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Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Children and Youth

Discovering attitudes towards prejudices among youth in Poland: perspective of professionals working with youth.

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: Discovering attitudes towards prejudices among youth in Poland: perspective of professionals working with youth.

Keywords: Prejudices, Social Work, Education, Anti-Oppressive Framework

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the attitudes on prejudices and discrimination among Polish high school students. It investigates reasons for negative perceptions against minority groups and the role that social work could play in promoting inclusivity. The empirical research, which drew on social identity theory, oppression theory and critical pedagogy investigate the prevalence of prejudices among young people as well as the obstacles that professionals working in both formal and non-formal education encounter. It highlights the role of schools in changing young people's viewpoints and fostering inclusive environments. The research questions focus on the extent of prejudices among students, the experiences and perspectives of professionals, and the potential of Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the oppressed" in addressing these issues in Polish educational settings. The study uses a mixed method research design that allows both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The research identifies key areas of prejudices, expresses the viewpoints of professionals on mitigating prejudices, and investigates the efficacy of current initiatives. The research tests the intergroup contact hypothesis and rejects its efficacy in the Polish educational setting. In conclusion the research presents the guidelines for social workers and educators to combat prejudice and encourage critical thinking among Polish youths.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Throughout history, many terrible conflicts have arisen as a result of differences between two groups that are rooted in intergroup divisions. Whether it is the racial divides, the class disparities or the religious conflicts, the intergroup tensions have fueled some of history's most tragic events (Duckitt, 2006). These conflicts often manifest as favoritism towards one's in-group and derogation of out-groups, defined by factors like nationality, religion, ethnicity, or ideology (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner (1979) in their social identity theory underscore how individuals derive part of their self-concept from group memberships, leading to in-group pride and potentially negative attitudes towards out-groups. The complexity of intergroup relations lies in assessing whether sentiments like favoritism or derogation are the primary drivers. Prejudice, rooted in false beliefs and negative attitudes often leads to discriminatory acts and oppression (Mackie & Smith, 1998).

Despite strides towards inclusivity and globalization, prejudices persist, preserving discrimination and oppression. The European Union's (EU) commitment to prohibiting discrimination based on various grounds reflects broader efforts towards a more equitable society. However, the implementation of anti-discriminatory regulations in Poland highlights a gap between theory and practice, prompting the need for further research. Social psychology warns against assuming freedom from prejudices, particularly those that remain subtle and ingrained (Duckitt, 2006). Understanding the historical context and psychological mechanisms behind intergroup relations and prejudices is essential for addressing systemic oppression and fostering inclusivity. This background information provides the foundation for investigating particular types and consequences of prejudices in Poland, as well as the role of social work and other professionals in the school environment in addressing it.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SIGNIFICANCE

Structural oppression, which includes the constraints and systemic violence that marginalized groups face, has an impact on many social and economic settings, showing itself in power relations that span from family homes to the national levels. This widespread issue, based on historical patterns and societal norms, shapes the experiences of ethnic minorities and other marginalized communities around the world (Kolluri & Tichavakunda, 2022). Despite worldwide initiatives by organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the EU to address these disparities, significant progress remains unclear demonstrated by the situation in Poland.

Poland represents the widespread struggle against oppression, as evidenced by the systematic discrimination and violence faced by minority groups such as LGBTQ+ community, women, migrants, and refugees. The recent war in Ukraine highlights both humanitarian gestures and systemic shortcomings within Poland's response. Although the government facilitates the entry of Ukrainian refugees, there are concerns about discriminatory practices against non-Ukrainian groups, LGBTQ+ community, Roma, stateless people and persons with disabilities (the Fundamental Rights Report 2023). Furthermore, instances of hate speech and racially motivated violence on the Ukrainian border emphasize the persistent challenges faced by minority communities (Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, 2023).

Within this context, understanding prejudices and its manifestations is of great importance. Poland's homogeneity, combined with societal dynamics shaped by factors like religion, history, and media influences, provides perfect circumstances for prejudices to grow stronger (Boguszewski et al., 2020; Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2021; Bandura, 1977). These prejudices, whether directed towards refugees, LGBTQ+ community, or women, contribute to a hostile social environment with far-reaching implications for mental health and social cohesion (Meyer, 2003; Fenteng, 2023). The necessity for macro-level measures for combating prejudices that take into account regional nuances and cultural dynamics is becoming more widely recognised (Malcolm et al., 2023).

Social work emerges as a critical player in this arena, tasked with advocating for social justice and inclusivity (Meyer, 2003). Understanding the regional variations in prejudices within Polish high schools and the perspectives of professionals working with youth is essential to inform targeted interventions (Piekut & Valentine, 2021). Furthermore, viewing schools as instruments for positive change stresses the importance of educational environments in encouraging acceptance and addressing discriminatory attitudes (Zirkel, 2008; Andreouli & Sonn, 2013). Integrating theories such as Oppression Theory, Social Learning Theory and Critical Pedagogy offers a framework for promoting critical consciousness and transformative education among youth (Bandura, 1977; Freire, 1970). Thus, the theoretical part of the thesis lays the foundation for a thorough examination of prejudices, discrimination, and the role of social work and education in tackling these serious social problems. By examining the specific context of Poland, this study hopes to shed light on general patterns of discrimination and develop measures for creating a more inclusive and equitable society, particularly in education.

Schools have an important role in influencing young people's perspectives and can help to minimize prejudices. Working with youngsters is essential for creating a more inclusive society in the future. Schools often mirror greater societal concerns, making them places to research prejudices.

The overall objective of the study is:

1. Investigating prevalent prejudices among high school students in Poland to identify key areas of bias and analyze the perspective of professionals working with youth in both, formal and non-formal settings.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Exploring the Youth's perception regarding prejudices in the socio-cultural context of Poland.
2. Discovering the main challenges encountered by professionals when addressing prejudicesss within formal and non-formal educational contexts with Youth in Poland.
3. Discovering the main suggestions that professionals from formal and non-formal educational settings believe are effective for tackling the prejudices.

This research study will assess factors influencing attitudes towards prejudices, evaluate existing programs and initiatives in the school environment, and emphasize the importance of creating inclusive environments through empirical data analysis.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to stay focused on the objectives, the study addresses the following research questions. The three research questions are identified to explore the perspectives of students and professionals on the topic of prejudices in Poland. They also serve as a point of discussion for the implementation of the elements of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed when working with youth in Poland to tackle the prejudices.

1. What is the prevalence of prejudicial attitudes towards out-group members among high-school youth aged 14-21 in Poland?
2. What are the perspectives of professionals engaged in youth work regarding the prevalence and manifestations of prejudices within their respective working school environments?
3. To what extent can the principle of 'Critical Consciousness' outlined in Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" be utilized by professionals working with youth in Poland as a framework for addressing and mitigating prejudices?

The thesis presents a theoretical framework, exploring oppressive theory and Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity and categorization theory, which delve into intergroup contact processes. This framework thoroughly explains the progression from prejudices (affect) to discrimination (behavior) and structural

oppression. The empirical section presents quantitative questionnaire results on high school students' attitudes toward prejudices in Poland. Additionally, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with youth professionals in Poland enriches understanding of prejudices in school environments. The conclusion offers key recommendations for youth professionals, emphasizing revised intergroup contact, parental influence, and fostering critical approaches to oppression. This work strengthens the role of social work in Poland by using it as the core to anti-oppressive practices. It also offers insights for enhancing the role of social workers in Polish schools.

2. FROM PREJUDICE TO OPPRESSION

A theory is a fundamental ground for the understanding of the phenomenological concept in the social work field. It is used as a collection of coherent ideas that direct the social work practice (Poulter, 2005). While the concepts provide a measurement framework for understanding and addressing complex issues in society and social work practice. Structural or systemic oppression is defined as limitations and systemic abuse that marginalized groups experience as a result of social institutions, laws, and power dynamics (Moreau, 1979). It is a problem faced by minority groups in almost every setting, starting from power dynamics between parents and children, through oppression towards LGBTQ+ communities, women's rights, elderly or children, people with disabilities and so on. Historical settings, laws, and customs that consistently harm some groups—especially ethnic minorities—are the foundation of structural oppression (Kolluri & Tichavakunda, 2022). This chapter aims to understand the nuances of prejudices and to explain the difference between prejudices and discrimination, and to analyze how oppression is derived from discrimination. Focus of this study is an examination of prevalent prejudices among youth. It sheds light on the various forms they take and the impact they have on individuals in the school environment. As a result, the strategies used in social work and education to combat discrimination and promote inclusion and diversity will be evaluated.

2.1. DEFINING THE COMPLEXITY OF PREJUDICES

Prejudices are a common, yet complex social issue. The complexity is composed of three main reasons: (1) diversity of different types of prejudices; (2) the common generalization based on the false beliefs that spread the negative attitudes, and (3) the fact that it might lead to oppressive or even violent discriminatory acts. Allport´s *The Nature of Prejudice (1954)* has served as one of the most comprehensive frameworks for the existence of prejudices. Initially, the main belief about prejudices put

in Allport's words was: "A person's prejudices is unlikely to be merely a specific attitude toward a specific group; it is more likely to be a reflection of his whole habit of thinking about the world" (p. 175); and "the style of thinking that is characteristic of prejudices is a reflection, by and large, of the prejudiced person's way of thinking about *anything*" (p. 400). Allport (1954) pointed out that the intergroup relations are characterized as an *out-group* hater and/or an *in-group* favoritism that are reciprocally connected. Social psychology explains the concepts of *in-groups* and *out-groups*. An in-group refers to the group to which one belongs and others who are considered to belong to it, too. In-group members have positive attitudes towards one another and provide each other preferential treatment. An out-group refers to individuals who do not belong to your group. In-group individuals are usually treated better than out-group members, who are often perceived unfavorably. Lambert (1995) and Linville & Fischer (1996) found that in-group members are seen as diverse and containing favorable characteristics. Out-group members are stereotyped as "all the same," homogeneous, and negative. Nevertheless, as human beings we interact with each other on a daily basis and as a result intergroup relations are a survival strategy. Social identity theory, introduced by Tajfel (1978) and further developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), suggests that people see themselves as part of various groups, for instance, those having children versus those not having children. As mentioned, people also judge these groups, both the ones they are part of (in-groups) and the ones they are not (out-groups). To analyze and decide how good these groups are, people compare them and their value. This process of sorting, judging, and comparing contributes to creating a person's social identity. Therefore if a person holds prejudices towards one out-group, they will most likely have prejudices towards different out-groups, too.

In social psychology, differences in people's group memberships correspond with both the social identity theory and the social categorization perspective, according to Tajful and Turner's (1979) results. Having a positive social identity makes people feel good about themselves, while a negative one might lead to trying to improve the group's image through competition or other strategies (Trepte and Loy, 2017). Self categorization, proposed by Turner presents two kinds of identity: social and personal. The social identity is about the groups "we" belong to, while personal identity is more about who "we" are as individuals. Depending on what is important in a situation, we might act based on our group identity or our personal identity, or both. The distinction between self-categorization theory and social identity theory is that social identity theory focuses on how we act in groups compared to individually; self-categorization theory says both group and individual identities can influence our behavior at the same time (Trepte and Loy, 2017). The discussion on social psychology and the two theories sheds light on how prejudices might arise from how people perceive and categorize themselves and others into different groups.

Intergroup relations can be developed in three stages. The first stage is a social categorization" when individuals recognize the world as a collection of different social groups based on nationality, gender, social class, religion and other characteristics. In the second stage referred to as "social identification," individuals connect with each other using the categories such as the same nationality, the same ethnicity, the same skin color or the same religion. Consequently, in the final stage, called "social comparison," individuals commence comparing oneself to members of the same group, favorising the in-group characteristics, while emphasizing the distinctions from members in out-groups (Leonardelli and Toh, 2015) *(Figure 1)*.
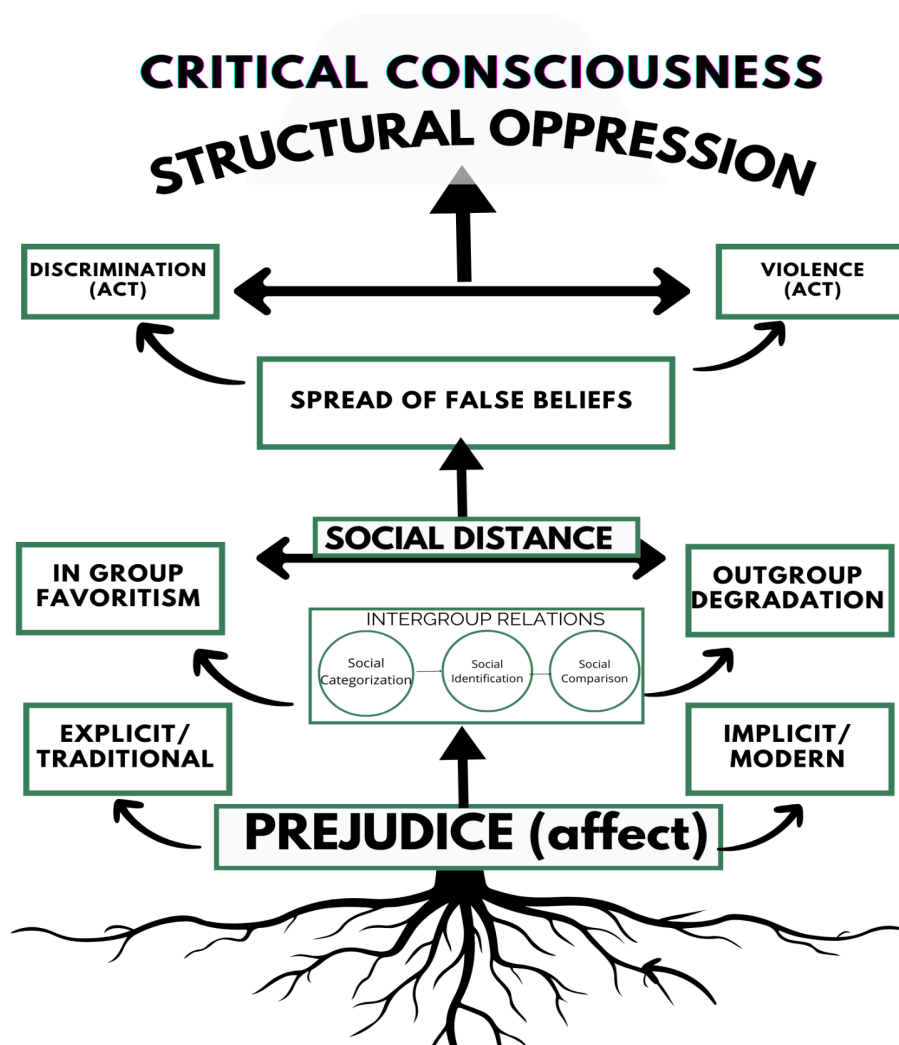
Figure 1. The Framework - from prejudices to structural oppression. Author's created.

As presented above, it is still not very clear where favoritism towards in-groups and degradation towards out-groups come from and how they are related (Everett et al., 2015). It is not always apparent if treating people differently based on their group identity is a sign of hatred towards the out-group or a preference for one's own group. Understanding the intergroup bias can be challenging and demands an

interdisciplinary approach because it is often linked simultaneously to cultural, historical, social, and political factors (Grigoryan et al. 2020).

Abbink (2019) differentiates between two sets of "others": rival and non-rival (or neutral). While it may be simple to identify in-group favoritism, when members of the in-group receive preferential treatment over members of the other group, hatred or prejudices towards members of the other group may differ depending on the "type" of the out-group. To explain it differently, there is a belief that there exists inconsistency in the way out-groups are viewed. Members of a rival out-group are treated worse than members of a non-rival out-group because the first group is seen as hostile and as the one posing a threat to the members of the in-group. For instance, in Poland findings about intergroup relations stresses that Jewish minority is considered an "especially dangerous" minority because they are perceived as a minority that is secretly wanting to rule the world and posing a threat to the in-group members (Golec de Zavala and Cichocka 2011).

Prejudice can be both conscious - explicit, and subconscious - implicit, which complicates its nature (Greenwald and Banaji, 1994). Implicit attitudes are automatically activated by simply being aware of the attitude or object and typically function without a person's full awareness or control. In contrast, explicit attitudes are reflected by measurable attitudes (Dovidio et al., 2002). Simply said, subconscious (implicit) prejudices function without our knowledge or consent, whereas conscious (explicit) bias refers to prejudices and ideas that we are aware of. Since explicit bias is more obvious it is typically simpler to recognise. Contrary to it, implicit prejudices are more subtle and may be in contradiction with an individual's publicly expressed opinions. McConahay (1986) distinguishes between traditional and modern prejudices. The traditional prejudices towards women (sexism) is characterized by endorsement of traditional gender roles, a belief in the inferiority of women's abilities and a differential treatment of men and women. Modern prejudices towards women, however, are characterized by the denial of continued discrimination, denial of women's demands and lack of policies supporting women's rights such as education, work and health. Even though, in his study, the division of the prejudices referred solely to racial and sexist prejudice, the model can be applied towards the prejudices against LGBTQ+ community, too. The explicit and implicit prejudices can be related to the traditional and modern prejudices in a way they are being expressed. Modern prejudices is subtle, sometimes hidden, or even rejected (implicit and conscious, however often subconscious), in contrast to traditional prejudices, which is more straightforward and open (explicit and conscious). It is crucial to emphasize here that modern prejudices tend to be implicit *(Figure 1)*. Nevertheless, usually prejudice is defined in negative terms, but it can also manifest a positive form.

The term "positive prejudice" is not common in the literature to the same extent as the "negative prejudices". However, it needs to be acknowledged that characteristics such as gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, age are not only they causes of negative attitudes and oppressions, but might serve to the privilege of others too (Shaikh et al., 2022).The positive approach to prejudice recognizes the creation of multi-ethnic communities and fostering social inclusion (Nagda et al., 2006). This approach suggests that there is a positive aspect to prejudices, which is often missed in discussions dominated by negative connotations of prejudices. In this context, "positive prejudice" refers to attitudes or beliefs that, instead of leading to discrimination or exclusion, contribute to the creation of diverse communities and promote social inclusion.The term "positive prejudice"is often linked to the actions for social desirability connected with personal traits, especially in the context of racial and ethnic prejudices (Dienstbier, 1970). In this study, the term "positive prejudice" is used as a link to reduce prejudices by claiming that it is not enough solely to stop the prejudices, but it is required to create interventions for social inclusion in the context of a different today's world.

After analyzing different types of prejudices, the second factor contributing to the complexity of prejudices as a social issue is a propagation of false beliefs. In the world people are characterized by immense diversity, and these present differences are the potential for the unjust treatment as it creates the possibility of identifying particular groups or individuals as "different" and having opposed traits to "ours". Additionally, the generalization process is applied too, assuming that *all* members of the other group are the same (Linville & Fischer, 1996). Prejudices stand as a barrier to social harmony and by spreading the negative beliefs and unconfirmed misconception about minority groups, it consequently might lead to discrimination, violence, social exclusion of individuals and structural oppression. Prejudice is an incorrect belief made up of two unfavorable components—false information that lacks sufficient evidence and justification and hostility. Prejudice may manifest as a propensity to keep social distance (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; Bogardus, 1928; Makashvili et al., 2018; Weaver, 2008). Brown (2010) adds that prejudices based on negative and unsubstantiated information refers to negative views towards individuals based on their membership in a specific social group, referring to the generalization process. It is believed that the generalization process takes place, unifying the belief and applying it towards the whole group while disregarding individual behaviors. As an example, having prejudices towards Polish people can lead to discriminatory acts or even the violence towards other nationalities. From this point of departure, the prejudices are usually based on imaginative beliefs about the particular minority group. The affected minority groups are defined as the groups that differ from what is accepted by the *normative* majority of the population due to such factors as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, social standing, physical appearance, and numerous other factors that are the main subject of prejudices.

Third factor contributing to the complexity of prejudices is the cause of discriminatory and violent behavior, as well as social exclusion and oppression. Etymologically, "to discriminate" is to identify the difference, in Latin "discriminant" - " to distinguish from each other", and as such this is not a negative term. However, when used in the legal, academic or scientific way, the term usually refers to an unfair discrimination. Meaning, that it is a process of first identifying the difference, and then using the difference as a basis for the unfair treatment as supported by the Social Identity Theory. Because discrimination, as an action, is based on prejudices, a thought, it is necessary to first identify prejudices within ourselves and then in the environment in which we interact in order to lessen the conscious and unconscious negative opinions and convictions we have about members of other groups to avoid the negative affect convert into a negative behavior. Consequently, having a thorough understanding of prejudices and its types, together with application of focused interventions and changes in legislation, can help to create a more accepting and more accepting environment.

In fact, the Common Ingroup Identity Model suggested by Gaertner and Dovidio (1993) introduces the idea that the prejudices can be reduced using factors that change the perspective between in-group and ou-group members from "us" and "they" into more inclusive "we". The model originates from the social categorisation approach to intergroup behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to the in-group identification framework, intergroup bias can be minimized by replacing the traditional "us" versus "them" group boundaries with a more inclusive "we" that involves all members of the in-group and out-group. People give positive ratings to all members of the redefined in-group, which consists of both the former in-group and the former out-group members as a part of the bigger in-group. Stereotypes, bias, and discrimination against the former out-group will consequently decline.

The authors, Gaertner and Dovidio (1993) connect their findings of creating a common identity to the Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954) which was and still is the method central for creating a more harmonious society if used under the optimal conditions such as (a) common goals, (b) equal status, (c) intergroup cooperation (i.e., the absence of competition), and (d) authority sanction (i.e., support from societal customs and/or authorities) and additionally, when used all together and not as separate parts (Gaertner and Dovidio, 1993). The Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM), in fact, has been proved effective in various contexts, including racial and ethnic groups, where cultivating a common identity enhances intergroup interactions and attitudes (West et al., 2009). For example, Andrighetto et al. (2012) adapted the model among Kosovar Albanian students, showing that shared in-group identification and extended contact with out-group members decreased competitive victimization. This highlights how fostering a sense of common identity facilitates understanding and trust among different groups. In

summary, the CIIM offers a valuable framework for recognizing and addressing intergroup prejudices, promoting more inclusive social relationships.

Next more in detail, I will explain the concepts of discrimination and oppression, presenting their interrelation with prejudices. The definitions will undergo a comprehensive examination to describe the mechanisms of discrimination. Finally the framework explaining the presence of structural oppression will be outlined.

2.2. DISCRIMINATION, OPPRESSION AND PREJUDICE IN SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

One might think that discrimination and oppression are closely related, but these are distinct concepts. Discrimination occurs when people are treated unfairly or unjustly because of certain characteristics and beliefs like race, age, nationality, religion they have, or gender. It involves making unfair distinctions between individuals or groups, which leads to unequal treatment. Allport (1954) defines discrimination as denying individuals or groups fair treatment. According to Jones (1972), discrimination is defined as activities that favor one's own group over the out-group, while as explained before prejudice refers to the attitudes based on the false information and misconceptions that have no actual confirmation in reality. On the contrary, oppression goes beyond individual acts of unfairness to describe the widespread and systemic nature of discrimination. According to a general critical science approach, oppression originates from inequalities created by ruling elites, and sees many excluded groups as influenced by similar social processes (Payne, p. 272). According to Donna Baines and Natalie Clark's definition of oppression in their book *Doing Anti-Oppressive Work (2017)*, oppression occurs when a person or policy behaves unfairly against an individual or group because of their affiliation with another group and stronger power position. This at the same time involves depriving people from the opportunities, freedom as well as basic human rights and strengthens the division of individuals into two groups, the more powerful one and the less privileged one. At the same time it might also involve imposing on people their beliefs, values, systems and laws though both, peaceful and violent means (Baines & Clark, 2017).

Kumashiro (2000) adds that oppression occurs when certain identities are valued in society while others are disadvantaged. Oppression is a systematic act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group, or institution. It is not just a casual occurrence, but happening systemically, because of how societies and people think. Once it is part of how the system works and into society's consciousness, it affects almost all relations. Depending on the situation, anyone can end up being oppressed or oppressing others. Systemic oppression can manifest in different ways, such as providing people with bad housing

conditions, giving people of color demeaning jobs, or spreading negative information about them. It can stop groups of people from being able to express themselves and meet their needs, which can harm their physical and mental health. It is not always obvious and can be part of the way society is organized or the rules that govern it. Discrimination, on the contrary, can be more direct and intentional. In fact, discrimination, too can cause a lot of stress and mental health problems, especially for groups of people who already face a lot of unfair treatment, like LGBTQ+ community and people of color (Tang and Browne, 2008).

Prejudice and discrimination often lead to structural oppression, affecting various groups in society (Jost et al., 2004; Kolluri & Tichavakunda, 2022). Allport (1954) emphasizes that one prejudices might be affecting the attitudes and behavior towards all other groups. From the social psychology perspective, discrimination is a composition of three aspects of *cognitive, affective, and behavioral* components. It begins with the stereotype, the unconfirmed component of information, which, when confirmed, may develop into prejudices, the component of the attitude, and finally into discrimination, the behavioral component (Sheppard, 2023). *Cognitive* refers to what we think about it, *affective* expresses how we feel about the source of our attitude whereas *behavioral* relates to the acts we do in response to our feelings and ideas regarding the attitude's source. For instance, if one thinks they would like to help refugees at the border (cognitive), one begins to feel empathy (affect) towards *people on the move* who are attempting to cross country borders when escaping a war affected country. As a result, the individual decides to raise funds for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that help *people on the move* (behavior). While affective and cognitive aspects refer to stereotypes and prejudices, the behavioral component, refers to discrimination. The three components explain the way from stereotype to discrimination. A reduction of prejudices that serves as a motor to discrimination will likely contribute to a greater social inclusion, reduced hostility and improved mental health of the marginalized groups. People who experience discrimination on a regular basis may internalize prejudices or discrimination that is aimed at them, which can result in negative outcomes such as poor health, low self-esteem, anxiety, and shame (UN 2018).

When it comes to the educational institutional environment, Kumashiro (2000) points out that the oppression can take two forms: action and inaction by peers, educators and other professionals. Researchers (Pittman, 2010; Tran & Guzey, 2023; Muller & Boutte, 2023, Kelly, 2022, Thomas, 2020) point out the various prejudices and stereotypes, such as gender bias, racism, classism and heterosexism that professionals and teachers have that affect their performance and contact with students. Andreouli (2013) argues that schools play a vital role in promoting inclusive communities in diverse contexts, emphasizing the need for a contextual and political model to address prejudice and promote inclusivity.

Paluck and Green (2008) note the vast theoretical perspectives on prejudice reduction. Garpin (2019) highlights increasing research on its causes, effects on marginalized groups, and relevance in classrooms. What follows explores approaches to reducing prejudice in social work practice and education.

One of the most influential theories in the field of education and social work is the oppressive theory, which focuses on the school environment. The main notion is to change the perception of the school as a harmful place for the students into a notion that the school is a safe space. When speaking about the safety on the school level, Kumashiro (2000) divides the safety space into two levels. Firstly, the school should provide a safe, free of oppression space for all the students, including the marginalized groups. This includes protection from verbal, physical, institutional, and cultural harm. The school should be an environment that embraces the otherness, and does not assume what is "normal", allowing the students the self-expression and providing role models (Asante, 1991; Malinowitz, 1995). Second, schools should provide safe therapeutic, supportive and empowering spaces where the students can go when they feel they need help, support, advocacy or advice. This theory represents such topics as power, domination, privilege, stratification, structural inequality and discrimination. However, Baines (2017) emphasizes the differentiation of different types of oppressions faced by minority groups presented by different oppressive theories. As an example, sociology and social work evolves such oppressive theories as conflict theory, Marxist theory, critical theory, feminist theory, and empowerment approach, because they all relate to power and inequality concepts. These theories show that anti-oppressive social work is concerned with political, social and cultural structures and psychological processes that maintain oppression in the society. Accordingly, the theory serves a foundation for understanding the relationship between prejudice and oppression in a broader context.

In the relation between education and social work fields the most prominent theoretical foundations were introduced by Paulo Freire's Pedagogy of the oppressed. Pedagogy of the oppressed emphasizes questioning and combating oppressive structures in education and society. Critical pedagogy, as promoted by Paulo Freire, recommends educators to engage students in critical thinking and reflection on social norms and power structures. It argues that education should not only provide information, but also enable people to critically analyze and change their social circumstances. It places a strong focus on liberation, critical consciousness, and transformative education that are crucial when discussing the topic of prejudices and the reduction of prejudice. Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy and its main element, critical consciousness have been identified as an antidote to oppression (Jemen, 2018). Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy is an educational method that opposes standard institutional frameworks of education, focusing on conscientization (PT., "conscientizacao"), which means fostering critical consciousness and knowledge of oppressive social structures. This critical consciousness helps people recognize and tackle

oppressive structures. The value of dialogue and praxis (action), or in other words, the integration of theory and action to bring about social change, is central to Freire's education. Through discussion, both educators and students participate in mutual learning and reflection, promoting a democratic and participatory educational atmosphere. Furthermore, Freire's pedagogy emphasizes the necessity of understanding the political, social, and economic contexts which influence educational experiences. Freire's framework of critical education provides an understanding of the personal and societal deeply rooted issues. When applied to the educational system, it provides the answers for tackling the prejudices in the school environment and contributing to social inclusion .

Moreover, to support the discussion on prejudice amongst youth in high schools within educational and social work framework, this study will use the Social Identity Theory (Tajful and Turner 1989) that explains the division between "us" - the members of the *in-group*, vs. the members of the *out-group*-"them". This psychological theory serves as a basis to understanding the intergroup conflicts (Tajful and Turner 1989). Additionally, the study will apply the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) because it emphasizes the role of observational learning and modeling when shaping the behavior and attitudes of youth which is significant when analyzing the prejudices in a school environment where Youth spends most of their day time. The other theoretical aspects include the anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice to overview the existent intervention models.

Anti-oppressive practices in social work emerged as a key approach to address the issue of power dynamics, empower marginalized individuals and promote social inclusion (Collins & Wilkie, 2010). It recognizes the oppressions in the society such as classism, racism, ageism are interconnected, and highlights the importance of working with all the topics interconnectedly. Social work practitioners being at the core of societal oppressions and societal changes can incorporate the anti-oppressive practices into their daily social work routine. By applying the "conscientizacao" into the work with clients, social workers have the power to bring awareness about societal oppression. This has led to the development of social justice social work practice, where the main concern is how society's rich and powerful define and control the weaker and poorer members of society (Moreau, 1979). Anti-oppressive theory influences both social work practice and social work education by supporting investigations on the application of practices among minority groups. Furthermore, by including anti-oppressive practice, social work practitioners and educators will be more qualified to recognise and address societal oppressions.

Critical consciousness allows the service users to critically evaluate the issue of social oppression and respond to it through voicing out their experience and knowledge. Freire (2013) argues that these views should be a part of every program, policy, effort and part of a larger society. Participatory forms of

helping, that is, those where the participants have a full influence on the outcome, tend to be those that offer most self-worth as well as far reaching and lasting impacts (Moreau, 1981). Contrary, it is highlighted by researchers that participatory acts might in fact influence and strengthen the *status quo* maintaining inequality (Carey, 2013a). To avoid it to happen the Anti Oppressive Practice and participatory approach needs to be carefully thought through and challenged by holistic approaches that aim at empowerment, social justice and inclusion.

Fostering critical consciousness, promoting critical action and empowering individuals from the minority groups are the central points of the critical consciousness theory that when applied in work with young people addresses marginalization and oppression (Diemer et al., 2016). The multiple sources of oppression interventions can assist youth with identifying and recognizing the existing forms of oppression and consequently resist the prejudices that come from these oppressions (Grapin, 2019). Nevertheless, the theory of the oppressed based on critical consciousness emphasizes the need for youth to be part of the spaces where they can engage in actions against oppression. Therefore, it is critical to provide young people with an environment where they can confront oppression and advocate for social change, and consequently challenging the oppressive system and developing a culture of activism that in the future can lead to social change (Martinez et al, 2019). As the Figure 1. represents, the critical consciousness aims at combating the systemic oppression present in the society. Understanding the process of transferring from prejudices to oppression is important in addressing it properly. The prejudices manifested in an explicit or implicit way are interconnected with the intergroup relations. Based on interactions with others, the in-group favoritism and out-group derogation take place which contributes to keeping the social distance between groups. Finally the spread of false information contributes to the behavioral part of individuals, causing discrimination and often violence. When this framework is accepted in the society and normalized by institutions, it becomes an oppression.

In reference to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) youth learn about interacting with others through observation and peers in a school environment. The assumption is that educational programs aimed at educating participants about concepts such as bias, multiculturalism, and democratic values may eventually enhance out-group views and lower prejudices (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014; Paluck & Green, 2009). Moreover, according to Albarello et al. (2022) interventions targeting the classroom context can help to hinder prejudices in adolescence at the class level. FitzGerald et al. (2019) distinguishes categories for activities reducing prejudices in the real-life context, that can be applied in the classroom environment as well as in a non-formal educational setting.

1. The category of engaging with others' perspective, consciousness-raising or imagining contact with an out-group: Imagined positive contact with an out-group, Imagined negative contact with an in-group, Educational films to induce empathy with out-group, Perspective taking / imagination, Empathy training. In Social work this concept is often called: Verstehen, contact with others through experiential learning and getting into someone else's shoes.

2. Exposure to counter stereotypical exemplars: Exposure to admired "black" exemplars, Vivid counter stereotypic scenario.

3. Identifying the self with the out-group: "Embodiment in black avatars", Focusing on what members of out-group and in-group have in common.

4. Inducing emotion: Mood inducing via Music, Inducing moral elevation.

To reduce prejudices, interventions such as increasing intergroup engagement, inclusive common identities, social norms, socio-cognitive skill training, moral reasoning, and tolerance show to be partially useful. Still, the results were not fully confirmative. Many of those interventions either have no effect at all or worsened unconscious biases. Methods that seek to reduce biases should be used carefully. Much more research is required to determine the long-term impacts of the interventions.

Non-formal education comes as a response to limitations faced by formal education and the difficulties it poses to the development of communities and social inclusion (Almeida & Morais, 2024). Non-formal education can be viewed as an alternative and/or supplement to formal education in people's continuing learning processes, and more importantly creating a supportive environment for addressing the topic of prejudice. Because it is based on the participatory technique - defined as the methodology that gives the participants the choice and rights to decide on the outcome of the activity - it involves students more. Giving the participants a certain level of responsibility and freedom contributes to the level of involvement. Souto-Otero (2021) suggests that individuals accumulate knowledge throughout life from personal experiences, social interactions, family, and both formal and non-formal education, which is supported by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). Non-formal education, as outlined by this perspective, emphasizes learning outside of traditional schooling addressing social issues such as prejudices and discrimination, as noted by Dean (2021) and Rose (2010).

Based on the critical consciousness emerging from the Pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire, 1970), the pedagogical methodology of the theater of the oppressed (TO) was developed by Augusto Boal. The potential of the theater of the oppressed in social work and educational contexts is well proved. Through participatory theater approach, this methodology aims at empowering individuals to explore and address systemic concerns and reinforce the sense of self-agency. The work of Boal (2019) emphasizes the

significance of involving participants in critical discussion and action to challenge oppressive structures, which aligns with previously mentioned statements and theoretical framework.

Although TO has been commended for its capacity to promote empathy and transformative learning experiences (Giesler, 2017), there have also been criticisms about its efficacy in addressing the complex social and political circumstances that marginalized communities must face (Opfermann, 2019). Even though, there are critiques to the methodology, it has demonstrated efficacy in diverse settings, such as family therapy (Proctor et al., 2008), mental health services amidst the COVID-19 pandemic (Alizadeh & Jiang, 2022), and legislative processes aimed at giving voices to the marginalized perspectives (Saeed, 2015). According to Kina and Fernandes (2017), TO is a tool for social change and democratizes art for social reform in addition to being a means of empowering individuals. People can question established power relations and seek to overthrow oppressive structures by participating in participatory theater techniques (Cole et al., 2023). According to Kina and Fernandes (2017), this strategy calls on practitioners to work in collaboration with service users, encouraging sincere communication and group initiatives. TOhas been used in social work to address gender-based violence (Crozier, 2023), investigate dangerous youth experiences (Conrad, 2004), and advance critical pedagogy in a politicized public space (Denzin, 2019). Social workers can improve their capacity to address structural challenges in their communities and radicalize the practice classroom by including TO into their curriculum (Giesler, 2017). All things considered, TO offers a methodology to the social work practice by giving voice to underrepresented groups, encouraging critical conversation, and promoting educational opportunities. Social workers as well as teachers can actively address structural problems and try to create more inclusive and equitable societies by finding ways to adopt this practice into the curriculum.

Within the non-formal educational setting, there have been several approaches applied in the efforts to reduce prejudices. They are, however, mostly based on the Contact Hypothesis (Allport,1954), emphasizing that the contact with members of the out-group happens under the optimal conditions: (a) common goals, (b) equal status, (c) intergroup cooperation (i.e., the absence of competition), and (d) authority sanction (i.e., support from societal customs and/or authorities). In fact, multicultural education has been identified as an effective strategy for strengthening intergroup relations and decreasing prejudices (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013). In education, contact with various groups, and more precisely, combining both contact with education have all been proven in studies to have a medium-sized effect on prejudices reduction (Bartoş et al., 2014). Furthermore, training programs that strengthen connections between individuals and groups they may have prejudices against have been shown to diminish implicit prejudices (Phillips et al., 2011). Furthermore, similarly to already mentioned video games,

entertainment-education has been recognized as an excellent strategy for bias reduction, outperforming various known strategies (Murrar & Bräuer, 2017). Murrar (2017) through an experiment showed how educational TV comedy can reduce both explicit and implicit bias amongst participants. Individuals exposed to an educational television comedy with varied, yet relatable Arab/Muslim characters scored lower on implicit and explicit measures of bias than those exposed to a control sitcom with an all-Caucasian cast. The prejudice-reduction impact lasted four weeks following exposure. Furthermore, it has been discovered that only the knowledge about our friends having a direct contact with the members of the out-group helps in reducing prejudices (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, Tropp, 1997). FitzGerald et al. (2019) also points out that imagined positive contact with an out-group or imagined negative contact with an in-group contribute to reduced prejudices in the classroom environment. Similarly, Lai and colleagues (2016) found that when people imagine themselves being helped by someone from a different group, they tend to have better opinions about that group.It has also been claimed that education on historical and current injustices, individual racism, and structural racism can help to combat anti-Indigenous racism (Efimoff, 2023). This is an important aspect of non-formal education, very often omitted in the classroom environment. Additionally, the research underlines the necessity of engaging with parents and networking with other institutions in the context of non-formal education as essential areas for development (Kirsch & Seele, 2020).

To summarize, a mix of theories such as the Common Ingroup Identity Model, Intergroup Contact Theory, practical school-based interventions and parents' involvement can provide a complete strategy to eliminate bias among high school students. Significant progress can be made in promoting inclusion and lowering prejudices among adolescents by encouraging positive intergroup relationships, increasing empathy and awareness about out-groups, and adopting tailored interventions in the school. Many studies combine different methods and theories for optimizing the results (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Additionally, a mix of intercultural education, interaction with various groups, specialized training programs, entertainment-education, and education about historical injustices can all help to reduce prejudices through non-formal education practices.These methods emphasize the importance of both formal and informal educational tactics in overcoming stereotypes and developing constructive intergroup connections.

It is important to take into account the complex nature of intergroup interactions in order to understand how negative contact might increase prejudices. Negative intergroup contact may result in generalized out-group avoidance, which could jeopardize future interactions with diversity and possibly increase prejudices, as well as prevent members of the out-group from interacting with each other, therefore

maintaining negative attitudes (Meleady & Forder, 2018). In their research, they find that unfavorable interactions with European immigrants in Britain are linked to both an increase in prejudices and a desire to avoid such interactions in the future. It was discovered that having a bad experience with an out-group member but not an in-group member decreased the intention to interact with the out-group in the future. Additionally, further research showed that the impact of negative contact on out-group avoidance extends beyond that out-group and is linked to lower desire to interact with other out-groups as well—a phenomenon known as *the avoidance generalization effect*. According to the phenomena, negative contacts with members of the out-group may cause people to avoid the group as a whole more broadly, which may increase prejudices (Arnaudova et.al, 2016). Additionally, research by Kunstman et al. (2013) shows that prejudices can be sustained, intercultural partnerships can be discouraged, and intergroup anxiety can be increased by social standards against intergroup contact. Intergroup acceptance and the level of intergroup communication might be impacted by the internalization of motives to respond without prejudices (Kunstman et al., 2013). Additionally, research by Berge et al. (2017) and others shows that unfavorable intergroup interactions might amplify prejudices by reinforcing prejudices and hostility towards members of the out-group. Negative contact is predicted to enhance prejudices, despite the fact that positive contact typically lessens prejudices (Berge et al., 2017). This highlights the harmful impacts of negative contacts on intergroup attitudes. Negative contact experiences can intensify negative intergroup feelings and the desire for social distancing, which can result in a rise in prejudices and negative intergroup attitudes (Vezzali & Stathi, 2020).

Finally, it should be noted that unfavorable intergroup interactions may worsen prejudices by encouraging avoidance, feeding preconceptions, and intensifying negative feelings towards members of the out-group. In order to develop interventions that promote positive intergroup relations and reduce the possibility of increased prejudices coming from negative encounters, it is essential to comprehend the mechanisms via which negative contact promotes prejudices. In the next sub-chapter presented the anti-oppressive social work practice will enlighten the institutional framework in tackling prejudices in the school environment.

2.3. ANTI-OPPRESSIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE AND YOUTH WORK

The anti oppressive practice (AOP) intends to transform social attitudes based on the experiences of individuals that are centered on elements of oppression and discrimination. These practices come from "the analysis that oppression comes from inequalities arising from the power of ruling elites and sees various excluded groups as affected by similar social processes" (Payne, 2002, p.272). To work against

oppression, social work adapts the direction of social justice oriented social work with an aim of transforming reality, instead of only reacting to the victims. Transformation in the contest of social work focused on social justice refers to ways in which the profession can help individuals and groups to reveal their emotional pain and at the same time work to change the structural forces such as racism, sexism etc. that are causing the inequality and social injustice. AOP in social work aims at addressing the issues through direct practices that incorporate approaches aiming at liberation of people from oppression, as well as at macro and structural levels with large actions such as activism, research, advocacy and other mass actions. AOP practice is used in the social work field as one of the main approaches to addressing social justice. Rather than an angle approach, it is rather an umbrella of methods and approaches that draw on social activism and the understanding that the social services can be provided as a way of working with people towards liberation and social change. There are several fields in which social justice oriented AOP find their use. Here, some of the examples will be presented in the field of child protection, community building with the focus on disabled people, the AOP in working with older adults, as well as presenting the examples of radicalizing both, social work and education with AOP.

In fact, AOP with marginalized groups such as children and youth, elderly adults, and disabled people has been increasingly highlighted by scholars in recent years (Pon et al., 2011; Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020; Merkel-Holguin et al., 2022). With respect to child welfare it underlines the relationship between children and parents and then addresses the power relations of superiority over children, which can be institutionalized and systemic, and result in its normalization. In AOP social work, the importance is given to empathy-the *acknowledgement and understanding* of what another person is feeling (Slote, 2007). Empathy in social workers with marginalized families is necessary in order to acknowledge the types of oppression that families are facing, e.g., classism, heterosexism, Islamophobia, or racism. Even though the types of oppression might be different, the experience is still marginalized.

Empathy and sensitivity are crucial components of AOP practice in addressing social and cultural differences. Lai and colleagues (2016) discovered that visualizing oneself being helped by an out-group member led to positive views towards that out-group. The example points to the fact that imaginative contact and imagining ourselves taking an identity or characteristic of a different out-group through the empathetic lens, might decrease the level of prejudices toward that out-group and consequently and potentially towards other groups. Additionally, taking the perspective of a "black character" in a computer game reduced unconscious racial prejudices more than reading about it in narrative (Unzueta et al., 2014), which adds to the theory of empathy serving as a tool in decreasing prejudices toward out-group members. Anthropologists use "Verstehen" called an "emic" perspective to grasp another person's

definition of a situation based on their own experiences (Schwandt, 1994). Contrary, Lai et al. (2014) did not find evidence that taking an out-group member's perspective decreased prejudices towards that group.

Empathy and AOP is not the panacea in case of oppression. There are findings suggesting that parents have an impact on their children's intergroup attitudes, prejudices, and discriminatory behaviors (Degner & Dalege 2013). The study indicates a strong correlation between parental opinion and child attitudes towards the out-groups, indicating that parental attitudes may affect child intergroup bias. Miklikowska (2017) confirms that parents' socioeconomic status and education level can impact youth's levels of prejudices. The wealthier and better-educated parents are associated with decreased prejudices among youth. Finally, Pirchio (2018) identifies the effect of parenting on forming children's attitudes and beliefs regarding the people of different ethnic backgrounds. High impact of familyhood and parenting gives a new perspective about how prejudice can be tackled in a school environment.

When referring to AOP in relation to ageism which is visible both among older and younger generations the social work practice is related to empowerment of individuals, promoting social justice and deconstruction of repressive discourses (Kjellberg, 2022). AOP has demonstrated its importance in social work with disabled people. According to the social disability model it is assumed that barriers exist due to social structures, norms and systemic practices and not due to the disability itself (Meekosha and Dowse, 2007).

De-stigmatization of disability gives people agency over their lives, and makes sure that all facets of social work practice are accessible. Practitioners constantly have to consider how their privilege and power dynamics may prevent oppression. Social work education being part of Community-Based Research practice (CBR) stresses the preparedness of social work students to face oppressive structures and advance social justice in their research (Kumashiro, 2000).

Working with vulnerable groups, particularly youth in high school, presents several challenges, primarily related to prejudices, discrimination and oppression. These challenges can be categorized into two main areas. First, there are concerns regarding youth well-being and mental health. Vulnerable youth, especially transgender and gender-diverse individuals, are at a high risk of mental health issues (Hawke et al., 2021). This vulnerability is compounded by factors such as lack of family support, risks of sexual exploitation, and the threat of homelessness (Bounds et al., 2020). Socially disadvantaged youth often face extra stressors in their daily lives, necessitating effective coping mechanisms for their personal growth and development (Super et al., 2016). Secondly, there is a challenge to address the sensitive topics in the formal educational system. One of the most difficult issues is openly discussing and effectively

challenging prejudices, discrimination, and oppression. In order to ensure the complex diversity issues, youth work is highlighted as an important field of interaction where young people are viewed as co-creators. This evolves the meaning of critical pedagogy proposed by Freire and the principle of participatory engagement (Elsen & Ord 2021). Educators and social workers play pivotal roles in addressing sensitive topics like prejudices and discrimination in a manner that is both respectful and constructive.

As emphasized by Elaen and Ord (2021), understanding and appropriately responding to young people's experiences are critical aspects of effective practice. Educators must recognize that, as Kumashiro (2000) argues, anti-oppressive education can reinforce an "us" versus "them" mentality. When solely focusing on marginalized groups, it may reinforce the privileged position of the normative group. Althuser (1971) adds that schools are institutions that legitimize and transmit governing beliefs that contribute to systemic oppression while refusing to question the existing *status quo*. To effectively engage with youth, it's essential to employ dynamic and updated approaches. Besic (2020) emphasizes that anti-oppressive education should address both marginalized individuals and those deemed 'normal' in society. Through fostering critical consciousness, both groups can reflect on their societal positioning. Maher and Kay (2001) describe the "pedagogy of positionality," wherein students and teachers analyze their roles within social institutions, enhancing understanding of privilege and prejudices among all involved. Suzina (2020) argues that combining knowledge and critical consciousness is crucial for opposing oppression, whether in classrooms or in everyday life. Britzmann (1998) emphasizes the need of unlearning for both students and teachers in improving anti-oppressive education, whereas Luhmann (1998) believes that resistance to knowledge, rather than a lack of it, is a major barrier to change. These findings emphasize the importance of critically assessing oppression and engaging with multiple perspectives, particularly within the complex environment of schools, where adolescents are influenced by a variety of stakeholders such as teachers, parents, and governmental bodies. Navigating power dynamics and problems in schools requires educators and social workers to find a balance between anti-oppressive approaches and student well-being. Though these are not cure-all solutions, they have the potential to improve minority inclusion and the general environment, despite systemic constraints.

Concluding remarks about the complexity of prejudices, the differentiation between discrimination and oppression and the framework explaining how prejudices lead to structural oppression. The understanding of prejudices in the school environment is complex. The prevalence of prejudices in the classroom leads to decreased well-being of students, depression and social exclusion. Existence of prejudice is often

related to the family environment, but social work, youth work and education environments are of importance in working to tackle them and addressing their presence.

It is clear that structures, institutions and government are of importance in combating structural oppression. The social work and education practices are affected by anti-oppressive policies that are advocated for in the EU. The chapter that follows will delve into the anti-oppressive policies that are impacting the prejudices in Poland.

3. ANTI-OPPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AFFECTING PREJUDICES IN POLAND

Poland, as a member country of the EU since 2004, is a beneficiary of the initiatives and EU programs aiming to "promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens" (European Union, 2024) as stated in *the Article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon (2008)* EU member state "shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child." According to the EU values different institutional bodies are working with the topic of prejudice and discrimination on the European level. Each form of discrimination is an act against the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as the Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations. Accordingly, the European laws should be adopted and transposed into national laws and documents such as the constitution to ensure the uniformity of the member states.

The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 in Article 32 defines two principles: equal treatment (Article 32(1)) and non-discrimination (Article 32(2)). Additionally, the principles of equal treatment and the principle of non-discrimination are interpreted in accordance with art. 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, which confirms the dignity of every human being: "The inherent and inalienable dignity of humans is the source of freedom and rights of human and citizen. It is inviolable, and its respect and protection is the responsibility of public authorities." Every human being has an equal birthright and inalienable dignity, which constitutes the equality of all people and equality before the law (Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 1997). Additionally, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the European Union treaties as a fundamental right. In line with the EU recommendations, Poland's government committed to take the actions against discrimination and in favor of equal treatment through the "National Action Program for Equal Treatment for the years 2022-2030

(hereafter NAP for Equal Treatment 2022-2030)" The program is based on the initiatives of the EU and the foundation of the Polish Constitution.

The Polish state theoretically ensures equality between women and men within the Polish national legal system in accordance with international human rights treaties and within the framework of the fundamental values and principles of the EU. The NAP for Equal Treatment 2022-2030 evolves anti-discrimination policy, work and social security, education, health, access to goods and services, building awareness, data collection and research, coordination.

The European Commission, a body under the European Union, invests into non-governmental organizations working against discrimination in countries all around the European Union. The main organizations working towards greater social inclusion are: Age Platform Union (NGOs working with elderly and promoting a social inclusion of elderly people, working with the generational gap and ageism; European Network Against Racism that address issues of prejudice and discrimination based on racism, xenophobia and antisemitism; European Disability Forum that defends the rights of over 100 million disabled individuals across the EU; European Network of Equality Bodies that promotes equality and tackles discrimination; International Lesbian and Gay Association as well as International Lesbian and Gay Youth Organisation that advocate for people from LGBTQ+ community; and Transgender Europe. Each of the organizations has members in all the European member countries. The non-governmental organizations, however, are not working with the governments of the countries, and therefore have limited possibilities of providing training to teachers, trainers and professionals working with youth about the prejudices. (European Commission, n.d.)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Poland employ various methodologies aimed at reducing prejudices, discrimination, and oppression. These include initiatives for addressing the structural oppression such as international scientific conferences on men's rights and addressing wage gaps for disabled individuals, as well as promoting tools to measure wage disparities in businesses. Efforts also focus on addressing the discrimination present in the society by supporting migrant integration into the labor market and facilitating regular meetings involving representatives of national and ethnic minorities. Suggestions for combating hate speech involve establishing a monitoring team, conducting research on its prevalence and nature, launching media campaigns, and providing educational resources for media professionals. Collaborative models for equal treatment coordination between regional authorities and ministries are proposed, along with initiatives like establishing state sign language interpreters and introducing a certificate for leaders committed to equal treatment. Groyecka et al. (2019) investigates the impact of the Human Library method in Wrocław, Poland, demonstrating its effectiveness in reducing

prejudices and social distance towards marginalized groups through dispelling myths and fostering compassion and understanding.

As shown, non-governmental organizations in Poland are actively involved in using various approaches to combat prejudices, discrimination, and oppression. Their activities, which range from promoting workplace equality to combating hate speech, show an effort to create a more inclusive society. This preventive approach is especially important given the current news context, which frequently emphasizes cases of prejudices leading to discrimination in Poland.

3.1. PREJUDICE LEADING TO DISCRIMINATION IN POLAND

As discussed, the reasons for the existence of prejudices are complex. Nevertheless, when understanding the causes of prejudices, it is equally important to understand how to measure the prejudices, therefore certain indicators are necessary. Researchers agree that the main indicators of prejudices that need to be measured are: (1) religiosity and the collectivistic narcissism (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2023), (2) the right-wing authoritarianism (Golec de Zavala, 2021), (3) the social dominance orientation (Pratto, 1999), the intergroup contact (Allport, 1954), (4) the social distance (Stefaniak & Witkowska, 2015) and the (5) identity with the own group (Bennett et al., 1998; Dunham, 2018).

(3) Social dominance orientation (SDO) contributes to the existence of prejudice in Poland. Essentially, SDO is the belief that a hierarchical structure should exist within society, where certain social groups are to hold dominance over others. At the same time, these societies usually go opposed to the equality and egalitarian structures and prefer their own group to rule. Moreover, the SDO has been associated with the acceptance of hate speech and the rejection of the hate-speech prohibition (Bilewicz, 2015). Duckitt (2006) explains that this idea comes from psychology and is a result of growing up without emotional warmth from parents. Consequently, this fosters a mindset in which individuals perceive the social world as a hostile environment where one must continuously struggle for survival. This belief is a root for the prejudices towards members of the out-group whose presence might be related to, for instance, difficulties in finding a job. Moreover, higher SDO is typically connected with more conservative views and beliefs, more prejudices against marginalized or stigmatized social groups, and more socially undesirable personality traits, for instance high psychopathy, and low agreeableness (La Macchia and Radke, 2017).

(2) The right wing authoritarianism is the second, after the SDO concept contributing to the existence of prejudices (Duckitt, 2006). It is a tendency to follow the rules of the authorities as well as the willingness of

following the traditions and customs. There are three components of this aspect: submission to the authorities, submission to the conventional rules and authoritarian aggression (Altemeyer, 1998). It is the belief that individuals who are the "issue" in society should be punished. It confirms the belief in the individuals that the world is a dangerous place. Researchers claim it is related to prejudices because of the generalized fear (Altemeyer, 1998). In order to deal with this fear, authoritarian personalities typically turn to either God and deep faith or strong political leaders (usually of the right party), who better suppress feelings of fear and uncertainty about the future than those of the left, who might be suggesting the change (Soral, Wiśniewski, 2017). Moreover, according to Duckitt (2006) such a personality is rooted in fear, which can also be the source of prejudice, particularly directed towards groups that are seen as posing a danger to the *status quo* in society. Therefore there is a hypothesis that there is a correlation between the influence of the authorities (the government, the religion) with fear towards the members of the out-group and prejudice.

As previously mentioned, to identify and assess prejudices, it is essential to understand a historical and cultural context of a place, establish indicators that can assist in identifying prejudices, and identify the most oppressed groups in a specific setting. Poland is historically a traditional, largely homogenous and heterosexual country with the majority of people classified as Christian Catholic and with a conservative political culture (Boguszewski et al. 2020).

The traditional family values have been additionally influenced by the previous ruling party, *Law and Justice* representing conservative ideology that were explicitly affecting the minority groups such as women, LGBTQ+ community or *people on the move* called refugees. Moreover, the conservative political discourse of the previous government had a significant impact on attitudes towards immigration, nationalism and populism. The public media discourse effectively worked against other Eastern cultures and religions affecting the attitudes and perceptions of Polish people towards migrants and refugees. The perception about immigrants has been shaped especially in the context of complex political discourse on the European migration crisis in 2015 (Krzyżanowska & Krzyżanowski, 2018) and the crisis on the Belarussian - EU border in 2021. Additionally, there is evidence of prejudice towards refugees, sexual minorities and transgender individuals in Poland (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et. al,, 2023; Nowicka et. al, 2017) with the "LGBTQ-free zones" as examples of oppression in the country. The party's anti-immigration, anti-european and anti-LGBTQ+ community agenda has shaped the attitudes of people after its victory in 2015 and throughout the eight years of ruling (Krzyżanowski & Krzyżanowska, 2018; Polynczuk-Alenius, 2020).

Nevertheless, the political party is not the only reason for the existence of prejudice in Polish society. The reasons for the existence of prejudices are historical, cultural, societal, as well as religious. The influence

of social and public media discourse is crucial in a comprehensive analysis of Poles' attitudes towards the minority groups in the country. Indicators such as a strong trust in the government officials, the amount of intergroup contact between in-group and out-group, social distance towards members of the out-group in a close relation proximity as well the strength of identifying oneself with being Polish are all elements affecting the level of prejudices and consequently, leading to discrimination and oppression in the society. Understanding the main prejudices in Poland's general public, as well as their causes and effects is important in order to understand the perspective of the society, but more importantly, for the purpose of this research, of the generation of teachers, professionals, and parents that might have influence on youth attitudes through the contact in their daily environment.

(3) Intergroup contact is considered to be one of the most important aspects in reducing prejudice. Intergroup contact, defined as interactions between members of various groups, has received substantial attention in psychology and social sciences. According to the literature, intergroup engagement and contact hypothesis can decrease intergroup bias, boost intergroup trust, and foster intergroup relationships. It means that individual contact between the members of two different groups - under the optimal conditions - improves the relationships and contact between them (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2006, Allport 1954). In the research, the questions asking about the friendship with individuals of the out-group were used in order to analyze the frequency of the contact between Polish high-school students and minority group members.

(4) Social distance is characterized by the preferences of the individuals engaging into relationships with the members of the out-groups. The method to measure the Social Distance was initiated by Bogardus (1925) who wanted to identify the point of breaking the contact with the members of the out-group discovered through the series of questions: "Would you accept X as a …?" The general idea was that different people differ in terms of feeling comfortable with members of different out-groups in settings representing different levels of proximity. In Poland, a social distance has been studied by researchers and the statistics as a phenomenon that took a ride especially in 2015, when the right-wing political party, *Law and Justice* took power in the government. The negative messages about *refugees* sent by the authorities, raised numbers on the scale of xenophobia and racism, as well as the negative attitudes and unwillingness to accept refugees in Poland were common. Currently, social distance has been studied concerning prejudice towards refugees and sexual minorities, indicating a link between religiosity, spirituality, national narcissism, and social distance towards these groups (Żemojtel‑Piotrowska et al., 2023).

(5) Identity with your own group, often combined in Polish literature with Collective narcissism. Identity with one's group is part of the Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Whether based on gender,

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ethnicity, race or religion the identity is an important aspect of one's identity. This aspect is usually the central point when we think of ourselves and helps us to identify with the same members of the in-group. Collective Narcissism is the false belief that the greatness and importance of the individual's own group (members of the in-group) is not recognized and admitted by the members of the out-group (Golec de Zavala 2011, 2023). It is a composed belief of the vulnerability of the in-group members and the hostility of the out-group members (Golec de Zavala & Cichocka, 2011). However, mostly it applies only to the certain social groups such as Jewish or Arabic religious minorities about whom people do not possess enough knowledge and use the opinions coming from the public media, which are often manipulated. Moreover Żemojtel-Piotrowska (2023) discovered a connection between religiosity and the collective narcissism and their impact on the negative prejudice amongst the Polish population, especially towards *people on the move* and the sexual minorities in Poland.

The Research Center on Prejudice in Poland (2017) utilized indicators to measure levels of prejudice among Polish people, identifying the main oppressed minority groups in both 2017 and the most recent study.

3.1.1. "People on the move" - attitudes towards refugees

According to the Geneva Convention (1951), the 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, 1951). According to the United Nation Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) by the end of 2017, there were 25.4 million refugee men, women and children registered across the world (UNHCR). Among 44 most developed countries, Poland is not the main one where the refugees go, unless people are coming from neighboring countries such as Belarus or Ukraine. Poland is a major country in accepting the refugees from the former USSR, however it is observed that the attitudes towards refugees are negative. Based on the research it is caused by right-wing authoritarianism, orientation towards social dominance, strong nationalism, insecurity about the social position, negative attitudes towards refugees as a normative behavior, support for the *status quo* of the refugees, and lack of empathy resulting from the negative attitudes (Hartley & Pedersen, 2007; Nickerson & Louis, 2008).

According to Krakiewczyk-Krawczyk et al. (2022) Polish people show openness and willingness to help, especially the refugees coming from the territory of Ukraine affected by the Russian invasion. However, Pszczółkowska (2022) highlights the dichotomy of the policies present not only in Poland, but in all European Union. The Ukrainian Union in Poland says: "It amazes us that Poland, the same country which helps Ukrainian refugees in such a wonderful way, shamelessly and with cruelty drives families from

outside of Europe into the forest and kicks them out to Belarus". Poland has been an actor in a complicated political game. The country was affected by the *power play* that uses refugees, people trying to escape wars and discrimination, for political reasons. Additionally, Bansak et al. (2016) found out that voters prefer applicants who will benefit the recipient country's economy, have experienced severe medical or mental pain rather than economic hardship, and are Christian rather than Muslim. These findings showed that public attitudes towards asylum seekers are influenced by assessments of their potential economic contributions, humanitarian concerns about the legitimacy of their applications, and anti-Muslim prejudices, which is largely caused by the public media and political discourse. These preferences are consistent among respondents of all ages, education levels, incomes, and political beliefs across the examined nations in the Polish Prejudice Survey (2017).

3.1.2. LGBTQ+ community

The negative attitudes towards other genders and sexualities are spoken openly in Polish media and the public arena. Polish identity is strongly based on heterosexism that comes from the traditional and conservative approach rooted in the religion and history of the country. Therefore, the rise of openly anti-LGBTQ+ political parties has taken place which has affected the Polishness of individuals (Szulc, 2021). According to Szulc (2021), Polishness, a strong Polish identity, is built on feelings of both superiority over and affinity with the Slavic culture, usually related to Orthodox Europe in general and Russia in particular (Janion, 2010). Nevertheless, the rise of the conservative political parties in Poland, resulted in visible discrimination towards the individuals by, for instance, creating "LGBTQ-free zones" across Poland. Sadly, it is openly believed that there is no discrimination towards LGBTQ+ community in Poland, but rather it is their fault for acting "too much". Therefore, according to that understanding, it is not gender nor sexuality being a problem, but the actions of LGBTQ+ community such as equality parades. The framework for differentiation of the traditional and modern prejudices introduced by McConahay (1986) will be used here to describe the current attitudes of Poland society, that can be described as subtle and hidden, which aligns with the theory of modern prejudices.

Modern prejudices is a negative reaction to political proposals introduced by the members of the minorities, in this case LGBTQ+ community. It is a belief that discrimination of the minority group does not take place any longer, and the demands towards equality for them are unjustified. An important element of the modern prejudices is the accusation that it is the minority that provokes further isolation and it is then responsible for their marginalization (Brown, 2011; Nelson, 2003; Stephan, Stephan, 2000). Traditional prejudices towards sexual orientation in Poland are expressed on the basis of ethical and religious hostility to homosexuality that is based on moral and religious objections to homosexuality. This

kind of prejudices is associated with three beliefs: (1) that homosexuality is an abnormality, and often linked to pedophilia; (2) that interactions between persons of the same sex are against nature and religion; and (3) that homosexuals should be avoided. In response, modern prejudices against LGBTQ+ community reflects hostility to the individuals' demands as well as a desire to keep this group out of public view. This type of prejudice consists of the three beliefs listed below: (1) Homosexuals are no longer discriminated against; (2) societal improvements for more equality are not required; and (3) by displaying their sexual orientation, the LGBTQ+ community accepts responsibility for the criticisms directed at them and the situations that occur.

The Polish Centre for Research on Prejudice's study from 2017 concluded that contact with the LGBTQ+ community in Poland is limited. Only 25% of Poles know at least one homosexual person. In relation to the Contact Theory, the lack of contact with the members of the out-group might contribute to the negative attitudes. According to the previous analysis, we know that direct contact with the members of the minority group is beneficial for reducing prejudice and increasing inclusion under the right conditions. Although the relationship between intergroup contact and attitudes towards the out-group members are working two-way, that is contact improves attitudes, but friendly attitudes also increase the quantity and quality of contact (Pettigrew, Tropp, 2011). It can be assumed that a significant improvement in attitudes towards homosexual people will not be possible until the percentage of Poles who personally know a member of the mentioned community. However, in order for the LGBTQ+ community to "come out" and start speaking publicly about their gender/orientation, there needs to be a safe environment in the country they live in *(Figure 2.)*.
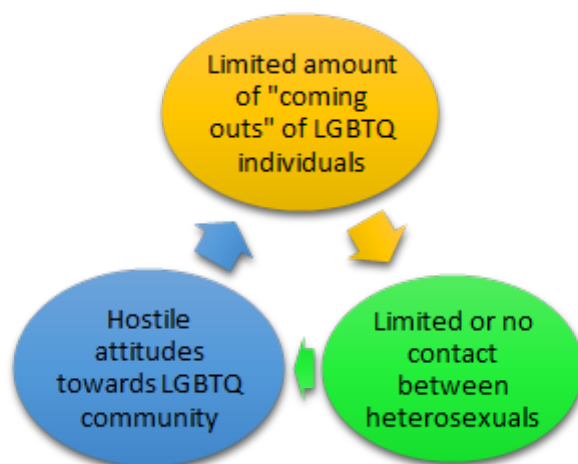
Figure 2. The vicious circle of prejudices and negative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ in Poland. McConahay (1986).

The minority groups such as *people on the move* and LGBTQ+ community are one of the most oppressed as identified by the Research Center on Prejudice in Poland (2017). There are examples of prejudices, such as negative attitudes and *subtle* rejection of the existence of the issue, discrimination, such as violent acts and hate-speech, and finally structural oppression, all contributing to the decreased levels of security and a general well-being of the individuals living in Poland. The structural oppression comes from the prejudices that are influenced by various factors (See Figure 3).

Understanding the roots of oppression is crucial in being able to address the issue amongst youth in Poland. The part that follows will introduce the issue of prejudices among youth in Poland and the approaches to address it in polish high-schools.
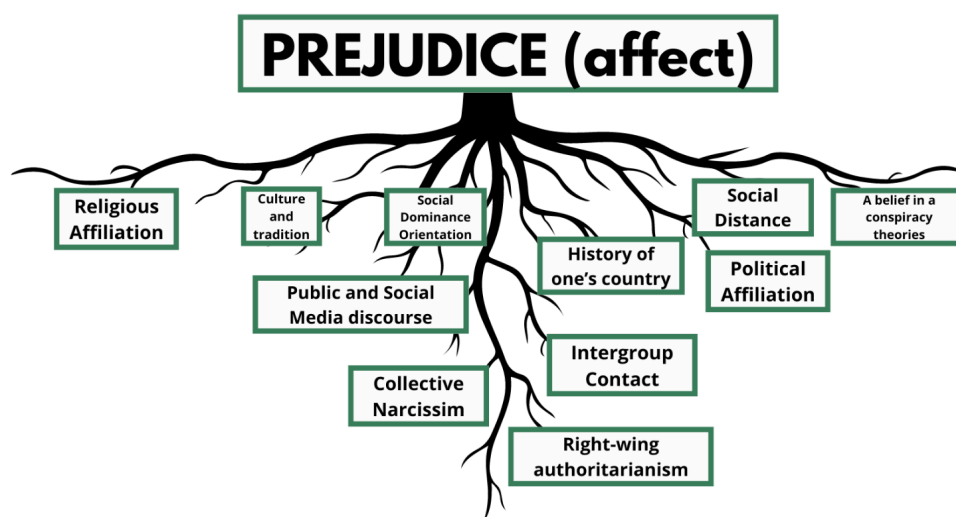
Figure 3. The roots of the prejudices. Author's created.

3.2. PREJUDICE AMONGST YOUTH IN POLAND

It is important to analyze the prejudices amongst youth in Poland for several reasons including the effects of globalization, migration, and raising awareness about sexuality and gender. These are contributing to a changing environment and the situations where youth are most likely to encounter the members of the out-group in their environment. Poland, as a fairly homogeneous, heterosexual and religiously united country, tends to hold to the traditional values and views, however the observed openness of the youth is changing this reality (Boguszewski et al., 2020). As a result, youth are more likely to question different

values and beliefs that are transmitted to them from different sources (Furlong & Harris, 2017). Sources such as the news, social media, peers, teachers or parents play a vital role in shaping minds and attitudes among individuals (Vervaet et Al., 2018). Research shows that teachers have a big influence on how young people think and act, especially when it comes to prejudices. Studies show that teachers' attitudes on discrimination have a big influence on teenagers. Research indicates that educators who provide support to their pupils can prevent bias from growing and promote social trust in teenagers (Miklikowska et al., 2019). Additionally, the closeness of the teacher-student bond may be able to lessen the association between bullying and ethnic prejudices, highlighting the importance of a positive and supportive teacher-student relationship in lowering prejudices towards ethnicities (Iannello et al., 2021). Any type of prejudices, whether based on ethnicity, religion, gender, etc develops in childhood and adolescence (Raabe & Beelman, 2011). Therefore high school, the place where youth spends majority of their time is the place where they are mostly exposed to these differences, and additionally through their behavior are most likely to show them towards others. There is existing data showing that prejudice has negative effects on mental health and as a result leads to depression and lowered self-esteem (Wilson, 2016; Major & Vick, 2005), which when experienced in a school environment, consequently might lead to the worsened academic performance, social isolation and other mental health issues. The existing data on prejudices in Poland amongst youth shows that it has been discovered an existing religious prejudice and prejudices towards the LGBTQ+ community (Zemojtel-Piotrowska, 2023). Not only the prejudices, but the discriminatory acts in forms of hate speech are present in the public media. The Warsaw District Court found Polish Television (TVP) guilty of violating the rights of several individuals and breaching journalistic standards by airing a documentary called "Invasion," which targeted the LGBT community in Poland. Seven people initially sued TVP for defamation, leading to a court ruling on June 21, 2022. Additionally, the NGO "Kampania Przeciw Homofobii" also sued TVP. The court ordered a prime time apology on TV, banned further broadcasts of the documentary, and awarded PLN 10,000 for a specified communal purpose as requested by one of the plaintiffs (European Committee of Social Rights, 2020).

It is important to compare the statistics of discrimination towards LGBTQ+ youth community in Poland with those in Europe. In fact, the specific emphasis is put on the LGBTQ+ community while analyzing the European Survey from 2020 conducted in 28 states of the European Union. The results compare the situation of LGBTQ+ community in Poland compared with the European average (Table 1).

BEHAVIOUR/ ATTITUDE	POLAND	EU-28 AVERAGE
Avoiding holding hands with the same partner (%)	83	61
Avoid certain locations due to fear and insecurity (%)	51	33
Often/Always being open about LGBTQ+ (%)	27	47
Experienced harassment within the last year (%)	42	38
Believe in the governmental actions towards reducing prejudices (%)	4	33
Youth (15-17) hiding being LGBTQ+	39	30

Table 1. European Union Strategy for Fundamental Rights (2020)

These findings highlight a concerning fear in Poland and suggest a significant gap in government efforts to combat discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community compared to the broader European context. The data highlights the need for improved measures to tackle the prejudices and discrimination towards not only the LGBTQ+ community, but towards all the minority groups facing discrimination and structural oppressions to reduce the amount of fear amongst youth in Poland (European Union Strategy for Fundamental Rights, 2020).

Piekut (2021) shows that prejudices towards the minority groups amongst the older generation is higher compared to youth which leads to the conclusion that adults and professionals working with Youth are more likely to expose their prejudices on youth if they are not aware of them. There is a general narrative giving an explanation about generational differences in the attitudes towards the out-group members in Poland. It states that people that have been raised before 1989 but after the Second World War are less open-minded and less willing to accept changes in the society because of the authoritarian regime and lack of out-group contact they grew up in. At the same time, on the contrary there is a narrative of younger generations, born after 1989 that they are open minded and carry less prejudices. After the Second World War due to the changes in borders and replacements, the country became homogeneous, both ethnicity and religiously (white and Chrstian catholic). From 1952-1989 when Poland became the PSL (Polish People's Party), homogeneity was the main aim of the country that caused all the members of the minority groups such as Jewish minority and LGBTQ+ community to disappear from public life (Heinen, 2009). After 1989, the freedom of movement was larger and then, in 2004 Poland entered the European Union which provides legislative power to policies against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual orientation (Bojarski, 2011). Despite the legislative changes and

changes in the political systems, the rise of the Catholic Church, anti-gender and anti-immigration movements were aiming for popularity. According to Bilewicz and Winiewski (2015), younger Poles tend to be a combination of conservative and liberal beliefs, with a conservative view on family life, low acceptance of minorities, and a preference for a strong leader, yet liberal views on the economy and labor market. Through the in-depth interviews organized with thirty participants in Warsaw, Poland about how Generational perspectives shape the attitudes towards the cultural diversity in Poland it was claimed that limited exposure to ethnic and religious minorities during socialism, both at home and abroad, could contribute to differing perspectives among generations. This argument agrees with the theory that more exposure to non-Polish individuals has resulted in more positive attitudes towards minorities among young Poles. A study of project participants found that having more encounters with persons from different ethnic backgrounds leads to more tolerant attitudes towards them as suggested by the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954). This hypothesis can be used to describe the dynamics between generations raised before 1989 in the communist era and those raised after 1989 in a non-authoritarian system. Moreover, Piekut and Valentine (2021) also found out that more everyday interactions with people who are perceived to be of a dissimilar ethnic background are associated with more tolerant attitudes to them. It is important, however, to mention that the conditioning must happen under the optimal conditions, and that the exposure solely is not a solution to increased openness towards diversity. Therefore, the differences between generations in perspectives towards the members of the out-group are not caused only because of the authoritarian regime, but mostly because of the lack of exposure to the members of the out-group early in their lives. The issue of generational differences in the attitudes towards members of the out-group is important to be addressed, because in parallel it points to the generations of students and teachers who hold different beliefs about the world and the society.

Generational differences in prejudices towards minority groups in Poland are expressed. It indicates that older generations exhibit higher levels of prejudices compared to youth. The following chapter on methodology details a mixed-method design conducted in Poland with high-school students and professionals, exploring how generational perspectives shape attitudes towards cultural diversity.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research utilizes a mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to comprehensively explore research questions. This combination is justified by its ability to provide a more nuanced understanding than either method alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The advantage of qualitative research is the opportunity to focus on real-world challenges and to obtain deeper understanding about values and beliefs, while quantitative research analyzes the representative data from

a larger population (Bryman, 2016; Tenny, 2022). Quantitative method was used to study prejudices among high-school students in Poland, while the qualitative method was used to obtain the perspectives of professionals working with youth. The research was conducted from December 2023 to March 2024 in two stages.

4.1. QUESTIONNAIRE

An online anonymous survey of high school students in Poland was distributed during IT lessons. The survey underwent a pilot test with 5 participants to refine the questionnaire's usability and coherence. The voluntary participation was ensured. Based on Kothari (2014), the pilot test helped identify limitations and refine the questionnaire. Questions were initially developed in English and adapted on prejudices indicators from Eurobarometer and the Polish Prejudice Research Study (Bilinski, 2015). The language was simplified for student understanding and translated.

Survey was conducted in three schools in the Mazovian and Lubelskie regions of Poland, encompassing various urban and rural areas settings to capture diverse perspectives from students. Twenty schools in the region were contacted but only three schools responded to participate. The heterogeneity of schools profile was ensured with representation of a private Catholic institution in Radom, which has a rather homogenous sample of students by ethnic background and religion, while others represent heterogeneous students sample, including Roma students and individuals of diverse sexual orientations, students of Ukrainian nationality, students with disability etc. After excluding the responses outside of the criteria and missing,, the valid answers are n=275 high school students aged 14-21.

Question sequence, influenced by Kothari (2014), progressed from general to personal perspectives on prejudice, concluding with demographics. Accordingly, the questionnaire consists of 17 closed ended questions including demographics (Attachment).After cleaning and modifying the data, including labeling variables and checking for errors, analysis was conducted using SPSS ensuring accuracy and reliability (Pallant, 2016).

A total of n=201 (72%) Polish, and n=3 (1,1%) Ukranians, and n=1 Russian, Georgian, and a Roma ethnicity and one is half Polish-half German. From the total sample n=275 172 (61,6%) were women and n=69 (24,7%) were men, and n=38 (13,6%) were missing. The gender imbalance is the limitation of the study. There were 188 respondents (67,4%) aged between 14-17, 57 (20,4%) respondents aged 18-21, and 30 answers were missing. For the further analysis all respondents in age group 14-21 of total 275 = (100%), representing 132 (47,3%) rural area of less than 50 000 inhabitants and 133 respondents (47,7%) representing larger cities with >50.000 inhabitants (See Table 8 in attachment).

4.1.2. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

The high school youngsters who completed the questionnaire are underage and are considered members of the vulnerable group that need special protection. As a result, during the selection procedure, the supervisor authorized the letter of consent (see Attachment A). With the involvement of the principals of the schools, the parents were notified. All respondents were informed of the study's purpose, anonymity and confidentiality, and the fact that they were participating voluntarily. The research questions were translated and modified according to the educational level and respect for diversity. The study's reliability, objectivity, and integrity are all ensured in accordance with the general academic and ethical principles of ISCTE and ESWOCHY.

Significant attempts were made to assure variety by involving schools from various socioeconomic backgrounds and places throughout Poland (contacted via email, visits, and phone calls). More than 17 of the selected 20 schools did not respond, resulting in a smaller sample size. As a result, all participating schools were concentrated in a single city with a population of more than 300,000 people, albeit representing diverse profiles.

4.2. QUALITATIVE STUDY

The semi-structured interviews with professionals actively working with youth were conducted in Polish language. All of them were audio-recorded, translated to English and transcribed to serve as the basis for the data analysis. The following explain the interview process and the selection criteria for the particular study.

Empirical data for this study was gathered through online semi-structured interviews with Polish professionals working with youth, reflecting the exploratory nature of the research. Semi-structured interviews, as advocated by Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) facilitate open-ended questioning to explore personal experiences and offer flexibility in adapting questions as new themes emerge. All interviewers who agreed to participate in the semi-structured interview were 7 (See Table 6 in Attachments). Purposive sampling through snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. Bryman (2016) suggests that snowball sampling happens when one participant suggests other potential candidates with the same characteristics for the research. The participants were contacted and invited to book the interview via Calendly to choose the most appropriate time and day for the interview. After registering, the email with the consent form and question guide was distributed to the participants of the study. All the interviews were conducted in Polish, audio-recorded via Google Meet and then transcribed and translated to English using TurboScribe, making sure that the translation reflects what the participants meant. One interview

guide was employed for both formal and non-formal education teachers. Language of the professionals was analyzed to uncover biases, values, and beliefs concerning youth. Table 5 (in attachment) represents the connection between the research Questions, objectives and the semi-structured interview guide.

The rationale behind selecting the professionals from two different fields is because they utilize different educational methods to work with youth and more importantly the environments differ in the aspect of voluntary participation of youth, which contributes to the effectiveness of learning when compared with the formal education (Affeldt et al. 2017; Benkova et al., 2020; Morciano, 2015). According to Treadwell (2017), participants of the qualitative research are named Respondent A, B, C, etc. to ensure confidentiality. Hence, in the transcription and in the analysis of the data, participants will be named as FI# (Formal [education] Interviewer) and NFI#(Non-Formal [education] Interviewer.

The following criteria are used in selecting the participants:

- Participants can be either men or women.
- The participant should be a professional working actively with Youth in Poland (teachers, social workers, social pedagogues, youth psychologists, NGO activists, youth workers).
- The participant can be either from formal or non-formal educational institutions (public school, private school, NGO).
- The participant should be currently working in the field with youth.

4.2.1. THE ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis method was used in order to notice emerging patterns and provide empirical conclusions. Information obtained from the participants (audio-recorded n=7 interviews) provided new in-depth insights on the subject of prejudices in the working environment. The TurboScribe was used to transcribe and translate the interviews from Polish to to English. The coding was ensured by labeling parts of the transcript into one concept and by application of qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2013). Interviews were coding with MAXQDA data analysis tool that ensures the logical understanding of the connections between the codes and use them for the visual representation of data. Initially, there were 670 codes that were created out of the seven interviews. Consequently, based on the 4 main research questions, the 6 main themes were identified, 19 subthemes and 57 emerging themes out of 670 codes. (Table 7 in attachment). In reference to Holsti (1969) thematic analysis was analyzed objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages.

4.2.2. CODING

In the coding process, I focused on the content of the all interviews from the transcripts that can be beneficial for discovering the emerging themes and concepts from the participants. Coding is the labeling of parts of the transcript into one concept and an effective method in qualitative content analysis with big data sets (Flick, 2013). Flick (2013) points out that it is not beneficial to the researcher to code all the text due to extra time put into coding, but instead to focus on the most relevant part of the transcripts that answer the research question.

4.2.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In online interview process videos were not used due to participant comfort and technological limitations, which might impact the analysis of the data because the body-movement was not observed, and the ey-contact was not maintained. Additionally, as Bryman (2016) indicates, the qualitative study often lacks generalizability. He states that the collected data is not generalized and therefore the biased opinions might result. The regional level analysis cannot be generalized to the country level, which is one of the study limitations.

4.2.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

All interviewees in the study were asked to digitally sign the consent form. confirming that they had read the purpose of this study, their participation was fully voluntary and confidentiality will be ensured (See Appendix C). Participants gave consent to audio/video recording for the purpose of transcription, and will be deleted after completing the study. Researcher acknowledges the self-determination and the commitment to the meticulous analysis of the data ensuring the reliability and objectivity and integrity of the study in accordance with the ISCTE general principles.

5. RESULTS

According to Allport (1954) an attitude is *"a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related"* (p.810).

First, it is crucial to present the results of the prevailing attitudes of youth towards prejudices by understanding their perceptions of the most prevalent biases across Poland, including prejudices presented in public and social media. The results of the questionnaire (n=275) confirm the prevalence of various forms of prejudices among youth in Poland towards Roma minority, Jewish minority, Muslims, Ukrainians, individuals of non-white ethnicities, individuals with different sexual orientations than heterosexuality, transgender individuals, people with physical disabilities, the elderly (aged 75+), as well as minors, men, women, physically fit individuals, and individuals who are obese. These assessments included three distinct spheres: the broader national context, representation of prejudices in public media, and representation of prejudices in social media platforms. The answers were measured using the Likert Scale from 1 (Definitely do not agree) to 5 (Definitely Agree) for all three questions. Polish Youth believes that the main prejudices that exist in all three dimensions are towards transgender individuals, towards different than hetero sexual orientations, towards Ukranian individuals and towards obese people. The groups about which there is little prejudice are thin People and Male *(Table 2)*.

	N					
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Transgender	275	0	3.4412	.85867	1.00	5.00
Non-hetero Sexuality	275	0	3.4036	.84811	1.00	5.00
Ukraine	275	0	3.3515	.86431	1.00	5.00
Obese	275	0	3.2824	.84183	1.00	5.00
Non-white Skin Color	275	0	3.1503	.82443	1.00	5.00
Muslim	275	0	3.1285	.79616	1.00	5.00
Jewish	275	0	3.0958	.78776	1.00	5.00
Roma	275	0	2.9830	.78129	1.00	5.00
Women	275	0	2.9236	.87651	1.00	5.00
Disabled Individuals	275	0	2.8788	.82677	1.00	5.00
Children	275	0	2.8497	.82344	1.00	5.00
Elderly	275	0	2.8364	.81170	1.00	5.00
Thin	275	0	2.8218	.84010	1.00	5.00
Men	275	0	2.8194	.86245	1.00	5.00

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis. The Median Sum of the Attitudes towards Prejudice in three different dimensions: Public Media, Social media and generally amongst the population.

Second, the attitudes of youth towards prejudices are captured by analyzing their experience of prejudice and discrimination. The students were asked two questions if they experienced prejudice and/or

discrimination towards themselves based on factors such as: age, gender, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, ethnicity, ideology, disability and weight (See Table 3).The most common reason for experiencing prejudices is weight, age, gender and religion of respondents, which is experienced equality distributed across urban and rural areas. Additionally, there was a correlation found across the prejudices experienced on the basis of weight and gender (r. 0.335, p.<0.001), as well as on the basis of weight and ideologies such as veganism (r.0.313, p.<0.001) (See Table 15 in attachments). The results suggest that individuals who experience prejudice based on their weight may also face discrimination related to their gender or ideology suggesting that various traits of one's identity intersect and contribute to the experience of prejudice. The results confirm the research about the prejudices on the basis of physical appearance (O'Brien et al., 2013), however there are few studies referring to the analysis of this issue in Poland suggesting an area for further research. Comprehending these relationships is crucial in order to confront societal prejudices related to physical appearance in Poland.

	Urban vs. Rural Division of the Participants			
	Urban		Rural	
	Yes		Yes	
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Sex	27	23.1%	24	20.2%
Age	36	31.3%	36	30.5%
Nationality	12	10.1%	13	10.7%
Religion	25	21.0%	24	19.8%
Sexual Orientation	19	16.1%	22	18.3%
Skin Color	10	8.2%	11	9.2%
Ethnicity	7	5.9%	11	9.0%
Ideology	12	10.0%	11	9.0%
Disability	8	6.7%	8	6.6%
Weight	40	33.6%	39	32.5%

Table 3. The Experience of Prejudice and Discrimination based on the Rural vs Urban area.

5.1. GENERALIZED PREJUDICES AMONG YOUTH IN POLAND

Given the connections among ageism, classism, sexism, racism, sexual prejudices, and religious intolerance, researchers seldom look into these intolerable viewpoints at the same time. The development of the Intolerant Schema Measure (Aosved, Long, Voller, 2009) aimed to create a concise, and valid measure[1] of intolerance that took into account these six dimensions at the same time. There are Polish versions of the scale that include either 48, 36 or 12 items adapted from the original version, while in this study the 10-point scale was included in analysis of prejudices towards other ethnicities, LGBTQ+

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[1] It was created by the authors using data from several samples collected from existing measures such as the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, Neosexism Scale, Modern and Old-Fashioned Racism Scale, Modern Homophobia Scale, Fraboni Scale of Ageism, Economic Beliefs Scale, and M-GRISM.

community, gender, religion, age and physical appearance *(see Table 9 in attachment)*. The questions created for the purpose of analyzing this concept were in a way so that the answers show that if the higher the Mean, then lower the generalized prejudice. Questions number 9, 11 and 12 were formulated negatively, therefore the coding was reversed before conducting the analysis. The reliability of the instrument was measured and proved. The Cronbach's α for ISM (General Prejudice Scale) in my sample is 0.749 and moderately acceptable (Table 4). In other words, it indicates that the items in the scale have moderate, but acceptable internal consistency and the results are consistent with the original version of the Intolerant Schema Measure (α= .85) (Aosved & Long, 2006).

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.749	10

Table 4. Cronbach Alpha for reliability of the Scale

The Pearson correlation was used in order to measure the attitudes of youth in Polish high schools regarding prejudice, first, to analyze the normal distribution of the data. The primary hypothesis suggested that intergroup contact would decrease general prejudices levels, however the findings rejected this notion. In addition, the attitudes of the sampled youth are captured by presenting the percentage of experienced prejudice and discrimination based on nationality, gender, age, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, skin color, ethnicity, ideology, disability, weight within the last school year, additionally divided. Relevant to the research question are the findings presenting the attitudes of youth towards the most prevailing prejudices in Polish society which will be presented in the frequency table, as the Mean of the sum of the responses to three questions. Of significant relevance to the findings was the Pearson correlation between parental viewpoints and the prevalence of general prejudices among youth. The correlational tables are presented in the Appendix Table 11, Table 12, Table 13 and Table 14. Lastly, the attitudes of youth towards prejudices are analyzed by understanding what they believe are the efforts of the government and schools done in order to tackle prejudices, raise empathy and promote diversity.

H1: Youth having more friends from the out-group has lower general prejudices levels.

The study investigated the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), positing that increased contact with out-group members could reduce prejudices towards all other groups. Correlation analysis between participants' intergroup contact and their general prejudices levels revealed a negative correlation coefficient ($r = -0.200$, $p < 0.018$), contradicting the hypothesis. Surprisingly, the findings suggest that higher intergroup contact is associated with higher levels of prejudices among youth. The negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship, implying that as intergroup relations increase, prejudices levels also rise. While the correlation is statistically significant ($p < 0.019$), it is only moderately negative, suggesting a meaningful yet not extremely strong association between the variables. These results reject H1, indicating the negative correlation between intergroup contact and prejudices levels among youth. (See Table 12 in Appendix for details.)

H2: Youth having a more positive attitude about the proximity towards the minority groups has lower general prejudices levels.

The correlation coefficient of 0.465 indicates a "moderate significance," suggesting that the relationship between General prejudices and the Social Distance scale is meaningful. Moreover, the p-value associated with this correlation is reported to be <0.001, signifying statistical significance at the conventional value of 0.05. This supports H2, indicating a correlation between General prejudices levels with Social Distance scale. In essence, as levels of the social distance scale towards certain minority groups increase (reflecting positive attitudes), the general prejudices scale decreases (meaning, the prejudices level is lower). This implies a link between attitudes of Youth related to prejudicial behaviors and attitudes (See Table 13 for details in attachments).

H3: Youth having a negative attitude towards one minority group has a negative attitude towards another minority group.

Strong correlations were found, particularly noteworthy are those exceeding 0.85, such as between transgender and different than hetero sexual orientation ($r=0.931$), Jewish and Roma minorities ($r=0.915$), and Muslim and Jewish minority individuals ($r=0.902$). Additionally, strong correlations were observed between thin people and women ($r=0.880$), Muslim and Roma ($r=0.890$), while the lowest correlations, exceeding 0.2, were found between obese and children ($r=0.140$), and all categories correlated with children scored below $r=0.2$, contrasting with physical disability ($r=0.248$) and elderly ($r=0.413$) (See Table 14 in attachments for details).

H4: Youth that have more similar views to their parents have more general prejudices levels.

The hypothesis was indicated that people who have similar views to both of their parents have higher General Prejudice levels. The reported correlation coefficient (r) between similarity of views to both parents and general prejudices levels is -0.173 (See Table 11 in attachments). This negative correlation coefficient suggests an inverse relationship between the two variables. In simpler terms, as the degree of similarity of views to both parents increases, general prejudices levels tend to decrease (the level of prejudices decreases). The correlation coefficient of -0.173 indicates a relatively weak negative correlation between the variables. Although the correlation is not very strong, it is still statistically significant. Additionally, the p-value associated with the correlation coefficient is reported at 0.001 which is less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. There is indeed a correlation between similarity of views to both parents and general prejudices levels.

5.2. COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE IN POLAND

Prejudice in Poland is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors such as social media discourse, cultural values, historical context, and intergroup dynamics (See Figure 3). These interconnected phenomena contribute to negative attitudes towards marginalized groups. To effectively address prejudices, employing anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practices when working with young people is essential. Understanding youth attitudes and perceptions regarding the presence of such programs in Polish schools is crucial.

According to social work's Oppressive Theory, oppression arises from societal power imbalances. Examining anti-prejudice initiatives in Polish schools necessitates considering power dynamics among students, teachers, and authorities. The student-teacher relationship significantly impacts youth development, as research demonstrates how professionals' biases affect interactions, creating oppressive environments for minority youth (Pittman, 2010; Tran & Guzey, 2023; Muller & Boutte, 2023; Kelly, 2022; Thomas, 2020). Thus, anti-oppressive programs benefit all, teachers, marginalized and normative youth groups. Understanding their availability and youth attitudes creates effective response strategies. However, despite efforts by the European Union and the Polish government, only 4% of youth (see Table 1) express satisfaction with government actions to address prejudices and discrimination in Poland (European Union Strategy for Fundamental Rights, 2020). Many youth lack awareness or willingness to engage with available initiatives.

5.2.1. Anti-discrimination initiatives and programs

Lastly, the results present the attitudes of youth towards prejudices reduction and programs offered by the formal and non-formal educational institutions to tackle prejudices, increase empathy, and work with diversity in Poland and in the schools.

The question was asked to understand the attitudes of youth and levels of their awareness about the actions taken by the government in reducing prejudices and discrimination in the country. Findings from the question indicate a notable difference between the perception of the availability of these programs and their actual presence in Poland. Firstly, the low (10,62%) percentage of youth that thinks that enough has been done in Poland to combat prejudices and discrimination matches the studies conducted by the European Union (2020). This raises concerns regarding the effectiveness and extent to which anti-prejudice programmes are present in Poland and to what extent youth notices its effectiveness in the society. It means that either these programmes are insufficiently addressing the problem, and the actions are not satisfactory with the results or the information about their existence is not reaching a large proportion of the student population. The large number (48%) of students who responded that such programmes do not exist in Poland confirms and demonstrates a gap in the implementation of anti-prejudicess measures. This finding raises the need for better strategies in promoting such programs and increasing youth's awareness. The data raises concerns about the transparency of the programs on the national level. Despite the information that the anti-prejudice and anti-discriminatory programs are offered through NAP for Equal Treatment 2022-2030, and European Commission's investments in the non-governmental organizations, the awareness amongst youth in Poland is very low.
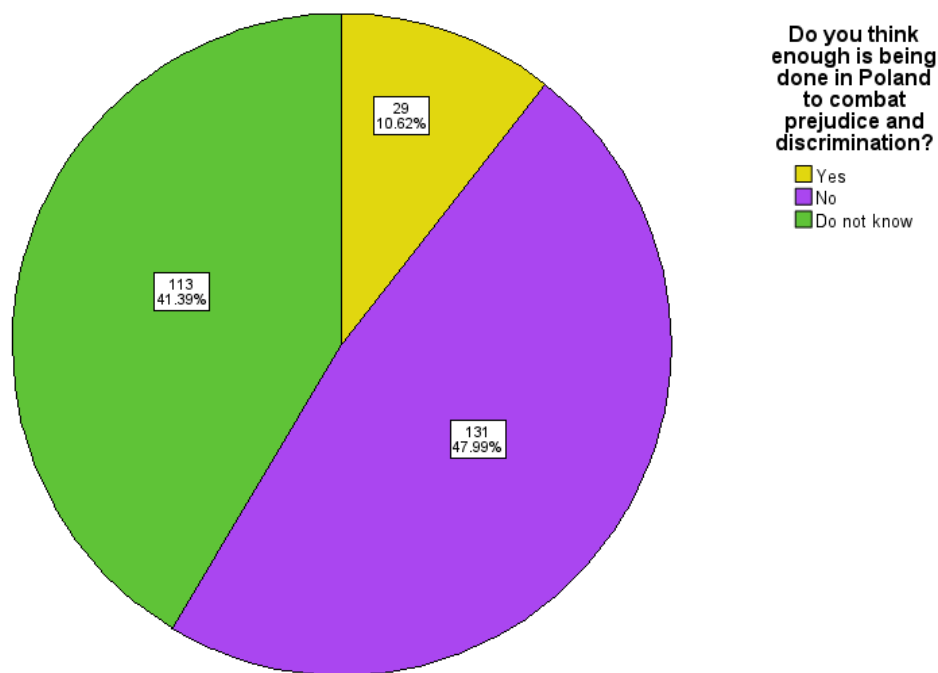
Figure 4.. Pie Chart: Perspective of Youth about the government's actions to tackle prejudices.

In the second questions, students were asked about anti-oppressive initiatives included in the school curriculum to understand their awareness of such initiatives and compare it with the perspectives of professionals working in the schools. A large percent (58%) expressed that there are no such initiatives in the curriculum indicating a possible gap in the educational system's efforts to introduce anti-prejudice material into formal learning environments. It raises questions about how much emphasis schools place on teaching about diversity and prejudices reduction, as well as if there are systemic obstacles in including topics like these into curricula. The relatively low number (11,3%) of students confirmed the presence of anti-prejudice programmes in their school curriculum. It suggests that, if such programmes exist, they may not reach a major section of the student body. In fact, this raises questions about the accessibility and inclusivity of such programmes, as well as their ability to engage students from varied backgrounds. The passivity of students, lack of motivation and engagement - themes that emerged in the qualitative analysis of data with professionals - are in line with the findings. It is possible that these programmes take place after school, causing youth to view them as an extra time commitment that they may not prioritize. Furthermore, the restricted curriculum and extensive programme requirements may cause teachers to prioritize other subjects above the implementation of anti-oppressive efforts, limiting students exposure to such content during formal learning hours.
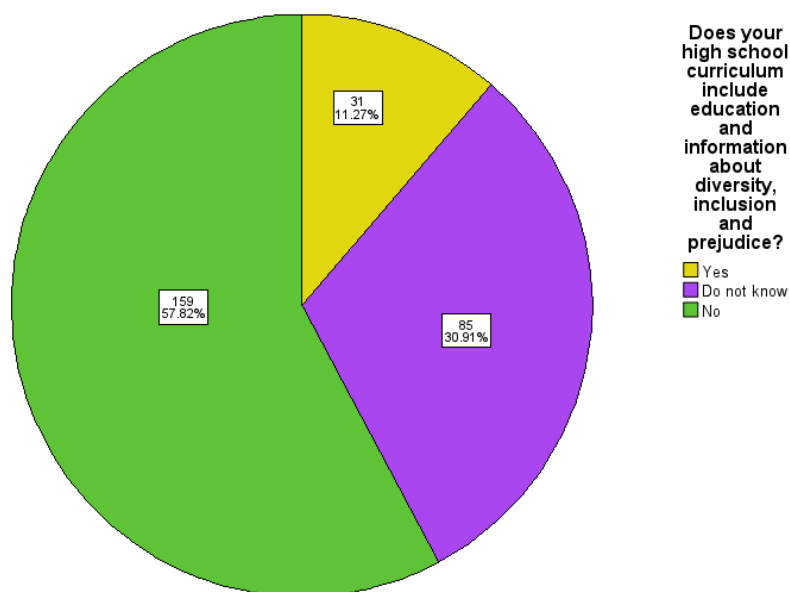
Does your high school curriculum include education and information about diversity, inclusion and prejudice?
- Yes
- Do not know
- No

31 11.27%
85 30.91%
159 57.82%

Figure 5. Pie Chart: Perception of Youth about the school curriculum and education about diversity.

5.3. PERSPECTIVE OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH YOUTH

Social work emerges as a critical player in this arena offering a framework of anti-oppressive methods to tackle prejudices and discrimination. Social work is resolving prejudices by conducting interventions that aim to reduce biased attitudes and promote inclusion. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of techniques such as interacting with various groups, and implementing anti-bias training programmes (Palluck & Greene, 2009; Amodio & Cikara, 2020). These programmes aim not only to reduce prejudices immediately, but also to build long-term attitudes towards marginalized populations. Additionally, the social work oppression theory lays the foundation and the core of the issue of oppression. The broad AOP framework can be applied in educational settings in Poland as a method for addressing prejudices and tackling discrimination in the schools. Critical Consciousness (CC) offered as an element of Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Freire, 1970) - that finds its use in social work - can be applied as an effective tool to raise critical awareness amongst youth about the presence of oppression in the society and address its roots - prejudices - to tackle them. Social work's role is not addressed enough in the Polish educational system, therefore there is a call for reinforcement of the school's pedagogue role in applying the AOP framework when working with youth in Poland. Social work then serves as a platform for the users working with youth offering to utilize the AOP to foster environments that inhibit bias and encourage acceptance and understanding.

School-environment. The participants' workplaces appear to be characterized mostly by tolerance with certain challenges faced by professionals working in the formal education environment. Both interviewees from formal and non-formal educational settings such as teachers, psychologists and youth

workers are working with teenagers and other young people of mostly Polish background with a few examples of diversity amongst youth such as individuals with various identities and origins.

> *"To be honest, our work atmosphere is [...] assessed as good. [..] Well, there are people who are dissatisfied. [...] Teachers, this is a specific environment. But in general, the atmosphere at my work is rated very good."(FI2)*

The participants from the non- formal educational setting have mostly a left-leaning political affiliation, and there's a significant emphasis on being secular and apolitical as two basic values of the places. The organizations place a high priority on adaptation and inclusion, working to modernize customs such as changing the words of the scouts' oath to make it more inclusive and consistent with their beliefs. In general, the atmosphere in a non-formal educational setting seems to be encouraging, forward-thinking, and centered on the growth and well-being of the youth they work with.

> *"We're apolitical and religious, we love everyone [...] We can't afford to support a church. It seems to me that this sphere of mental health in the center of children's help and influence on children makes us apolitical. Most of us are left-wing, almost all of us are left-wing liberals in this foundation. But we're not talking about this." (NFI2)*

Contrary to the non-formal education, the formal educational working environment in the public schools represent different realities. The respondents' workplaces are composed of a mix of formal guidelines and a few initiatives to promote diversity. Restrictions about attendance and behaviour are enforced, and there's a feeling that these requirements occasionally cross the line between home and school life.

> *"For example, it would be appropriate not to eat, not to get up, not to go out at any time, and to ask for permission. I'm not talking about any kind of incapacitation. But it's getting out of control. What I do at home, I do at school. I don't see the difference between home and school." (FI2)*

> *"Well, in school they explain that you have to be tolerant, that it's not our thing to judge someone [...]"*

Religious influences can be found in schools with religious profiles, though accommodations are made for pupils of other religions or non-religious backgrounds.

> *"I work in a Catholic high school, so when it comes to, for example, faith, everything is based on Catholic faith. It is not imposed in this school. The only thing is that there are certain things that are mandatory, even if you are a non-believer, you can sign up for our high school. The only thing*

is that you have to participate in retreats, there is also a school mass once a week, for which there are, for example, shifts, and then a particular class must come to this mass." (FI2)

Some initiatives are taken to assist people with impairments. Nevertheless, students are expected to keep their emotions under control, and although social dynamics can be difficult at times, the environment is generally kind. In general, the educational environment in both educational settings shapes a diverse and occasionally difficult workplace dynamic by trying to balance inclusivity, and cultural nuances from what is observed in the responses.

Needs and challenges. The exploration of the subtheme "Needs and challenges of youth" reveals insights through formal and non-formal education settings.

In a formal education, there's a spotlight on the shifting world dynamics impacting youth, expressing concerns over declining mental resilience and the necessity for psychological support.

> *"Everyone says it's getting like that after the pandemic. But I think it's not just the fault of the pandemic and the isolation that everyone is blaming everything on. Just a changing world." (FI4)*

> *"And yes, it's a generation that is very weak mentally. In fact, a large part of our youth needs psychological help." (FI2)*

Similarly, in non-formal education, there's a parallel concern about weakened mental strength and increased sensitivity, with one participant stating,

> *"This is also a very more and more common topic, mental health and the fact that more and more young people, as you said earlier, experience such moods, not only moods, but just mental health problems". (NFI1)*

Regarding digital citizenship and safety, both groups acknowledge the overstimulation from social media and lack of critical thinking skills among youth, leading to vulnerability to misinformation and negative influences online.

> *"Yes, the more that now, I say, new techniques, I don't know, VR, for example, I know that now some school has boasted, even in the messages it was that they introduce it to the lesson, but dear God, is it good for little children who already have so many of these gods and still introducing them just in such fantasy in the lessons?" (FI3)*

> *"Young people also spend a lot of time on social media, where there are these information bubbles and it is very difficult". (NFI3)*

In formal education, there's a recognition of the youth's ability to search but not sift through information effectively. The focus is on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health and the overwhelming amount of information available, which young people struggle to process. In terms of education and development, formal education highlights challenges in traditional learning methods, such as concentration issues, boredom, motivation, and procrastination.

"Let me put it this way, [...] what appears first is considered the ultimate truth [...]" (FI3)

"That we sit and do in the book, we sit and talk or we solve tasks in turn, that it's just boring for them and they can't focus." (FI3)

"(Young people) are limited to computers, phones, games." (FI1)

However, formal education advocates for diversified teaching methods to prevent monotony and stimulate learning, emphasizing practical engagement and experiential learning.

"We have a few multimedia tablets in classes, I don't know, for example in tourist services classes, they very often play ping-pong, walk around, ask questions, they have additional attractions that on the one hand, broaden their horizons, and [...] they prevent such monotony, I would say." (FI3)

In conclusion, while both groups acknowledge the evolving challenges faced by youth, formal education leans towards mental health issues and the changing world's impact compared to the school environment of teachers, while non-formal education emphasizes innovative teaching methods and challenges in digital literacy, focusing on activities that could empower youth. Moreover, formal educators emphasize concerns about digital citizenship and safety, noting issues such as technology addiction, media illiteracy, and a lack of critical thinking regarding online information. Additionally, they highlight the persistence of traditional gender roles and polarization in society. In contrast, non-formal educators underscore the importance of mental health and well-being, addressing topics like emotional expression, self-esteem, and societal norms. They also discuss challenges related to social inclusion and discrimination, recognizing the need to promote equality and combat stereotypes.

Strengths and Capabilities. While examining the strengths and capabilities of today's youth in both formal and non-formal education settings, it is observable that within both settings, interviewees emphasize the energetic and passionate disposition of young people. They speak about diverse interests of youth and a willingness to engage deeply in the chosen passion, whether it be discussing cars or delving into various hobbies that are not as common and casual. Additionally, their openness and readiness to communicate are highlighted, indicating a generation unafraid to express themselves and engage in dialogue.

Additionally, insights from non-formal education interviews point to the receptiveness of youth towards knowledge acquisition and their adaptability in forming opinions based on new information underscoring the youth's openness and tolerance, evident in their environmentally conscious practices and acceptance of diverse gender identities.

> *"Because they also give a lot, a lot, a lot of such energy here. You have to keep up with some things to understand them." (FI4)*

> *"They have passions. They actually have things they are passionate about. And they are much stronger in these passions than, for example, my generation when I was in this age." (FI2)*

> *"So it's like young people are great and it's like it's very easy to influence, educate, change these views." (NFI3)*

> *"I'm impressed. They know a hundred times more than I do." (NFI2)*

> *"They have passions. It is definitely often a choice based on one's interests, [...]" (FI4)*

Overall, both formal and non-formal education environments illustrate the strengths and capabilities of today's youth, showcasing their energy, passion, openness, and readiness to absorb knowledge and embrace progressive attitudes.

Engagement and Communication. The analysis of engagement and communication among youth within both formal and non-formal education points to motivation and participation of Youth in the sample group, which is a crucial aspect when discussing the perception of professionals towards the attitudes of youth. Formal education interviews, such as those conducted with FI4, highlight prevalent issues of lack of motivation towards education, often stemming from a desire to avoid overexertion or academic challenges.

> *"[...] can't cope for various reasons, either intellectually, or they just don't want to do it and are comfortable with it, or, for example, they start working , they go somewhere and the parents think that they can [...] arrange individual teaching and then when they have individual teaching, it is known that [...] he will not have to make much effort." (FI4)*

The prevailing attitude suggests a tendency among youth to seek the *path of least resistance*, reflected in their reluctance to engage deeply with educational tasks or to participate in extracurricular activities. This sentiment is further expressed in observations regarding poor vocabulary and a general lack of interest in expanding knowledge or participating actively in school-related endeavors.

"Well, I know it's ambitious, but I don't think it's about ambitious. No, no, the path of least resistance, to make it easier." (FI4)

"Vocabulary, development, such, as I say, the questions are still closed, but if the questions are open, it's best to at least put a word in, possibly a sentence, because if there was, for example, a description, a process, then 90% of students don't even try to do it." (FI3)

Conversely, insights from non-formal education underscore similar patterns of disengagement, manifesting as a deficit of interest and a sense of being overwhelmed by academic and extracurricular commitments.

"There are people who are very involved and there are people who are not interested at all." (NFI2)

"I have the impression that this is the reason why they don't want to travel, because they just don't feel like they have time for it, or they have a lot of duties, they just very ambitiously enter certain things and that's why they feel overwhelmed." (NFI1)

Despite some efforts of educators, mostly in non-formal educational settings to spark interest through various means, such as introducing non-formal education techniques that are mostly based on experiential learning and participatory activities, a significant portion of youth presents reluctance and apathy towards involvement. The factors that contribute to such attitudes are overstimulation, having too many options, and a lack of interest in the methods. Both formal and non-formal education environments thus struggle with the challenge of motivating and engaging youth, highlighting the need for innovative approaches to foster meaningful communication and participation in educational activities.

Contact with parents. One of the most appearing topics across the interviewers was: parents. In analyzing the theme of contact with parents within the context of prejudices amongst youth, in both formal and non-formal education settings there is information of how the relationship between youth and parents affects them and what influence it has on their prejudices as well as the importance of upbringing.

In formal education interviews, one prevalent aspect is the lack of time between parents and youth, leading to a deficiency in communication about school-related matters and the life that students have in and outside of school. For instance,

"So you can't be left behind with some facts and things that they like to talk about, or want to talk about, or need to talk about, for example, because they have no one to talk to at home because their parents don't have time." (FI4)

"Because sometimes parents, they leave the house and parents spend very little time at home, they talk little with this youth." (FI1)

Moreover, there's a recurring theme of over-caring parents who believe they know what's best for their children, often disregarding teachers' perspectives. This suggests a disconnect between parents and educational institutions, hindering effective collaboration and support for students.

"These [extra lessons] are for the student, and for the parents. Sometimes a parent can appear, but very rarely." (FI3)

"The generation of parents is also quite different, so their parents are also a bit more caring, sometimes over-caring, a bit too much sometimes." (FI2)

"Parents believe students, not teachers, and little to the teachers. And, for example, it's hard [...] Because parents think that it's not a problem for the child, but sometimes, however, well, you know, it is." (FI2)

"And the most sad thing is that in such situations it is difficult [...] to talk, if there is no cooperation with the parent and there is no two-sided support. Because we often say something different, take actions that are not taken further, because the parent states that it is not needed by the child, him or other peers. This is also a problem here." (FI4)

Conversely, non-formal education interviews shed light on parents' lack of resources and knowledge in supporting their children's education. While acknowledging parents' inherent care for their children, there is an emphasis on their unfamiliarity with modern challenges faced by youth.

"Parents also lack the ability to support young people, perhaps also the knowledge of how to support young people and in general what the world of young people looks like now. Because things are really changing very quickly, and parents sometimes just don't understand what's happening to their children and what environments their children are in." (NFI3)

This lack of understanding of youth's daily life, might lead to (un)intentional prejudices in youth, as parents may subconsciously pass on outdated beliefs or stereotypes to their children. Additionally, the influence of parental views on various aspects of life, including education and social interactions, is highlighted. This suggests that prejudices amongst youth often comes from their home environment, where parental attitudes and beliefs play a significant role.

"I think that this is simply a matter of parents, parents are often very responsible for the children's approach to school and whether they will go to these studies and so on. This is one issue." (NFI1).

"I think that they are simply observing what is happening in Poland, they are also observing their parents, how they are also talking at home all the time." (NFI3)

"And they repeat what they say at home." (FI1)

Both formal and non-formal education settings underline the importance of parental involvement and understanding in shaping youths' perspectives and behaviors. While formal education settings stress the need for improved communication and collaboration between parents and schools, non-formal education settings emphasize the necessity of equipping parents with the knowledge and resources to support their children effectively. Ultimately, bridging the gap between parents and educational institutions is recommended in addressing prejudices amongst youth and fostering a more inclusive environment.

Generational Bias. Interestingly, one of the common topics running through the interviews was related to the generational bias based on negative attitudes towards distinguishably different age groups, both elderly and children.

In formal education settings, there's a prevalent concern about the lack of discipline and respect for authority among students with the references to the past and emphasis on the rapid changes that happened throughout the years. For instance,

"I think that young people have lost, so to speak, such a barrier between older people, between people who teach, and colleagues." (FI3)

"But in fact, they allow themselves more, when it comes to, for example, the younger generation to the teacher, the older generation, simplifying the generation so much. But they are much more brave when it comes to, for example, saying that they don't like something. They can also complain more to the teacher, for example, if something is wrong." (FI2)

"I was just surprised by the behavior of the students towards the teachers and the lack of respect towards you. First of all, you know, teachers are really for nothing. If you don't make good contact with the student and with the students in general, they have you for nothing." (FI1)

Moreover, technology use emerges as a significant point of contention, with concerns about excessive phone use and its impact on face-to-face interaction and teamwork skills. The pervasive presence of phones during school breaks is highlighted as a barrier to social interaction and team-building activities, highlighting the difficulties in socializing. Additionally, there's a perception that younger generations spend more time on their phones compared to previous generations, further worsening the issue.

> *"They don't talk much to each other [...]The best thing is for them to come, you know, open the cell and scroll." (FI1)*

> *"Everything is about doing it in a group, because individually it can be a little different, but when it comes to doing it in a group [...]this is a problem. This is a problem. How to work in a group." (FI2)*

> *"[...] everyone actually has a phone with them all the time and looks at this phone, for example, during breaks, they don't get to know each other that well." (FI3)*

> *"This applies to such relationships not only on the Internet, but also in the classroom: the stupider I am, the more popular I am." (FI4)*

Non-formal education interviews also shed light on generational biases, with observations of a negative image of children in public spaces. There is a narrative in Poland that older generations perceive younger individuals as lacking respect and discipline, contributing to tensions between different age groups (Siemienska, 2021). In the interviews, there's a perception that older adults are more traditional and resistant to change, creating a divide in values and attitudes towards societal issues such as environmental conservation and mental well-being when holding onto the conservative beliefs. Additionally, the lack of support from the older generation towards the younger generation and their ideas, might be interpreted negatively by youth, confirming the perception that older people are more traditional and conservative, maintaining or even creating a bigger gap between the two groups.

> *"[...] but also big prejudices against children, younger people. It's like the prejudices towards children, young people, calling "kaszojady" (baby food eaters) that appears." (NFI3)*

> *"There's less and less respect for older people. I was at school once and I was waiting for a class and there was one teacher and she said that being a teacher is like a "purgatory". That it's really*

hard. And when I talk to them, they say that it's hard, that kids... There's no respect for older people.” (NFI2)

“[...] these "konary" are already completely unstuck, because "konary" are such an older instructor circle, they are already typically 70 years old, for example, so it's such a huge generational gap, and that they are unstuck because they remember other times and now they are smart and they don't know how it actually looks like now to act with children, and it comes out from the bottom.” (NFI1)

“[...]that there is less understanding of the topic of some mental comfort, that we should ensure, there is less understanding of the pressure of this frame, as if they really don't have to go into winter to some peak in the Tatras to prove that they are valuable hikers, and people of this age, they have such a look that no, only through such a difficult thing, they can prove it.” (NFI1)

In conclusion, both formal and non-formal education settings reveal generational biases and prejudices amongst youth, highlighting the need for greater understanding and communication between different age groups to address these challenges effectively.

5.4 MANAGING PREJUDICE IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

High school serves as the primary environment where young people spend a significant amount of time and encounter diverse disparities. It is within this context that youth are most prone to demonstrating behaviors influenced by these differences. The detrimental effects of prejudices on mental health include depression and low self-esteem (Wilson, 2016; Major & Vick, 2005), and when experienced in a school setting, they can lead to outcomes like poor academic performance, social isolation, and other mental health challenges. Therefore, it's crucial to analyze the school environment and gain insight into professionals' perspectives on addressing these issues.

Identifying the diversity. Firstly, during the interviews the participants were asked about the diversity in their working environment to understand the demographics of the groups. Interviews within both formal and non-formal educational settings reveal distinctive perspectives on various aspects of diversity, including nationality, ethnicity, disabilities, gender/sex orientation, and physical appearance. There was a particular focus put on the language used by the professionals in order to identify the possible implicit or explicit prejudices. In the formal education setting, there's a notable emphasis on nationality and ethnicity, with mentions of increasing diversity, such as Ukrainian students, and efforts to accommodate individuals

from different backgrounds. For instance, the interviewers notice the diversity highlighting the slowly growing presence of diverse nationalities within the formal institution.

> *"We even have Ukrainian citizens at the moment, one Italian, and I don't remember exactly, so as not to lie, something, probably Bulgarian origins [...]" (FI3)*

> *"We even have Ukrainian citizens at the moment, maybe in the entire school, and we have about 800 students. Well, it could be around, I don't know, 15 people maximum." (FI4)*

> *"But when it comes to people of other cultures or origins, yes, we had people from Ukraine, we also had people of a completely different nationality, but combined with Polish, I mean, speaking Polish, after all." (FI2)*

Additionally, there's acknowledgment of mental disabilities, particularly learning disabilities and conditions like autism spectrum disorder with a commitment to inclusivity and support mechanisms. However, at the same time there is a denied presence of individuals with physical disabilities due to the technical profiles of the school.

> *"[...]disabilities, due to the fact that the school is technical and teaches a profession, and here medical examinations are needed, which our students undergo." (FI4)*

> *"However, when it comes to such, I don't know if it can be called a disability and you also include such people, there are a lot of people on the autism spectrum." (FI4)*

> *"We don't have any disabilities because it is a technical school, and gastronomic, so here it would exclude a little, some disabilities. We have children with disabilities, of course, but it's more in terms of learning and dysfunctions to learn." (FI3)*

> *"But when it comes to different nationalities or disabilities, I will also add that in fact, in high school, people with disabilities are admitted. These disabilities are usually, for example, hearing impairment or visual impairment." (FI2)*

Conversely, in the non-formal education context, diversity discussions extend beyond nationality to encompass gender/sex orientation and religious diversity. The interviews emphasize a shift in societal attitudes towards recognition and acknowledgment of diverse sexual orientation, with instances of transgender and non-binary individuals being recognized and respected. There's also an acknowledgment of potential challenges, such as managing name changes and parental reactions, indicating a nuanced understanding of the intersectionality of identities. Furthermore, there's a notable acceptance of diverse

physical appearances, with examples like a male caretaker painting their nails being seen as a non-issue, reflecting a more inclusive and tolerant environment.

> *"Yes, there have been times when we've had people in the group with orientations other than heterosexual, as well as transgender and non-binary people." (NFI3)*

> *"[...]more and more non-binary people." (NFI2)*

> *"We definitely have them in school. But I don't know which specific people it was. I don't want to guess. I don't want to use stereotypes." (NFI2)*

> *"Culturally it is also quite a homogeneous group, I mean, there are rather Poles here, for a while we had some kind of outburst in the teams, a few people of Ukrainian origin, but rather culturally homogenous" (NFI1)*

The formal educational setting does not mention the diversity in terms of different sexual orientation or gender usually by denying their presence, or if there is a mention, the language used is not inclusive.

> *"Yes, unfortunately at our school there are couples, so to speak, one-way. And they are not well received." (FI3)*

In the formal settings, language used by interviewees reflects little awareness of diversity and no examples of commitment to promoting inclusivity, while non-formal educational settings provides examples of more inclusive language and greater awareness of diversities. While formal education interviews focus on representation of institutional efforts to accommodate diversity, non-formal education interviews delve into the lived experiences of individuals, highlighting personal narratives and societal attitudes with more understanding. Overall, these insights present the evolving and changing landscape of diversity and diversity management in educational contexts, emphasizing the importance of proactive measures to promote inclusivity and combat discrimination in 2024.

Prevalence of prejudices. From analyzing the prevalence of prejudices in the context of professionals working with youth three main sub themes were created: neutral perception, recognized prejudices and denial of prejudices. It analyzed how prejudices are perceived, managed, and acknowledged.

Interestingly, throughout the interviews a similar pattern of speaking of prejudices would occur.

1. Denial of prejudices ('have not seen', 'there is none')
2. Continued discussion about the challenges of Youth
3. Subtle prejudices and discrimination identified.

4. Realization that discrimination is there.

The pattern might lead the researcher to the question of what are the reasons for neglecting prejudices in the first place. The potential reasons were not analyzed in the interviews, however it could be due to the official representation of the working environment during the interview, it could be due to lack of knowledge about what prejudices and discrimination is, it could be a denial and not paying attention to such situations at work, or a true belief that the prejudices does not exist.

In formal education settings, interviewees more often exhibit a tendency towards denial of prejudices or neutral perception, emphasizing the absence of overt discrimination based on gender, gender roles, nationality, or sexual orientation. The language used by interviewees in formal education settings tends to downplay the existence of prejudices, often framing it as isolated incidents or attributing it to individual personalities rather than systemic issues. Phrases such as *"no big problems"* or *"haven't seen it"* are recurrent, suggesting a reluctance to confront underlying biases. The denial of prejudices within the formal setting can be divided into the emerging patterns:

1. Recognition of Prejudice but Downplaying Severity: Professionals in formal education settings often do not acknowledge the existence of prejudiced behaviors, and when they do, they tend to downplay their severity. For example, one respondent mentions *"unconscious comments"* but portrays them as *"thoughtless"* and not malicious. They are expressed as the normalized behavior: *"thoughtless statements," "normal, youthful testosterone" (FI4)*. Some professionals claim they have not witnessed prejudices and reject admitting it in a further conversation: *"No, I haven't seen it"*, *"No. There's no way there was anything like that here,"* No, I haven't seed. In my classes, I haven't seen, I haven't heard anyone say that in general.", "Probably not. Probably not. You know, such laughter between students has always occurred, but it's not in the background of discrimination. It's more like someone will always find some of their scapegoat, so to speak."(FI1).*

2. Omnipresence of Prejudice: There's a tendency to normalize prejudices as part of youth behavior. They describe fights and other serious situations as common occurrences not specific to their school but happening everywhere: *"Of course, it's not all sweet here, because there are fights and more serious situations, but they don't happen in any environment. It happens in the family, in various places, and in every job."(FI4)*

3. Limited Awareness or Acknowledgment: Many professionals in formal education settings claim they haven't witnessed instances of prejudices. They attribute this to a lack of exposure or

attention rather than a genuine absence of prejudiced behaviors: "[...] *because we also don't notice any big problems with discrimination There were at least no reports of someone saying that such incidents take place (on the basis) of some discrimination. So it wasn't there"* (FI2).

Conversely, in non-formal education settings, there is a more pronounced recognition of prejudices, particularly towards marginalized groups such as individuals from Ukraine or those with non-heteronormative sexual orientations. Instances of rude comments, ridicule, and exclusionary behavior are acknowledged, indicating a need for greater awareness and intervention. Interviewees in non-formal education settings adopt a more candid approach, acknowledging the existence of prejudices and its detrimental impact on marginalized groups. Terms like "*rude comments"* and *"not friendly behavior"* highlight the tangible manifestations of discrimination observed in these settings.

The denial of prejudices is not as common in the interviews with professionals from non-formal educational institutions, however the division below presents the emerging patterns:

1. Recognition of Prejudice with Some Accountability: Similar to the formal education setting, professionals in non-formal education acknowledge instances of prejudiced behaviors, such as laughing at someone's appearance or nationality. However, there's a slightly higher level of accountability as they mention addressing such behaviors among volunteers.

    "I'm not recalling any specific examples now. Rather, it was just a case, [...] because she's from Ukraine, or I'm going to throw a snowball at her because she's from Ukraine. I'm not going to sit with her because she is from Ukraine." (NFI3)

2. Questioning the Prejudice: Unlike the formal education setting, professionals in non-formal education settings are more likely to question the existence of the prejudices and seek explanations for their existence rather than deny them completely.

    "Well, I think that for sure to what extent it is true, to what extent it is a factual belief, it is also something to consider." (NFI3)

3. Denial Coupled with Overconfidence: While both settings feature denial of prejudices, professionals in non-formal education settings often express overconfidence in their lack of prejudices. Statements like *"there's no prejudices. We're too good"* suggest a dismissive attitude towards the possibility of prejudiced behaviors among their groups.

Moreover, despite efforts to promote mutual respect, interviewees in non-formal education settings recognize that prejudices often stem from home environments and societal attitudes. There is an additional acknowledgment of the influence of peer dynamics, with some interviewees noting the tendency for individuals to make offensive remarks in pursuit of acceptance within their social circles, highlighting the peer influence.

> *"Often outside of school, among their peers. They can behave the same way as they would in their family home, that is, if an adult is watching, if someone is judging, 'I will be good, I will guide this old woman through the road'. But if in half an hour he will be among his peers, where there will be more people who will not have respect for an older person, they may even take advantage of the fact that he is a weaker person and want to make a stupid video with this person in the role of some victim, I don't know if they would dare to stand up for such a person." (FI4)*

In general, the analysis shows contrasting perspectives on the prevalence of prejudices between formal and non-formal education settings (see Figure 6). It emphasizes the importance of addressing the topic of prejudices and discrimination, as well as promoting education and inclusivity in all educational contexts, for both teachers and students. Additionally, while formal education settings may benefit from increased awareness and proactive measures to address subtle forms of discrimination, non-formal education settings can serve as platforms for fostering dialogue and challenging societal norms that perpetuate prejudices and exclusion.

Nature of Prejudice. While analyzing the nature of prejudice, the following categories emerged: explicit prejudices and implicit prejudices. In formal education contexts, prejudices often emerge through thoughtless comments, inadvertently perpetuating harmful stereotypes despite lacking malicious intent, which can be categorized as a modern type of prejudices, often implicit, subtle or even hidden (See Figure 1).

> *"These are more thoughtless comments. And when they think about it later, they absolutely didn't mean some very negative attitude. However, if there are such cases of discrimination, these are rather thoughtless statements." (FI4)*

Conversely, in non-formal education settings, prejudices are depicted as deeply rooted in subconscious biases shaped by systemic factors and societal norms. While conscious prejudice exists, it is also understated, manifesting in biases related to diverse worldviews or beliefs. Concerns about

discrimination, particularly regarding sexual orientation and mental health, underscore the challenges of fostering acceptance within these environments.

"In those groups where transgender people were present and, for example, introduced themselves by a different name, then I didn't observe any such open negative attitudes. For example, there was a situation where someone, for example, like, has a different worldview, yes, and somewhere out there treats anti-modern people, or some kind of homosexual or bisexual person, as not entirely natural, but this person did not present attitudes openly, but simply walked away/was distanced." (NFI3)

"[...]well, the topic of homosexuality, because I mainly work with the staff of the teams, they are also people of this age, from 16 to 25 years of age, and maybe it is not somehow emphasized in a way that we do not call someone for a function because he is of a different orientation." (NFI1)

The complexities in the nature of prejudice are observable. By acknowledging the differences, and understanding the differences between both implicit and explicit types of prejudices, educators can better tailor interventions to combat prejudice and promote diversity and inclusion in educational and social work settings.

*Manifestation of prejudicess.*In examining the manifestation of prejudice as perceived by professionals working with youth, notable differences emerge between formal and non-formal education settings. Within formal education contexts, professionals acknowledge instances of hate speech and microaggressions, often coming from *thoughtless* comments or subconscious biases. For example, derogatory and offensive terms like "fa**ot" are used, according to FI4, without malicious intent, reflecting a lack of awareness of their harmful implications.

*"[...] vulgarity or some expression like that, these fag*ots" [...] (FI4)*

"For sure, in our school there was a problem with hate when it came to the school's self-government, because the self-government met with the fact that they wrote various messages on Instagram. (FI2)"

(about Ukrainian students) "Yes. 'We have already helped you so much, and no one helps us so much. I have to do this and that, and you will have it easier, you are going to have it easier'. And there are such various remarks." (FI1)

There are references to "changing times" and the general idea that nowadays the world is politically correct and we *"delve too much into details"* when speaking about inclusive vocabulary.

"[…]once there was no problem to learn a poem about Murzynek (Nig**r) Bambo, and now children don't learn it, because we shouldn't say it like that, Murzynek(Nig**r), but Ciemnoskóry (Dark-skinned) for example." (FI1)

Additionally, exclusionary behaviors, such as physical appearance-based discrimination or hate messages on social media platforms like Instagram, contribute to the existence of prejudices within school environments. These manifestations of prejudices are often typical and reflect societal norms and systemic influences which are structural and often directed into minority groups, such as women or LGBTQ+ community.

"But as in the background of the school, one person or two girls found a group of peers in a different class, so they sit somewhere separately in class, but during breaks I see that they just talk with other people." (FI3)

In contrast, professionals in non-formal education settings also recognize hate speech and exclusionary behaviors but additionally highlight specific targets such as individuals of Ukrainian nationality or LGBTQ+ community.

"[...] for example, there are various indiscriminate rarities towards witch people, whether towards homosexual people or people from Ukraine. Towards people from Ukraine, also those stereotypes that appear in the stories of people from Ukraine who are in groups. And these people say that, for example, they are discriminated against at school, they have been teased because they are completely different. Despite the fact that these people have lived here for many years, after the war these prejudices became stronger." (NFI3)

"Well, there are such thoughts and statements, but I don't think it's ever happened that someone was not called for this reason, or was recalled from this function when he came out." (NFI1)

Despite the presence of discriminatory thoughts and statements, there is a perception that exclusion based on these factors is rare, particularly concerning gender identity and sexual orientation. Overall, while both formal and non-formal education settings struggle with prejudice, the specific responses to discrimination should vary, underscoring the importance of tailored interventions and considering how youth behave in both of these settings, to address the anti-oppressive methods effectively and with care.

*Mitigating Prejudice.*When speaking of the importance of tailored interventions to promote inclusivity, it is important to understand the current situation at both working environments. Interviewers were asked about the strategies as well as the suggestions that they believe would be most effective in tackling prejudices.

In both, Formal and Non-Formal Education settings there were four main activities recognized:

1. Encouraging Open Conversations - Professionals emphasize the importance of promoting open conversations with trusted individuals, whether peers, teachers, or neighbors, to provide support and guidance to youth experiencing prejudices, however it does not present itself to be commonly practiced.

"You know what, I do it on a regular basis if there is a need. Once a week we have a teacher's hour and once a week on a regular basis." (FI1)

"[...] such discussions come out, so to speak, even on their own, on these practical classes, where we are with each other, for example, for 5 hours,[...] and then there are really such different aspects moved, not only what's at home, what's at school, but sometimes young people can express themselves more broadly." (FI3)

On the contrary, in non-formal education professionals facilitate open discussions in group settings, encouraging participants to express their opinions and challenge discriminatory beliefs. They create opportunities for self-reflection and empathy, helping participants understand the consequences of hurtful language and stereotypes.

"So if somebody, for example, said, I don't know that a particular race or nationality is inferior, we just talk about it. If something comes up in class, we just discuss it then." (NFI3)

2. Redirecting to Professionals - The professionals in formal educational settings redirect students to professionals when necessary, ensuring they have access to appropriate resources for addressing discrimination. Additionally, when faced with situations beyond

their expertise, professionals from a non-formal educational environment also redirect individuals to professionals or other resources for appropriate support and guidance.

"First of all, encourage them to seek help from trusted people, because no one is the alpha and omega. Sure. First of all, always encourage young people to seek help from trusted people, because if not from friends or peers, then from someone older, it doesn't have to be a close person, it can be a teacher, even a neighbor. But listen, you don't have to talk to me about this, but I know you have a problem, find someone to talk to." (FI4)

"If we have such a basis, then I direct my students to a pedagogical psychologist or another institution, even above school, if we can help such a person." (FI1)

"The best advice that I can give to someone is to meet a specialist for example (when) youth that come to me and I don't know how to react" (NFI1)

3. Feeling Obliged to Intervene - Professionals acknowledge their responsibility to intervene in conversations or situations involving prejudice, emphasizing the importance of standing up for inclusivity and challenging discriminatory attitudes.

"If I can solve this problem, we will solve it on a regular basis and as soon as possible." (FI1)

Professionals in non-formal education settings also feel obligated to challenge discriminatory remarks or behaviors, acting as mentors or older siblings to youth experiencing discrimination. They strive to create inclusive environments where youth feel supported and empowered to address prejudice and discrimination.

"[...] and I hear that somewhere in there is this type of conversation in the background, it is my responsibility to interfere in this conversation and react." (NFI3)

"I feel obliged to be a person who says, hey, no, it's not like that, it doesn't change anything, if this person does his job well, then hello, it doesn't matter at all [...]" (NFI1)

4. Changing the Subject - Some professionals utilize a technique of changing the subject to divert attention away from potentially harmful or discriminatory conversations.

"Yes, of course, I always answer, I always calm them down, because otherwise it would be an adventure, for the whole school. Maybe here the girls are just incredible, they see everything in everyone, but not in themselves." (FI3)

"'Come on, we'll do it together, I'll help you, tell me what you were doing there on the weekend.'
And very often it is also the case that I try to make this joke a little, so as not to irritate them even
more." (FI3)

"My technique is that I answer in one sentence, in some way, if there's something, but in a closing
way, and I move on to something else." (NFI2)

Overall, while professionals in both formal and non-formal education settings employ various strategies
to mitigate prejudices, the approaches differ slightly based on the context and the specific needs of the
youth they serve. Nevertheless, there seems to be a critical need for the improvement of the strategies for
mitigating prejudicial attitudes. The importance of taking a step forward, and instead of tackling the
prejudices, promoting the diverse environment with individuals having a sense of self-agency and
acceptance towards others.

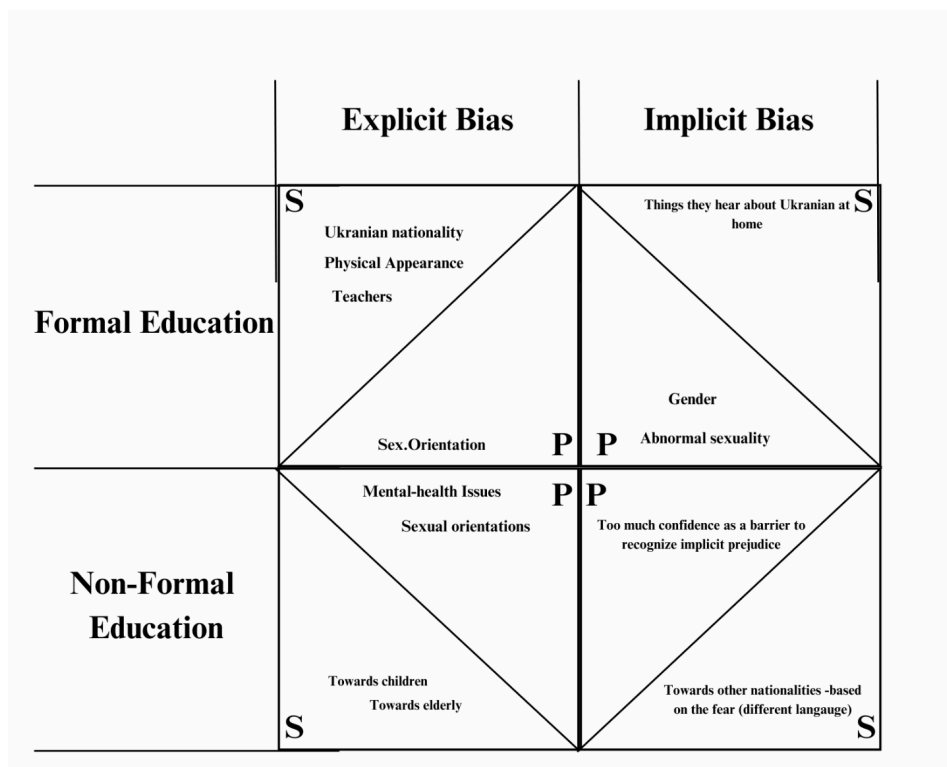*Figure 6: Implicit/Explicit bias among S (students) and P(professionals) within formal and non-formal*
educational settings based on the interviews. Author's created.

5.5. ANTI PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION PROGRAMS

*For teachers.*In the area of study of reducing prejudice and discrimination, teachers encounter varied
availability and options for programs aimed at addressing these issues. In formal educational settings,

there is evidence of some initiatives, such as training sessions provided cyclically, indicating a recognition of the importance of addressing prejudice and discrimination within the education system.

> *"Yes Yes Yes. And quite cyclically. I think even twice a semester. The needs are different. For example, procedures related to dealing with minors are now at the TOP level." (FI4)*

> *"Although some of the schools were also somewhere on this topic, some topics appeared on the pedagogical boards, so it just naturally, I think, entered the school system." (FI2)*

> *"Yes, you can use the 'Radomskie Ośrodki' (Centers in Radom) for teachers, you can use different types of training." (FI1)*

In non-formal educational settings, however, there appears to be a more diverse choice of programs available to teachers, ranging from collaborative efforts with municipal organizations to obligatory trainings mandated by scout associations

> *"I will tell you that this is a project from the Polish Academy of Sciences, which was commissioned to us." (NFI2)*

> *"They are certainly created by the ZHP (scout association), everyone is different, it is simply created by the main headquarters of the Polish ZHP, and Free Being Me is a program created by an international scout organization, to which we belong as a WACS association, that is, it is an association of girls, both scouts and guides." (NFI1)*

These programs cover a range of topics and approaches, from general prejudice reduction to safety policies, with some being obligatory for all teachers within certain organizations. Despite these variations, challenges persist, such as resistance to change among older educators and questions regarding the relevance and effectiveness of mandated trainings.

> *"And this is a training that every adult member of the ZHP must currently go through, i.e. staff, people performing such instructional functions, and people who have completed the 18th year of life." (NFI1)*

> *"[...] it also shows what kind of overtaking and lack of openness to change at all, because we are as an organization now in such a mode that basically until today everyone has to finish this course, [...]older people who have been working for a long time as educators in scouting, they have such a situation, and what do they need it for, what they hurt before, and now they won't hurt someone, after all, some kind of, I don't know, closure to the fact that it doesn't make sense." (NFI1)*

Overall, while both formal and non-formal educational settings offer directions for addressing prejudice and discrimination, the non-formal sector appears to provide a more diverse and structured approach, albeit with its own set of challenges.

*For students.*The availability of programs aimed at reducing prejudice and discrimination among students varies between formal and non-formal educational settings. In formal education, there is evidence of efforts to address these issues, such as the involvement of psychologists in providing support and guidance to students on various aspects, including current affairs and coping strategies. On top of this, there are instances of informal programs, such as talks and presentations focusing on diversity and cultural understanding, organized by teachers with the support of pedagogues.

> *"Of course. Year by year we have more and more teachers and psychologists." (FI4)*

> *"They are organized, they come, for example, policemen, who, you know, know each other on this information and present young people in situations where they can be offended on the forum, or share videos, that everything is to be recovered, to be aware that this is going to be discovered, that they are not harmless." (FI1)*

There are activities and meetings organized by outside of school authorities such as police, implementing programs on cybersecurity, which is found to be relevant in the school setting amongst Youth. However, there are also indications of limited awareness or implementation of specific programs, with some respondents noting a lack of structured initiatives in their schools.

> *"Well, I have children in schools, yes. And to be honest, I have not seen it in other schools, [...] This is probably an omitted topic." (FI3)*

> *"Probably not. As of now, teachers do it individually in their educational classes, but I have no information about who did it and whether they did it. So it's as if we don't practice something like that." (FI2)*

In non-formal education, there is a more structured approach, with various programs and initiatives aimed at addressing prejudices and discrimination among students. These include programs like "Everyone Equal" and "Free Being Me," which focus on acceptance, tolerance, and diversity. Additionally, there are efforts to integrate these topics into broader discussions on mental health and safety, on acceptance and tolerance, on the topic of *abnormality* and some workshops directly working on prejudice and discrimination with sessions conducted by psychologists and other professionals.

"When it comes to therapeutic and developmental groups, we have a series of meetings and specific topics that we discuss, and every year there is this topic related to stereotypes and prejudices. So when it comes to young people, it's a long time on such ground." (NFI3)

"So we also deal with European topics, about the future, about managing yourself in time. There is also one strong topic that we do, but it's done by my second facility, and that's mental health." (NFI2)

"Yes, when it comes to such education on diversity, of course, ZHP has several such programs that can help in working with the team, or with the staff on the subject of diversity, one is such a Polish program proposal, it's called Everyone Equal, something like that, there is also such a program Free Being Me, it's good to be yourself, and it also focuses on, on the one hand, acceptance and tolerance of yourself." (NFI1)

Overall, while both formal and non-formal settings offer avenues for addressing prejudices and discrimination among students, non-formal education appears to provide a more diverse and structured approach, with a wider range of programs and initiatives targeting these issues.

The interest. The interest in programs aimed at reducing prejudices and discrimination among students and teachers varies significantly between formal and non-formal educational settings. In formal education, there are challenges with student engagement, with some students expressing a lack of interest due to fatigue and time constraints

"they don't want to stay for any additional hours" (FI1).

"It is difficul*t to talk to the youth about other topics at lessons, because we are limited by the basics, and after lessons, the youth is just tired and there is no strength and probably no time for it." (FI3)*

Additionally, there is a perception that topics related to prejudices and discrimination may not be as popular among students compared to other subjects.

"Taking this project into account, it is definitely other topics that are more popular. For example, building bonds with the school, or topics related to boundaries, emotions, communication, cooperation, probably more focused on…"(NFI3).

Teachers also face obstacles, such as time constraints and competing priorities, which can contribute to a lack of interest in implementing these programs as well as financial issues faced by the schools.

"No, they're not interested. It's the teachers' time. They often have to stay after classes. The school's finances are often at stake. They're not interested, too." (NFI2)

However, some of the teachers express interest indicating the beneficial aspects of the programs.

"You know what, I try to use it. I try to use it because I have small children at home." (FI1)

"[...]and you know, this teacher also has her children at school age, some of them already, and they just also deal with it, so they know, they are also interested." (FI2)

However, in non-formal education, there are instances of both student and teacher interest, with some students actively engaging with program content and expressing appreciation for external speakers.

"When I went with my prelectures I was invited to high school. As I told you, it happened to me a few times that people were like, 'wow, it's nice that you came.' They came up to me. I sent them an email or wrote an e-mail later." (NFI2)

However, there are still challenges, such as resistance from certain students or teachers who may question the relevance or effectiveness of these programs.

"A person with a presentation comes and talks to them. What do they learn? Nothing." (NFI2)

"I refuse to do it, and what if I don't? You'll remove me from the scouts? you know, just a way to oppose and refuse to do it. I'm not sure where this ideas come from, but some people, have stated that they won't participate." (NFI1)

Overall, while there are pockets of interest and engagement in both formal and non-formal settings, there are also significant barriers that hinder the effective implementation of programs aimed at reducing prejudices and discrimination. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive approach that considers the unique challenges and dynamics of each educational context.

5.5.1. Implementation of the pedagogy of the oppressed

One of the objectives was to analyze the application and efficacy of critical pedagogy principles in addressing prejudice among Polish youth in both, formal and non-formal educational settings. The analysis of the interviews presents that in the formal education setting, the implementation of the element of Critical Consciousness from the pedagogy of the oppressed faces several challenges. One major issue is the passivity of students, who are less likely to initiate discussions or actively engage in identifying societal issues. Teachers often find it challenging to encourage participation and assertiveness among students, who may resist engaging in activities that involve drama or self-disclosure.

"Young people are less likely to initiate, rather teachers initiate when they have a specific problem with young people." (FI4)

"When I tried to conduct such a lecture where we could talk openly about such topics, no one wanted to talk. I mean, they are a bit ignorant about this. [...] But most of them, unfortunately, they are such 'a wall' for teachers." (FI2)

Moreover, limited time within the curriculum restricts the opportunity for in-depth discussions on social issues, as teachers are pressured to adhere strictly to program guidelines.

"But, for example, as I tell you, one hour and 30 people is rather not. No, we just do everything from the curriculum and we don't go [...], to such side topics." (FI3)

Teachers themselves may lack awareness of effective pedagogical methods, further hindering their ability to address prejudices effectively.

"[...] they are different, just like dramas here, we present, we step into the shoes of some person, the truth, who is wronged and what would you do then, you wouldn't do anything then, because at the moment, inventing such things by force is often just inventing things by force and fooling around." (FI4)

"No, unfortunately. Ok. I hope that maybe I will still be able to in my education, if I had an education, to convey such things. [...[You know what, teachers don't know such methods. They just don't even know that such things exist and that they could do something like that. So, unfortunately, there is already a lack of knowledge." (FI2)

However, some educators attempt to incorporate elements of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, such as psychological tests and role-playing exercises to learn about student's main issues that they would like to address, and practice empathy. Albeit, with constraints due to time limitations and constraints within their application, not allowing the students to work outside of the box. The example:

"Sometimes I manage, but it's at the end of the year,[...] I make some tests for them, such psychological ones,[...] Or maybe some games, very often I make them, cards with some defining the other person.[...] we stick the cards on the back and they choose what they think about this person[...] and then this person takes this card from their back and sees what others think about her. [...] And these cards, as you mentioned, are all positive." (FI3)

Contrary, in non-formal education settings, there appears to be more flexibility and awareness in implementing the CC from the pedagogy of the oppressed. Activities such as role-playing, experiential

learning, and discussions are employed to engage students in identifying and addressing societal issues. Examples of activities such as privilege walk, or a human library have a great potential to engage Youth and influence the decrease of prejudices. Moreover, one professional from the Non-Formal education had a professional training on the methodology of the Theater of the Oppressed, based on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970).*

> *"I had the training with the theatre of the oppressed method and I used some elements of it." (NFI3)*

These activities allow for greater participation and open dialogue among students, facilitated by educators who actively encourage discussions and provide space for self-expression. The visible difference in the attitudes of students might be caused by the context. While formal education is a must and obligation, non-formal education's principle is the voluntary participation, which have been found to improve student learning experiences, increase empathy for stakeholders, and integrate social and technical aspects of the learning process (Dhadphale and Wicks, 2022). The participatory activities, nevertheless, involve active participation and collaboration among researchers, educators, and learners, which in the end can result in a more inclusive and dynamic learning experience (Petry & Puigcercós, 2022).

The emphasis on experiential learning enables students to empathize with others' experiences and reflect on their own perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of prejudices and discrimination. Additionally, interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds, such as international guests, or imaginary contact with refugees, increases the levels of tolerance and might further enrich students' learning experiences by broadening their cultural awareness and empathy.

> *"I have the impression that the best is such an experience of meeting someone, just and something like a living library." (NFI1)*

> *"I mean kids at different ages [...] had this role to be a bit of a refugee [...] there is also such a form[...] such off-road games in which [...] you get into some role, it's very normal for us only just then the topic was very related to the exclusion." (NFI1)*

In general, the main element of the pedagogy of the oppressed is a Critical Consciousness. By becoming critically aware of the social issues/oppressions that exist in the closest environment - in the society, country or worldwide - and addressing these issues adequately, individuals raise awareness. However, it is not only about making individuals aware of the oppression, but at the same time, giving the individuals the opportunity to engage in a problem by analyzing it critically, evaluating the situation and finding solutions through role play, and later, the public discussion on forums.

Amongst interviewers, while there is a recognition of the importance of engagement of students, several challenges appear. One significant challenge is the passive stance of students, who may be ignorant of or uninterested in participating actively in discussions about oppression. In turn, teachers lack knowledge of effective methods to facilitate such discussions, further contributing to student passivity. Limited time within the formal education system is also cited as a constraint, with educators feeling pressured to follow strictly the curriculum requirements. Additionally, there's a lack of familiarity with alternative teaching methods that could foster critical dialogue. Some attempts at engagement are made in non-formal educational settings, where there is more flexibility, but challenges persist due to students' unfamiliarity with being asked to participate actively. Despite these obstacles, there are instances of success when educators create spaces for dialogue and when students are given the opportunity to express themselves, suggesting that there is potential for deeper engagement if the barriers can be addressed.

The findings of the level of student participation point to a question about the reason for the lack of involvement amongst the students in activities offered to them. The motivation of youth participation differs between formal and non-formal settings with students showing more interest in participation voluntarily.

Overall, while both formal and non-formal education settings strive to address prejudices and discrimination, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed faces different challenges and opportunities in each context. In formal education, constraints such as time limitations and teacher awareness hinder its full implementation, whereas non-formal education settings offer greater flexibility and emphasis on experiential learning, enabling more effective engagement with societal issues.

*Suggestions.*The theme explores the suggestions of the professionals within both, formal and non-formal environments about promoting a diverse and less prejudiced environment among youth. From the interviews, it is observable that professionals suggest employing various tactics and tools that could promote creating a less prejudiced environment, with the special focus on education (See Figure 7). Consequently, one recurring theme is the importance of education, both formal and non-formal, as highlighted by the quote,

"Well, first of all, education." (FI4)

Education plays a crucial role in challenging prejudices and promoting understanding. Teachers' involvement is emphasized, with an emphasis on their role in shaping attitudes and behaviors. As one interviewee mentions,

"So that's where I think, we've slowly started to act, which is to educate" (NFI3)

Team games and activities are proposed as effective means of promoting cooperation and breaking down stereotypes. Integration trips and sports competitions provide opportunities for young people to interact and collaborate, fostering understanding and respect. By mixing groups and encouraging cooperation, educators aim to challenge misconceptions and foster inclusivity.

"And sometimes, so to speak, with premeditation I choose people who don't like each other to see that they can work together" (FI3)

Furthermore, the contact theory is emphasized, advocating for greater exposure to diverse experiences and cultures. There is a perspective that through meetings with people from different backgrounds and participation in multicultural activities like Erasmus programs, young people can broaden their perspectives and challenge stereotypes.

"Meeting with another culture. Getting to know another culture. Getting to know people from another culture. And this is the first motive that minimizes these prejudices and stereotypes if they appear" (NFI2)

Early intervention is also highlighted as crucial, with suggestions to start addressing prejudice from an early age. By integrating lessons, conversations, and workshops on diversity and inclusion into the curriculum from primary school onwards, educators aim to instill acceptance and understanding from a young age.

"For me it would be ideal to start from the first year of their class, that is, when they are the youngest and the most childish" (FI2)

Adopting a blended approach that incorporates education, teacher participation, team building exercises, and exposure to a range of experiences is necessary to foster a varied and less prejudiced atmosphere among young people. Nevertheless, if one aims at relying on the contact hypothesis, the optimal conditions need to be met in order to build the intergroup relations based on the positive contact, diminishing the risk of the negative contact affecting the relationships.
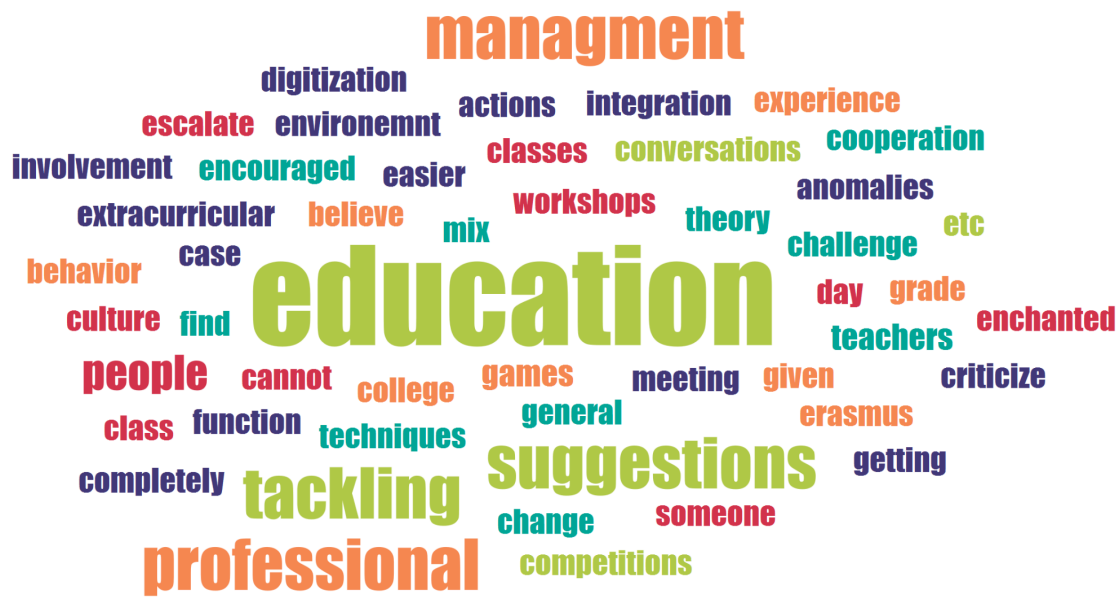
Figure 7. Wordcloud: Suggestions of Professionals to address topic of prejudices

6. DISCUSSION

This empirical research aims to address the gap in understanding prejudice within the Polish educational system, both in formal and informal educational environments, from the perspectives of both students and professionals working with them at the regional level. To achieve this, a mixed-method research design was employed to comprehensively capture and analyze youth attitudes towards prejudices in Poland, alongside insights from educators who have considerable influence over young people's perceptions and behaviors, particularly regarding prejudices. The perspectives of teachers and other professionals are crucial, as studies demonstrate their significant impact on shaping young minds. Research suggests that supportive teachers can effectively curb the spread of prejudices among students and foster the development of social trust (Miklikowska et al., 2019). Additionally, the research shows the closeness of the teacher-student tie has the potential to mitigate the correlation between ethnic prejudices and bullying, emphasizing the significance of a supportive and good teacher-student relationship in reducing biased behaviors (Iannello et al., 2021). The analysis of the interviews indicates several concerns related to implicit prejudices held by the professionals shown by the language of the responses and responses indicating that the prejudices might be of modern type (McConahay, 1986) which is subtle, sometimes hidden, or even rejected.

After analyzing the data from both the quantitative and qualitative research it was possible to establish the main characteristics of the youth in the sample group, the most appearing types of prejudices, the level of influence of their environment, as well as their perspective about the effectiveness of anti-oppressive educational offers and diversity programs in Poland. Similarly, after interviewing the professionals it was possible to compare the attitudes of prejudices of youth in both formal and non-formal settings, on the regional level. It is a significant exploration because it can give a better tailored introduction to addressing the differences on the macro level in Poland and in social work practice.

The quantitative data analysis confirmed the demographic homogeneity of participants with the majority being Polish, Cristian Catholic (Boguszewski et al., 2020, however with the growing tendency to claim "atheist", with an equal division between rural and urban areas of living .

The most significant finding is that rejecting the hypothesis that increased intergroup contact reduces prejudices. The questions on the Scale for ISM - Intolerant Schema Measure towards the members of the out-group are based on the belief in the greatness and importance of the individual's in-group on the basis of ethnicity, religion, LGBTQ, gender, physical appearance and age. Furthermore, considering the contact theory (Allport, 1954), it is thought that reduced prejudices against all other groups may result from increased contact with members of the out-groups. The General Prejudice Scale and the participants' Summed Contact with members of the out-group were correlated negatively, rejecting the hypothesis and questioning the theory. The correlation at (r.-0.200) provides information that the contact with members of the out-group might be not beneficial in reducing prejudices, and rather the opposite. Examining the nuanced relationship between intergroup contact and prejudices in Poland needs a thorough understanding of the complexity of its causes. While intergroup contact theory posits that increased interaction between diverse groups mitigates prejudices, there are instances where such interactions provided unexpected outcomes, potentially increasing prejudicial attitudes, as results from this study indicated. Recent findings by Visintin et al. (2019), and Berge et al. (2017) underscores the role of adverse experiences or interactions with out-group members, as well as unfavorable intergroup contact, in amplifying prejudices. Negative contact can intensify prejudices by exposing individuals to conflicts, biases, and stereotypes that reinforce negative perceptions of the out-group (Visintin et al., 2019). These findings may be connected to various factors influencing young people, including traditions, cultural influences, media discourse, socioeconomic status, and educational levels. The main challenge of questioning the negative attitudes consists of perception biases, particularly evident in the omnipresent influence of technology and social media. Whether positive or negative contact, our perceptions of out-group members find validation in the public discourse or social media platforms, further shaping our cognitive landscapes. Therefore, cultivating critical thinking skills and fostering an awareness of biased

perceptions are crucial steps in enhancing intergroup contact and mitigating prejudices through the promotion of positive interaction under the optimal conditions. The results from the first sight contradicts the Contact Theory and the majority of worldwide research that supports it (Pettigrew & Tropp). However, Allport (1954) indicates that it is not just contact with members of the out-group that improves the attitudes towards minority groups, but contact under the right conditions. These are (a) common goals, (b) equal status, (c) intergroup cooperation (i.e., the absence of competition), and (d) authority sanction (i.e., support from societal customs and/or authorities). Furthermore, it is believed that these conditions function better when combined as a whole rather than separate parts (Gaertner and Dovidio, 1993). Not meeting these conditions when interacting with members of the out-group contributes to the negative attitudes that are further confirmed by Polish youth.

Questions that followed revealed that the most experienced prejudices and discriminations among the sample of young people referred to gender and physical appearance. The findings from both urban and rural locations reported a similar percentage of prejudices, indicating that home location has little impact on the likelihood of prejudice or discrimination. The findings that physical appearance is one of the main factors for prejudices. Literature confirms, as O'Brien and others (2013) indicated in his studies, the connection between "disgust, anti-fat prejudices, and physical appearance" to be a complicated interaction between feelings, body image, and prejudices. Therefore, on one hand weight plays a big role, and on another hand prejudices and discrimination against male and slim persons seems to be of least significance. The emerging issue of weight prejudices in Poland calls for action. It involves a combined strategy that takes into account societal, environmental, and individual factors. According to research by Brewis & Bruening (2018), weight stigma and shame can have a major impact on teenagers' mental health therefore interventions to reduce weight-related bias are crucial. They should include social-environmental elements such as encouraging inclusion and addressing weight stigma in social circles. Furthermore, relationships and support systems, such as friendships, can help to mitigate the harmful impacts of weight bias (Brewis & Bruening, 2018).

The perception about the existing prejudices compared to experienced prejudices in Poland is different. Young Polish people see the stereotypes that exist in Poland differently. According to the findings, Polish youth believe that there are widespread prejudices against transgender persons, people who identify as non-heterosexual, Ukrainians, and obese people in three different contexts: the nation as a whole, the public media, and social media. The perception of sample youth on the prejudices existing in Poland to some extent confirms the studies conducted by the Polish Centre for Research on Prejudice in 2017 in Poland indicating the most affected groups are: people from the LGBTQ+ community, "people on the

move", however this study adds the recognition of the prejudices towards Ukranian individuals, which was not a present issue in 2017. Additionally, this research study does not pose significant prejudices towards Jewish and Roma minorities. The possible explanation can be found in the psychological effect of "If I do not see, it does not exist", referred to as a biased perspective. Mathur (2014) presented that addressing biased perspectives by different perspective-taking can reduce automatic racial biases in behavior, highlighting the role of cognitive processes in moderating prejudiced responses. Additionally, perspective-taking interventions, which encourage people to imagine the ideas, feelings, and experiences of others, can help to counter automatic prejudices and create more inclusive attitudes towards diverse groups (Mathur et al., 2014). The region investigated in Poland is not characterized with the presence of neither Roma nor Jewish or Muslim communities indicating a possible biased perspective in the lack of prejudices towards the groups that one has no contact with. However, as shown in the research, even imagined contact, such as visualizing oneself being helped by an out-group member or taking the perspective of a black character in a computer game, has been shown to reduce unconscious racial prejudices, indicating the potential for empathy to decrease prejudice towards out-group members. Empathy-based approaches like "Verstehen" have been effective in some instances and show potential for applying the strategy of *positive contact* when coming in contact with members of the out-group.

Ageism is the prejudices and discrimination based on the age of individuals. The findings show that in Poland it seems to be a significant issue (Podhorecka, 2021). The tendency to maintain social distance can consequently be a manifestation of prejudice (Allport, 1954; Bogardus, 1925; Makashvili, 2018; Weaver, 2008; Kelman & Pettigrew, 1959). And ven though the negative attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals, people of Ukrainian descent, "people on the move", and on the basis of the physical appearance are the most prevalent factors in the contemporary public discourse in Poland, the findings indicate that there is a significantly negative attitude towards people of either older or younger age than the participants. In her findings across the group of young people, Levy, (2016) has discovered that generally educated young people who are not in the field of medicine, have been associated with acceptance towards older adults. Findings of this questionnaire indicate that the sample Youth have rather negative attitudes towards older adults, which might be related to the level of education in the particular region and amongst the school sample. Podhorecka et al., (2022) addresses the issue of ageism in Polish society confirming the prevalence of ageism amongst the sample group. Understanding aging is tied to negative attitudes toward older individuals, especially among younger people. However, increased contact with the elderly is linked to more positive perceptions. Educational initiatives should promote interactions with older adults to combat ageism, but further research is needed for a comprehensive understanding, especially

post-pandemic. These findings underscore the importance of integrating young people with the elderly in educational settings (Podhorecka, 2022).

Following the analysis, the next section touched upon the environment of the sample group. There was a relationship found between the similarity of views to the parents and the level of prejudices. The stronger the similarity, the higher the level of prejudices. This is an interesting finding suggesting that parents have a significant influence on young people's minds and that in the context of prejudices, it stresses how important a role parents play in either sustaining or opposing prejudiced ideas among their children. As a result, interventions aiming at eliminating prejudices must recognise the critical role of parental influence and try to promote inclusive and empathetic parenting practices. The finding increases the need for the understanding of prejudices in Poland on a general scale, in order to address it appropriately to both adults and youth. As anti-oppressive practice indicates in order to work effectively with youth and children, parent's engagement is needed to achieve a common goal. The relationship between parents and children needs to be understood before any intervention is taken. Generally, the findings confirm the literature review (Degner & Dalege, 2013; Pirchio et. al, 2018, Miklikowska, 2017) suggesting that parents do have significant influence on the explicit and implicit prejudices levels amongst young people.

The students were also questioned regarding their preferences for a diversity programme to be taught in the classroom. Finding that a significant proportion of the youth sample expressed an interest in learning more about various aspects of diversity, such as religions, cultures, skin colors, disabilities, and sexual orientations, is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of diversity education in promoting inclusivity and tolerance among young people (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Andreouli et al., 2013; Albarello et al., 2022). Additionally, the low number of respondents who expressed an interest in making contact with members of out-groups brings into question the effectiveness of intergroup interaction programmes in enhancing social harmony and reducing prejudices. This conclusion contradicts the well-established literature, which frequently emphasizes the benefits of intergroup contact for reducing prejudices and enhancing intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Gaertner et al., 1996; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Andrighetto et al., 2012; Levy, 2016; Meleady & Crisp, 2016). It would be beneficial to investigate the causes for this lack of interest in intergroup contact further.

Schools play a pivotal role in shaping young people's ideas, values, and beliefs, making them crucial environments for socialization. As students encounter diversity and interact with peers from different backgrounds, schools become key settings for promoting social inclusion and positive intergroup relations to combat prejudices. Professionals like teachers and psychologists hold significant influence in this regard. Kumashiro (2000) underscores the importance of understanding school environments, particularly

in contexts like Poland, where oppression may occur across various levels. Therefore, analyzing the school environment is essential for comprehending and addressing issues of prejudices and discrimination in youth development.

Firstly, the analysis of qualitative data is emphasizing particularly the perspective of professionals about youth. The main challenges identified are those referring to mental health and digital citizenship. The interviewees raise worries regarding young mental resilience decline, which is made worse by things like disinformation and overstimulation on social media. It seems that abusive use of technology is affecting many aspects of youth's life such as motivation, focus, and social divide (see Figure 8). Technology has a big impact on how discrimination is perceived in society. Worry regarding the possibility that modern technologies, like artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithms, will reinforce prejudices and discrimination is growing as these tools become more advanced. Research showed that algorithms have the ability of producing results that are discriminatory, especially when it comes to race and gender (Stypińska, 2022). This highlights how the AI and technology community need to pay more attention to creating tools that are able to identify and eliminate biases (Wang, 2021). The issue of technology and its effect on mental health raises important questions about how formal education could implement the lessons related to mental health resilience in the curriculum, and additionally how could both, formal and non-formal education implement activities and lessons related to the digital literacy so youth feel comfortable, safe and responsible in the digital space. Considering the developing world, as well as the stance of the European Commission that the technology and AI tools are the biggest promise of the twenty-first century, it should be one of the most burning concerns for the professionals to adapt youth with the skills to manage this new environment in creating cohesion in the society, instead of more division. As for social work profession, and social workers, the technology is a tool that can improve the intervention for many fields such as children with learning difficulties, adults in nursing homes, individuals in remote areas, and that puts a significance to increased digital training in Poland for both, teachers, social workers and students.
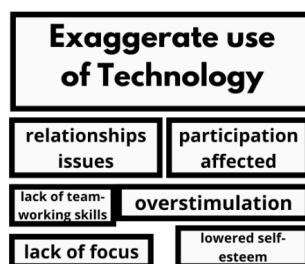

Figure 8. Exaggerate Use of Technology and its consequences on youth

The analysis highlights the parental influence in both formal and non-formal educational settings. The literature review confirms the influence of parents in shaping youth's attitudes ((Degner & Dalege, 2013; Pirchio et. al, 2018, Miklikowska, 2017). It confirms the results from the quantitative study. The challenge is to equip parents with the resources that would both facilitate communication with the youth and improve their cooperation with the school and teachers to better assist their children. Social Work proposes the solution within the anti-oppressive framework, suggesting that it is important to address the power abuse issue - of the dominant group towards the more submissive group. Therefore the understanding of parents about the power relations dynamics that are present at home is important, as well as the engagement of parents in the cooperation with social workers and teachers is of importance for the greater understanding of youth' issues.

Additionally, the analysis highlights the generational bias of youth towards both, older and younger individuals. Ageism is again identified as a growing issue, especially with the rise of AI (Stypinska, 2022), and therefore awareness about this social issue should be addressed by not only social workers, but also educators. Technology, including social media, has been demonstrated to promote intergenerational communication (Zhou & Salvendy, 2017), therefore it has been determined that it is an effective instrument for encouraging intergenerational cooperation. Competently utilizing technology can be a significant tool for encouraging intergenerational collaboration and addressing ageism in society. Consequently, intergenerational communication and establishing the relationship between different age groups can play a significant role in mitigating prejudices. The challenge of building empathy, respect, and appreciation for different viewpoints across generations is one that education needs to confront. Additionally, research shows that respect and understanding between generations have been effectively fostered by intergenerational programmes and initiatives such as community service projects and intergenerational learning projects (Spudich & Spudich, 2010). These programmes give older and younger people the chance to connect, exchange stories, and gain knowledge from one another, which improves communication and develops empathy amongst various age groups. Nevertheless, while technology can help with intergenerational communication and cooperation, it is important to recognise that the younger generation may not be actively interested or optimistic about diversity programmes and activities aimed at reducing prejudices.

This passivity and lack of hope that youth are described with could be attributed to a variety of factors, including skepticism about the efficiency of these programmes and feeling of disconnection from society issues. One strategy is for educators, social workers and above all, the authorities, to rethink how diversity programmes are created and carried out so that they are more relevant and meaningful for young people. This might involve introducing participatory methods that appeal to younger audiences and

connect with their beliefs and interests. Furthermore, there is a need for effectively incorporating societal issues into the educational system to make young people aware of them. Educators could develop critical thinking and empathy in students by incorporating issues such as diversity, racism, and social justice into the curriculum to ultimately empower the youth through initiatives such as The Positive Education about Ageing and Contact Experiences (PEACE) (Levy, 2016). PEACE approach emphasizes the need of teaching people about aging and offering positive elder role models in order to remove prejudices. The PEACE approach includes two key elements such as education about ageism that includes facts and positive role models, and the positive intergroup contact. The model has a potential to influence policies and ultimately contribute to tackling the issue on the spectrum of all ages of people.

In the analysis of the second theme, the issue of prejudices is addressed in a broader sense, addressing aspects such prevalence of prejudices, nature of prejudices, and mitigation of prejudices. The crucial emerging issues identified in the analysis are the downplaying of the existence of prejudices and discriminatory acts by professionals. It is essential to address the question of what are the elements that contribute to downplaying and avoidance of the conversation about prejudices amongst professionals. The potential answers could be the educational level and awareness, the fear and reluctance and neglect of addressing the systemic issues or a genuine belief that prejudices do not exist. Teachers play a pivotal role in the process of promoting equity and inclusivity in schools, as they are at the forefront of interacting with students on a daily basis. However, there may be instances where teachers exhibit reluctance to address systemic issues within the education system posing an issue. Lack of knowledge or comprehension of the systemic problems may be one cause of this resistance. It is possible that educators are not receiving enough professional development or training on issues like prejudices, sexism, racism, or other types of discrimination that occur in the educational system. Teachers could find it difficult to identify and successfully address these problems if they lack this information. Teachers and other professionals could also feel overburdened or unprepared to deal with systemic problems in their classrooms. They can be afraid of saying or doing the incorrect thing and unintentionally fostering negative stereotypes or biases. Talking about systemic concerns can be difficult when one is afraid of making mistakes or becoming angry at parents, coworkers, or administrators. In fact, the results from the questionnaire indicate that the more intergroup contact with out-group members, the higher level of prejudices amongst sample youth which is contrary to the general findings of the Contact Hypothesis and contradicts what one might believe - that the more contact with members of the out-group, the lessened the prejudices. The negative contact, that is furthermore, mostly perceptional, is a potential answer to the perception of professionals, too, who live and work in the same environment. Additionally, the analysis of the data indicates that teachers in both, formal and non-formal educational settings express prejudices,

either explicit, by their actions or implicit, by unconscious choice of wording towards different sexual orientations. Explicit prejudices can be shown as discriminatory acts or behaviors against people of different sexual orientations, producing settings that impact learning process and personal development. In contrast, implicit prejudices, which stems from unconscious biases, can quietly impact educators' language choices, reinforcing stereotypes and marginalizing LGBTQ+ community children, which as Kumashiro (2000) points out, contributes to creating the oppressive environment in the classroom.

Lastly, the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* has been used as a guideline to ask professionals if they use any elements, and more specifically, the critical consciousness to work with the students. The issues within this theme cross with those raised in other themes. The passivity and lack of motivation of students, awareness and knowledge about the anti oppressive tools used in education, and most importantly lack of time and space to create a space for the open dialogue between students. The methodology in addition to its broad use in social work (Boal, 2019; Giesler, 2017; Proctor et al., 2008; Alizadeh & Jiang, 2022; Saeed, 2015; Kina & Fernandes, 2017; Cole et al., 2023) finds its use in the classroom too. Giesler (2017) points out that by incorporating Boal's activities into the macro and micro practice classroom, teachers may help students become more self-aware and socially conscious, which in turn helps them focus on principles like empathy, empowerment, and social change. Nevertheless, despite the broad and comprehensive literature review about the effective use of the methodology in both social work practice and education, the issues emerging in the Polish educational system, especially the field of formal education, are more systemic and not allowing the teachers flexibility.The interviews show the attempts of professionals in applying the elements of the critical pedagogy in the classroom, however those take place mostly in the non-formal educational settings such as NGOs and scouts associations where there is more space for implementing those. The education of professionals in aspects of methodologies and anti-oppressive tools, nevertheless, seems to be crucial in the Polish environment.

The fourth theme presents the analysis of the availability of programmes on prejudices, discrimination, diversity, and social inclusion for both teachers and students. The analysis contradicts the results from the questionnaire conducted with students. The availability of programmes appears to be diversified according to the teachers, nevertheless the results revealed by the students showed a significant disparity between the perception of available anti-prejudice programs and their actual implementation in Poland. The low percentage of youth who believe enough has been done to combat prejudices aligns with studies conducted by the European Union, indicating potential lack in the effectiveness and reach of existing programs. Moreover, the high proportion of students reporting the absence of such initiatives highlights a gap in the implementation of anti-prejudicess measures, necessitating better strategies for promotion and increasing youth awareness. Teachers and professionals point to initiatives offered by school pedagogues,

official programs run by police in the formal setting, and to various programs such as "Free Being Me" and others in the non-formal educational setting. The low confirmation of anti-prejudice programs in the school curriculum raises questions about their accessibility and engagement, suggesting potential obstacles within the educational system that need to be addressed to effectively combat prejudices. Generally, the research results conducted by the EU (2020) are confirmed indicating similarly low numbers of awareness. However the literature claiming that governmental and non-governmental programs in Poland exist raises questions of their transparency amongst youth and effectiveness.

In the final theme, professionals put forth proposals and recommendations aimed at promoting a less prejudiced society, with education emerging as the most frequently cited solution. Education is of high importance in tackling prejudices due to its potential to increase knowledge, awareness, and critical thinking skills in individuals from a young age (for instance: Freire, 1970; Kumashiro, 2000; FitzGerald et al. 2019; Souto-Otero, 2021) By integrating anti-prejudice education into formal curricula and non-formal educational initiatives, young people can develop a deeper understanding of diversity, empathy, and respect for others (Suzina, 2020). Additionally, education provides a platform for challenging stereotypes, promoting inclusivity, and fostering intergroup understanding, which are all crucial for addressing prejudices. Furthermore, education enables people to become advocates for social justice, providing them with the tools and knowledge they need to confront discrimination in their communities. In summary, education stands out as an important tool for breaking down prejudices and building a more equitable and inclusive society.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study confirms that prejudices are a significant concern in Poland, affecting youth and educational settings as well as professionals in both, formal and non-formal educational environments. The conclusion aims to summarize the issue from various angles, highlighting the perspectives of both young people and education professionals and point to the complexity and the multifacetedness of the issue. It will be divided into three main parts summarizing the attitudes of youth about prejudices, the professional's perspective and the anti-oppressive methods that are being used and can be used in Poland. Additionally, I will point to the pivotal role of social work in the field of prejudices and education.

The attitudes of youth

Polish youth report experiencing prejudices based on factors including gender, physical appearance, and sexual orientation. Additionally, the negative attitudes are identified towards people of Ukrainian descent, and religious and ethnic minorities. Interestingly, the youth perceive a higher prevalence of prejudices in

society than they personally encounter. This contradiction could be due to underreporting or a lack of awareness. The most important finding indicates that intergroup contact does not contribute to lower levels of prejudices. The *negative contact* needs to be addressed and methods reinforcing *positive contact* applied. Additionally, despite the potential benefits of intergroup contact programs, young people show little interest in participating. A crucial finding is the significant influence of parental attitudes on youth's susceptibility to prejudices.

The perspective of professionals

Professionals working in both formal and non-formal educational settings expressed concerns about youth mental health and the impact of digital citizenship. Downplaying the existence of prejudices across all professionals has been identified raising a need for addressing this issue further. This could be due to a lack of awareness or the presence of systemic issues within the educational system. Furthermore, some educators exhibited implicit bias in their language choices, potentially creating an unwelcoming environment for certain groups of students. Finally, professionals, especially from a formal educational setting reported a lack of time and resources to create open dialogue spaces where students feel comfortable discussing prejudices. On the contrary, professionals from non-formal educational settings possess more time and space to implement elements of the Critical Consciousness in raising awareness of youth about topics such as prejudices and discrimination.

Anti-Oppressive methods

The discussion revealed potential limitations in the effectiveness and reach of current anti-prejudice programs. While intergroup contact with positive experiences according to the literature shows promise in reducing prejudices, across the sample youth group it does not seem to be effective. Therefore, better tailored actions and initiatives should be analyzed. Critical pedagogy approaches that encourage critical thinking and social awareness hold significant potential, especially in non-formal educational settings. Formal education is revealed to be more controlled and not have enough space for implementation of the anti-oppressive programs in the already extensive school curriculum. Parental engagement and education about prejudices are also crucial for lasting change and contributing to the less-prejudiced environment.

The Role of Social Work

Social workers play a vital role in addressing prejudices by tackling power imbalances within families and communities basing the actions in the oppressive theory framework. They can equip parents with resources to communicate effectively with their children about prejudices and its impacts. Additionally,

social workers can advocate for educational reforms that promote inclusivity and address ageism. Collaboration with educators to develop and implement effective anti-oppressive programs is another key area where social workers can contribute. The role of social workers in the Polish educational system should be addressed further.

This study's findings include policy and practice recommendations for formal and non-formal educational settings as well as implications for social work practice and future research.

7.1. POLICY AND PRACTICE

In formal education:

1. Implementing the diversity and inclusion programs in the curriculum by educators and professionals working with youth with the assistance of other professionals (e.g., psychologists, youth workers etc.).
2. Establishing the role of School Social Worker or reinforcing the role of School Pedagogue for addressing the discrimination and prejudices in the school environment and contributing to providing a non-oppressive environment for students using the anti-oppressive methods.
3. Improving the level of involvement of parents in the relationship on the line between youth - parents - school. Providing resources, workshops and support networks for parents to address the issues of prejudices and discrimination at home.
4. Providing professional development for the educators including strategies for recognizing the prejudiced and discriminatory acts and ways for the effective facilitation of the discussion on forum.
5. Recognizing the importance of empathy and critical thinking in educational and personal development of youth.
6. Reinforce the school curricula with workshops for building greater awareness about the importance of prejudices towards physical appearance. Addressing the issues such as weight is essential in building a more inclusive environment at schools.
7. Actively promoting intergenerational communication to combat ageism and promoting a more inclusive environment and mutual understanding between generations.
8. Reinforcing the importance of digital citizenship and utilizing technology for educational awareness. Educational institutions should include digital literacy and critical thinking skills in their curricula to assist students utilize online spaces responsibly and critically analyze information about prejudices and discrimination.

In non-formal education

1. Developing anti-oppressive programs to address specific forms of prejudices and discrimination. These curricula should include interactive and engaging activities that encourage critical thinking, empathy, and inclusivity.

2. Obligatory training on the topics of diversity and inclusion for professionals of all ages in order to promote the inclusive environment for all the participants.

3. Promoting positive intergroup contacts between diverse groups making sure the contact is maintained under the 'optimal conditions'.

4. Non-formal educational organizations should collaborate with community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and local stakeholders to raise resources and expertise in combating prejudices and discrimination.

5. Non-formal educational organizations should provide safe and supportive environments in which participants can engage in open and honest discussions on prejudices, discrimination, and social justice issues. These areas should be facilitated by trained members who can conduct talks, mediate conflicts, and encourage constructive dialogue.

6. Promoting and encouraging methods that contribute to greater empathy, critical thinking and critical consciousness amongst youth.

7.2. FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study has made substantial contributions to the literature on attitudes to prejudices amongst youth in Poland, further research should focus on the following areas:

1. The denial and neglect of prejudices amongst professionals: further research should investigate and focus on the reasons for the professionals for neglecting the presence of prejudices to better understand the reasons and consequently be able to develop educational training to empower the educators.

2. Intergroup Contact: further research on why intergroup contact increases the level of prejudices amongst youth in Poland is required to better understand the intergroup dynamics between various groups in Poland and find methods to adequately address the contact with members of the out-groups.

3. Motivation of youth: further research should investigate the strategies and ways to encourage and motivate youth for participation. To properly address this situation, it is critical to focus on strategies that involve and motivate young people through rethinking how diversity programmes are created and conducted so that they are more relevant and meaningful for young people.

4. Theater of the Oppressed: further research on the impact and effectiveness of the CC (Critical Consciousness) in addressing the topic of prejudices. The methodology of the Theater of the Oppressed and its long-term effects on tackling prejudices amongst Polish youth should be investigated further in order to analyze if it is an effective way to work with Polish youth.

5. Technology as a prejudices reduction tool: further research is required to understand the ways in which technology can be used in working with youth to tackle various forms of prejudices.

6. Prejudice on the basis of physical appearance: the findings are significant, however there are few studies referring to the analysis of this issue in Poland suggesting an area for further research.

7. Additional findings from the quantitative study have not been included due to the time and word-count constraints, however they provide a great foundation for the future research in addressing the prejudices on the regional level.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RIGA STRADINS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE
Welfare and social work department

Informed Consent

By this I certify that Wiktoria Wilk is the 2nd-year full-time student in Erasmus Mundus European Joint Master Social Work with Children and Youth (ESWOCHY) program and is carrying out her research for her Master thesis on the topic "The "Theatre of the Oppressed" as a Social Work Method for Reducing Prejudices among Youth in Poland". Aim of the research: to gather data by conducting online surveys with students who can share their views on prejudices in the school environment.

I hereby confirm that she is acknowledged about the research ethics in social science and social work ethics in her research activities, including the following principles:

● Participants will be given information about the purpose of the research project.

● Participants have the right to decide whether they will participate in the research project, even after the surveys have been concluded.
● The collected data will be handled confidentially, including data analysis and presentation and will be kept in such a way that no unauthorized person can view or access it.
● The recorded online survey data will be used only for this research purposes and will be deleted after finishing the research.

It is kindly asked for your cooperation in informing parents so that they may consent to the data gathering as part of an ongoing research project.

ESWOCHY is implemented by the universities of the Consortium that is Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Riga Stradins University (Latvia), The Catholic University in Ruzomberok (Slovakia) and ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon (Portugal).

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APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE: THE PREJUDICE AMONG YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN POLAND

Dear Participants,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important survey on prejudice among high school students in Poland. Your insights are invaluable for understanding and addressing issues related to diversity, discrimination, and inclusion. Please, remember:
   - All information you give will be treated with confidentiality. Your responses will be collected in an anonymous way. No personal links will be used for the further analysis and report. - Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to skip any question you don't want to answer.
   - Your answers will be stored securely and used for the research purpose only. - By continuing with the questionnaire, you consent to participate in the study.

In case of any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher: Wiktoria Wilk. (email: wiwilk@stud.mruni.eu, or tel. 572840245)

Thank you for your extremely valuable participation. Your answers will contribute better to a better understanding of the issue of prejudice in Poland.

Wiktoria Wilk

SECTION 1 - PREJUDICE ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Understanding of prejudice: Please indicate Yes / No / I prefer not to say
Have you experienced any of the following within the last school year in Poland:
1.Prejudice - Yes / No / I prefer not to say
If yes, please specify. What was it based on:
 - ■ Gender
 - ■ Age
 - ■ Nationality
 - ■ Religion
 - ■ Sexual orientation
 - ■ Skin colour
 - ■ Ethnicity (being Roma/ Chechen)
 - ■ Ideological beliefs (vegan)
 - ■ Disability
 - ■ Weight
 - ■ Any other reason: please specify which one.
2.Discrimination? - Yes / No / I prefer not to say
If yes, please specify, was it based on the…
 - ■ Gender
 - ■ Age
 - ■ Nationality
 - ■ Religion
 - ■ Sexual orientation
 - ■ Skin colour
 - ■ Ethnicity (being Roma/ Chechen)
 - ■ Ideological beliefs (vegan)
 - ■ Disability
 - ■ Weight

■ Any other reason: please specify which one.

3. Identification with your own group

Using the scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) -5 (Strongly Agree) please refer to each sentence:

- I have a lot in common with other Poles. (bonds)
- I feel a strong bond with other Poles. (bonds)
- I often think about the fact that I am Polish. (centrality)
- Overall, being Polish is an important part of who I am. (centrality)
- Overall, I am happy with being Polish. (affect)
- Generally, I feel good when I think of myself as a Pole. (affect)

4.Right wing authoritarianism

Using the scale from 1-5 please refer to each sentence:

- Society should handle disagreements and laziness with a strong approach.
- Those causing trouble should know they're not welcome in society.
- Following the rules of society is very important and should be strictly enforced.
- To keep life safe and sound, we really need strong leaders in charge.
- Let the leaders make the big decisions that affect everyone in society.
- We should appreciate the people in charge for giving us clear directions on what to do.
- It's important to keep and take care of our traditions.
- Don't doubt things that have been proven to work.
- Doing things the way they've always been done is usually the best way.

5.Do you think that the attitudes in Poland are negative towards…..?

Please indicate on the scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)

- Roma minority
- Jewish minority
- Muslim
- Ukrainians
- People of different skin colour than white
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender
- Physical disabilities
- Old people
- Children
- Men
- Women

6.Using the scale from 1-5 please indicate if you think that the public media (TVP, TVN, Onet etc.) have impact on spreading the negative ideas and prejudicess about:

- Muslim
- Jewish minority
- LGBTQ
- Transgender
- Disabled person
- Roma
- Ukrainians
- Man
- Woman
- A obese person
- A thin person
- older adults
- Young person

7.Using the scale from 1-5 please indicate if you think that the social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, twitter) have impact on spreading the negative ideas and prejudice about:
- Muslim
- Jewish
- LGBTQ
- Transgender
- Disabled person
- Roma
- Ukrainians
- Man
- Woman
- A obese person
- A thin person
- older adults
- Young person

8. General Prejudice Scale
On the scale from 1 - 5 please indicate:

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
2. People from different cultures enrich our society.
3. Roma people have different traditions that I would like to learn more about.
4. Individuals with different than the normative heterosexual orientation should be treated equally.
5. I do not mind if our president is transgender.
6. It is important to challenge the stereotypes about gender roles.
7. People with different religious beliefs should be accepted by our society.
8. We should have more mosques in our country for the followers of Islam.
9. Women are not as competent as men in the leading positions.
10. Older individuals do not have valid opinions.
11. Thin people have more opportunities on the job market.

9.Please answer YES / NO / I DON'T KNOW

Do you think enough effort is made in Poland to combat prejudice and discrimination?
9a. Why?

SECTION 2 - PREJUDICE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

10.Using a scale from 1 to 5 or "Prefer not to say", please tell me if you would feel comfortable about having someone from each of the following categories as a headmaster of the school?

- ○ A different skin color person -
- ○ A person of a different religion than yours
- ○ A woman
- ○ A man
- ○ A disabled person
- ○ AN LGBTQ
- ○ A transgender person
- ○ A Roma person
- ○ A child
- ○ An older adult
- ○ An obese person

11.Do the schools and lesson plans in your high school incorporate education and information on diversity, social inclusion, and prejudices?

       Yes / No / I don't know

12.Please answer on the scale from 1 -5 if you agree that the School materials and lessons should include more information about the diversity related to:

- People of different than most of the population skin color
- Different religion than the majority of population
- Sexual orientation.
- Different ethnicities and their cultures (Roma, Chechens)
- Different types of physical disabilities.
- Different types of mental disabilities.

13 .On the scale from 1 - 5 please indicate if you think that enough effort is made in your school to combat prejudice and discrimination?

       1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3.Neutral 4.Agree 5. Strongly Agree

- ○ Why? ………………………………………………………………………………………
- ○ How do you think the school could promote diversity and inclusion?
  - a) discussions included during the regular lessons;
  - b) non - formal (voluntary) education workshops;
  - c) no need for any additional events.

SECTION 3 - PREJUDICE ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL

14. Do you have friends or acquaintances that are: **(**YES / NO / I don't know/ I prefer not to answer.)

- Of a different nationality than your
- Of different than your skin color
- Disabled
- Muslim
- Jewish
- Roma
- LGBTQ
- Transgender
- Who has different ideological beliefs (vegan)?
- Who weighs differently than you?
- Who come from different socio-economic backgrounds (are poorer or richer)

15.Using the scale from 1 to 5 would you describe YOUR views and the views of your:

- I have the same views as my Mother
- I have the same views as my Father
- I have the same views as my Close friends
- I have the same views as the Youth in general

16.In case of harassment, discrimination or cyberbullying how do you feel about being able to protect yourself? I feel…

- Very Insecure: I feel very insecure and unable to protect myself.
- Insecure: I feel somewhat insecure and may struggle to protect myself.
- Neutral: I feel neither secure or insecure about protecting myself.
- Secure: I feel somewhat secure and confident in my ability to protect myself.
- Very Secure: I feel very secure and confident in my ability to protect myself.

17.In the scale from 1-5 please indicate if you agree that

     In case of experiencing harassment or discrimination the best source of seeking help would be….

- Talk to the parents

- Talking to a friend
- Talking to a schools' teachers
- Informing and talking to a School Pedagogue / Social Worker
- Calling Police
- Calling an Ombudsman
- Seeking help online anonymously
- Not talking to anyone
- Other: (please specify)

18.Is there anything else you would like to share about the topic of prejudices among high school youth in Poland? ……………

DEMOGRAPHICS:
- Your age:
- Your gender:
- Where do you live?
    - urban to 19.000 inhabitants
    - urban 20.000 - 49.000
    - urban 50.000 - 99.000
    - urban 100.000 - 499.000
    - urban more than 500.000
    - rural?
- What is your political attitude on the scale from 1-5?
- (1 – definitely left-wing, 5 – definitely right-wing), or "I don't know" or "I prefer not to say"
- Your nationality:
- Religious belief: Christian Catholic/ Christian Orthodox / Christian Luteran/Protestantism/ Jehovah's Witnesses or other alternative belief/ Muslim/ Jewish/ Atheist / Other.
- How strongly religious are you? Strongly / Moderately/ Slightly/ not at all
- Which of the following best describes your family socioeconomic status:
    - Upper class
    - Upper middle class
    - Middle class
    - Lower middle class
    - Lower class
    - Prefer not to say

APPENDIX C

FORMULARZ ZGODY

Student: Wiktoria Wilk   Katedra Nauk Społecznych
Kierownik: Anna Broka
E-mail: wiwilk@stud.mruni.eu

Tytuł badania:
Odkrywanie postaw wobec uprzedzeń wśród młodzieży w Polsce. Perspektywa pracownika socjalnego.

Jeżeli się z tym zgadzasz, zaznacz pole po każdym stwierdzeniu.

Zapoznałem się z celem tego badania. Miałem możliwość rozważenia informacji i zadania pytań. Odpowiedzi na wszystkie pytania były zadowalające.	☐
Rozumiem, że mój udział jest dobrowolny i że mogę w każdej chwili zrezygnować bez podania przyczyny.	☐
Rozumiem, że wyniki tego badania mogą być publikowane i/lub prezentowane na spotkaniach. Wyrażam zgodę na rozpowszechnianie w ten sposób moich anonimowych danych, które nie pozwalają na moją identyfikację.	☐
Rozumiem, że o informacje zebrane w trakcie tego badania może poprosić odpowiedni personel (np. przełożeni i egzaminatorzy zewnętrzni) i je sprawdzić. Wyrażam zgodę na działanie dowolnego organu, z prawem dostępu do niego i przeglądania informacji.	☐
Wyrażam zgodę na rejestrację audio/video mojej rozmowy kwalifikacyjnej. Na potrzeby badania transkrybowane i analizowane będzie wyłącznie nagranie dźwiękowe.	☐
Wyrażam zgodę na użycie w publikacjach dosłownych cytatów; Nie zostanę wymieniona, ale rozumiem, że istnieje ryzyko, że mogę zostać zidentyfikowana.	☐
Chciałbym otrzymać dalsze informacje na temat wyników badania oraz przesłać mi podsumowanie wyników pocztą elektroniczną.	☐
Zgadzam się wziąć udział w tym badaniu	☐

Data: 25 lutego 2024 r

Uczestnik   **Badacz**

Nazwa: Name: Wiktoria Wilk

Data:

APPENDIX D

Research Question	Research Objective	Question in the Interview Guide
What are the perspectives of professionals engaged in youth work regarding the prevalence and manifestations of prejudices within their respective working school environments?	Exploring the perspective of professionals in both formal and non-formal educational settings concerning their perception of youth.	1. Could you describe your current youth work setting in terms of the diversity of the youth population (e.g. cultural, ethnic, religious or disability background) and how long you have worked there?
		2. What could you tell me about young people today from your perspective? What changes are we seeing among young people today?
	Analyzing the perspectives of professionals in both formal and non-formal educational settings concerning prevalent prejudices in their work environments.	3. Do you notice any form of discrimination and prejudices among people in your work environment? Can you give examples?
		4. What factors or causes do you think contribute to prejudice among young people in Polish schools? (How do these factors manifest themselves?)
		5. Do you feel involved or responsible in dealing with bias in your work environment?
	Discovering the main challenges encountered by professionals when addressing prejudicesss within formal and non-formal educational contexts with youth in Poland.	6. Do you notice the generation difference in Poland? Do you notice differences in young people's attitudes towards different age groups? to older people etc?
		7. Do you see gender role bias among young people?
		9. Do you work with transgender people? If so, have you observed any prejudices against transgender students? If so, why do you think this is happening and what is the attitude of Polish youth towards transgender people?

		10. How common do you think discrimination based on physical appearance is among young people in Polish society?
To what extent can the principle of 'Critical Consciousness' outlined in Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" be utilized by professionals working with youth in Poland as a framework for addressing and mitigating prejudices?	Analyzing the application of Critical Pedagogy principles in addressing prejudice among Polish youth.	11. Do you engage young people, and how, in identifying issues or issues that affect them personally or in their communities?
		12. Do you have the opportunity to use the experiential education method when presenting prejudices to young people?
		13. Do you have open discussions and dialogues among young people about identified problems and potential solutions?
	To explore the suggestions for methods and techniques that professionals aspire to employ while engaging with youth in their work.	14. What techniques and tools would you use to develop your imagination and empathy so that you can understand different points of view?

Table 5. Semi-structured Interview Guide based on the research questions and objectives.

APPENDIX E

#	Year born	Previous Education	Years of Experience with youth
FI1	1979	● Graduated in food engineering; ● Postgraduate studies in teaching.	7 y.
FI2	1994	● Mathematics with a specialization in teaching; ● Master's studies in Pedagogy; ● Having a license.	4 y.
FI3	1972	● Pedagogical mathematics	27 y.
FI4	1985	● Bachelors in B.H.P. Master, Safety and Hygiene of Work; ● Postgraduate studies, in pedagogy; ● Postgraduate studies in Human Nutrition and Dietetics.	5 y.
NFI 1	1996	● Internal organizational training within ZHP at all three levels, i.e. guide, sub-master and master; ● Course of colonial educators; License to be a colonial educator; ● Various smaller workshops.	10 y.
NFI 2	1998	● Graduated in Journalism and Social Communication. ● Master's degree from the Department of Information Society.	1,5 y.
NFI3	1993	● Graduated in psychology; ● Pedagogical training at a post-graduate degree; ● Currently doing post-diploma degree in suicidology.	2 y 6 months

Table 6. Profile of the participants in semi-structured interviews.

APPENDIX F

Main Themes	Subthemes	Emerging Themes
1. Perception of the Professionals about Young People	1.1. Needs and Challenges	Digital Citizenship and Safety
		Mental health and Well-being
		Social Inclusion and Discrimination
		Education and Development
		Normative Behaviors
	1.2. Strengths and Capabilities	Openness
		Emotional Awareness
		Passions and knowledge
	1.3. Engagements and Communication	Lack of motivation
		Lack of focus
	1.4 Contact with Parents	Influence from Home
		Parents lacking right resources
		Over Caring Parents
		Lack of time
	1.5 Generational BIas	Communication and Boundaries
		Technology Use
		Values and Attitudes
		Respect and Authority
		Relationship Issues
2. Prejudice Management in the Working Environment (by Professionals)	2.1 Identifying the Diversity	Physical Appearance
		Gender and Sex Orientation
		Mental and Physical Disabilities
		Religion
		Nationality/Ethnicity
	2.2 Prevalence of Prejudice	Recognition of Prejudice
		Denial of Prejudice
		Neutral Perception
	2.3 Nature of Prejudice	Open prejudicess
		Unconscious bias
		Hormones
	2.4 Manifestation of prejudice	Microagression
		Exclusion
		Hate-speech
	2.5 Mitigating Prejudice	Open Conversation
		Comments
		Redirecting to Professionals
		Bystander position
	2.6. Suggestions on Tackling Prejudice	Collaborative games
		Education Teachers/Youth/Parents
		Contact Theory
3. Implementation of the Pedagogy of the Oppressed	3.1 Engaging Students into Identifying the Social Issues (CC)	Limited time
		Limited Knowledge
		Challenges of students Participation
	3.2 Activities and Methods	Discussion on the Forum
		Experiential Learning
		Role-play and Drama
		Contact with Out-Group members
	3.3 Impact and Reflection	Empowerment
		Development

4.	Programs for Prejudice and Discrimination Reduction	4.1 Availability of the Programs for students	Informal Programs
			Formal Programs
			Lack of Initiatives
		4.2 Availability of the programs for teachers	Variety in Options
			Limited Effectiveness
			Importance of Collaboration
		4.3 Interest in the Programs	Teachers
			Students
5.	Education of the interviewers		
6.	Working environment	6.1. School environment	
		6.2. NFE working environment	

Table 7. The themes, sub-themes and emerging themes from the interviews.

APPENDIX G

Non-plagiarism declaration

Submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master's Programme in Social Work with Child and Youth:

• Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College

• Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work

• Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work

• Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize and will result in a failing grade in the programme.

Date 17/05/2024

Signature: Wiktoria Wilk

Name (in block letters): WIKTORIA AGATA WILK

			Urban		Rural	
			Woman	Man	Woman	Man
Age of the Participants	14	Count	4	5	5	1
		Table N %	1.8%	2.2%	2.2%	0.4%
	15	Count	22	10	20	9
		Table N %	9.7%	4.4%	8.8%	4.0%
	16	Count	12	9	18	7
		Table N %	5.3%	4.0%	7.9%	3.1%
	17	Count	19	4	24	4
		Table N %	8.4%	1.8%	10.6%	1.8%
	18	Count	21	4	12	5
		Table N %	9.3%	1.8%	5.3%	2.2%
	19	Count	1	4	2	1
		Table N %	0.4%	1.8%	0.9%	0.4%
	20	Count	1	0	0	2
		Table N %	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%
	21	Count	0	0	1	0
		Table N %	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%

Table 8. Participants' division by age, gender and urban vs. rural area.

		People from different cultures enrich our society.	The Roma have different traditions that I would like to learn more about.	People with an orientation other than heterosexual should be treated equally.	It wouldn't bother me that our president is transgender.	It is important to break stereotypes about gender roles.	People with different religious beliefs should be accepted in our society.	We should have more mosques in our country for Muslims.	REVERSED Women are not as competent as men in managerial positions.	REVERSED Older people don't have the right opinions.	REVERSED Women are not as competent as man at important positions
N	Valid	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3.48	2.91	3.65	3.23	3.59	3.85	2.73	3.66	3.18	2.9891
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.00
Maximum		5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.00

Table 9. General Prejudice Scale. Questions.

Age of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	16	5.8	6.5	6.5
	15	65	23.6	26.5	33.1
	16	52	18.9	21.2	54.3
	17	55	20.0	22.4	76.7
	18	43	15.6	17.6	94.3
	19	8	2.9	3.3	97.6
	20	5	1.8	2.0	99.6
	21	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	245	89.1	100.0	
Missing	System	30	10.9		
Total		275	100.0		

Table 10: Age of Participants.

Correlations

		General Prejudice Scale	Similarity to Parent's point of view
General Prejudice Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.173[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	275	269
Similarity to Parent's point of view	Pearson Correlation	-.173[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	269	269

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11. Correlation between General prejudices and Similarity to Parent's point of view

118

Correlations

		General Prejudice Scale	Intergroup Contact Scale
General Prejudice Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	-.200[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.019
	N	275	137
Intergroup Contact Scale	Pearson Correlation	-.200[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	
	N	137	137

[*]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 12. Correlation between General Prejudice levels and intergroup contact.

Correlations

		General Prejudice levels	Social Distance
General Prejudice levels	Pearson Correlation	1	.465[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	275	275
Social Distance	Pearson Correlation	.465[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	275	275

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 13. Correlation between General Prejudice levels and Social Distance

		Roma	Jewish	Muslim	Ukranian	Non-white Skin color	Non-hetero	Transgender	Physical Disability	Elderly	Children	Men	Women	Thin	Obese
Roma	Pearson Correlation	1	.915***	.890***	.736***	.625***	.599***	.611***	.535***	.274***	.142*	.387***	.473***	.496***	.522***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.019	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Jewish	Pearson Correlation	.915***	1	.902***	.774***	.603***	.595***	.630***	.508***	.226***	.076	.334***	.451***	.451***	.465***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.209	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Muslim	Pearson Correlation	.890***	.902***	1	.762***	.570***	.599***	.642***	.506***	.244***	.153*	.303***	.400***	.399***	.449***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.011	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Ukranian	Pearson Correlation	.736***	.774***	.762***	1	.503***	.602***	.593***	.523***	.371***	.192***	.259***	.359***	.335***	.403***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Non-White Skin Color	Pearson Correlation	.625***	.603***	.570***	.503***	1	.669***	.634***	.642***	.285***	.099	.546***	.638***	.654***	.665***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.102	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Non-hetero	Pearson Correlation	.599***	.595***	.599***	.602***	.669***	1	.931***	.592***	.266***	.152*	.347***	.477***	.475***	.587***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	.012	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Transgender	Pearson Correlation	.611***	.630***	.642***	.593***	.634***	.931***	1	.576***	.251***	.164***	.306***	.436***	.443***	.568***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	.006	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Physical Disability	Pearson Correlation	.535***	.508***	.506***	.523***	.642***	.592***	.576***	1	.466***	.248***	.495***	.579***	.605***	.641***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Elderly	Pearson Correlation	.274***	.226***	.244***	.371***	.285***	.266***	.251***	.466***	1	.413***	.390***	.342***	.343***	.395***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Children	Pearson Correlation	.142*	.076	.153*	.192***	.099	.152*	.164***	.248***	.413***	1	.149*	.117	.184***	.140*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.209	.011	.001	.102	.012	.006	<.001	<.001		.013	.054	.002	.020
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Men	Pearson Correlation	.387***	.334***	.303***	.259***	.546***	.347***	.306***	.495***	.390***	.149*	1	.774***	.829***	.682***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.013		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Women	Pearson Correlation	.473***	.451***	.400***	.359***	.638***	.477***	.436***	.579***	.342***	.117	.774***	1	.880***	.815***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.054	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Thin	Pearson Correlation	.496***	.451***	.399***	.335***	.654***	.475***	.443***	.605***	.343***	.184***	.829***	.880***	1	.840***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.002	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275
Obese	Pearson Correlation	.522***	.465***	.449***	.403***	.665***	.587***	.568***	.641***	.395***	.140*	.682***	.815***	.840***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	.020	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275	275

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 14. Correlation between Social Distance across various minority groups

Correlations

		Prejudice Experienced Based on Gender	Prejudice Experienced Based on Weight	Prejudice Experienced Based on Ideology (veganism)
Prejudice Experienced Based on Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.335***	.357***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	247	239	242
Prejudice Experienced Based on Weight	Pearson Correlation	.335***	1	.313***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	239	251	245
Prejudice Experienced Based on Ideology (veganism)	Pearson Correlation	.357***	.313***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	242	245	255

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15. Correlation between Prejudice Experienced on the basis of weight, gender and ideologies.