Children's life in superdiversity contexts: Impacts on the construction of a children's citizenship – the Portuguese case

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Abstract
This article develops a reflexive and interpretive analysis of the life of children in superdiversity contexts, systematizing some of its impacts on the construction of a children's citizenship, with particular reference to the Portuguese case. The article promotes the conceptual construction of the child in the 21st century through the correlation of qualitative analysis variables based on a multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary theoretical framework. The article introduces the child protection system in Portugal within a framework of European and international influences. It identifies the indicators present in public policies and in the social welfare system that affect child protection in a cross-analysis with the professional practices that intervene with children and families. The author addresses the questions of the ecosocial dimension in the territorialized intervention of family policies in contemporary and multiple approaches to superdiversity. For policy-makers and practitioners in local government, NGOs and social services, appreciating the dimensions and dynamics of superdiversity has profound implications for how they might understand and deal with modes of difference and their interactions within the population. The article concludes with a systematization on the current problems regarding the child as a citizen in contemporary society.

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Life of children in (super) diversity contexts and impacts on the construction of a children's citizenship

The child protection system in Portugal is characterized by the open method of coordination (OMC), based on the partnership and network relationship between the different stakeholders promoting child welfare. OMC is also recognized as an effective instrument for the definition of public policies in the fields of employment; social protection; social exclusion; gender equality; pensions and health. It is based on the strengthening of partnership and cooperation between organizations, institutions, services and citizens. It assumes relevance in the social security sector, distinguishing the social protection of citizenship, the protection of the family and the welfare subsystem.

According to Rodrigues (1999), the conceptualization of social assistance in the 1970s was marked by concerns about the development and reform of the social security system, defining itself as promoting the active participation of all citizens in social life, by creating the necessary stimuli for the development of the capacities of people and groups in the promotion of their social well-being.

In contemporary societies, the issue of the child has received greater attention from governments and international organizations in both developed and developing countries due to endogenous and exogenous factors related to the lack of minimum living conditions and the imbalance in demographic rates influenced by falling birth rates and also by new forms and cultures of life and family. Since the 1990s, we have seen an accumulation of European and international directives in this field and consequently a diversity of specific legislation in each country. However, we can conclude that the greatest guarantor of the protection and well-being of the child remains the Social State based on two fundamental principles:

- The State providing assistance, guaranteeing all its citizens a minimum of material goods . . . either by creating and providing the conditions under which they can obtain them for their work, or, if this is not possible, by taking their place, providing itself with the necessary means to achieve that objective. (Moreira, 2007)
- The welfare state, requiring the state to have a policy of income distribution and a policy of public investment in social facilities for children.

The state and civil society should ensure that the child is properly cared for when the parents or other persons responsible for the child do not have the capacity to do so. They should respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family in guiding the child in a manner appropriate to the development of the child's capacities.

All children have the inherent right to life, and the state has an obligation to ensure the child's safety, survival and development. It has an obligation to protect and, if necessary, restore the fundamental elements of the child's identity (including name, nationality and family relations). The child has the right to live with their parents unless this is considered incompatible with their best interests; and the right to express themselves freely on matters that concern the child. Children also have the right to express their views, to obtain information, to make it public, without border restrictions, and to be protected

against intrusion into their private life, family, residence and correspondence, and against illegal offences against their person. The child has the right to be protected against any work that endangers their health, education or development, as well as against the use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and against their exploitation in production and trafficking.

The diversity of social, local, residential and cultural contexts of children's lives today constitute a challenge for social integration based on citizenship values as a way of experiencing humanitarian values in a real life context (Pavan, 2016). The promotion of citizenship in contexts of diversity is today a reality of contemporary society, which places culture, customs, art, and the individual and collective thinking of relationship groups by kinship or community relationship at the centre of the social question. Let us look by way of example at the gypsy ethnicity: at present it is a minority that is integrated by education as well as by intra-family relations and by residence in mixed neighbourhoods and communities.

Social inclusion is a concept characterized by action, requiring the definition of public policies, instruments, the mobilization of human and financial resources, the construction of social infrastructure, and the mobilization and participation of the subject as actor and citizen in the exercise of full social citizenship.

According to the practical guide *Children on the Move, from Protection towards a Quality Sustainable Solution* (International Social Service General Secretariat, 2017: 19), 'care solutions for children on the move (if any) are short-term and rarely involve a robust assessment of a child's individual needs. When it comes to protecting children on the move, the focus today is to provide emergency shelter and basic needs. This is necessary, but inadequate. States fail to provide concrete solutions and long-term (re)integration that consider the social, educational and professional needs of children on the move.' In addition to these responses, the child as a person has special needs which expose them to certain risks and which are not really assessed, and the child is rarely placed at the centre of decision-making. The same source states, 'care measures for children on the move rarely address the evolving nature of the child's migration experience or their views and ambitions'. These children integrated into migratory movements (forced or voluntary) are even more vulnerable to unsafe migration processes, human trafficking and exploitation.

Each year we celebrate the World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, based on the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As a first step, we must question the importance of both the Declaration and the World Day for the Improvement of Humanity as well as what impacts it has on the paradigm shift and what implications it should have for the transformation of the social model: 'cultural diversity is as necessary for mankind as biological diversity is for nature' (UNESCO, 2002).

In speaking of diversity we open a plural dialogue at the human, cultural, religious, ecological, linguistic and anthropological level, which is part of a diversity of socio-political contexts associated with new social realities in contemporary society: namely migratory flows, refugees, humanitarian crises caused by armed conflict or political persecution, not forgetting the matrix of the European area characterized by free movement and mobility. When we reflect on diversity we find several elements of complexity in its

definition because being a plural concept, but very much influenced by the dominant cultures, leads us to treat it today as Superdiversity, in an interconnection of factors, causes and contexts in search of new identities and new individual and collective social behaviour.

At the ideological and normative level, we enter into the debate on the recognition of ethnic diversity and the right of individuals to their culture of origin, participation in and the adherence to the common values of the host society (Inglis, 1996; Oliveira, 2020). In this context, the state plays an important role in defining policies to protect ethnic minorities regarding guarantee of their human rights in the host society, preventing stigma and/or racism, and full integration into society (Marques, 2003).

In my opinion, any debate on diversity and/or superdiversity should offer some clarification of the foundations and values that underpin this concept. It focuses on a political and in some cases ideological management perspective of controlling effects and preventing causes or risk factors in societies with a strong impact of mobility and migration flows. It focuses on the human rights perspective based on the democratic principles and values of society, which recognizes citizenship and the participation of each and every citizen equally. It focuses primarily on orientations around specific groups that are frequently designated as vulnerable groups (e.g. ethnic minorities), or it partly seeks through discourse to reduce inequality, but in practice highlights social inequality in people's daily lives. Taylor et al. (2012) distinguished between the concepts multiculturalism and interculturality – referring to their being more rhetorical than programmatic. The author acknowledged that the semantic differences between the prefixes 'multi' and 'inter' are significant and useful, the prefix 'multi' emphasizes the recognition of different cultures, while the prefix 'inter' refers to integration in interaction. At the present time, along with that debate, we have the prefix 'super' – which in my conception means the interface between different elements including: groups, policies, contexts, cultures, values, and enables better cooperation among differentiated actors who cross interests, knowledge and experiences that enhance society's innovation and social and human development.

Second, Vertovec (2007), referring to diversity in the United Kingdom, states that this new environment is, in his understanding, characterized by complex interactions of variables between widespread 'clusters' of newly arrived immigrants, with multiple origins and transnational links, who are still differentiated by their socio-economic conditions and by their category of social group stratified before the law. However, the term is not consensual among the group of thinkers on the subject, namely Pavlenko (2017), who denounced the import of the concept of superdiversity into the field of linguistic diversity, calling into question its contribution to the progress of science, or its impact on the improvement of the living conditions of migrants and refugees who remain in situations of socio-linguistic inequality. In this context, I consider it important to offer some reflection on the model of globalization that has affirmed itself worldwide. According to the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), the great need for strengthening and deepening knowledge and policies lies in the social dimension, which is seen as having the potential to intervene in the negative social impacts produced by economic globalization.

Child protection system in Portugal and in the European and international context

The Children and Youth Protection Law in Portugal (147/99) works in a renewed way and is configured on a model of participatory protection and social responsibility, through the local Commissions for the Protection of Children and Youth, in an expanded modality (with greater involvement of civil society) and a restricted modality (more technical) with the objectives of deepening the participatory and interdisciplinary diagnosis of the problem of children and youth. This new legal framework also introduces the recognition of parents as a dependent factor for the implementation of an intervention with children, recognizing their obligation and social responsibility (art. 9) and the non-opposition of the child/young person aged 12 years or over (art. 10), except in situations considered urgent (art. 91).

In 2018, 33,324 child cases were examined by the Child Protection Commissions at the national level. There were 14,007 protective measures, and the largest number of these were applied to male children and youth, at 56%. The 15–21 age group accounted for 42% and the 11–14 age group represented 23% of the total measures taken. In the Portuguese system a predominance of such measures are applied in the child's environment, namely support for parents. According to data provided by the child protection system (CPCJ, 2018), the main situations requiring child protection are: (1) negligence, with 31.2% (the data also show that there is a slight increase in negligence cases – where a child is deemed to be in danger – between 2017 and 2018); (2) domestic violence, at 22.7%; (3) harmful behaviour in childhood and youth, at 17.5%; and (4) situations abusing the right to education, at 16.1%.

Regarding the situation of domestic violence, in the case of children, we speak essentially of vicarious violence involving 3789 cases, with a higher incidence in males, at 52.7%. Almost all cases of domestic violence (99%) refer to situations of exposure to violent behaviours. However, in 1% of situations children are also the victims of physical abuse. Cases of physical abuse total 997, including two cases of female genital mutilation and 120 cases of corporal punishment (0.0008 per 1000) (12% of the total), with a higher incidence among boys (52%). There was a total of 333 sexual abuse cases, mainly among girls (81%). Domestic violence and dangerous behaviours among children or young people increased by 0.5 and 0.7% respectively from 2017 to 2018, and situations related to education stabilized at 16%. It should be noted that reports of physical abuse represent 5% of the total and those of sexual abuse 2%, representing an increase of 86 and 73 cases, respectively, compared to 2017 (CPCJ, 2018).

The child has gained from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989): the best interests of the child constitute the general guiding principle. Children's recognition as a social category has initiated major changes at the legal, social and cultural levels, requiring the construction of a sustainable and quality childhood on a worldwide scale. The dialogue between cultures and societies has been characterized by conflicts and instability amid globalization and major migratory flows. The promotion of pluralism, diversity and freedom requires processes of exchange between different civilizations in order to create greater social cohesion among peoples. One of the major migratory flows is that of peoples coming from around the Mediterranean, so it is important to understand

that: 'the Mediterranean legacy is a complex set of ideas, images and feelings which have been cultivated for centuries and are still cultivated in this "sea", which was called mare nostrum by the ancient Romans and which could be given the same name again, if we understand the word nostrum as referring to each and every one of us as human beings' (Cassano and Zolo, 2007 in Benguerna and Mangone, 2016: 6).

The Mediterranean has become a social and spatial reality of a political, economic, social, cultural but also humanitarian crisis. It is a reality that challenges child protection systems to prepare through lifelong education and training competent professionals to intervene with and for children; that they have a solid knowledge of the meaning of children's rights and the ability to explain and use theories promoting children's well-being, to promote and defend children's rights before different public social agents. To develop policy recommendations at local, national and international levels, both in developed and developing countries, the knowledge of children's culture of origin and values can assume a strategic role in overcoming the current humanitarian crisis we are witnessing, and become an opportunity to review child protection policies and practices.

> In a universe characterised by the confluence of ideas, men, religions and various civilisations, the challenge is to articulate the different scientific, technical and local resources/synergies, involving entrepreneurs (industry and commerce) and local communities in issues relevant to their daily lives. It implies a reflection on policies, that is, on the forms of recognition and protection of each person as an equal and for whom equal opportunity for expression and self-fulfilments be guaranteed. (Benguerna and Mangone, 2016: 5)

Knowledge of each person's region of origin and cultural values will also provide a solid basis for the protection and promotion of an effective cultural heritage capable of bringing a new future paradigm from the legacy of different cultures. Culture includes our entire system of beliefs, values, attitudes, customs, institutions and social relations. It shapes the way we perceive the world (including ourselves) and how we interact with it; just as the global crisis facing humanity is a reflection of our collective values, behaviours and lifestyles, so it is above all a cultural crisis (UNESCO, 1998).

In 2017, UNICEF estimated that more than 150 children died crossing the central Mediterranean from North Africa to Italy, although we have to consider the invisibility of reality, as the actual number of victims (children) is certainly higher, as many children on the move are not accompanied, so their deaths are not recorded (UNICEF, 2017a).

According to the ILO, '73% of the world's population do not have or have very limited access to social protection, resulting in the perpetuation of extreme poverty and hardship in the lives of the majority of the world's inhabitants' (ILO, 2014). Social security is one of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[1] with the duty to ensure a minimum level of well-being and social support for all citizens, although it is the responsibility of governments to design and organize their national social protection systems.

It is not only important to analyse and respond to the need for access to competent social protection systems for all, but it is also essential to analyse and reconfigure the role of professionals and intervention practices in the problem – those who work with the people involved in these systems. We must analyse the factors that strengthen social

welfare in the macro context of a social development model, where social protection takes on a transformative role, leading to positive economic results, more sustainability, stability, and harmonious societies.

The entry of the concept of superdiversity into the debate of social and human sciences and public policies has brought with it new elements to be considered in models of social protection and welfare in contemporary societies involved in a paradigm of mobility and movement of persons. Traditionally, we have conceived social protection as a social policy to combat and improve insecurity, health problems, economic and social vulnerability and to guarantee the social minimums of life for all. If, on the one hand, we intend to see social protection as emancipatory, we reduce it to an accommodating welfare action, of dependence of the person on the system that reduces fears and gives security, and confidence that the social problems experienced by people are not precarious. The advance of scientific knowledge challenges us to build transformative social protection systems, reducing inequality and building social justice. We speak of a social protection system that has a preventive and sustainable effect; one that strengthens the resilience of individuals, families and communities and their ability to react to life risks.

One of the goals of the social protection system is to improve the quality of life of vulnerable people who live in precarious situations without or with few resources available to support themselves, which might be brought about naturally or by human hand. A comprehensive social protection system contributes to poverty reduction, reduces inequalities, contributes to social cohesion and establishes the basis for socially sustainable economic development (Basu and Stuckler, 2013).

Second, as Padilla et al. (2013: 63) state, 'it is also necessary to invest in promoting the valorisation and incorporation of the various knowledges (knowledges of nurses, social workers, users) and a sensitive attitude to diversity on the part of all health professionals, with the aim of humanising care and promoting proximity in the doctor–patient relationship'. Both professionals and social and community resources are facilitating agents for the promotion of equity, performing professional practices based on diversity. According to the same authors, it is necessary to promote an institutional and formative culture for diversity for the different actors in the process, namely through changes in social practices. Civil society should assume a more proactive role through the innovation of its practices and processes of transformation and social change appropriate to the territorial reality and to the whole population. These should be sustained and articulated with broader public policies capable of incorporating the participation and empowerment of people from the perspective of citizens themselves and with the capacity to develop their social and full citizenship in the global society to which they belong.

Some indicators present in public policies and the social protection system and their effects on child welfare

Social policies are part of the context of public policies, understood as 'a set of interrelated actions taken by an actor or set of political actors concerning the choice of objectives and means to achieve them in the context of a specific situation, and these decisions, in principle, must be situated within the power that these actors have to achieve them' (Jenkins, 1978, in Pereirinha, 2008: 17). Public policies are defined in legal norms,

which express their aims, according to the area of action (Ferreira, 2017). Social policy differs from other areas of intervention of public policies in that it pursues aims to promote well-being in society, the meaning of which is to meet social needs, which seek to improve social justice in society. 'This means understanding the concept of need as social construction, relative to society' (Pereirinha, 2008: 20; Pereirinha and Murteira, 2016).

At the political level there are countries with a strong centrality of power, highlighting the existence of a dominant class (elite) and a dominated class (the people). There are people experiencing a life of subservience, oppressed and vulnerable groups, with a concentration of wealth and of non-redistribution.

European governments have been unable to deal with a recurrent and predictable fact of the contemporary world: the transit of people fleeing war, poverty, natural disasters and the lack of the prospect of a decent life. The refugees are confronted in a world that has been able to break down the barriers to achieve free movement of capital and information, but which has multiplied the number of walls and fences between physical borders and regions of tension.

Portugal was considered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the period 2001–2008 to be a country in the Euro zone experiencing low economic growth. This was rated on the weakness of the Portuguese economy, associated with weak growth and low productivity and an increase in its indebtedness and especially that of households.

In May 2011,[2] the Portuguese government started its Economic and Financial Adjustment Programme (FSAP), based on three pillars: (1) the sustainability of public finances; (2) the stability of the financial system; and (3) competitiveness and structural reforms (Mendes, 2015). In 2013, the Portuguese economy showed some revival and there was an increase in GDP three years after the memorandum of understanding with the *Troika*, and after the withdrawal of the financial assistance programme in June 2014.

The crisis manifested itself through indicators of life and well-being in the Portuguese population and the targets set in the wake of the crisis, which affected the most vulnerable and unprotected groups in society. We give as examples some indicators of poverty in the austerity period between 2008 and 2013.[3] According to the Statistical Data from the European Union (EU-SILC),[4] and from the National Institute of Statistics (INE), regarding the Income and Living Conditions of the Portuguese population, we can see that the risk of poverty rate[5] in Portugal on average has worsened with the intervention of *Troika* (2011–2014). The Portuguese citizen earns an average monthly income of about 411 euros, very close to the poverty line, whose reference value is 409 euros per month.

According to the latest data from INE,[6] the risk of poverty and social exclusion in 2017 was 21.6%, higher than 2017 by a percentage of 1.7. In 2017, 17.3% of residents in Portugal were at risk of poverty, severe material deprivation reaching 6% of the population in 2018 (0.96 pp less than 2017). There was a slight reduction in the risk of poverty among the under-18s, from 19.0% in 2017 to 18.5% in 2018, and among the elderly population, from 17.7% to 17.3%. The poverty rate for working-age adults was 16.9%, up 0.2 pp on 2017 (16.7%).

In Portugal, the groups most at risk of poverty are children (although the at-risk-of-poverty rate has been decreasing), older people (contrary to children we have seen an

increase in their vulnerability), single parents, families with three or more children, but also the isolated and the unemployed. It is also important to highlight the vulnerable situation inherent in certain groups such as ethnic minorities, notably Roma communities, and homeless people.

One of the major challenges inherent in the country's situation is income inequality, which in Portugal has always assumed significant values. 'In 2016, Portugal had the 5th worst score in the EU-28 on the Gini Coefficient and the 8th worst score on the S80/S20 indicator'.

Another challenge to be highlighted is housing. Since the economic crisis, Portugal has seen significant increases in housing prices, with relevant impacts on the most vulnerable people. The European Commission itself in its reports on Portugal warned that 'affordable housing could become a problem for low-income households, given recent increases in property prices. 29.1% of the resident population on lower incomes are burdened with housing costs. Furthermore, the recent increase in housing prices is likely to worsen the situation for low-income and socially disadvantaged people, especially in the country's two largest cities' (European Commission, 2019).

By the end of 2018, there were 134,198 families benefiting from RSI (Rendimento Social de Inserção, i.e. income support) and 282,195 individuals. In terms of age, 86,638 were under 18 years of age, which is indicative of the weight of children among the beneficiaries. In terms of gender, women (144,701) are still in greater numbers but the difference with men (137,494) is not very high.

Also, for 2018, the average benefit per individual was 115.17 euros and per family 258.23 euros. In 2019, the total amount of the RSI rose to 189.66 euros for a single adult. Despite these continuous increases we still face a benefit that, although relevant in reducing extreme poverty, is still far from adequate in promoting a decent life for the people who receive it. In a European context marked by unemployment, fragile living conditions and social exclusion, the adequacy of minimum income schemes is fundamental for the promotion of greater social and labour participation of people.[7]

As regards poverty in households with children up to the age of 18, they are at risk of poverty as long as their income is below the adult poverty line. According to data from Portugal we can observe the at-risk rate of children in poor households, as well as the percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion and of severe child material deprivation (www.pordata.pt/).

The macroeconomic scenario of the crisis in Portugal shows that its effects are not only an economic concern, but also a situation with a strong social impact, in particular on the well-being of people and especially the most vulnerable groups. The poverty indicators in Portugal show that during the crisis period, with particular intensity throughout the duration of the External Financial Assistance Plan, the social situation of individuals, families and children worsened.

The austerity measures implemented during the *troika* period had direct repercussions on the well-being of families – together with the worsening of the economic and financial situation of the country – in particular the protection and well-being of children in terms of health, education and state social support for families, especially those most in need. The high levels of unemployment which have affected a large number of families with children, associated with the increase in situations of serious economic deprivation,

also cause high emotional and social instability, which has translated into consequences in the lives of the children.

The UNICEF Child Alert bulletin from February 2017 documents the extreme risks facing refugee and migrant children during the perilous journey from sub-Saharan Africa into Libya and across the sea to Italy. Refugee and migrant children and women routinely suffer sexual violence, exploitation, abuse and detention as they make their way along the Central Mediterranean migration route from North Africa to Europe. A survey of refugee and migrant children found that 75% had experienced violence, harassment or aggression at the hands of adults at some point during their journey, while nearly half of the women and children interviewed reported sexual abuse during migration – often multiple times and in multiple locations (UNICEF, 2017b).

The complexity of the social situation of children in Europe is characterized by various forms of deprivation and inequalities. According to Eurostat data, in 2016, 26.4% of boys and girls in the EU-28 lived at risk of poverty or social exclusion; in Portugal 27% were exposed to this risk. Migrant, refugee or persecuted and unaccompanied children have their lives marked by the processes of vulnerability of their families (parents), which are highly characterized by job insecurity and different levels of education. These children, without legal recognition in the host country, are exposed to material deprivation at home and their condition as migrant children, constituting influencing factors in their living conditions. In 2017, a quarter of the refugees and migrants who arrived in Europe across the Mediterranean Sea were minors, fleeing conflict and poverty (UNICEF, 2018). In this group of children, we must remember those children who remain invisible because of their special needs and who, in addition to effective rights, need special rights, namely: special education, more care and better systems of protection and social welfare.

It is important to question how we apply the concept of well-being in social intervention practices, which promote a value, a constitutive element of a full citizenship of each and every person, who, as a part of society, has as the human right to the possibility of access to the best conditions and quality of life.

Multiple approaches to superdiversity in the ecosocial dimension and territorialized intervention

Over the last two decades, we have witnessed significant changes in public and European policies aimed at children, but there are no obvious implications for the renewal of professional practices, i.e. we continue to give preference to individual practices and devalue group and community practices characterized by interdisciplinary models. Such practices could emerge in a new theoretical framework, more sustained by scientific research (science) and in new paradigms of intervention, namely partnership and the network. Such an interdisciplinary intervention would be contextualized in an ethical structure that facilitates it. Starting from the concept that ethics is a structure of values that informs our practice, we need an environment that inspires professional action. It is a principle of freedom that leads to the autonomy and citizenship of the subject and constitutes an attitude towards life (principles and values). According to this pattern, it is important to understand the principles that should guide interdisciplinary intervention: namely, it is

not only the encounter between different disciplines, but essentially the transition between different realities and social contexts. Interdisciplinarity implies a metalanguage that respects principles and the heterogeneity of knowledge. Today's global social reality calls for a greater intersection between disciplines, allowing us to discover a more integral and less partial view of the problems (Banks and Nøhr, 2008; Gilligan, 1982; Robertis, 2003; Vertovec, 2007).

Culture is an inextricable part of the complex notion of sustainability. It is an arbiter in the difficult trade-offs between conflicting ends about development goals. 'The recognition of cultural diversity adds a crucial dimension to strategies that consider sustainability as an element that facilitates the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of development. In this sense, cultural diversity can be considered as a key cross-cutting dimension of sustainable development' (UNESCO, 2009: 25).

Reflecting on or making a reflective analysis of child and family protection policies in contemporary times, we must do so in an ecosocial dimension and within a framework of analysis of a territorialized intervention, because its action takes place at different levels of social organization, with the intervention of different stakeholders, including the citizen and within a transnational societal framework in the context of globalized society (Ferreira, 2017).

There are multiple contemporary social problems in the globalized world: capitalism has globalized distribution, exchange and consumption, but also people, ideas, the state, institutions, de-territorializing them and/or territorializing them according to their fundamental objectives and strategies. Examples of this are migrations, refugees, unaccompanied children and the societal model of mobility and consequent internationalization.

Local social action makes it possible to know social needs and identify local potentialities and synergies, forwarding an analysis that promotes programmes and services in response to these identified needs, as challenges to local politics and as a challenge to the knowledge of social actors in the field of planning. According to Cardoso, 'the realisation and permanent updating of social diagnoses and the planning of actions to be implemented, require the participation of the different actors involved' (Cardoso, 2012: 186, in Ferreira; 2018: 262).

At present, the problem lies in the way we operate the set of policies, means and resources available in an effective and efficient way to promote the quality of life of the citizen, to improve the productive frameworks of society and achieve greater equity in the distribution of goods and services. According to Rodrigues (2014) 'at the technical level, the formulation and design of public policies, the processes of implementation and evaluation of results and impacts require specific professional skills, resulting from capacities for analysis and mobilisation of information, as well as technical-scientific knowledge of different disciplinary areas and specific knowledge relating to the analysis, management and evaluation of public policies' (Rodrigues, 2014: 13–14, in Ferreira, 2018: 263).

The inclusion of the territorial aspect in the design of public policies is associated with a reconfiguration of the logics of state intervention and with a change in the way public action is administered, becoming co-produced locally by a diversity of public and private actors. In this sphere of intervention, the need for collaborative actions between partners arises. I present as challenges the understanding of the literacies among the

different actors that intervene in the protection system; taking care of the communication flows that continue to be guided by the top-down process rather than bottom-up, which calls into question whether the voice of those who have no voice is being listened to This leads to ethical dilemmas in the intervention between the various levels of intervention: more specifically between the social model and the judicial model.

This process of social change is based on the constructivist paradigm. It is centred on the competences and capacities of the citizen and of the partnership. It is guided by a logic of action in partnership, in a network intervention and social citizenship, which includes the recognition of the whole citizen as a subject of rights and essentially of their human dignity (human rights approach) (Ferreira, 2011).

The ecological model is based on the perspective of the interaction between human and the social environment, and on an adaptive exchange of the life cycle. It develops in people and communities a co-responsibility in the improvement of the social and daily environment. Networking represents a commitment to the reconstruction of bonds of solidarity, which is guided by the model of social networks, and fosters new ways of understanding and reading social reality in a context of globalization and sustainable social development.

According to the concept of '*ecodevelopment*' (Strong, 1992), the basic principles of this new vision of development are the satisfaction of basic needs; solidarity with future generations; participation of the population concerned; preservation of natural resources and the environment; the development of a social system and the guarantee of employment, social security and respect for other cultures; and education programmes (Ferreira, 2018: 264).

The paradigm of sustainability (Sachs, 2002), currently very much established in contemporary society, integrates Social Sustainability – through the improvement of the population's quality of life, equity in the distribution of income and the reduction of social differences, with the active participation of subjects. In this context, we highlight the relevance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10 'Reducing Inequalities' and the Global Standards for Social Work, as well as the principles, values and ethics that should underpin redistributive and social equality-promoting policies, in the promotion of greater territorial social cohesion.

Advocacy is a fundamental approach of social professions in highly resourced social protection systems, or in environments where social protection is entirely based on culture, religion, or aid-dependent contexts, in order to preserve and improve social relations, promote social integration, and make relations between people harmonious and welfare. According to, Scheneider and Lester (2001), exploring the 'potential of each person' is fundamental to social and human development.

The current refugee crisis also challenges us to question the sustainability of the protection and welfare system today, considering the deficit of positive outcomes of protection policies. Social protection systems are agencies of social transformation, focused on building solidarity within and among communities, and promoting self-determination, democratic participation, to enhance and strengthen voices in society at large – on the global level.

Conclusion

It is in a web of contradictions and complexities that contemporary society finds an area of innovative intervention and, at the same time, structural and conjunctural dilemmas

that highlight the need for scientific knowledge. It is fundamental to analyse superdiversity in the framework of human rights, freedoms and guarantees, recognizing a citizenship accessible to all human beings where monetary and power issues occupy a higher place in a competitive and skills-based society. The internationalization of practices is today a response to the challenges of globalization, where the local and the global are recognized as important, with an emphasis on emancipatory practice and social and human development, whether carried out locally or internationally, and the professional responsibility to be active in the global world .

The issue of values is another fundamental dimension in education for a participatory citizenship, especially when we face the danger to life of people living in communities of war, conflict, vulnerability, poverty and environmental pollution (the case of India), who face the risk of life by journeys across sea and land, with the aim of reaching stable and safe communities where they seek shelter, peace, security and social integration.

In the process of welcoming ethnic minorities, the role of professionals in local intervention is to promote social rights, social justice and equality, and local policies (territorially-based) that promote an active and participatory civil society.

The sooner societies recognize social rights, the sooner the exercise of those rights will become an important objective, as will their relationship with the basic aspects of citizenship and democratic society, and even more so when the 'rule of law' is also a rule of rights (Ferreira et al., 2016: 290).

Professionals should know how to respect and use in their interventions the principles of uniqueness, freedom and self-determination of each citizen, respect for the intimacy and private life of the subject, the autonomy of the person, recognizing their competences and capabilities, and interdependence in relation to the rights and duties that are recognized for all citizens in society. To look at humans in their relationship between their personality and the social environment requires the use of the method of social action knowing–being, in the development of an intentional and interpersonal process. We need to move away from the paradigm knowing the problem/acting, to the paradigm: knowledge–transformation/action.

Integrated and collaborative approaches assume a particular role in social integration, promoting the full participation of each and every citizen in social, cultural, economic and political life, as a human right and according to the principle of equal opportunities for all, regardless of their origin, gender, race or age. It focuses on the ability of the person to enhance personal, social and relational skills that will help him/her to exercise his/her citizenship, using the active and accessible social resources and policies to promote innovative responses through the networks of Social Solidarity and the participation and recognition of the person as a partner in the intervention.

A sustained intervention in diversity/superdiversity needs to change and innovate interprofessional intervention practices in the child protection system through a *cultural revolution or better mentalities*, reinforcing solidarity between people, promoting a dialectic relationship of commitment between caregiver and care, respecting the rights of others, in the family, in the community and in society, i.e. training for interprofessionality and not only for interdisciplinarity.

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Notes

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2. Translation of the content of the Memorandum of Understanding on Economic Policy Conditions, 17 May 2011. Available at: www.bportugal.pt/pt-PT/EstabilidadeFinanceira/ Documents/MoU_PT.pdf
3. Living Conditions and Income Survey (EU-SILC) conducted in 2014 (INE); www.ine.pt; www.statista.com/topics/2481/portugal/
4. The EU-SILC, in Portuguese, Survey for Living Conditions and Income, was formally launched in 2003.
5. In 2014 (post-*Troika*), the proportion of individuals with an equivalent income below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, which corresponds to 60% of the median national income per equivalent adult, was 27.5 % of the population (metadata – Eurostat).
6. Portuguese National Statistics Institute; www.ine.pt; www.statista.com/topics/2481/portugal/
7. EAPN, Poverty Watch Portugal 2019; www.eapn.pt/dimensao-europeia

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Résumé

Cet article développe une analyse réflexive et interprétative sur la vie des enfants dans des contextes de surperdiversité, systématisant certains impacts sur la construction de la citoyenneté des enfants, avec une incidence sur le cas portugais.

La construction du concept d'enfance au XXIe siècle est revue à travers une corrélation multivariée de variables soutenues par un cadre théorique (multi et) interdisciplinaire, et le système de protection de l'enfance au Portugal se présente dans un cadre d'influences européennes et internationales.

L'identification d'indicateurs dans les politiques publiques et dans le système de protection sociale ayant des effets sur la protection de l'enfance est présentée dans une analyse croisée avec les pratiques d'intervention professionnelle auprès des enfants et des familles.

J'aborde également les enjeux de la dimension éco-sociale dans l'intervention territorialisée des politiques familiales avec des approches contemporaines de la superdiversité. Pour les responsables politiques et les professionnels du gouvernement

local, des ONG et des services sociaux, apprécier les dimensions et les dynamiques de la superdiversité a de profondes implications pour comprendre et traiter la différence et ses interactions au sein de la population.

Je conclus par une systématisation des problèmes actuels liés à l'enfant en tant que citoyen dans la société contemporaine.

Mots-clefs

Enfant, protection sociale, contextes, superdiversité, Portugal.

Resumen

El presente artículo desarrolla un análisis reflexivo e interpretativo sobre la vida de los niños en contextos de superdiversidad, sistematizando algunos impactos en la construcción de la ciudadanía de los niños, con incidencia en el caso portugués.

La construcción del concepto de infancia en el siglo XXI se revisa mediante una correlación multivariada de variables apoyadas en un marco teórico (multi e) interdisciplinar, y el sistema de protección de la infancia en Portugal se presenta en un marco de influencias europeas e internacionales.

La identificación de indicadores en las políticas públicas y en el sistema de bienestar social con efectos de protección infantil se presenta en un análisis cruzado con las prácticas profesionales de intervención con niños y familias.

También abordo las cuestiones de la dimensión eco-social en la intervención territorializada de las políticas familiares con enfoques contemporáneos sobre la superdiversidad. Para los responsables de la formulación de políticas y los profesionales del gobierno local, ONGs y servicios sociales, apreciar las dimensiones y dinámicas de la superdiversidad tiene profundas implicaciones en la forma de entender y tratar la diferencia y sus interacciones dentro de la población.

Concluyo con una sistematización sobre los problemas actuales relacionados con el niño como ciudadano en la sociedad contemporánea.

Palabras clave

Niño, bienestar, contextos, superdiversidad, Portugal.