive relationship. The disciplinary model in an institution that follows the principles and values of restorative justice will be fair and authentic to all stakeholders. Transparency in a system is another important element in relationship building.

Finally, the social workers play a critical role in the development of the children and youth. They are role models and they can advocate for an improved justice system and develop a fairer social reform that place the perpetrator and the victim in a circle, rather than in an opposing battle. They can build therapeutic alliances with the children and youth by incorporating the values of restorative justice in managing disputes. They can shift away from the 'just desert' approach common in the traditional justice system and work towards removing barriers, building closer ties and convincing children and youth against unlawful behaviours.

In an institutional setting, the culture and the environment can shift the perception of the social workers and the residents. The leadership is critical in promoting changes to the culture and the environment. To adopt an effective restorative justice framework, the values have to be internalised. It has to be visible, observed in the day to day practice of an institution, in the in-

teraction between the social workers and residents and in the engagement of the community within the institution. Though it may be easy to incorporate a restorative justice programme such as circles or conferencing, the impact on the residents may not be profound unless the social workers within the institution are openly displaying the values of restorative justice. The values should be incorporated in all aspects of the institution not just merely to address misbehaviours. The children and youth must be able to articulate the values, observed by the social workers and the children and youth must notice that the social workers are adopting similar values in their action and behaviour.

LIMITATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN INSTITUTIONS

This article has highlighted the values of restorative justice, the benefits of a restorative justice framework and the need to consciously incorporate the values of restorative justice in the day to day running of an institution. For the framework to be successful, the social workers play an important role. They need to understand and believe in a restorative justice framework. One of the main limitations would be the evaluation of the values by the social workers and others working in an institution. It may not be easy to train and change the perception of all members in an institution even if social workers believe in the concept of restorative justice. It may be necessary to review all policies related to behaviour management and for leaders in an institution to take the lead by actualising the values of restorative justice.

Another limitation is based on the articulation of the values and how it could be incorporated in the management of misbehaviours. It is not easy to differentiate the values of restoration and reintegration. To simplify the values for ease of understanding may dilute the values to mean nothing more than just a code of conduct. This will not result in the envisioned outcome of developing pro-social children and youth. Though, it is important to provide clear indicators of each values, these indicators should not be cast in stone and should be revised as the environment changes.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Despite the limitations, the benefits of restorative justice in an institutional setting and its impact on children and young people can be substantial. To ensure successful implementation, all stakeholders within the institution should be involved in the development of the restorative justice framework. There are four major relationships within an institution and these relationships should be placed at the centre of the restorative justice framework. The relationships between the leaders and employees, the leaders and residents, the employees and residents as well as the residents and residents should be part of the larger restorative justice framework.

The four values of restorative justice and the behaviour indicators for these values should be developed with inputs from the various stakeholders and based on their differing relationships. By placing the stakeholders, their relationships and their job requirements at the centre of the restorative justice framework, they are likely to take on the role of an enabler or implementer. Such positioning will develop greater accountability in the development of a restorative justice framework, creating an environment that would sustain the changes. For sustainability of the initiative, it is important to focus on the people as indicated by Boyes-Watson (2004, p. 366):

"The adoption of restorative justice is more than just the installation of a program or technique: the adoption of restorative justice moves organisations towards more communitarian values. It is a project of profound change which requires sustained leadership to invent new organisational infrastructures which brings different sets of participants together to talk in different ways about different things. More than anything else, this process requires personal commitment, not only from above but at all levels of the organisation. People must, at some level, choose restorative justice for themselves. Restorative practices open people to a sense of community by building awareness and respect towards others".

In developing the restorative justice framework, it is equally critical to consider an evaluation framework that can assess the behaviour indicators of the four values of restorative justice

and its impact on the conduct of the residents in the institution. Based on the different relationships within the institution, the evaluation should provide measures to assess the changes in the behaviour and attitudes. In adopting a custom-made approach to the development of an evaluation framework, the success can be measured based on the needs of the institution.

In sum, to develop an effective restorative justice framework in an institutional setting, it is important to focus on the relationship amongst the stakeholders and consider the steps involved in the evaluation of the framework.

CONCLUSION

This article suggested the incorporation of restorative justice in an institution managing children and youth, in the form of a framework that is based on four values of respect, responsibility, reintegration and restoration. It is necessary to examine the framework in depth from the basis of what works best for the children and youth in an institutional setting. The suggested framework provides a broad outline that requires clarity and objectivity in the development of the values and in assimilating them as part of the milieu of an institution.

Restorative justice provides more than just a model to manage misbehaviours. The concept provides greater benefit to all parties by inculcating values important in leading a good life. To further establish the connection between the values of restorative justice and the development of a good life for children and youth in an institutional setting, it is necessary to embark on research studies that would evaluate the environment before the introduction of a restorative justice framework. Data should be collected before and after the introduction of a restorative justice framework. To be faithful to the principle of restorative justice, the data collection should involve all stakeholders and should be carried out periodically.

It is also worth noting that the values of restorative justice may vary from one environment to another and that the values and behaviour indicators should be developed with reference to that institution. A study to ascertain the im-

port of a restorative justice framework should not be based on a concept of one size fits all. It is necessary to carefully evaluate the practices within an institution before introducing a restorative justice framework.

To conclude, there is merit in thinking critically of new ways to improve the environment for children and youth residing in an institution. Institutionalisation should be the last resort for any children and youth. However, if it is necessary in the context of care and protection, there is a duty for all involved to focus developing children and youth to be resilient and to be socially responsible individuals.

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Martina Soko,
University of Zagreb, Croatia

Dunja Majstorović,
University of Zagreb, Croatia, dunja.majstorovic@fpzg.hr

CHILDREN REFUGEES IN CROATIAN DAILY NEWSPAPERS: DOMINANT ON PHOTOGRAPHS, NEGLECTED IN TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The most sensitive group of refugees are children, and this paper seeks to determine how the two Croatian national daily newspapers, *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* reported on refugee children in the first month of their arrival on Croatian territory (from 17 September to 17 October 2015). The method used in the paper is content analysis (qualitative and quantitative) and taken into account were all texts that mentioned refugee children, all photographs that portrayed refugee children and all front pages depicting them.

There were 94 texts and 180 photographs of refugee children, distributed almost evenly between *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*. The research results determined that there were differences in the portrayal of the refugee children in texts as opposed to photographs. They were the dominant subjects in 80 percent of the photographs but in only 12 percent of the texts; their identity was protected in texts, but not on photographs, and the majority of published texts portrayed children in general while the majority of photographs portrayed only one child.

Even though none of the analysed newspapers negatively wrote about refugee children, the number of published photographs with children raises the question of whether they were used as an instrument of attracting attention. In that sense, disputable is the publication of

photographs without context as well as the fact that only one analytical text on refugee children appeared in the analysed period, indicating a lack of journalistic initiative to address these important issues.

Keywords: children refugees; content analysis; Croatian newspapers; refugee crisis

INTRODUCTION

In September 2015 the Croatian media was marked by reporting on the refugee crisis and a large number of refugees¹, passing through the country. According to UNHCR in 2015, there were 21.3 million refugees in the world, half of which were children (UNHCR, 2015: 2, 8). Solely in September 2015, 163.673 refugees came to Europe across the Mediterranean and Southeast Europe; from the beginning of the year (up

¹ According to the Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees published in 1951, a refugee is "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." (UNHCR, Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, 2010: 3)

According to United Nations Convention on Migrant's Rights, international migrants are "persons who live temporarily or permanently in a country of which they are not nationals. As the term 'migrant' refers to cases where the decision to migrate has been taken freely by the individual concerned, i.e. without the intervention of compelling external factors, migrants are differentiated from refugees and asylum seekers." (UN, United Nations Convention on Migrant's Rights, 2005: 25)

until the end of September) more than 520.000 (UNHCR, Operational portal: Refugee situation). According to the latest available data on the official site of Croatia's Ministry of the Interior, since the beginning of the migration crisis in Croatia on 16 September 2015 until 26 January the following year, 607.404 refugees entered Croatia (MUP, Reception and accommodation of migrants, 2016).

In such a period of crisis, when it comes to reporting on refugees, the media play maybe the most important role in their acceptance in host countries. In this respect, the way the media report is sometimes of crucial importance because the use of terms such as "thousands" or "hundreds" of refugees at the expense of rendering accurate data does not contribute to balanced and fair reporting (Santoro, 2012).

Nevertheless, numerous research across different countries show that the media do not favourably portray refugees. According to Esses, Medianu and Lawson the refugees have been portrayed as potential threats in the western media over the last 10-15 years (2013: 520). Similarly, Tait, Grimshaw, Smart and Nea have shown that the British newspapers very often portray refugees and asylum seekers in a way that could produce the feeling of fear and hostility against them (2004: 41).

A large number of research that deals with the analysis of media coverage of refugees in Australia has reached similar results. In their analysis of three Australian newspapers McKay, Thomas and Blood concluded that the most prominent framework in early story reporting was "illegality" associated with individuals and their arrival in Australia, and terms such as "queue jumpers" and "illegals" were regularly used (2011: 616). Longitudinal analysis of newspapers in Australia and New Zealand conducted by Sulaiman-Hill, Thompson, Afsar and Hodliffe for the period 1998-2008, showed how reporting had changed after September 11, and "that the reporting on Muslims is more likely to frame stories in ways that are less sympathetic to their circumstances than for other refugees" (2011: 358-359). In his research that puts the focus on the relation of the Australian government towards the refugees from 2001 to 2002 (pre- and post-election), Leach conclu-

ded how the "federal election campaign saw the definition of asylum seekers as a political problem" (2003: 31). Slattery found that "children overboard"² event was shown through the discourse of "good Australian citizens" and "bad asylum seeker others" (2003: 93).

In the United States of America, analysis of human interest stories by Steimel had reached the conclusion that refugees were presented in three ways: as prior victims, as those in search of the American Dream, and as those who are unable to achieve the American Dream (2010: 8). Although the research dealt with refugees in general, and was not focused on children, they were mentioned in a number of analysed articles, primarily in the context of education as a critical factor for the integration of refugee children in the USA as to enable them to achieve a better life (Steimel, 2010: 10). The way in which the juvenile refugees from Sudan who became known as the "Lost Boys"³ were portrayed in the American media was analysed by Robins who examined how the media "framed" that story based on American national myths and concluded that reporting on them provided readers with a "feel-good fairy tale about human spirit" and American generosity while at the same time failed to provide the appropriate political and economic context and omitted the buried reality of racism in the USA (2003: 31).

In the analysis of media reporting on Afghan refugees on television Wright pointed out that there were three main factors contributing to the probability of effective media coverage of the refugee crisis: 1) it must be so large that it

2 "Children overboard" refers to the October 2001 event when Australian Prime Minister John Howard, Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock, and Defence Minister Peter Reith, based on navy reports, accused Iraqi asylum seekers on a vessel crossed by the Australian naval ship of throwing children into the sea to force them to take them to Australia. Later it was shown that the pictures in the media with adults and children in the water, who were supposed to show that event, were photographed at the time the boat began to sink and the refugees were trying to save their own lives (Slattery, 2003: 93).

3 "Lost Boys" is the name for thousands of juveniles who in the early 1990s walked more than 1,000 miles to escape the long-lasting civil war and starvation in Sudan. Those who did not die of starvation on their way ended up in a camp at the border of Kenya and Ethiopia where they stayed for years. At the beginning of 2001, 500 of them emigrated to the United States, and in the years that followed 4,000 more (Robins, 2003: 31).

is impossible to ignore it or have obvious links with the worries of the West; 2) its nature must be such that it produces dramatic images; 3) the style of media reporting must be sufficiently innovative to stimulate the interest of the viewer (2004: 107-108). In the context of the presentation of the children, Wright stated that they "usually receive one special mention in the news reports and then are shown in the context of narratives covering more general issues" (2004: 105).

In Croatia, there is a lack of studies on the portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in the media but, given the recent events when refugees were passing through the country, this will certainly change in the future. Župarić-Ilić who conducted a research on first ten years of asylum system in Croatia concluded how "in the years that transcended the first granted asylum the general social climate and the media portrayal of topics regarding asylum have been fairly negative towards asylum seekers" (2013: 202), but how things have slowly changed over the years. Nevertheless, regardless of the positive changes, "there are still examples of sensationalist, tendentious and biased reporting, but today these are mostly individual cases, unlike media writings from the beginning of the development of asylum system" (Župarić-Ilić, 2013: 217).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

The paper aims to determine the quantity and quality of reporting on children refugees through the analysis of texts and photographs in two Croatian daily newspapers: *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*. Both newspapers are classified as semi-tabloids (Kanižaj, 2006: 50) and distributed nationally.⁴

The used method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative content analysis since the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches enables a better understanding of a certain phenomenon (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011: 118).

⁴ The exclusion of third national daily newspaper 24sata was because it is a classic tabloid newspaper while semi-tabloids feature serious newspaper content.

The research was conducted for the time period from 17 September to 17 October 2015⁵ and included the analysis of all texts, photographs⁶ and front pages that portrayed children refugees.

The categories for the analysis of texts were defined as following: children as dominant or secondary topic⁷; the number of mentioned children; whether the child's identity is protected or revealed (and how it was protected or revealed); and place of the text in the newspapers. Categories for photographs were similar to those used for the analysis of texts but adjusted to the visual display. Categories for analysis of front pages were defined as following: headlines (whether they mention refugee children); photographs on front pages (is it a dominant or a smaller photograph); and characteristics of photography. Selected front pages were analysed descriptively.

The coding of each text was done by the junior author with the supervision of the senior author⁸.

In the course of the research, the following hypotheses were defined:

- Children refugees are fairly more represented on photographs than in texts
- In both newspapers children refugees are mainly secondary topic inside texts
- Both newspapers evenly reveal identities of children refugees on photographs

⁵ The selected month was chosen deliberately to see how journalists reported on refugee children at the very beginning of their arrival in Croatia in an extraordinary situation in their homeland. Such research period is limited and cannot be indicative of the reporting in the entire period of the refugee crisis.

⁶ In the analysis of photographs, the definition of a child by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was used. The definition, as cited in Article 1, refers to a child as "every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier." (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Only those photographs in which persons apparently belonged to that age category were included in the analysis.

⁷ Dominant topic referred to texts where children were the subjects of texts, while the secondary topic referred to texts where children were only sporadically mentioned (in one or several sentences).

⁸ The paper is based on the research conducted by the junior author as a part of MA thesis on the Faculty of Political Science. The supervision of the research was done by the senior author who was the mentor of the thesis.

To test the hypotheses, χ^2 test with a significance level of 5% ($p < 0.05$) was used, and the p-value was calculated for each test.

Since children are the most vulnerable group of refugees, journalists should be most considerate when reporting on them. According to the Media Act in Croatia⁹, the media are obliged to respect the privacy, dignity, reputation and honour of citizens, and especially children. It is forbidden to disclose information revealing the identity of a child if this endangers the welfare of the child (Media Act, 2004). UNICEF too published Ethical guidelines to help reporters when dealing with stories but to define their obligations as well: "In certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as: a current or former child combatant, an asylum seeker, a refugee or an internal displaced person" (UNICEF, Ethical Guidelines).

This research seeks to determine how two Croatia's newspapers reported on refugees in the moment of their arrival as this was an extraordinary and unexpected situation for both the country and its citizens as well as for the journalists.

RESULTS

The results of the research are presented for both texts and photographs (quantitative and qualitative content analysis) published in Jutar-

9 In Croatia, the rights of children in relation to the media are regulated by: Article 16 of the Media Act (2004), Article 12 of the Electronic Media Act (2003), Article 6 of the Law on Croatian Radio and Television (2010), Article 3 of the Ordinance on the Protection of Juveniles in Electronic Media (2015) and the Code of Honour of Croatian Journalists (2006). In addition to laws and regulations, there is also an Ombudsman for Children in Croatia, whose scope of work is to "protect, monitor and promote the rights and interests of children on the basis of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, international treaties, binding legal acts and laws of the European Union" (Law on Ombudsman for Children, 2007, Art. 2).

The Office of the Ombudsman can respond to cases of threats to children's rights in the media (in the form of warnings and recommendations to media who violated the child's right to privacy or other rights, by reporting certain cases to the Journalism Council of Honour, proposing to the State Attorney's Office to institute court proceedings against the publisher and editor-in-chief if there has been violation of the Media Act or other law) (Jelavić, 2009: 16).

nji list and Večernji list and include the descriptive analysis of newspapers' front pages.

REFUGEE CHILDREN IN TEXTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

The overall number of texts in both newspapers mentioning refugee children was 94 (51 texts in *Jutarnji list* and 43 texts in *Večernji list*). The number of published photographs depicting refugee children was much higher – in total 180 photographs (92 published in *Jutarnji list*, 88 published in *Večernji list*). As expected, such differences are statistically significant ($\chi^2=26.99$, $df=1$, $p \text{ value}=.000$) and serve as a confirmation of the first research hypothesis stating that children refugees are fairly more present on photographs than in texts.

The conclusion of text analysis regarding primary and secondary topics is that the children are mostly secondary topics in texts. As high as 88 percent (83 texts) of the refugee children in texts of both newspapers were a secondary topic (mentioned in a single word or several sentences), while in only 12 percent of the texts (11 texts), children were the primary topic.

The results for the photographs were opposite. In both *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*, children were dominant on the photographs. As high as 84 percent (151 photographs) of both newspapers showed children refugees as dominant topics, while in 11 percent (20) of photographs children were secondary topics.¹⁰

To test the second research hypothesis, differences concerning children as dominant and secondary topics inside texts (for both newspapers) were calculated. The calculated differences were statistically significant ($\chi^2=55.15$, $df=1$, $p \text{ value}=.000$) which serves as a confirmation of the second research hypothesis stating that in both newspapers children refugees are a secondary topic inside texts.

Regarding the refugee children's identity, the results show that both newspapers protected the identity in the majority of the published texts – *Jutarnji list* in 69 percent of the cases (35

10 The total sum was not 100% because, in some photographs, it was not possible to determine whether the child was a dominant or secondary subject.

texts) and *Večernji list* in 81 percent of the cases (35 texts). Data for the photographs indicate a completely different picture since the majority of photographs published in both newspapers revealed the child's identity. As high as 80 percent of the photographs (74 photographs) in *Jutarnji list* and 81 percent of photographs (72 photographs) in *Večernji list* revealed a child's identity (Table 1).

Table 1. Children's identity in texts and photographs in *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*

| Child's identity | In texts | | On photographs | |
|--------------------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | (JL) | (VL) | (JL) | (VL) |
| Protected | 35 | 35 | 10 | 10 |
| Revealed | 13 | 5 | 74 | 72 |
| Protected revealed | 3 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| Total (N) | 51 | 43 | 92 | 88 |

The calculated χ^2 test shows no statistically significant differences in the revelation of children's identity in both *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* ($\chi^2=0.027$, $df=1$, p value=0.868)¹¹ and thus confirms the third research hypothesis that both newspapers would evenly reveal children's identity on photographs.

Although the protection of children's identity in texts is in favour of fair reporting, the majority of photographs published alongside those texts revealed their identity. In some of the photographs, the child's identity was protected since they were photographed from behind or from a larger distance, but on no photographs was intentional protection such as blurred face used. Nevertheless, other similar photographs indirectly revealed their identity since they featured an adult with the child, most presumably a parent.

The research also included the number of children that appeared in both texts and newspapers. The majority of published texts showed children in general – in *Jutarnji list* 65 percent of the texts; in *Večernji list* 81 percent of the

texts. The result for the photographs is again opposite – the majority of photographs show only one child – in *Jutarnji list* 65 percent of the photographs, in *Večernji list* 62.5 percent (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of refugee children in texts and photographs in *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*

| Number of children | In texts | | On photographs | |
|---------------------|----------|------|----------------|------|
| | (JL) | (VL) | (JL) | (VL) |
| One child | 10 | 5 | 60 | 55 |
| More than one child | 8 | 3 | 18 | 18 |
| Children in general | 33 | 35 | 14 | 15 |
| Total (N) | 51 | 43 | 92 | 88 |

The analysis also included the page number in the newspapers on which the texts with children refugees appeared. The results show slight differences between the two analysed newspapers – in *Jutarnji list* the majority of texts were published on pages from 6 to 10 in the newspapers (49 percent), followed by pages from 0 to 5 (35 percent). In *Večernji list*, the majority of texts with refugee children could be found on pages 0-5 (56 percent), followed by pages 6-10 (28 percent of the texts) (Table 3).

Table 3. Children refugees in pages of the *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*

| Refugee children on pages in newspapers | JL | VL |
|---|----|----|
| p. 0-5 | 18 | 24 |
| p. 6-10 | 25 | 12 |
| p. 11-20 | 4 | 5 |
| p. 21-30 | 3 | 0 |
| p. 31-40 | 1 | 2 |
| Total (N) | 51 | 43 |

¹¹ The χ^2 test was used only for calculating the differences of protected and revealed identity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND FRONT PAGES WITH CHILDREN REFUGEES

Although the children are mainly mentioned along with their mothers, photographs of them are mostly with men (parent, guardian, policeman or other) – on more than 35 percent of all photographs children were portrayed with men. The main problem regarding the photographs of refugee children is lack of context – regarding photographs without any description as to what or who they portray. The lack of a specific description of the photograph was found in 60 percent of the cases.

Some recurring motives were identified in the photographs. Those motives could be classified as follows: the motive of a journey as seen through people with backpacks and children in their hands; the motive of a child in grown-ups embrace; the motive of a child and a policeman or humanitarian aid.

Along with counting of the front pages with refugee children on the photographs (quantitative content analysis), they were also analysed descriptively. Children refugees appeared in total ten times (17 percent) on front pages. In *Jutarnji list*, children appeared four times (three of which featured a large photograph of children that was, at the same time, the main photograph on the front page) and six times in *Večernji list* (children dominated the front pages of this newspaper four times). The number of front pages with refugee children was too small for any statistical analysis.

Further analysis of front page photographs found that on three children were crying¹², as well as that their faces could easily be recognized. All children were tiny, visibly upset and exhausted. Apart from the children crying, the front page photographs often showed children alongside police officers. One such front page in *Jutarnji list* featured a child in the hands of policeman along with the headline "Let's be human"¹³. That same day, *Večernji list* also published a

12 Two of the three photographs were published in *Večernji list* (published on 18 September and 21 September 2015) and one in *Jutarnji list* (published on 18 September 2015).

13 *Jutarnji list*, 17 September 2015

photograph of a child and a policeman, as well as one three days later. These photographs are particularly interesting because they show the interaction between children and police officers and one could argue that such photographs served as a demonstration of a "Croatia's human face" during the refugee crisis.

DISCUSSION

Although refugees and migrations, in general, have been thoroughly studied in academic papers in Croatia in terms of broader sociological issues (causes and reasons of their displacement, difficulties and problems they encounter), there haven't been systematic studies on the portrayal of refugees in the media. On the other hand, the abundant research of media reporting on an international level has shown how refugees are very often portrayed negatively (e.g. Esses, Medianu & Lawson, 2013; McKay, Thomas & Blood, 2011; Tait, Grimshaw, Smart & Nea, 2004).

The concern of this particular study was the issue of children as they are the most vulnerable group of refugees. While there haven't been significant differences in their portrayal between the two analysed newspapers (*Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list*), the major finding of the research relates to a completely different portrayal of children refugees in texts as opposed to photographs. These differences comprise of: significantly lower number of published texts with refugee children as opposed to photographs; portrayal of children as secondary topics in the texts but as dominant subjects on photographs; protection of child's identity in texts but not on photographs; texts showing children in general, while photographs mainly showing only one child. Such results speak in favour of the special use of newspaper photography – portrayal of only one child as a dominant subject of the photograph (personalized use) can be characterized as an instrument for attracting readers' attention. This is also consistent with three main factors contributing to the probability of effective media coverage of the refugee crisis as defined by Wright (2004). Dramatic images of refugees produced the most striking photographs that were the dominant feature of newspaper reporting. Consistent too with the findings was another inference of Wright about children usu-

ally “shown in the context of narratives covering more general issues” (2004: 105). This is at the same time the major criticism of the reporting in both analysed newspapers.

It is impossible to say whether the revelation of children’s identity had put in danger some of them, since even the Ethical guidelines by UNICEF recognize special situations in which the revelation of “child’s identity – their name and/or recognizable image – is in the child’s best interests” (UNICEF, Ethical guidelines – Guidelines for reporting on children, Article 5). Despite this, the Guidelines ask reporters to “always provide an accurate context for the child’s story or image” (UNICEF, Ethical guidelines – Guidelines for reporting on children, Article 2). This was not the case in the analysed material. Even though personalized photographs of children in difficult conditions have certainly helped raise the public awareness of the problems the refugees face and have helped sensitize the public, the much-needed context for photographs lacked in the majority of the cases. The same objection can be used for the texts as well since the analysed period found only one analytical text that explains the background story and calls for mobilization.¹⁴

CONCLUSION

The conducted content analysis of two Croatian national daily newspapers *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* regarding the presence and portrayal of refugee children confirmed all three research hypotheses. It too demonstrated how differently children were portrayed in texts as opposed to photographs. First, the number of texts in both newspapers mentioning refugee children was significantly lower than the number of photographs portraying them. Second, the research results demonstrated the further difference in the portrayal of refugee children between texts and photographs. As expected, children were mostly secondary topics in the texts in contrast to photographs where they mostly appeared as principal subjects. Statistical analysis of the obtained results showed significant differences

¹⁴ The text entitled “The worst is not over yet, and the trauma will stay with these children for a lifetime” was published in *Večernji list* on 25 September 2015, and interestingly is not found among the first pages in the newspapers, but on page 34.

between the number of texts and photographs as well as between presentation of children as principal or secondary subjects and serves as a confirmation of the first two hypotheses.

The third most significant difference between texts and photographs in the portrayal of children came in the form of protection/revelation of children’s identity. UNICEF ethical guidelines for reporters appeal for the protection of child identity when there is a “potential risk of harm or retribution” of “any child who is identified” as “an asylum seeker, a refugee or an internally displaced person” (UNICEF, Ethical Guidelines). It is hard to conclude whether such serious risks for the children existed. Nevertheless, research results show that both newspapers mostly protected the identity of children in texts but not on the photographs. This confirms the third research hypothesis that both newspapers evenly revealed children’s identity on photographs.

The fourth difference concerns the number of children in texts and newspapers. The majority of published texts in both *Jutarnji list* and *Večernji list* showed children in general while the majority of photographs showed only one child. All these differences serve as the evidence that both newspapers produced a different image of children in texts as opposed to photographs. While they were only sporadically mentioned in texts, they were used in a large number of photographs probably as an instrument of attraction. Photographs of children were extremely personalized – they were the main subjects, and most of them portrayed only one child.

That the children refugees (and refugees in general) were a major news story, can be inferred from the page numbers in the newspapers in which the texts (and accompanying photographs) appeared.

Another interesting finding was the overall smaller number of front pages with refugee children than expected. The descriptive analysis of front page photographs found the immediate dramatic impact of photographs – they portrayed crying and visibly exhausted children. Other relevant finding is the number of front-page photographs showing children alongside policemen in interaction and sometimes with emotional headlines such as “Let’s be human”.

One interpretation of this photographs could go along the demonstration of showing "Croatia's human face" during the refugee crisis.

Such practice is in all sense admirable, but, on the other hand, one cannot neglect the fact that majority of the published photographs lacked any context as well as the fact that there was only one analytical text on refugee children, indicating a lack of journalistic initiative to address these important issues. Journalists should take the effort and devote more space to explaining the problems of refugee children, through a higher number of quality texts about them at the expense of photographs (especially those without context).

The analysis covered a one-month period of reporting on children refugees in two Croatian national daily newspapers. Since the selected time period was also the first month of refugees' arrival on Croatian territory, it is possible that the new situation and the special conditions the country was in, rendered a sort of media frenzy that resulted in a large number of texts (and photographs) on refugees. It is possible that the manner of reporting on refugees changed through time, after this first month. Therefore, future research should include the period of the refugee crisis in all its duration in Croatia to see whether the newspaper reporting changed as the crisis progressed.

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ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE NEWS COMMENTS: THE ROLE OF MEDIA COVERAGE IN SUPPORTING ATTITUDES ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND STEREOTYPES AGAINST VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS*

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the research were to determine what attitudes towards child sexual abuse (CSA), victims and perpetrators are represented in the direct comments on child sexual abuse news, whether there is a difference in commenting with regard to the description of the victim, perpetrator and abuse in the news and whether there is an association between the specific attitudes. Quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used to analyze all CSA news published on the Jutarnji.hr news portal during 2015 (N = 78) and affiliated online Facebook comments (N = 531). The frequency of different attitudes and stereotypes within comments was recorded for each CSA news. The most prevalent were stereotypes about perpetrators, attitudes that shift responsibility from perpetrators to other persons and institutions, attitudes about CSA prevention and suppression and stereotypes about male victims. Use of the pejorative terms to describe a perpetrator, detailed descriptions of the CSA event, the disclosure of victims' identities and consensual

words to describe abuse have supported stereotypes about victims and perpetrators in the news comments. Such media coverage creates an unfavourable environment for detecting CSA and victims' recovery.

Keywords: child sexual abuse (CSA); media coverage; attitudes towards CSA; stereotypes; content analysis; online news comments

INTRODUCTION

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as the inclusion of children in sexual activities which they do not fully understand, for which they are not able to give informed consent, for which they are not developmentally prepared or which violate laws and social taboos¹ (WHO, 1999). Pre-

1 Protection of children from sexual abuse is demanded by numerous international instruments for the protection of children's rights, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Art. Article 19, Art. 34, Art. 35, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, 2000, Art. 1, Art. 2 and Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, 2007, Art. 18, Art. 19, Art. 20. The suppression of

* This paper is already published in Croatian language in: Popović, S. (2017). Analiza online komentara vijesti o seksualnom zlostavljanju djece: uloga izvještavanja u podržavanju stavova o seksualnom zlostavljanju i stereotipa o žrtvama i počiniteljima. In V. Car & M. Matović (Eds.), *Mediji, novinarstvo i ljudska prava. Zbornik radova. Zagreb: Fakultet političkih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu & Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung [Media, Journalism and Human Rights]. It is published in this conference proceedings in English language with the publisher's permission.*

valence studies conducted on national representative samples of children in Croatia show that between 8.5% and 13.7% of children in Croatia were victims² of contact sexual abuse, or between 16.5% and 18.1% if non-contact activities are included in the CSA definition (Rajter et al., 2013; Buljan-Flander, 2006). It is important to report about CSA since the media have the power to construct CSA as a social problem and relocate funds into prevention (Cheit et al., 2010). Media is an important means of primary prevention because parents use the media as the main source of information about CSA (Babatsikos, 2010). In addition, they can exert pressure on institutions when violating victims' rights or even encourage victims to disclose sexual abuse. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children of the Republic of Croatia has issued the Recommendation of the Ombudsman for Children to Protect the Privacy of Children in the Media (Ombudsman for Children, 2012), which obligates journalists and editors to protect privacy right of the CSA victim, caution when reporting on the perpetrator of intrafamilial CSA and in expressing doubts about the credibility of the CSA allegation. Unfortunately, when reporting on CSA, media may not only violate children's rights to privacy and dignity. Use of generalizations and premature conclusions may create a moral panic, media may textually victimize victims or even become a sort of guide to abusers or even sexually

CSA in the Republic of Croatia is regulated by the Criminal Code (Official Gazette 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15), the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (Official Gazette 137/09, 14/10, 60/10), 101/17, Family Law (Official Gazette 103/15), while the treatment is regulated by the Protocol on the Treatment of Sexual Violence, 2014.

2 In this paper, for the sake of easier understanding, the term "victim" is used, however, it is a concept that needs to be avoided and replaced with the term "survivor" which encourages those who survive abuse and gives them the psychological power to deal with consequences unlike the term "victim" which implies passivity and helplessness.

The regulations protecting children's privacy in the media are the Media Act (Official Gazette 59/04, 84/11, 81/13), Electronic Media Act (Official Gazette 153/09, 84/11, 94/13, 136/13), Croatian Radio and Television Act (Official Gazette 137/10, 76/12, 78/16, 46/17), Juvenile Courts Act (Official Gazette 84/11, 143/12, 148/13, 56/15), Criminal Code (Official Gazette 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15), Mandatory Relationship Act (Official Gazette 35/05, 41/08, 125/11, 78/15), and the Code of Honor of the Croatian journalists (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.hnd.hr/dokumenti>

explicit material (Popović, 2016). Media may support incorrect assumptions about victims, perpetrators and the nature of CSA (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010), thus creating an unfavourable environment for detection and disclosure of CSA. Retrospective research in Croatia and abroad confirm that most cases of sexual abuse happen in secret and never get officially reported (Buljan Flander et al., 2008; Finkelhor, 2011; Finkelhor et al., 2014; Pereda et al., 2009; Rajter et al., 2013). Believing in incorrect assumptions about CSA and stereotypes about victims and perpetrators has negative consequences on believing the victims, their recovery, prosecution of perpetrators, judicial decisions, public policy and prevention programs (Cromer and Freyd, 2009). For this very reason, scientists have become interested in media reporting and presentation of CSA and this interest is growing after 2000 (Popović, 2016). A systematic review of the CSA news research shows that current body of research has mainly been concerned with the analysis of CSA media content, media coverage of perpetrators or specific cases and prevalence of reporting on cases reported to the authorities (Popović, 2016). Except for Steven J. Collings (2002), who found that stereotypical reporting encourages stereotypical statements about the perpetrators of sexual abuse, so far no other attempts have been made to determine the role of the media in supporting the CSA attitudes and stereotypes about victims and perpetrators, at least not published in English language.

The main objective of the research was to determine which attitudes about CSA, victims and perpetrators are represented in the direct comments on the CSA news published in 2015 on the Jutarnji.hr portal, is there a difference in attitudes regarding the description of the victim(s), the perpetrator(s) and abuse in the news and whether there is an association between specific attitudes.

METHODS

There are two basic units of analysis in this research: 1. news about child sexual abuse posted on the *Jutarnji.hr* portal during 2015; 2. associated online comment(s) of the published news (only direct comments, indirect comments (comments to direct comments)

were not analyzed). The basic terms that need to be defined are *online news, child sexual abuse, attitudes and stereotypes*. Online news comments in the context of this research are a Facebook plug-in comments through which readers of the *Jutarnji.hr* portal can be included in a public discussion about the news. Facebook plug-in comments have been selected for analysis because they are easily available, they reduce the anonymity of commentators and enable them publicity among Facebook users who are not readers of *Jutarnji.hr* portal. Facebook registration request for online comments reduces the likelihood of uncivilized communication for at least two reasons: (1) it is possible to identify commentators by name and surname and making them responsible for the comments they leave; (2) other Facebook users with whom they are connected via social network get an automatic notification of their activity on the portal (Rowe, 2014). This increases the responsibility of commentators for the content they create. CSA news represents all newspaper articles published on the *Jutarnji.hr* portal during 2015 from which titles it is evident that they are exclusively or primarily about CSA, and not about another type of abuse or sexual abuse of persons who can't be considered children. The age limit of childhood in this research is in accordance with the age of consent (15 years) defined in the Criminal Code (Official Gazette 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15). The analysis also includes articles that do not specify age but use the term "child/children" instead. Attitudes refer to the evaluation of people, objects or ideas (Aronson et al., 2005, p. 217), while the stereotypes are defined as the generalizations about a group of people by which virtually identical attributes are attributed to almost all members of these groups, regardless of the actual variations between members (Aronson et al., 2006, p. 461). Stereotypical statements in the context of this research are only those statements in the comments who used expressions that attribute identical attributes to all members of the group (e.g. *all* perpetrators or *all* victims or usage of plural).

A quantitative content analysis is usually defined as systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1) or a quantitative analysis of the qualitative characteristics of the message. Coding form consisted of 21 variables divided into three groups:

1. General characteristics of media reporting and presentation of CSA (month, section, geographic orientation, dominant approach, the reason for writing, number of newsworthiness factors, sensationalism in content, sensationalism in style, type of CSA, duration of CSA, use of "consensual" or "voluntary" words for the description of abuse);
2. General characteristics of the presentation of the perpetrator (sex, age, number of perpetrators, the role of the perpetrator) and victims (gender, age, number of victims, identity disclosure);
3. A number of direct comments and stereotypical statements (for each news).

Research of attitudes and stereotypes about child sexual abuse in online news comments was conducted by qualitative analysis of the direct comment content. Using qualitative content analysis enables the detection and recording of a certain content and the analysis of the features of that content, that is, it answers questions about *what?* and *how?* (Tkalcic Verčič et al., 2010). Additionally, every comment was verified in relation to the "CSA myths" defined by Cromer and Goldsmith (2010). CSA myths are inaccurate assumptions about CSA, perpetrators and victims (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010, p. 618). In the field of CSA, these are popular, but incorrect beliefs that make detection and disclosure of CSA more difficult. The authors grouped them into four categories: (1) exaggeration or minimization of the extent of harm that CSA poses; (2) denials of the extent of CSA; (3) diffusion of perpetrator blame; (4) perpetrator stereotypes. Their categorization is supplemented by the fifth category (5) assumptions about the victims which refer to those assumptions that can't be categorized elsewhere. The frequency of the occurrence of each CSA myth is recorded in relation to every news.

SAMPLING

The news and online Facebook comments on the *Jutarnji.hr*³ portal was published during 2015. The news and comments that were inclu-

³ This research was used to test a part of the coding sheet for research that will be carried out within the PhD on a sample of five printed newspapers. Among five news portals (*Jutarnji.hr*, *Vecernji.hr*, *Slobodnadalmacija.hr*, *Glasslavonije.hr*, *Novilist.hr*), only *Jutarnji.hr* published enough news and comments during 2015 necessary to make conclusions at the level of statistical significance.

ded in the sample were chosen in the first stage using keywords in the search engine: *child sexual abuse*, *rape*, *paedophilia* and *child pornography*. Keywords are selected according to *Jutarnji.hr*'s indexes of archival articles of the homonymous thematic areas. In the second phase, every link that offers thematically similar news ("related news") was verified with respect to the year of publication.

The criteria for selecting the news in the sample were:

1. News published in 2015;
2. The news from which headlines it is possible to determine that they are exclusively or primarily about child sexual abuse. Headlines are chosen because they are used in journalism to attract readers. All news from which titles it was not possible to determine the type of abuse or which were not conclusive about the age of the victim were excluded from the analysis.
3. News in which the age difference between the perpetrator and the victim was at least three years in order to meet the criterion of the legal definition of child sexual abuse. All news in which the difference between juvenile perpetrators and victims was less than 3 years are excluded from the analysis because they relate to sexual violence amongst peers.

In the final sample (census), 78 news items and 531 online comments⁴ were selected.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data collected by research are nominal and numerical. In order to test the statistical significance of differences of independent nominal data Pearson's χ^2 test and Fisher's exact test (the last where the expected sum within one cell was less than 5) were used (Field, 2009:688-690). When appropriate, Odds Ratio (OR) was calculated. The odds ratio was used to compare relative probabilities of outcomes of occurrence of interest (e.g. whether the child's identity is

4 Immediately after the data was collected for this research, *Jutarnji.hr* changed the design on 06/05/2016, after which, unfortunately, all previous Facebook comments published on this portal have been removed. Therefore, it is no longer possible to access the comments that were analyzed in this research.

discovered in the article), given the exposure to the variable of interest (e.g., a detailed description of the abusive event in the article) and it can be used to determine if the exposure is a risk factor for a specific outcome (e.g. the odds that a journalist will disclose the child's identity if they use the detailed description of an abusive event) (more in Szumilas, 2010). Kolmogorov - Smirnov test (more in Field, 2009) was used to evaluate the distribution of numerical data. Once it was established that the data were not normally distributed non-parametric tests were used. The Mann-Whitney's test was used to analyze the difference between numerical data of two independent groups, Kruskal-Wallis test for three independent groups. In order to analyze the correlation between the particular stereotypes, Spearman's correlation was used (r_s). For analysis purposes, where appropriate, the previous compression of answers in a smaller number of categories was conducted. The exact p values are reported in the results. The statistical analysis was carried out in the Statistical Program Guide 12.0, StatsSoft, Inc., and the results are presented in graphs and tables.

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE NEWS: RESULTS OF THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The majority of news was published in February (N = 13) and May (N = 14), the lowest in November (N = 2), while the monthly average was 5.33 (SD = 3.246). Most news about CSA were events that took place abroad (55.1%), whereby the largest share of news was published in the section World News (44.9%) and in the section Black Chronicle (42.3%). Six news articles were published in the section Bizzare, only three news articles in the section News and one was the confession of the victim conveyed from the other media. Section Black Chronicle was reserved exclusively for cases of CSA that occurred in Croatia while the section Bizzare was reserved for events that took place abroad.

Most of the news coverage dealt with the specific child sexual abuse cases (93.6%), in 2015 only one news article was published that undertook a problem approach and it was dedicated to CSA in the Catholic Church. Only 5.1% of

the news carried out a mixed approach (news about a specific case accompanied by a problem approach). Problem approach implies creating awareness of the CSA problem, empowering understanding of CSA, creating consensus about policy options, and motivating action (Rowan, 2009). The news hooks were various stages of investigative and judicial proceedings 83.3% (investigation, arrest, criminal charges, indictment, trial, verdict), while only 6.4% of the news was published with the aim of alerting the public. The main reason for reporting about domestic cases was a police investigation which is still in progress (42.9%), while the main reason for reporting on foreign cases were convictions (30.2%).

News items were coded to capture the number of newsworthiness factors within each news item. The child sexual abuse newsworthiness factors are 1. upstanding accused; 2. extra violence (e.g. kidnapping, murder); 3. bizarre facts (especially strange and memorable facts such as satanism); 4. multiple parties; 5. celebrity status of the victim or perpetrator; 6. Cover-up (Cheit et al., 2010:103). A total of 143 newsworthiness were found, where most of the news contained two newsworthiness factors. The largest number of factors within one news was 4, and one-fifth of the published news (20.5%) contained 3 or 4 news value factors. Stories without newsworthiness factors were exclusively about the CSA in Croatia, while 81.3% of the multi-

factor news items covered CSA stories that took place abroad.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CSA MEDIA COVERAGE AND PRESENTATION

Most of the news was devoted to specific CSA cases (52.6%), followed by articles on cases involving more than one CSA type (sexual intercourse with a child, exhibition in front of a child, child pornography, child prostitution, sexual tourism, ritual child sexual abuse) (20.5%). Only one news article published in 2015 was devoted to ritual child sexual abuse (Figure 1).

The relative majority of news dealt with long-term abuse (44.2%). Sensationalism in the content (detailed description abuse) was present in 36.4% news, and most of them dealt with contact CSA (60.7%). A statistically significant difference was found in use of the sensationalist content depending on the stage of the judicial process. A detailed description of abuse was found more in later stages of judicial process than in news related to police investigations or arrests ($p = .020$, Fisher's exact test). Sensationalism in style (use of pejorative terms to describe a perpetrator (e.g. monster/monstrous) was found in most of the news (69.2%).

Consensual or voluntary words to describe abuse were used in the 14.3% of the news (e.g. making love, to fondle, to satisfy, relati-

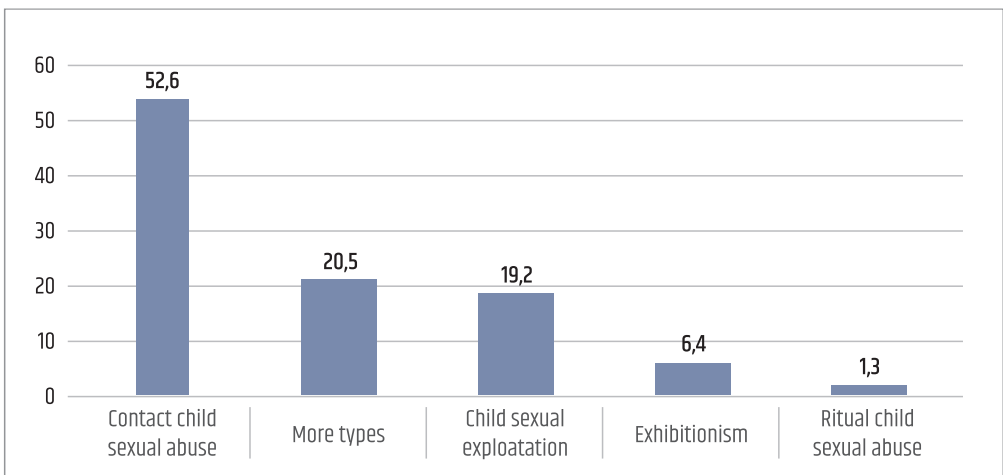


Figure 1. Prevalence of different types of CSA in news during 2015 (%)

Table 1. The use of consensual words according to sensationalist content

| Sensationalist content | The use of consensual words | | Total |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | |
| Detailed description of abuse | 9 | 19 | 28 |
| Without detailed descriptions of abuse | 2 | 47 | 49 |
| Total | 11 | 66 | 77 |
| p = .001, Fisher's exact test | | | |

onship, affair, sex/oral sex, love bite), and the abovementioned practice was used to describe mostly contact child sexual abuse (81.8%). A statistically significant difference in the use of consensual words was found depending on sensationalism in the content (Table 1).

Journalists used consensual words statistically significantly more when the victims were male. When using consensual words, the odds were 8.5 times higher for the victim to be male.

Table 2. The use of consensual words based on victim's gender

| The use of consensual words | Victim's gender | | Total |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Female | Male | |
| Yes | 3 | 8 | 11 |
| No | 35 | 11 | 46 |
| Total | 38 | 19 | 57 |
| p = .004, Fisher's exact test | | | |

The odds of using consensual words when reporting on CSA were 11.5 times higher when using a detailed description of the case than when the reporters did not provide details of an abusive event. Use of consensual words statistically significantly differed based on the victim's gender (Table 2) and the stage of the judicial process (Table 3).

The consensual words were solely used in the news coverage of later stages of the judicial process (the trial was pending or the verdict was pronounced). Although the use of consensual words was missing in most of the news, in a total of 19 covering verdicts 36.8% used consensual words to describe confirmed child sexual abuse.

Table 3. The use of a consensual word based on the stage of the judicial process

| The stage of the judicial process | The use of consensual words | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | |
| Investigation phase | 0 | 37 | 37 |
| Trial phase | 11 | 17 | 28 |
| Total | 11 | 54 | 65 |
| p = .000, Fisher's exact test | | | |

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE AND PRESENTATION OF THE PERPETRATORS

In most of the news, CSA was committed by men (87.2%). Although CSA is reported predominantly to be committed by one perpetrator (75.6%), in almost one-quarter of the news (23.1%) CSA has been committed by more than one person. When it was possible to determine the age of the perpetrator, perpetrators of different age groups were equally represented, and the least news was devoted to perpetrators younger than 30 (15.4%). There was a statistically significant difference in gender and age of perpetrator ($p = .020$, Fisher's exact test). The odds to report about female perpetrator were 10.5 times higher when the perpetrator was a person under the age of 40. There is also a statistically significant difference in the perpetrator's gender depending on the stage of the judicial procedure ($p = .000$, Fisher's exact test). The reason to report about a female perpetrator was solely an indictment, trial or verdict (confirmed CSA). On the other hand, when the perpetrator was a man, the news was covering the investigation phase where a person is still only a suspect, not necessarily guilty (37 news of the investigations and 19 news of the verdicts).

The relative majority of news was devoted to the CSA committed by a stranger (29.5%), then teachers and nannies (16.7%), members of the child's family (12.8%) and family friends or acquaintances (11.5%). Other news which described the role of the perpetrator were concerned with the CSA committed by celebrities, priests and jihadists (Figure 2).

Among all news about the CSA committed by women, almost all perpetrators were described as teachers and nannies, only one news mentioned a female family member. Moreover, the news about CSA committed by teachers and persons who formally care about children, 88.9% was devoted to the female perpetrators. Most of the CSA news used a pejorative term to describe a perpetrator (53.2%). Although no statistically significant difference was found in the use of pejorative terms based on the perpetrator's gender, the terms did qualitatively differ. Male perpetrators were described using the words: "monster, disgusting sexual monster, stepfather from hell, maniac, sick, pig, mentally disturbed, disturbed mind, demons, beasts, barbarians", while female perpetrators were mostly described with the two terms: "horny and debauched".

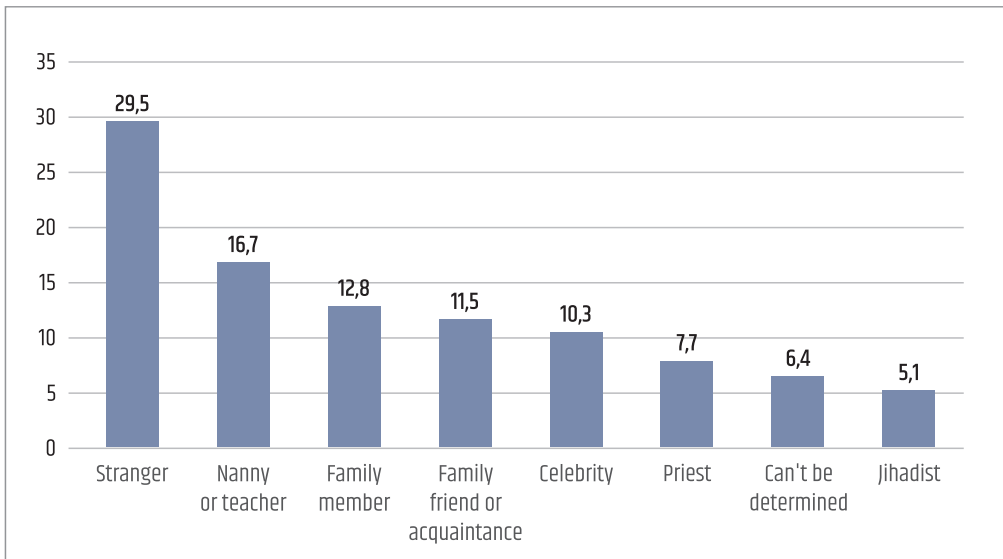


Figure 2. Description of the perpetrator in the news (%)

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE AND PRESENTATION OF THE VICTIMS

In most of the news the gender and the age of the victims of sexual abuse (74.4%) were mentioned, the victims were mostly children up to 12 years (64.9%), usually female (66.7%). Most news reported on cases involving two or more victims (59.7%). The largest share of news reported CSA of girls under the age of 12 (34.6%), followed by news in which it was not possible to determine gender and age of children (25.6%), and news in which the victims were female aged 13 and older (14.1%). Males were rarely victims in the news, especially boys older than 13 years (11.5% of all news). The statistically significant difference in the victim's and perpetrator's gender was found (Table 4).

were perpetrators of 84.6% CSA of both genders while women younger than 40 years committed 85.7% CSA against teenagers.

Of the 77 reported cases, the victim's identity was protected in most of the news (68.8%), and in only one news item it was disclosed directly, using a child's photo. However, in 31.2% of the news, the identity of the victim was disclosed indirectly (by revealing the identity of parents, family member perpetrator, place of abuse, etc.). A statistically significant difference was found in the disclosure of the identity according to the age of the victim ($\chi^2_{test} = 7.78$, $df = 1$, $p = .035$). In a total of 9 news items on teenage sexual abuse, the identity was indirectly disclosed in 8 of the items, making teenagers the only group in which the identity was mostly revealed. The victim's identity was usually disclosed

Table 4. Gender of the victim and gender of the perpetrator

| Perpetrator's gender | Victim's gender | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Female | Male | |
| Male | 37 | 11 | 48 |
| Female | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| Total | 38 | 19 | 57 |

p = .000 Fisher's exact test

When the victim was female, news presented a heterosexual abuse, only one news item was devoted to a girl that was sexually abused by a woman. On the other hand, when the victim was a boy, they equally reported on male and female perpetrators, although mostly homosexual abuse (57.9%). When the victim was a teenager, the news reported dominantly about heterosexual abuse. Male perpetrators committed 84.6% of the CSA of teenagers, and females perpetrated exclusively against male teenagers ($p = .000$, Fisher's exact test). There was a statistically significant difference in the victim's age according to perpetrator's gender ($p = .006$, Fisher's exact test). Odds to report about a victim younger than 12 were 9 times higher when the offender was a male. There is also a statistically significant difference in the age of the victims of younger offenders of sexual abuse ($p = .004$, Fisher's exact test). Males under the age of 40

when the news reported about older victims than about younger ones, and when the victim was an older male child. News also statistically significantly differ in the practice of disclosing the identity of victims depending on whether they use sensationalism in their content (Table 5).

Most of the news disclosing the victim's identity reported about the details of CSA event (66.7%). The odds that the identity of a child victim would be disclosed was 6.8 times higher when the details about the event were provided. There was also a statistically significant difference in the disclosure of the identity depending on the stage of the judicial process (Table 6).

The odds that the identity of the victims will be protected were 13.1 higher in the early phase of the investigation than during the trial and pronouncing a verdict.

Table 5. Protection of the victim's identity according to sensationalism in the content

| Sensationalism in the content | Protection of the identity | | Total |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| | Identity protected | Identity disclosed | |
| Detailed description of abuse | 12 | 16 | 28 |
| No detailed description of abuse | 41 | 8 | 49 |
| Total | 53 | 24 | 77 |
| $\chi^2_{test} = 13,836, df = 1, p = .000$ | | | |

Table 6. Protection of the victim's identity and the phase of judicial process

| Phase of judicial process | Protection of the victim's identity | | Total |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| | Protected | Disclosed | |
| Investigation | 34 | 3 | 37 |
| Trial | 13 | 15 | 28 |
| Total | 47 | 18 | 65 |
| $\chi^2_{test} = 16,452, df = 1, p = .000$ | | | |

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE NEWS COMMENTS

There have been 531 direct comments on the total of 78 news items published in 2015, including a total of 342 stereotypical statements. The gender of the commentator was not possible to determine in only two comments, while comments were mostly left by men (71.6%). A total of 32 different attitudes towards CSA was found, the ten most common are presented in Table 7⁵.

5 Other attitudes are listed according to the representation in the comments: Prison is a sufficient measure of CSA suppression; CSA occurs only in the Catholic Church; The offenders of the CSA are homosexuals; CSA occurs only in Islamic countries; Parents are responsible if their child is sexually abused; Perpetrators of CSA are members of ethnic minorities; CSA does not happen or is very rare; Sexually abused children are forever damaged and will never recover; Sexually abused children do not suffer from the CSA; The exhibitionists are not sexual abusers of children; Boys cannot be victims of CSA; There is no effective therapy for the perpetrators of CSA; The sex offender registry is the best prevention measure; Children can give informed consent to sexual relations with adults; People using child pornography will not sexually abuse a child; The perpetrators of CSA are men who are brought home by a single mother; The perpetrators of CSA are strangers to a child; It is easy

Stereotypical statements in the comments were more prevalent when news dealt with domestic cases ($U = 523.00, p = .019$), used sensationalist style ($U = 449.50, p = .028$), and in which the identity of the victim was disclosed in an indirect way ($U = 441.00, p = .029$). News published in the News World section was accompanied by comments with a small number of stereotyped statements ($\chi^2(2) = 6.996, p = .005$) in comparison to the news published in the Black Chronicle and Bizzare section. Readers were more involved in direct commenting when the identity of the victim was revealed ($U = 437, p = .027$).

Among the myths about CSA the most prevalent were incorrect assumptions about perpetrators (Figure 3), transferring responsibility for CSA to other persons or institutions, inaccurate assumptions about the measures of suppression and prevention, inaccurate assumptions about the victims, minimizing the prevalence of CSA and incorrect assumptions about the harm that CSA poses on a child.

to recognize a perpetrator of CSA; CSA occurs only in institutions; All perpetrators of CSA are pedophiles.

Table 7. Most common attitudes towards CSA in online news comments (n)

| The ten most common attitudes towards CSA in online news comments | Max | Count in all news (n) |
|--|-----|-----------------------|
| Perpetrators of CSA are monsters that need to be killed. | 14 | 102 |
| Institutions are responsible for not preventing child sexual abuse. | 6 | 41 |
| Male victims of teachers and nannies are not victims, but lucky ones. | 8 | 32 |
| Mothers mostly know about CSA in a family and support it. | 8 | 22 |
| The castration of perpetrators is an effective measure of suppression and prevention of CSA. | 4 | 21 |
| Disclosure of the perpetrators' identity is the best measure of suppression and prevention. | 3 | 20 |
| Boys want sexual experience with older women. | 7 | 15 |
| Children lie about CSA. | 4 | 11 |
| The perpetrators of CSA are mentally disturbed persons. | 3 | 11 |
| CSA occurs only in poor and underdeveloped communities. | 4 | 10 |

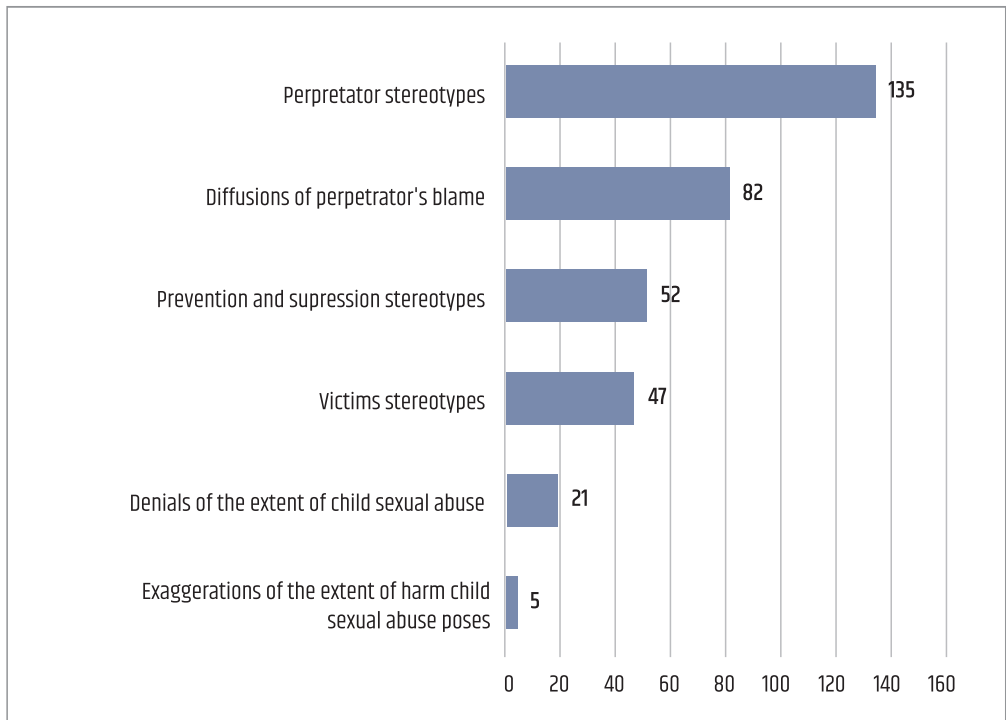


Figure 3. Prevalence of CSA myths in online comments on child sexual abuse news

ATTITUDES AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT PERPETRATORS

The stereotype of the perpetrators as monsters that need to be killed is statistically significantly more prevalent in the comments on the news where the perpetrator was a male ($U = 157.50$, $p = .009$), and the victim female ($U = 206.50$, $p = .003$), where the main reason for writing the news was at an early phase of the investigation or still unproven CSA ($U = 334.00$, $p = .046$), which occurred in Croatia ($U = 463.00$, $p = .001$) and in the news published in the Black Chronicle ($\chi^2(2)=9.948$, $p=.005$) which used sensationalism in style ($U = 446.50$, $p = .015$). This stereotype was positively associated with the attitude that institutions are responsible for CSA ($r_s = 0.49$, $p = .000$), that castration ($r_s = 0.44$, $p = .000$) and disclosure of the perpetrator's identity are adequate measures of suppression and prevention ($r_s = 0.40$, $p = .000$), and that the perpetrators are homosexuals ($r_s = 0.30$, $p = .000$).

The stereotype of perpetrators as mentally disturbed was statistically significant more present in the comments on CSA news dealing with domestic cases ($U = 639.50$, $p = .030$) and in comments on news dealing with the criminal act satisfaction of lust in front of the child than in the news dealing with other forms of CSA ($\chi^2(2) = 16,269$, $p = .004$). This stereotype was associated with the attitude that the exhibitionists will not sexually abuse children ($r_s = .347$, $p = 0.02$), while the latter is related to stereotype that perpetrators are homosexuals ($r_s = 0.45$, $p = .000$).

The opinion that the perpetrators are easy to recognize is positively associated to the stereotype that the perpetrators are members of ethnic minorities ($r_s = 0.49$, $p = .000$) and with the attitude that the prison sentence is an effective measure of the suppression and prevention of CSA ($r_s = 0.53$, $p = .000$). The attitude that there is no effective treatment for the perpetrators is related to the stereotype that perpetrators are members of ethnic minorities ($r_s = 0.33$, $p = .000$). There is also a positive correlation between the attitude that perpetrators are homosexuals and the attitude that perpetrators are monsters that need to be killed ($r_s = .30$, $p = .007$) and that castration is an effective measure of CSA suppression and prevention ($r_s = .314$, $p = .005$).

ATTITUDES WHICH TRANSFER RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE PERPETRATOR TO OTHER PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The stereotype that children lie about CSA was statistically significantly more prevalent in the commentaries of news in which the perpetrator was a female ($U = 172.50$, $p = .000$), victim male ($U = 292.50$, $p = .010$), teenage age ($U = 304.00$, $p = .012$), when the identity of child victims was unprotected ($U = 503.50$, $p = .002$), when details of abusive event ($U = 563.50$, $p = .005$) and consensual words to describe CSA were used ($U = 234.50$, $p = .005$).

A stereotype about non-offending mothers⁶ as those who need to know about CSA and support it was more present in the commentaries on the news in which the perpetrator was a family member, family friend or acquaintance ($U = 421.00$, $p = .002$) when the victim was a younger child ($U = 300.00$, $p = .039$) and where the child's identity was disclosed ($U = 486.00$, $p = .000$). This stereotype was positively associated with the attitude that victims of CSA are forever damaged ($r_s = 0.40$, $p = .000$), that CSA is rare ($r_s = .393$, $p = .000$), that perpetrators are strangers ($r_s = 0.33$, $p = .003$) or the child's step-father ($r_s = .35$, $p = .002$), and that disclosure of the perpetrator's identity is the best measure of CSA prevention ($r_s = 0.35$, $p = .002$).

The belief that parents are responsible when their child is a victim of CSA was positively related with the attitude that it is easy to recognize a perpetrator of CSA ($r_s = 0.49$, $p = .000$), that children are able to give informed consent to sexual relations with an adult ($r_s = 0.49$, $p = .000$) and that CSA occurs only in the Catholic church ($r_s = 0.33$, $p = .004$).

Attitude that institutions are responsible for CSA was statistically significant more present when

⁶ This term refers to mothers whose children are sexually abused by their husbands/partners or other family members. The term is used to raise awareness, contrary to the widely held belief, that most mothers whose children are sexually abused in a family or which occurred in a family home have no knowledge of abuse. Perpetrators are usually very skilled in manipulation and children keep abuse as a secret. In this analysis, the stereotype was recorded only when the mother was blamed in the comments on the news which did not offer any information that the mother had knowledge of the abuse.

the victim was a child ($U = 284.50$, $p = .015$), a female ($U = 284.00$, $p = .033$), and the perpetrator acted independently ($U = 417.00$, $p = .032$). Also, it was more present in articles on CSA in Croatia ($U = 463.00$, $p = .001$), published in the Black Chronicle ($\chi^2 (2) = 11.207$, $p = .003$) and in articles that used sensationalism in the content ($U = 520.50$, $p = .015$).

ATTITUDES ON CSA SUPPRESSION AND PREVENTION

The attitude that castration is an effective measure of the CSA suppression and prevention was statistically significantly more present in news commentaries about the events that took place in Croatia ($U = 505.00$, $p = .000$), published in the Black Chronicle ($\chi^2 (2) = 14.071$, $p = .001$), in which police investigation was still in progress and no indictment has been filed against the perpetrator ($U = 344.50$, $p = .041$), and in which the number of newsworthiness factors was lower ($U = 376.00$, $p = 0.041$). The view that disclosure of the perpetrator's identity is the best measure of prevention and CSA suppression was also more present in news commentaries on events from Croatia ($U = 509.50$, $p = .003$) published in the Black Chronicle ($\chi^2 (2) = 12.897$, $p = .003$).

ATTITUDES AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT CSA VICTIMS

The stereotype of male victims as "lucky ones" and stereotype that all boys want sexual relationships with adult women were statistically significantly more prevalent when the perpetrator was a younger person ($U = 300.00$, $p = .016$), female ($U = 68.00$, $p = .000$; $U = 102.00$, $p = .000$), and the victim male ($U = 228.00$, $p = .000$; $U = 247$, $p = .001$) teenager ($U = 269, 00$, $p = .003$, $U = 285.50$, $p = .006$). They also appeared more when journalists used consensual words ($U = 132.00$, $p = .000$, $U = 165$, $p = .000$), sensationalism in content ($U = 551.50$, $p = .004$, $U = 578.00$, $p = .019$), in foreign stories ($U = 630.00$, $p = .015$; $U = 647.50$, $p = .030$), published in section Bizarre ($\chi^2 (2) = 25,789$, $p = .000$; $\chi^2 (2) = 15.778$, $p = .002$) and when the victim's identity was disclosed ($U = 450.50$, $p = .000$; $U = 477$, $p = .001$). These opinions were positively related to the attitude that boys want sexual initiation by older woman ($rs = .91$, $p =$

$.000$), that children lie about CSA ($rs = .67$, $p = .000$), that children do not suffer from CSA ($rs = 0.33$, $p = .000$), and that boys cannot be CSA victims ($rs = 0.25$, $p = .027$).

ATTITUDES ON CSA PREVALENCE

An opinion that CSA occurs only in the poor and underdeveloped countries was statistically significantly more present in the comments on news with multiple perpetrators ($U = 429.00$, $p = .011$), while the stance that CSA is happening only in the Catholic Church on the news with more newsworthiness factors ($U = 434.00$, $p = .040$). The attitude that CSA occurs only in the poor and underdeveloped communities is positively associated with the view that CSA only occurs in institutions ($rs = 0.38$, $p = .001$) and in the Catholic Church ($rs = 0.273$, $p = .016$).

ATTITUDES ABOUT HARM THAT CSA POSES ON A CHILD

The opinion that the CSA victims are forever damaged and will never recover was positively associated with the attitude about non-offending mothers ($rs = .40$, $p = .000$), perpetrators as monsters that need to be killed ($rs = 0.32$, $p = .000$), and castration as an effective measure of CSA suppression and prevention ($rs = .26$, $p = .020$). A statistically significant difference in commenting CSA harm was not found with regard to characteristics of news reporting.

DISCUSSION

During 2015, *Jutarnji.hr* did not report about CSA as a serious social problem, but more as a problem of a minority of unlucky children. The results confirmed that *Jutarnji.hr* rarely reported on CSA, dealt with almost exclusively specific CSA cases, where the main reason for writing was a judicial process against the perpetrator. The findings are consistent with foreign research which found that media dominantly deal with specific cases, usually police or court reports (Kitzinger, 1996; Mejia et al., 2012; O'Neil et al., 2015). Interestingly, the only time *Jutarnji.hr* undertook a problem approach it covered CSA in Catholic Church, which can also create an impression that CSA in the Catholic Church is more frequent than in other churches or institutions. Ross E. Cheit, Yael Shavit and Zachary Re-

iss-Davis (2010) found that in the period from 1992 to 2004, there was a general decline in US media interest towards CSA, except in the case of scandals within the Catholic Church, while Michael J. Breen (2007) found that Irish newspapers and television, when a profession of the perpetrator was known, predominantly reported on priests.

This research confirmed the newsworthiness theory which deals with editorial criteria in deciding which news will be reported (Perišin, 2008). *Jutarnji.hr* was more inclined to report about CSA when the news contained two newsworthiness factors, especially more serious CSA with multiple victims. Cheit et al. (2010) found that newspapers are likely to report about events that have greater news value, that is, where the accused is a prominent person or celebrity, when additional violence is present, bizarre facts about a case, multiple victims or perpetrators and presence of cover-up. Moreover, TV news has on average three newsworthiness factors, which is more than average in newspaper CSA news (Shavit et al., 2014).

Stereotypes of perpetrators found in the commentaries were often the reflection of other social stereotypes, especially stereotypes about members of minority groups (migrants, ethnic minorities and homosexuals), thus additionally stigmatizing already stigmatized social groups. Language for describing perpetrators in the most news was sensational and served the demonization of the perpetrator, especially the male sex offender. In the research of the media narrative when reporting on CSA in Canada, Moira O'Neil and associates (2015) also found the narrative "punish the perpetrator" as dominant, especially the male sex offender. This research has confirmed that the use of pejorative terms for describing perpetrators encourages the stereotyping of perpetrators as monsters that need to be killed. This is a dangerous stance because it creates the impression that perpetrators are easy to recognize, that we cannot personally know them which can discourage a child to disclose and report abuse due to a fear they will not be believed. Most sexual abusers leave the impression of a kind, respectful and caring person which enables them to deceive parents and children, make friends with them thereby reducing the likelihood that the child will disclose

abuse (Buljan Flander, 2003, p. 90). Stereotypes of perpetrators as mentally disturbed individuals are also harmful because, besides creating the impression that the perpetrators are easy to recognize, it shifts the responsibility away from the perpetrator. Only a small percentage of abusers suffer from mental illnesses, and perpetrators generally come from different social, ethnic, and professional age groups making them literally impossible to identify (Sanderson, 2005, p. 18).

Consensual words to describe abuse (e.g., making love, to fondle, affair) in particular were used in the news where victims were male, mostly in cases where abuse is proven. The attitude towards male victims as "lucky ones" who want sexual activities with an older woman and who are lying about CSA, may have a profound negative effect on readiness to disclose and report abuse, believing the victims which may affect the sanctioning of perpetrators. It is often believed that girls are at greater risk to be victims than boys (Buljan Flander, 2003, p. 91). However, girls and boys differ in the tendency to disclose sexual abuse due to the cultural stereotype of a man as an active initiator of sexual relations. Therefore, boys may find it more difficult to talk about what they have experienced, feel more pronounced stigmatization and it is much more embarrassing for them to discover the truth, especially in homophobic cultures (Sanderson 2005, p. 14-15). On the other hand, it is often thought that women do not engage in CSA due to the cultural belief that they are custodians and passive recipients, moreover, totally incapable of sexual aggression. When an older woman sexually abuses a boy in early adolescence, such acts are considered as an introduction to sexuality rather than abuse (Sanderson, 2005, p. 19-20). Such attitude is particularly dangerous since it implies that women cannot sexually abuse children, that boys do not suffer from the consequences of sexual abuse, and that outcomes for female victims are more serious than for a male. Chris Goddard and Bernardette J. Saunders (2000) in their research of national newspapers in Australia also found that journalists often use a language which reduces the severity of abuse. Roland V. Landor and Susana A. Eisenclas (2012) found that male offenders were more often defined as perverse

paedophiles, while female perpetrators are somewhat romanticized, or displayed with more sympathy and excuses are used to reduce the seriousness of abuse.

Despite the Recommendation of the Ombudsman for Children on the Protection of Children's Privacy Right in the Media (Ombudsman for children, 2012), the identity of sexually abused children was revealed on the Jutarnji.hr portal. This research has confirmed that a greater likelihood for identity to be disclosed was in the cases in the late stage of the judicial procedure, when it comes to older, male victims, and when details of abuse were reported. Particularly worrisome is that the news which disclosed the identity of the victim had a greater number of comments. Sensationalist news and those who disclosed the identity of the child especially encouraged attitudes which diffuse the perpetrator's blame. The attitude that children lie about CSA is particularly dangerous because children do not report CSA because of the fear they will not be trusted. According to research by Kim Oates and associates (2000) as well as Nico Trocme et al. (2003) false accusations represent only 2% to 4% of the reported CSA (all by Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010, p. 628). The opinion that institutions are responsible for CSA can create an impression that the perpetrators are easy to recognize and that the institutions had to know about the abuse which simplifies the complex nature of CSA. Attitudes about non-offending mothers were common because the public find it difficult to comprehend how male family member can abuse a child without the mother's knowledge or approval. The danger of this attitude is a support to a belief that mothers should know if their child is sexually abused and hence they tacitly allow it. It is hard to expect that mothers, in general, are able to determine that a child is sexually abused by a family member because they are unfamiliar with CSA indicators, skilfully manipulated by abusers, while the perpetrator at the same time manipulates a child to be silent. Transferring responsibility to the mother causes the feeling of guilt (Sanderson, 2005, p. 163), and can discourage a child to disclose abuse because of the fear that his/her mother will have to be prosecuted. The results on identity disclosure are in line with Lise M. Jones and associates (2010) who analyzed

US newspapers in 36 states and found that in 37% of the news at least one identifiable data was published and in 3% the victim's name. Journalists also published detailed descriptions of abuse which violates the child's right to privacy, dignity and victimizes a child, this time by media.

Attitudes regarding prevention and suppression of CSA were most commonly present in comments on domestic cases when readers are particularly interested in solving the problem in the community. However, the belief that disclosure of the perpetrators' identity is the best safety measure is wrong because the majority of perpetrators never get officially reported to the authorities. Focussing exclusively on "known" perpetrators turns the attention away from those who are not discovered and who currently abuse children. On the other hand, because of the fear they will be detected, perpetrators may improve methods of manipulation in order to stay undisclosed (Sanderson, 2005:169). Since persons accused of CSA are demonized, disclosing the identity in the stages of an investigation when abuse is not yet proven can endanger an innocent person. The castration of perpetrators is not an effective measure of CSA suppression because it completely blurs an image of CSA and it creates the impression that castrated persons cannot sexually abuse children on others ways and that perpetrators cannot be women.

The attitude that CSA occurs only in the poor and underdeveloped communities hides the risk of neglecting the reality of CSA in their own community and neighbourhood which shakes the public into a false sense of security. Such attitudes appeared more often in the comments on news about multiple perpetrators in the poor countries. Victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse can be members of higher and lower social classes, degrees of education or material status (Sanderson, 2005:15). Such reporting supports a social stereotype about deviant members of underdeveloped communities. Finally, the premise that victims are damaged for the rest of their lives and that they will never recover can endanger a victim's recovery (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010: 623-624), but also prevent the detection of CSA when a child does not want to be viewed through the label of "CSA victim".

CONCLUSION

Media coverage of CSA can have serious implications on the social perception of CSA, perpetrators and victims. Opinions and attitudes that are formed in the media, can prevent the victim to disclose abuse, affect the negative reactions of the person to whom the child entrusts, and endanger victim's recovery and legal processes.

The language and descriptions used in news support an environment that is completely unfavourable for children's safety, especially for child victims of female perpetrators, for male victims, and children victims of abuse within the family. Use of consensual words to describe abuse, details about abusive events, the disclosure of the victim's identity and the use of pejorative terms to describe a perpetrator are particular negative journalistic practices which support stereotypical attitudes. Additionally, the absence of comment administration allows a comments section to become a free media space for hate speech and other inappropriate content. Despite the recommendations of the Ombudsman for Children, articles published on the Jutarnji.hr portal violated the victim's right to privacy and dignity by disclosing abusive details, making them victimized, this time by the media. It is further problematic that such detailed descriptions can be used as sexually explicit material.

Education of journalists and editors is essential when it comes to reporting on CSA because media can play an irreplaceable role in primary prevention of CSA. Media coverage that does not support stereotypes and which tackles the CSA problem could adequately inform the public and raise public awareness. Only in such way we could stop communicate stereotypical attitudes about sexual abuse, perpetrators and victims in the child's environment.

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SUPPLEMENT

PUBLICATION ETHICS STATEMENT

By submitting their manuscripts to conference proceedings, the authors took full responsibility for the adherence to ethics standards (e.g., ethical approval of their study), respect of copyrights, and absence of plagiarized ideas, texts, and graphics. Authors were required to sign cover letters considering publication ethics, which were submitted along with the manuscripts.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Members of the editorial board were excluded from the decision-making process regarding articles in which they have a conflict of interest.



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

9:00 am – 10:00 am

REGISTRATION

10:00 am – 10:15 am

OPENING CEREMONY

10:15 am – 11:30 am

KEYNOTE LECTURES

Keynote speaker 1: PROF. SABINE ANDRESEN, PhD,
Frankfurt University, Germany:
CHILDREN'S CONCEPT OF TRUST AND DISCLOSURE.
EMPIRICAL RESULTS FROM CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Keynote speaker 2: PROF. ASHER BEN-ARIEH, PhD,
Director of the Haruv Institute, Jerusalem, Israel:
FROM CHILD WELFARE TO CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING:
WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM CHILDREN

11:30 am – 12:00 pm

COFFEE BREAK

12:00 pm – 13:15 pm

I SECTION:

CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICE & POLICY

Improving reasoning in child protection practice: What more is needed than just decision making tools?,
RAVIT ALFANDARI, MYERS-JDC-BROOKDALE INSTITUTE, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Child protection in Germany: Balancing care and control in the frame of school social work,
KATHRIN BECK, UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND, KUOPIO, FINLAND

Accountable decision making: An ethnographic study on child protection casework,
TIMO ACKERMANN, ALICE SALOMON UNIVERSITY, BERLIN, GERMANY

The voice of the child - a policy analysis on children's participation in the Dutch protection system,
HELEN BOUMA, MONICA LOPEZ LOPEZ & HANS GRIETENS, UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Possibilities of cooperation of institutions, NGO's and University: Needs assessment of residential care,
TEODOR SABOLIĆ, LUCIJA VEJMEJKA & LJILJANA BAN, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

13:15 pm – 14:15 pm

LUNCH

14:15 pm – 15:00 pm

II SECTION:

THE WELL-BEING AND EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND CHILDREN AT RISK

Child psychological well-being and its associations with the type of home,
GEMMA CROUS, UNIVERSITY OF GIRONA, CATALONIA, SPAIN

Feeling good, feeling bad in residential centers. Perceptions and evaluations of children in care,
JOAN LLOSADA-GISTAU, GEMMA CROUS, CARMÉ MONTSERRAT, UNIVERSITY OF GIRONA, CATALONIA, SPAIN

Small voices Big dreams. What children have to say about violence,
MIRIAM TORAN BEDAMR, MACARENA CESPEDES QUINTANILLA, GONZALO DE CASTRO,
CLARISA GIAMELLO, EDUCO FOUNDATION, BARCELONA, SPAIN

15:00 pm – 16:00 pm

III SECTION:

RESILIENCE, VULNERABILITY, AND NEEDS OF CHILDREN AT RISK

An analysis of Israeli Youth Law (Care and Supervision): The case of adolescent girls at-risk,
SHIRAN REICHENBERG, THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Pathways into Resilience: Experiences of young people in rural Ireland.
LUCIENNE VAN ERWEGEN, QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

The 333 children in residential care in Ireland: How are they getting on in school?,
BARBARA MARTIN, QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

Evaluation of the prevention program for primary school-age children at risk: qualitative analysis,
ORJANA MARUŠIĆ ŠTIMAC & IVA GALOVIĆ, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NIKOLA TESLA &
NATAŠA VLAH, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA, CROATIA

16:00 pm - 16:30 pm

BREAK

16:30 pm – 17:30 pm

IV SECTION:

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

A restorative framework - An innovative strategy for care sector,
RAZWANA BEGUM BT ABDUL RAHIM, MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT, SINGAPORE

Restorative practices and their potential to increase protective factors and resilience of children
with behavioral problems in care,
BRANKA PEURAČA, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

A multi-agency approach to identifying and addressing safeguarding issues and special educational needs
in "at risk" populations of young people using a restorative practices framework,
NICOLA PRESTON, INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON,
BUCKINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM

The influence of restorative practices on the creation of social capital in youth work, community work
and schools in the Republic of Ireland,
MARY CLARKE BOYD, INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SLIGO, REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

9:30 am – 10:00 am

REGISTRATION

10:00 am – 11:15 am

KEYNOTE LECTURES

Keynote speaker 3: PROF. GORDANA BULJAN-FLANDER, PhD,
Director of the Child and Youth Protection Center of Zagreb, Croatia:
MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND INTERAGENCY SERVICES IN CHILD
PROTECTION: HEADING TOWARDS THE COURT OF LAW

Keynote speaker 4: LANA PETÖ KUJUNDŽIĆ, Juvenile Court Judge,
President of the Department for Juveniles at the District Court
of Zagreb, Croatia:
CHILD ABUSE AND MALTREATMENT, LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL
ACCOMPLISHMENT IN CROATIA, 20 YEARS: IMPLICATIONS
FOR PRACTICE

11:15 am – 11:45 am

COFFEE BREAK

11:45 am – 13:00 pm

V SECTION:

PREVALENCE, ETIOLOGY AND CHARACTERISTICS
OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

Sexual abuse of children in Croatia: Phenomenological and etiological perspectives,
DALIDA RITTOSSA, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA, CROATIA

Gender differences in child sexual abuse,
IRMA KOVČO VUKADIN, JADRANKO MESIĆ & VEDRAN ŽGELA, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

Multivariate analysis on children begging as organized labour exploitation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
ELMEDIN MURATBEGOVIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Manipulating equals abusing children in divorce - Child and Youth Protection Center's battle and mission,
MIA ROJE, GORDANA BULJAN-FLANDER & RENATA ĆORIĆ ŠPOLJAR,
CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION CENTER OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

Unthinkable, unspeakable - violence by colleagues in residential care,
FRIEDERIKE LORENZ, FREE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN & MEIKE WITTFELD,
UNIVERSITY OF DUISBURG-ESSEN, GERMANY

13:00 pm – 14:45 pm

LUNCH

14:00 pm – 14:45 pm

POSTER EXHIBITION

Youth awareness of their rights in legal proceedings in the Republic of Croatia,
VESNA KATALINIĆ, JANA KUJUNDŽIĆ, BOŽIDAR NIKŠA TARABIĆ & LANA PETO KUJUNDŽIĆ,
BRAVE PHONE, ZAGREB, CROATIA

Health effects on children with incarcerated fathers,
JULIANA AJDINI & AIDA NDREA, UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA, ALBANIA

Gender and diversity in Daycare Centers (Kitas). From the perspective of children: Lessons in theory and practice,
LAURA HENNIG, BERLIN, GERMANY

Helping children and families in high conflict divorces,
TAMARA ŽAKULA DESNICA, LJILJANA BUBNIĆ, IRIS ANTOLOVIĆ & NATAŠA MAKARUN,
HOME FOR CHILDREN "TIĆ", RIJEKA, CROATIA

Media coverage of children in "out-of-home" care: Content analysis of Croatian daily newspapers,
STJEPKA POPOVIĆ & KRISTINA KAMPIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA, CROATIA

14:45 pm – 15:45 pm

VI SECTION: SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS AND VICTIM'S PERSPECTIVES

Responding to children's disclosures of sexual abuse. Reported experiences of adult survivors
and the anticipated actions of potential confidants drawn from a community sample,
NADIA WAGER, UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD, UNITED KINGDOM

Intervention in cases of sibling sexual abuse: What can professionals learn from experiences and perceptions
of siblings involved?,
NOAM TARSHISH & DAFNA TENER, HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

Future expectations of adolescents in residential care and associations with outcomes,
YAFIT SULIMANI-AIDAN, TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY, ISRAEL

The visibility of a hotline for missing children in Croatia,
IRMA KOVČO VUKADIN, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

15:45 pm – 16:15 pm

BREAK

16:15 pm – 17:00 pm

Assessing parenting in the context of placement decisions on maltreated infants and toddlers:
An evaluation study,
ANNE-FLEUR W.K. VISCHER, HANS GRIETENS, ERIK J. KNORTH & WENDY J. POST, UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN,
THE NETHERLANDS

Strengthening families to prevent violence against children,
JASMINKA ZLOKOVIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA, CROATIA, NADJA ČEKOLJ, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA &
DIANA NENADIĆ-BILAN, UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR

Tić - psychosocial assistance for abused and neglected children in Rijeka, Croatia,
TAMARA ŽAKULA DESNICA, HOME FOR CHILDREN "TIĆ", RIJEKA, CROATIA

17:00 pm – 18:00 pm

**VII SECTION: CHILDREN IN THE MEDIA AND
MEDIA COVERAGE OF RISKS**

Presentation of children refugees in Croatian daily newspapers,
MARTINA SOKO & DUNJA MAJSTORVIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

Social media as a source of prejudice and stereotypes: Case study of Tin Šunjerga,
GORDANA VILOVIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

Media role in supporting child sexual abuse myths and stereotypes: Content analysis of online CSA
news and comments, STJEPKA POPOVIĆ, UNIVERSITY OF RIJEKA, CROATIA

The figure "stranger" as child sexual abuse perpetrator: Construction and meaning in educational
discourses represented in popular media,
ULRIKE MUND, GOETHE UNIVERSITY, FRANKFURT, GERMANY

18:00 pm – 18:15 pm

CONFERENCE CLOSING



CHILD MALTREATMENT AND WELL-BEING

challenges across borders, research and practices

international conference for researchers and professionals

Berlin (Germany), 21st – 22nd, March 2019

Call for abstracts

It is our honor to invite you to join us at the second interdisciplinary international conference on “Child maltreatment and well-being: challenges across borders, research and practices” which will be held at **Freie Universität Berlin (Germany), 21st – 22nd, March 2019**. It is organized by a network of researchers from Social Work, Educational Sciences, Sociology and Psychology who are working on child maltreatment and well-being in Croatia, Israel, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Catalonia (Spain) and Germany. The conference will be about the current circumstances in which children and young people are growing up, focusing on challenges concerning child maltreatment and well-being. This will be done through considering contemporary social developments across borders as well as current political frameworks.

The conference is inviting an interdisciplinary community of scientists and professionals working in the field of child maltreatment and child well-being. In this setting we would like to discuss current circumstances and interexchange experiences from professional observations and scientific work. Our aim is to encourage a broad discussion on various fields which are concerned with child maltreatment and well-being. Topics will be:

- Meanings of children’s well-being in institutions and families,
- Children’s participation, children’s rights and children’s inclusion,
- Prevention and disclosure of child abuse and violence against children,
- (Re)organization of child protection,
- Child protection in institutions (e.g. residential and non-residential care, schools, refugee camps),
- Effects of poverty and other forms of inequality and social exclusion on children,
- The situation of refugee children,
- Socio-political and social frameworks for child protection work across borders.

With the conference we want to open a space to facilitate knowledge to cross boundaries of countries as well as disciplines. In this spirit everybody who would like to contribute is welcome to submit an abstract (see practical regulations below) and to actively participate in the conference.

Submissions for oral presentations (one presenter: 15 min.+ 10 min. discussion; two presenters: 25 min. + 10 min. discussion) and posters may come from professionals dealing with child maltreatment and well-being, researchers (research projects and PhD-students) and students who are studying and working in the field of child maltreatment or child well-being. Further information is provided on the webpage: www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/cm2019

Formal regulations

Abstracts for posters or presentations must be submitted by 30th September 2018. Please send it as a pdf-file to:

contact-cmw-2019@ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de

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| <p>1st page: name(s) of the authors with the correspondent author highlighted mail address country of current residence institutional affiliation; if there is one</p> | <p>2nd page: mark whether it is an abstract for a poster or an oral presentation title abstract (all incl. max. 350 words) outline of the talk (incl. tackled question, description of the subject, summary of the results)</p> |
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