

3. Education and Communication

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Online University Presentations in German: Virtual, Utopian and Green. A Multimodal Analysis¹

1. Introduction

In our paper, we propose a multimodal analysis of texts that belong to the genre of online presentations. We focus our attention specifically on university presentations as forms of institutional communication, which follows the model ‘one-to-many’. The institution presents itself to students and their families with the main purpose of informing them about available educational offerings. On the one hand, these presentations have an informative function; on the other hand, they also have a persuasive function in which utopian ideals are used as strategic elements to communicate effectively and to reach readers emotionally. By underlining values like open-mindedness, along with attention to young talent and merit, the communication conveys positive feelings like happiness, interest and hope to its readers. We refer to the utopian side of the university communication as *green utopia*, a concept related to the ecology-based idea of sustainability.

In the first part of this essay, we explain what we mean by using the concept *green utopia* in the academic world. The second chapter is devoted to the linguistic terminology adopted in our paper, referring in particular to the text as an *inter*-text and multimedia text. In the third chapter, we present the main results of our analysis, which was conducted on the online presentation of the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany – one of the youngest institutions of higher learning in Germany. In its verbal and graphic components, this presentation underlines ideals like supporting young talent and equal treatment, with concrete actions undertaken. As will be explained, this website is an interesting object of analysis to demonstrate how institutional communication can apparently create an ideal world based on principles of meritocracy. In order to support our thesis about

1 This paper has been written according to common ideas of the two authors. Paragraph 1 has been written in cooperation. Paragraphs 2.2 and 3.1 were written by Marina Brambilla. Paragraphs 2, 2.1, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4, 4.1, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.2, 4.3 and 5 were written by Valentina Crestani.

utopian communication, we use the method of the multimodal analysis, which ensures consideration of:

- Many modes of communication (e.g. speech, gesture, and symbols).
- Communication as an interrelated object of analysis, which is realized in the form of texts with specific communicative functions.

The last chapter contains our final considerations.

2. *Green Utopia* in the academic world

The concept of ‘green’ and the concept of ‘utopia’ may assume indefinite contours according to different contexts in which they occur. We use this expression with a specific meaning related to the university as an institution of research, teaching and growth. We will begin the analysis with a consideration of the meaning of the color adjective *green*, after which we propose our definition of the noun *utopia*, and finally, of the idea of *green utopia* in the educational world.

2.1 Green

The word *green* includes various denotative and connotative meanings and it encodes many perceptual and cultural aspects². The semantic content of *green* depends on:

- A. The context of occurrence;
- B. The producer of the text;
- C. The recipient of the text.

In our paper, we explain these three factors as following:

A. Context of Occurrence: *green* refers to the specialized fields of education offered at German Universities, of the architecture used in university-buildings and of nutrition related to meals sold in the student cafeterias. In the first usage, it relates to the widely used concept of sustainability, as will be shown in the next paragraphs. In the second usage, *green* is connected with the new architectural principles and rules governing the construction of new buildings and the renovation of old ones in recent years. These innovative criteria were established at the European level with the introduction of a series of indicators to build new houses or renovate old constructions (see the 2010 *Directive on Energy Performance of Buildings*³). With reference to the third usage in the field of nutrition,

2 See Agnello (2013: 29–31).

3 <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32010L0031>>

great attention is given these days to sustainable food; *green* is to be understood as food that is both good for human health and friendly to the environment, from production to the final consumption. Green criteria are important at a political-social level. European citizens are increasingly interested in sustainability, including topics like bioarchitecture, sustainable food and sustainable agriculture. Citizens are also paying more attention to the adoption of green criteria by institutions, industries, hotels, supermarkets, gyms, schools and in general all organizations that provide services to the community or sell products (see *Nielsen Global Survey of corporate social responsibility and sustainability*⁴). Educational institutions that make use of different types of buildings (e.g. universities, libraries, canteens) are an interesting field of analysis because:

1. Such institutions are of relevance to a large group of citizens. Their main target consists of teenagers, young adults and their families, who have to be made explicitly aware of the importance of sustainability.

2. As educational institutions for the citizens, they have to communicate with them in order to present their educational offerings, their philosophy, the buildings where students attend lessons, eat at lunchtime, live during the semesters, etc. Many institutes present themselves on the web according to ideas of transparency, usability and accessibility.

‘Green’ will be treated in the next pages not as a term but as a concept specifically referencing the academic world. We do not intend for this notion to be strictly associated with the fields of architecture or nutrition, as it is in the usual sense. In these two areas, ‘green’ is connected with the idea of sustainability and environmental protection. We assume that ‘green’ and ‘sustainability’ are concepts that can be applied to the academic field in various activities related with student life, including studying, living, doing sports and eating.

B. Producer of The Text: the producer of the texts that are the object of our analysis is a German university which offers an official website where aspects connected to the ideas of green are privileged. The texts belong to the textual genre of online presentations. This genre has key characteristics related to the explicit aim of presenting the institution as the only one the reader should choose, i.e. an optimistic presentation of the institute. Essential features of the macrostructure of the web presentation include:

- A) Dividing the content in different sections, with titles as hyperlinks;
- B) Describing the best qualities of the university as an educational institution;

4 <www.nielsen.com>

- C) Characterizing the university as a factual organization made up of different areas (such as studying, research, teaching, administration) and buildings (e.g. classrooms, libraries, cafeterias, student residences);
- D) Offering interactive sections, where interested people can find contacts, social networks (like Facebook, Google+ etc.), contact forms, addresses and maps of the city and of the different buildings;
- E) Presenting photography of groups of students, of rooms, of the buildings etc.

The main characteristics of the microstructure of the texts are:

- Use of autosemantic words and expressions with an emotionally positive connotation (e.g. *Offen im Denken; Inspiration an Rhein & Ruhr; Vielfalt als Potential*⁵);
- Brief sentences that have a paratactic relation. In case of hypotaxis, i.e. sequences of a main clause and subordinate clauses, these are at the first level of subordination in order to have texts with a low grade of complexity (e.g. *Das bedeutet, dass während des gesamten Studiums kein Wechsel in eine gesetzliche Krankenversicherung möglich ist.*⁶);
- Nouns that are the result of a process of composition or of verbal derivation, which are compact and informative⁷ (e.g. *Krankenversicherung, Bewerbungsphase, Studienplatzangebot, Studieninteressierte, Forschungsort, Finanzierung, Bewerbung, Einschreibung, Antrag*).

C. Recipient of The Text: the main recipients of the texts are:

1. Prospective students and their families;
2. Current students who have successfully completed bachelor courses or master courses and who are interested in a higher level of education;
3. People who need to take individual exams or who are interested in attending individual lectures;
4. Professors who work at the university and teachers who work in schools.

The target group of the texts is an audience of prospective experts or of experts, if we consider graduates. In Germany, the autonomous life of university students has a great importance from a social perspective. It is common among prospective students to choose a university located in a city or town away from their family

5 Examples taken from the University of Duisburg-Essen, <<https://www.uni-due.de/>>.

6 Example from the University of Duisburg-Essen, <<https://www.uni-due.de/>>.

7 See Crestani (2010).

residence⁸. Online presentations of universities help students choose which institution to attend, where they will study and live for the next years of their life. For these reasons, a presentation that places students and their needs at the center will have greater success and prompt more students to apply to the university.

In conclusion, the idea of 'green' applied to communication in the academic context concerns practical aspects of student life such as living, eating and studying. By associating the value of 'green' and the act of 'academic communication,' and by analyzing the connection between the two aspects, we intend to make a timely contribution to the description of institutional communication, which is oriented on the concept of advantages for all people.

2.2 Utopia

The noun *utopia* has a relatively long but extremely interesting history, which is outside the scope of this article. For our purposes, the term itself gives the idea of 'no place', as it is made of two ancient Greek elements with the meaning of negation (οὐ 'not') and of place (τόπος 'place') and the classical Latin suffix *-ia*. It was coined by Thomas More in his *Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reipublicae Statu deque nova Insula Utopia* (1516). In modern dictionaries such as Collins (<www.collinsdictionary.com>) for English and Duden (<www.duden.de>) for German, its definition connotes characteristics of dream, perfection, happiness for everyone and idealist features, which do not belong to real places, and which are typical of an imaginary society. Despite this idea of perfection, Thomas More leaves open the question of whether a perfect society is really ideal.

In the following essay, we explore the concept of utopia in relation to the academic world. In this world, it is the university (with its role as the producer of the presentation) that presents ideals as its fundamental characteristics:

- Fairness in education.
- Equal treatment.
- Equal opportunities.
- Meritocracy.
- Open-mindedness.

8 See the article *Erstsemester mit Heimweh: Ausziehen!* (*Der Spiegel*, 17.10.2014): <<http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/studium/studium-erstsemester-studenten-erzaehlen-ueber-heimweh-a-997128.html>>. 40 percent of German students who attend their first semester at the university live with their parents; 60 percent leave their families and live in another city or town.

The presentation also displays characteristics of auto-representation, which references real data for some aspects (e.g. number of students, professors, or apartments in residences etc.) but also abstract concepts (e.g. the challenge of equal opportunities).

2.3 ‘Green Utopia’: A Definition for the Academic World

‘Green utopia’ is a concept assuming that university students can study and live in a sustainable way for themselves, but also for their current and future society. We use ‘green’ as the idealistic metaphor for the sustainability-concept and the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development “is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (1987, World Commission on Environment and Development). Transferring this concept into the world of the university, we describe the educational process as development that connects the needs of the current students with the needs of the (future) society. The needs of the students and of the society include educating students to work and live according to principles of equality, progress and awareness of the needs of the other citizens. University students can undertake the following activities:

- Studying, i.e. acquiring knowledge and developing interdisciplinary abilities and skills, which form the basis for a career;
- Using different areas of the university such as libraries and cafeterias (where they can borrow books, use Wi-Fi to study, eat at the cafeteria and choose a variety of healthy, low-cost meals etc.);
- Taking part in university life;
- Living in a place with a comfortable atmosphere for studying, meeting other students and participating in cultural activities.

3. Object, Terminology and Method of Analysis

3.1 Object

In our paper, we concentrate on the linguistic analysis of the official website of the University of Duisburg-Essen (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/>>, last accessed: October 2015). The reasons for using this university website include the following:

- It is a user-friendly site, which should allow students in search of information to find the most important points in an easy way;

- It offers a good overview of the academic world by adopting not only the verbal component but also the eidetic component of the language, which is fundamental in communication with citizens as a heterogeneous group;
- It presents a young institution, whose foundation dates back to 2003 as the result of the fusion of the University of Duisburg and of the University of Essen. The new institution had to adopt cooperation criteria and sustainable criteria to deal with the fusion in the best possible way.

In order to conduct a deep examination of the website, we will provide insight into all sections and we will include not only the online component of the site, which is dynamic and can/must change, but also electronic written documents, which comprise the static part of the site.

3.2 Terminology

We use terminology that may not be familiar enough to untrained non-specialist readers, or which assumes a particular meaning in our article. In order to avoid confusion, we will give a brief definition of the main terms used in our essay.

First, our analysis is linguistically oriented and concentrates on the verbal component of the website, but it also considers the eidetic component by adopting a semiotic interpretation of the web content. The verbal component is in German⁹; the eidetic component includes graphic elements such as colors, photography, characters etc. We consider the relationship between the verbal and eidetic components by using a linguistic-semiotic perspective¹⁰; this perspective allows us to analyze words not only in relation to internal characteristics (meaning, connotation, word-formation etc.) but also in relation to their external characteristics displayed on the website (color, size, position in the page etc.). The analysis of the connection between the verbal and eidetic components is a good way to understand the principles and ideas expressed on the website.

Second, we consider the website a text. Defining the text from a linguistic point of view may lead to long discussions, which is beyond the purposes of our research. We refer to De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) and to Brinker / Cölfen / Pappert (2014) for a linguistic definition of ‘text’¹¹. In our paper, we adopt the concept of ‘multimedia text’ (see Laskewicz 2004):

9 The website offers an English translation or a summary for the most important sections (e.g. its online application and information on living in a student residence).

10 See Brucculeri (2009) for an example of semiotic analysis in the field of tourism.

11 De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) assume that a text is a “kommunikative Okkurrenz”, i.e. a communicative occurrence that meets seven principles of textuality:

Miriam Bait, Marina Brambilla and Valentina Crestani - 9783631666838

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- The text is made of a verbal and an eidetic component, which are strictly connected and have a dynamic relation. The eidetic component is the dominant one, as it allows access to other verbal parts through the use of hyperlinks, which have a different color and are underlined. In addition to this informative function, the graphic component has a persuasive and expressive function: through the use of colors, pictures, characters etc., the reader is persuaded to read the text, which expresses the auto-representation of the institution;
- The verbal part is organized as a multilevel component (the different levels are obtained through the eidetic part). Each level (i.e. each hyperlink) represents a deeper level of information and content. It has a core thematic argument (i.e. the specific university) and related arguments, which can be found in separate sections in the website or on other websites, which are explained verbally and visually.

We consider the text as:

1. “Signifikante Praxis” (Barthes 1973), i.e. the activity of giving meaning to the text, when a person reads it or listens / sees it (in case of videos).
2. A dynamic product: it is a medium of communication and of representation. The language in the text is to be understood and to be deconstructed by the reader, who begins to ‘play’ with the different meanings of the text. That same reader then reconstructs the text.
3. Intertext, i.e. as a transformation of other texts that were given a meaning from the reader and then reconstructed¹².

3.3 Method of Analysis

A text, as explained in paragraph 3.2, needs to be analyzed with a multimodal method in order to avoid considering the text only as a sequence of words,

1. Cohesion; 2. Coherence; 3. Intentionality; 4. Acceptability; 5. Informativity; 6. Situationality; and 7. Intertextuality. If one of these principles is not present, the entity is a non-text and is not communicative.

12 See Barthes (1973 : 1015) : “Tout texte est un intertexte ; d’autres textes sont présent en lui, à de niveaux variables, sous de formes plus ou moins reconnaissables ; les textes de la culture antérieure et ceux de la culture environnante ; tout texte est un tissu nouveau de citations révolues. [...] L’intertextualité, condition de tout texte, [...] ne se réduit évidemment pas à un problème de sources ou d’influences ; l’intertexte est un champ général de formules anonymes, dont l’origine est rarement repérable, de citations inconscientes ou automatiques [...]”

sentences and clauses that have precise semantic, syntactic, textual and pragmatic relations to each other.

Multimodality assumes that communication (realized through written or oral texts) has to be described in terms of:

- A multiplicity of modes, i.e. linguistic, spatial, and visual modes used to create the text;
- The relationships between the modes.

In other words, the approach of multimodality sees communication not only as language, but as the interrelation between different modes, which are more than the single verbal mode. Multimodality is based on two main assumptions:

1. Communication exploits various modes (e.g. the visual, gestural, spoken, and written) depending on different contexts, all of which contribute to the final meaning. The full range of modes has to be analyzed in order to describe how people make meaning.
2. Modes are organized sets of semiotic resources that people use to make meaning. They are socially relevant and culturally shared.

Multimodality is a concept that is often used for the study of oral communication, particularly face-to-face-conversations. We nevertheless assume that multimodality is an effective method for analyzing web-communication. On the web, communication practices are neither simply written or oral; they take on mixed forms and can be written with features of oral communication (e.g. chats, instant messaging) or can be oral with features of written communication (e.g. video-tutorials)¹³. In the case of online presentations (e.g. presentations of universities, of organizations or of companies), there is a visual and often an audiovisual aspect (a video is assumed to be communicative and effective). That is the main reason why we propose multimodality as method of analysis.

4. University Presentation as a Multimodal Object

In the following paragraphs, we present the results of our linguistic-oriented analysis by adopting a thematic criterion. This means that we do not offer an analysis of single sections of the site, but we evaluate the different sections according to three specific themes: living, studying and eating.

13 See Siever, Schlobinski and Runkehl (2005) for communication in chats and Crestani (2015a) for communication in video tutorials.

These topics were chosen due to their relevance for university students: as it was said, a large percentage of students in Germany live in the place where they attend university. Because they spend a good deal of time on campus studying and attending classes, they often tend to eat at the university. For each of the three topics, we consider the linguistic and visual strategies that contribute to ideas of perfection, happiness, and opportunity for all students. We will demonstrate that the website is really only accessible for a group of people. The ideal reader of most sections of the website should be:

- German-speaking or English-speaking: with at least a B2- or a C1-level of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- Not disabled: blind students cannot access content of some parts of the site and deaf people cannot hear the video presented on the home page, because there are no subtitles or audio-description of the libraries¹⁴.
- Technologically competent and equipped: the reader must have an Internet connection and a PC, a tablet or a smartphone to access the website.

4.1 Living

The term *living* refers primarily to the state of life in a student residence or in an apartment with other fellow students. It also relates to a student's experience of a place by going to the cinemas, theatres, pubs and restaurants etc. and by taking part in the cultural and social life of the city.

4.1.1 *Experience the City*

For this topic, there is extensive use of emotional words, whose meaning is directly connected with the action of doing something pleasant and worthwhile. Therefore, living in Duisburg and in Essen is an *Überraschung* 'surprise'¹⁵

14 <<https://www.uni-due.de/ub/abisz/audioguide.shtml>>. In another section of the library presentation (<http://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/go/ub-film/Mit_der_Bibliothe_k_durchs_Studium_1.mp4Z>), there is a video that is primarily visual, as it shows how a student can find good books in the library to do his homework without any audio-description. This video is accessible to deaf people, but not to blind people. Moreover, it has mainly a persuasive function and not an informative one, as it is in the audio-description of the libraries.

15 The symbol “is used for the official English translation offered by the University. Words and expressions that do not have an official translation, will be explained with”.

(<https://www.uni-due.de/de/universitaet/leben.php>), because the city has a *reichhaltige Geschichte* ‘rich history’. Students can *nachspüren* ‘follow’ the history of the city when they visit the new *Ruhr-Museum*. Here, there is a fine play on words and concepts between the ancient origins of the city and the city’s new and innovative turn in the last decades. Duisburg offers not only history but also a direct link with nature and animals; the zoo is *legendär* ‘legendary’, and its brief description gives readers the impression of visiting an exotic land with pandas and dolphins, two animals that evoke positive impressions because they are symbols of sustainability¹⁶. Culturally speaking, Duisburg and Essen are well developed; the *Theater- und Musikszene* ‘theater and music scene’ offers *europäische Spitzenklasse*, i.e. it is excellent and of European standard. By living in these cities, students are provided with good entertainment opportunities such as a *lebendige Kneipenkultur* ‘lively pub culture’ and *niveauvolles Shoppen und Genießen*, i.e. stylish shopping areas and culinary highlights.

The takeaway message is that Duisburg and Essen are very nice places to live because they offer many experiences to live life to the fullest. The producer of the site is aware of the emotionally charged experiences of culture, nature, shopping and going out with friends, and he / she uses these experiences to create a text that proposes a sustainable way of life.

The history of the region is ancient and today it is a lively, thriving area. Up to the 1970s, however, the Ruhr metropolis was perceived as a dirty, cold region, based on the coal and steel industries since the nineteenth century¹⁷. The image of a grey city, damaged by pollution and exhaust fumes, is replaced with the image of green areas in the city and around the city, with open-air cafés packed with people enjoying life (see <https://www.uni-due.de/de/universitaet/leben.php>). The sky, which can be seen in the photography featured on the site, is blue with white clouds, a positive image testament to the environmental protection work that has been successfully undertaken since the 1970s. White clouds are in

16 See the logo of WWF with the giant panda as symbol of the environment; the dolphin was used in the Greek mythology with a positive connotation.

17 In the 1960s, air pollution was a visible problem in the Ruhr area due to the dust, ash and soot from furnaces, steel converters and coke ovens. Willy Brandt stated in the speech at the Bonn Beethoven Hall (April 1961) that “der Himmel über dem Ruhrgebiet muß wieder blau werden“ / “the sky over the Ruhr region must be blue again.” This statement represents the start of systematic environmental thinking in German politics. Since the 1970s, this challenge has been met with success. See <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/press/pressinformation/federal-environment-agency-sky-over-ruhr-is-blue> for more information on pollution today.

antonymic relation with the grey fumes of the industries. The color of the most important part of the site is also blue, which for a contemporary audience connotes elegance, simplicity, refinement or something official. According to Agnello (2013: 26), the blue color is “il colore preferito dalle istituzioni (ONU, Consiglio d’Europa, UNESCO ecc.) nonché il colore ufficiale delle aziende che vogliono veicolare serietà e tradizione [...]” Institutions as well as companies often use blue to communicate values of seriousness and tradition. We can assume that the reader will associate the emotionally connoted words with the sense of something official, of an objective description of the city and of a reality that is described. That motivating force leads to a utopia. The reader is involved in a play of words and mental associations, which encourage him / her to think about Essen and Duisburg as utopian microcosms, where he / she can live in harmony with himself / herself, with other people and with the environment, keeping in mind the affluence of the region is due to its industrial history. This is the weak point of the utopia hidden behind the text: the photography represents a green world while the words refer to the region’s economic power. People cannot forget that the region is based on heavy industry, although good results have been achieved in protecting the environment. Despite their awareness of this region’s industrial legacy, recipients can substitute the idea of a drab, grey place with the idea of happiness, because the positive graphic component of the presentation is dominant and they are strongly influenced by the power of the visual communication.

The idea of happiness and of the best opportunities that students can find in the region is the thread of all related topics of the experience.

4.1.2 *Experience the University*

The university offers opportunities in sports, music, theater and cinema. Their description is based on expressions like *ein breites kulturelles Angebot* ‘a broad cultural offer’ (<https://www.uni-due.de/de/studium/kultur_div.php>), where the adjective *breit* ‘broad’ refers to the idea of an educational concept of European openness. In the section, sports in nature such as sailing and boating competitions in which both students and professors get involved are emphasized:

1. Beim gestrigen Essener Firmenlauf waren insgesamt 200 Studierende, ProfessorInnen und MitarbeiterInnen aller Bereiche unserer Universität angemeldet. Wieder gelang ein hervorragendes Ergebnis. “In yesterday’s race in Essen, there were 200 students, professors and employees from all areas of our University. Once again we achieved an excellent result”

The idea of a very good result (*ein hervorragendes Ergebnis*) is related to the gender-orientated use of the plural: *Studierende*, *ProfessorInnen* and *MitarbeiterInnen* include both male and female people. This plural form (instead of forms

like *Studenten*, *Professoren* and *Mitarbeiter*, which refer only to men) is intentionally used to avoid gender discrimination¹⁸. The field of *Genderlinguistik* (gender linguistics) is a sociolinguistic field of analysis that was developed in the 1970s with the aim of finding out whether language differences between women and men can be explained through the different roles they have in the society. Furthermore, this field attempts to develop rules to avoid sexist use of the language. The category of natural gender plays an important role in our society and in the language used, as observed by Spieß, Günther and Hüpper (2012: 1): “Das ‘altertümliche Dual’ prägt weiter unsere Sprache, unsere Mode und nicht zuletzt die Gehaltsverteilung in unserem Land.” According to the three authors, the medieval dual male-female continuously influences our language, our practices and – last but not least – the differences in salary in Germany.

In the sport section of the university website, photography is the most meaningful part, with a predominance of blue and green colors (including the sport uniforms of the group of students and professors taking part in a competition). Blue and green refer to open-air sports.

In addition, the section about the *Essener Studentenorchester* (<<http://www.eso.uni-due.de/>>) underlines values like liveliness and cooperation among (former) students: *Wir sind eine lebendige Truppe aus aktiven und ehemaligen Studierenden* “We are a lively group of students and ex-students”. Here the word *Studierend* instead of *Student* ensures that both male and female students are taken into consideration. Another important value highlighted from a verbal and a visual perspective is the attitude of openness towards other students, who are invited to join the group of musicians. The concept of invitation is repeated three times with the following visual organization. First, it is integrated in the text and second, it has a special section, a box with a yellow background, and it is written in the same font (in bold). Finally, the verb *mitspielen!* “play in the orchestra with us!” is written in a red color (red is used to attract the user’s attention). This word is separate from the text and it is marked in italics. The italics extend a personal invitation to the reader, as the curvy font conjures something hand written, perhaps even by the conductor of the orchestra. The meaning is “You are invited to play with us”.

This element involves the reader, and given the presence of the button *Gefällt mir* “like” for Facebook at the end of the section, the reader can actually respond to the content.

18 See Miemietz (1993), Schwarz (1999) and Robustelli (2000). Miemietz and Schwarz in particular deal with possibilities and borderlines of the morphological motion in the person designation and in the job designation.

The invitation to be part of university life is present in other sections such as the *Universitätschor Essen* (<<https://www.stud.uniessen.de/~sh1053/>>), where the invitation is open to students who fulfil the following three requirements:

Singst du seit deiner Kindheit und immer wieder mal Stücke von Musicals?

Gerne verwandelst du dich beim Singen in einen Star wie Rihanna oder Ed Sheeran?

Dann sind auch alle Texte der Wise Guys eine Leichtigkeit für Dich?!

These three questions refer to a growing level of skill, but most of all they act emotionally on the reader and invoke their dreams (e.g. a childhood dream of singing, the dream of being a famous singer like Rihanna or Ed Sheeran, or the dream of singing difficult lyrics like those of Wise Guys): “Have you been singing songs from musicals since your childhood?”; “Would you like to use your singing transform yourself into a star like Rihanna or Ed Sheeran?”; “So all songs by Wise Guys are easy for you to sing?!”. The three questions are also graphically depicted as growing in difficulty; the increase of difficulty is underlined by marking the first words of the questions in bold, i.e. *Singst du* “Do you sing”, *gerne* “like” and *dann* “so”. The last question is intended as a direct consequence of the positive answers to the first two questions (if you’ve been singing since the childhood and you want to become a star like Rihanna or Ed Sheeran, then you are probably able to sing songs by Wise Guys).

In the English theater section (<<https://www.uni-due.de/duet/>>), the sense of invitation to be part of the university is less clear from a verbal perspective. The text always has a positive connotation in the visual component: the background is blue with tones of yellow and green.

Green and blue are colors that reference sustainable development at the university (<<https://www.uni-due.de/ifn/>>). Students are invited to take an active part at the *Initiative für Nachhaltigkeit – Universität Duisburg – Essen*, which has three important keywords, all the results of word-formation-processes (composition and derivation), and all convey a high degree of information with syntactic compactness:

- *Zukunftsfähigkeit* ‘future potential’
- *Lebensqualität* ‘quality of life’
- *Nachhaltigkeit* ‘sustainability’

In this initiative, students can actively participate in events and discuss the preservation of the environment with experts to guarantee a good quality of life for both the present and future generations. This project is described using positive words and expressions, which has two main functions:

– A persuasive function, such as *wir laden Euch herzlich zu unserer Veranstaltung „Corporate Social Responsibility im Dialog“ ein* / “We warmly invite you to our event “*Corporate Social Responsibility in dialogue*”, where the reader is directly invited to the event.

– A connotative function, such as *Liebe Freunde der Initiative*, where the reader is considered a friend deserving of a personal invitation addressed to the recipient of an informal letter or newsletter (“Dear friends of the initiative”).

In this description of the initiative, the utopian background of the project becomes evident. The reader is defined as a friend who can cooperate with other friends to make suggestions about sustainability and to discuss important topics. The reader is thus involved in a utopian world created by the producer of the text. From November 2014 to October 2015, the text was not changed¹⁹. A particularly careful reader would conclude that the initiative did not have a great deal of success, and that concrete actions to deal with an important topic like that of sustainability are probably taken only once a year. The symbol for the initiative is also utopian: a circle with light green contours and interconnected lines, which represents the earth and its connections to different places. The idea of connection among people is really a utopia; however, the only possible way for the reader to get in touch with the people organizing this initiative is with an email-address, which is difficult to find, as it has been placed at the end of the page and is written in a small font.

The concept of sustainability also assumes utopian contours in other fields, such as living in a dorm and eating in the canteen, as will be explained in the next paragraphs.

4.1.3 *Living in the City*

Students who must leave their family home search for a place to live that is comfortable, perhaps with other students, and where the costs for rent are not very high. The website of the University of Duisburg-Essen offers information about and descriptions of the student residences that belong to the university. The *Studentenwerk*, a sort of student union that provides financial, social and medical services for students, runs the student residences (<<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/wohnen/>>). The student residences present general information on cost of rent, number of rooms, types of rooms and the furniture provided. Expressions like *saniert* ‘updated’ and *modernste Standards* ‘the most modern standards’

19 The text was then modified in October 2015 to present a new event on the topic of the *Zukunftsstadt* “city of the future”.

often appear, which reference energy efficiency requirements. They are, however, the only references to the idea of sustainability, which seems to be important for the institution (as explained, a single section of the web site is dedicated to the *Initiative für Nachhaltigkeit – Universität Duisburg – Essen*). In some cases of the student residence descriptions, there are also more technical words borrowed from the language of bioarchitecture. Some examples include *wärme- und geräuschkämmend* ‘thermal and noise insulation’ and *Photovoltaikanlage* ‘photovoltaic system’.

These compound expressions all refer to important aspects of sustainable buildings, such as the thermal and acoustic characteristics. The theme of sustainability concerns not only the material aspects of buildings, but also accessibility for disabled people and foreign students. This is, however, also utopian: the reality speaks against the utopia of sustainable opportunities for these people. Only one residence has an apartment that is wheelchair accessible. Foreign students also have difficulties finding a room, because they tend to have fewer financial resources in comparison to German students²⁰. Accordingly, a prospective student reading this website would get a different impression about the university’s capacity to welcome students in need of special accommodation. German students themselves can also have difficulties finding a room, as there is a gap between the number of students and the number of available rooms financed by the state:

2., „Die Schere zwischen der Zahl der Studierenden und der Zahl der staatlich geförderten Wohnheimplätze geht immer weiter auseinander“, erklärt DSW-Generalsekretär Achim Meyer.”²¹ “The gap between the number of students and the number of rooms financed by the state is becoming increasingly bigger”, as the general secretary of DSW, Achim Meyer, explains.”

On the homepage of the university, there are expressions like *offen im Denken* ‘open-minded’ (which is the motto of the institution) and *Vielfalt als Potential* ‘Diversity – Realizing potential’. They all refer to values like:

- Open-mindedness: this concept has many semantic interpretations and it can be understood as an umbrella-concept for a wide spectrum of ideas (e.g. fair education, good educational opportunities for all people, combating discrimination and homophobia). As an abstract concept with many related

20 See the article „Wohnungssuche ist das größte Problem ausländischer Studierender in Deutschland“ (22.07.2015), <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/nc/wohnen/newsdetails/archive/2015/juli/artikel/wohnungssuche-ist-das-groesste-problem-aus-laendischer-studierender-in-deutschland/>>.

21 <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/nc/wohnen/newsdetails/archive/2015/oktober/artikel/mehr-preisguenstiger-staatlich-gefoerderter-wohnraum-fuer-studierende/>>

concepts, open-mindedness represents the prototypical example of a utopian concept.

- Diversity as potential: the goal of achieving diversity in society is a widespread idea. Diversity can refer to:

A. Gender equality among men and women: good examples are linguistically inclusive-forms (e.g. *Studierende*), which include both groups.

B. Inclusion of disabled people: the most important word is here *Inklusion* “inclusion”, a derived word with a specialized meaning in the field of the educational sciences. It is an approach in which students with special educational needs spend most of their time with non-disabled students (see Baglieri and Shapiro 2012). The deverbal noun *Beratung* “advisory service” is a keyword here:

3. Schwerpunkte der Beratung sind in der Regel Nachteilsausgleiche im Studium, wie im Bereich der Studien- und Prüfungsmodifikation, der Hochschulzulassung [...].²² “Important issues for the advisory service are usually balancing out disadvantages in the course of study, e.g. modifications to examinations, to access to the university [...]”

The concept of *Barrierefreiheit* ‘accessibility’ is also very important. The word is a compound of ‘barrier’ and ‘freedom,’ referring to accessible rooms at the university, but also to the possibility of finding an adequate room or apartment to live in (<<https://www.uni-due.de/inklusionsportal/wohnen.shtml>>). Disabled people are not only *rollstuhlfahrende und mobilitätsbehinderte Studierende* “students in wheelchairs and students with mobility problems”, but also *sinnesbehinderte und chronisch kranke Studierende* “sensory impaired and chronically ill students”. The two groups of students are described as people with the possibility of *eine bevorzugte Berücksichtigung* “preferential treatment”. Students in need of a wheelchair or blind students need to be able to enter a classroom and have accessible solutions for ICT products. There is a sequence of words related to the concept of *Barrierefreiheit*: *barrierefreie PCs* “barrier-free PCs”, *barrierefreie Notebooks* “barrier-free notebooks”, *barrierefreie Software* “barrier-free software”, *barrierefreie Plätze* “accessible seats”, *digitale Barrierefreiheit* “digital accessibility”.

C. Integration of foreign people: Particular attention is paid to refugees (<https://www.uni-due.de/international/wege_an_die_u.de.php>) as consequence of the dramatic influx of new refugees from Syria and other countries in recent years. The policy of Germany has been to welcome them and to offer them the chance to study. The words *Weiterbildung* ‘advanced training’, *Nachqualifizierung* ‘qualification’ and *sportliche Aktivitäten* ‘sports’ are used to explain to refugees what they

22 <<https://www.uni-due.de/inklusionsportal/beratungsstelle.html>>

can find at the university. The website offers different situations for refugees, e.g. if they are *Schüler/in* ‘pupils’, if they have *schulpflichtige Kinder* ‘children are required to attend school’, if they were students in their country etc.

D. Equality of homosexuals: here the potential of diversity refers to the concept of equality.

E. Socioeconomic diversity: merit and ability should determine whether a student attends school, not their family’s financial background. In addition to outlining available scholarships, the university also offers a video about the *UDE-Stipendienprogramm* “scholarship program of the UDE” (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/marketing/deutschlandstipendium.php>>). The video begins with the following sentence:

Früher förderte das Ruhrgebiet Steinkohle.

Heute Talente.

This can be translated as follows: “Once the Ruhr area produced hard coal. Today it produces talented people”. The visual background of these words is a blue sky with white clouds and rays of sunlight. This image evokes the idea of sustainable education, open to talented students of all social backgrounds. This idea is represented in the words of the people depicted in the video, e.g. female students receiving the scholarship. One of these women explains that the grant provides very important financial support for students *mit Migrationshintergrund* “with a migrant background”, once again emphasizing the utopia of the possibility for migrant students to achieve a very good education at this university. The same student explains that the scholarship represents *eine ideelle Förderung* “ideal support”, using words with positive connotations. If we look at the data, we understand that the grant is an important form of financial support, even though it is not enough to cover all the costs for a university student. The video also goes on to explain that 1,422 scholarships were awarded in 5 years, which is good, but not enough to help all talented students. The utopia of great opportunities for all talented students is also recognized in the video, and it ends with the following sentence:

Wir haben noch mehr Talente!

This can mean: “We have more talented students!” or “We also have other talents!”. The university’s idea is to give scholarships to larger numbers of students or to underline many other positive aspects of its organization.

The list is longer than the examples mentioned above and includes a wide variety of situations.

The diversity portal of the university (<<https://www.uni-due.de/diversity/>>) contains a specific overview of what the institution understands as belonging under the term *diversity*:

- *Gender* “gender”;
- *Familie* “family”;
- *Internationales – Interkulturalität* “interculturality”;
- *Gesundheitliche Beeinträchtigung – Behinderung* “health impairment – disability”;
- *Lebenslanges Lernen – wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung* “life-long learning”;
- *Bildungsgerechtigkeit* “educational justice”;
- *Bildungsaufstieg* “educational success”.

In order to express the variety of concepts included in diversity, not only from a verbal but also from a visual perspective, the institution uses an image of a group of stick figures (men and women) in different colors. The reader is first involved in a play of visual decodification, which is then supported by the verbal component of the page. The different colors²³ build a semiotic connection to the idea of diversity. It is surprising, however, that the idea of harmony and friendship among different people, which is well described from a verbal perspective, is destabilized by the image itself. Some stick figures are indeed represented as couples who speak together in a friendly way, but instead of using different colors for the two people involved in the conversation, the same color is used for the single pairs. So one couple is blue, the other couple is red, etc. The reader might understand the image as a contradiction of the verbal text, and as a result consider the values expressed in the text as a sort of utopia. Alternatively, he / she can interpret the figure as a provocation, directly enacted by the producer of the text, who is aware of the gap between the concept expressed in words and the real world.

The presence of negative words like *Hürden* “obstacles” supports this second interpretation of the image described above. These words are used in the same page to describe the project *Essen 2030 Ich mach’ mit!*, which aims to make Essen an attractive and future-looking city. The idea of diversity seems to be a fundamental one, as the reader sees by reading the last section of the page, where there is a list of the award-winners of diversity prizes. Here, the keyword of the text is *Diversity-Kultur* ‘diversity culture’, which is a hybrid compound made of the English word

23 It is interesting that black and grey are not used because of their semiotic meanings, referred respectively to death and moral rigidity (black) and old age (grey) (see Agnello 2013: 38–39, 41).

diversity and the German word *Kultur*. Again, words speak in favor of the positive effects of the diversity and of its importance, as the compound is effectively a union of two languages and two cultures. In another section on the website, the concept of diversity is again emphasized: *Vielfalt als Potential ist ein gelebter Leitgedanke der Universität Duisburg-Essen* ‘The potential of diversity is a central idea lived by the University of Duisburg-Essen’, referencing the third diversity day in June 2013. Core concepts referred to by the statement are *Chancen* ‘opportunities’, *vielfältig* ‘diverse’, *Austausch* ‘exchange’, *Herausforderungen* ‘challenges’, *Projekte* ‘projects’. The university defines itself as a *Universität der Potentiale* ‘university of potential’, referencing its diversity management. The poster explaining this concept (<https://www.uni-due.de/diversity/projektposter_audit.shtml>) contains a definition of diversity for the university. This definition is based on:

A. Two-word or three-word compounds with a positive connotation (*Chancengerechtigkeit* ‘equal opportunities’, *Potenzialentfaltung* ‘development of potential’, *Diversity-Kompetenzentwicklung* ‘competences development according to diversity-principles’).

B. Derived lexemes, which also share a positive connotation (e.g. *Innovationen in Lehre und Forschung* ‘innovation in teaching and in research’, *Öffnung der Hochschule für neue Zielgruppen* ‘university for new target groups’, *Kooperationen und Vernetzung* ‘cooperation and networking’). These words, which are associated with abstract concepts, are supported by more concrete expressions such as *Übersetzung von Formularen des Studierendensekretariats ins Englische* ‘English-translation of the student forms’, which are a minority part in comparison to abstract expressions. The reader of this text must have a good deal of knowledge about specific concepts (e.g. diversity management) to understand the presentation.

4.2 Studying

The term *studying* refers to following aspects in the presentation under analysis:

- A temporal aspect: the activity of studying is intended as a future action (for prospective students), as a present action (for students currently enrolled at the university) and as a past action (for graduates). Utopian ideas have a particular influence on the group of people who are in search of the best university to study at.
- An ethical aspect: as an institution, the university in general is connected to the idea of meritocracy. All people who (can) achieve good grades theoretically have the right to attend. This universal concept of “all people” is related to hypothetical situations: foreign students must have the same opportunities as Germans; female students must have the same chances as male students to earn

scientific degrees in fields such as mathematics, chemistry, and physics, which are typically dominated by men; and students with few financial resources must be given the concrete opportunity to attend.

- A social aspect: University is seen as a unique institution where people can acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities to critically analyze real events, to find viable solutions to problems and use these competences in their future working life. From a social perspective, knowledge, skills and abilities are fundamental, because graduates can contribute to developing society in a good way, if they use their theoretical and practical background for the betterment of the world (i.e. protecting the environment for current and future society).

These three aspects are interrelated and all contribute to create the utopia of “Studying at the University is a right”. The University of Duisburg-Essen is actually an institution that presents itself as open and democratic, with the aim of guaranteeing the opportunity for everyone to study.

Referring to the ethical aspect, the university promotes equality initiatives, such as events inviting women to study engineering, mathematics and similar courses (<<https://www.uni-due.de/abz/mmm/>>). This initiative has a loaded name: *MINT-MIX für Mädchen* “MINT-MIX for girls”, where MINT is an acronym for *Mathe, Ingenieurwissenschaften, Naturwissenschaften, Technik*. This name is written with three different colors: cyclamen, light blue and light green. Light blue and green are the most commonly used color in the website, and these colors represent the idea of sustainability in the field of academic studies. Cyclamen identifies the target group: girls. The distribution of the color has connotative meanings:

- Cyclamen is used for the words MINT and MIX and for the initial letter for the acronym MINT in order to emphasize the integration of female students in courses pre-dominantly attended by male students.
- The other letters in the explanation of MINT are in light blue. The use of color in MATHE, TECHNIK forms a theoretical union of men and women who attend the same courses. The long form of the acronym highlights the first letter in cyclamen to make the first letter more visible to the user. Another possible interpretation of this graphic explanation is that most of the letters are light blue, because most of the students are male (traditionally light blue is coded with male, while pink connotes femininity). According to this second interpretation, the idea of equal opportunities for both genders comprises a utopia.
- The phrase *Für Mädchen* is in light green. The idea of sustainability expressed here is that girls can achieve the same excellence in academic study as their fellow male students, and they can become important professionals in these fields. Light green is also the symbol of female, which is between the words

MINT and MIX. There is a semiotic connection between the symbol and the expression *Für Mädchen*.

‘Equal opportunities between girls and boys’ is repeated several times on the web site²⁴. The MINT-initiative is a project of the *GeCKo*, i.e. the *Gender & Co. Koordinierungsstelle*, a department tasked with coordinating gender initiatives. The main linguistic features used to describe the purposes of *GeCKo* include:

- Use of rhetorical questions and of declarative sentences, which reference stereotypes in a humorous way (e.g. *Jungs als Grundschullehrer – das passt doch gar nicht! Technik ist doch nichts für Mädchen!?! Stimmt doch gar nicht!* ‘Men as primary school teachers – it’s not true! Technology is surely not for girls!?! It’s absolutely not true!’; *Dass diese Aussage schon lange ein “alter Hut” ist, können Mädchen auch in diesem Jahr wieder hautnah an der UDE feststellen.* ‘Also this year girls can see here at the university that this statement has been nothing more than a cliché for a long time now’).
- Use of complex words such as compounds related to the gender equality (e.g. *gendergerechte Studienwahl* ‘gender-sensitive course-choice’).
- Use of the informal personal pronoun *du* ‘you’ to create a context of personal and direct interaction (e.g. *Hier kannst du schnell und unkompliziert herausfinden, welche Projekte dich darin unterstützen können.* ‘Here you can quickly and easily discover which projects can support you’).

The use of the pronoun *du* is a clear sign of a utopian world, which often only exists on the web²⁵. In the reality, all official documents are written with the formal *Sie* pronoun. For example, students who want to apply online read sentences such as *Eine Bewerbung ist erst möglich, wenn Sie Ihr Abiturzeugnis bereits erhalten haben.* ‘You can apply only after you have received your Abitur certificate’ or *Um keine Termine zu verpassen und alle Abläufe im Blick zu haben, drucken Sie sich die Checkliste aus.* ‘In order not to miss important deadlines and have all steps in mind, print out the checklist.’ In addition, the verbal tense is different. In the introductory sections to the application, there are imperative forms and verbal

24 Additional examples can be found in the section *Bildung: gleiche Chancen für alle* ‘Education: Equal opportunities for everyone’, <<https://www.uni-due.de/de/universitaet/chancengleichheit.php>>. In this text, the isotopic sequence is evident in expressions like *eine gerechte Bildung* ‘fair education’, *jedes engagierte Talent* ‘every motivated talent’, *zu einem erfolgreichen Abschluss* ‘to a successful degree’, *unabhängig von Geschlecht, ethnischer oder sozialer Herkunft* ‘regardless of gender, ethnic, or social background’.

25 Students would prefer the use of *du*-forms also in the real academic world in the communication between professors and students (Brambilla 2012).

expressions with a deontic meaning (e.g. *müssen* “must”, *sollen* “must”, *sein + zu + infinitive* “be + to be + participle”). The idea of possibility, which is expressed in the section of gender equality through the modal verb *können* ‘can’ is substituted by the idea of necessity; the idea of necessity must be respected in order to be admitted at the university.

The opportunity for foreign students to apply to the university also belongs to the ethical aspect. Here it is important to appreciate the fact that information is given in both German and English, which caters to an international audience. The reader can also choose between the two languages and read very important details about applying while still living in their home country. Among the information provided, there is advice about financing the costs of studying and living, which is also of interest for German students on a budget. Financing possibilities for German and foreign students are different, but in both cases, there are some aspects emphasized in funding schemes:

- High performance of students.
- Great talent of students.
- Migrant background.

The aim is to support students to complete their studies successfully, and to promote good students by taking into consideration the different backgrounds and needs of the students. According to this view, the student as a person with his needs, problems, abilities etc. is the center of the academic communication. The communication is here very effective, as it describes a world in which strong performances and talent are taken into great consideration. Accordingly, the reader understands that excellent results (together with a difficult background) are the keys to obtaining a scholarship and/or financial support. Again, a utopian world is described here:

4. Mit dem Stipendium werden in diesem Förderzeitraum 336 herausragende Studierende für ihre Leistungen belohnt. Insbesondere leistungsstarken Bildungsaufsteigerinnen und Bildungsaufsteigern wird so eine realistische Chance auf ein erfolgreiches Studium geboten.²⁶ “The grant is for 336 excellent students, who will be rewarded for their performance. In particular, the grant offers educationally ambitious students with the best performance to complete their studies with success.”

The words used here have a positive connotation related to the semantic field of excellence and to the real chance to be successful: *herausragend* “excellent”, *leistungsstark* “with good performance”, *realistisch* “realistic”, and *erfolgreich*

26 <<https://www.uni-due.de/de/marketing/deutschlandstipendium.php>>

“successful”. The number of students who can obtain a scholarship, however, is low when compared to the number of students who attend the university. Indeed, of the 41,160 students, only 336 receive scholarships – a very low percentage. In this section, which should be realistic and based on real data, there is a significant use of optimistic words and expressions:

5. Wir denken in Möglichkeiten statt in Grenzen. ‘We have a fresh way of looking at things.’

6. Wir sind stark in Forschung und Lehre, leben Vielfalt, fördern Potentiale [...]. ‘We are strong in research and teaching, embrace diversity, promote academic potential [...].’

In the examples, there are antonymic expressions (*Möglichkeiten* “possibilities” vs. *Grenzen* “limits”) and the university identifies itself with the positive expression (i.e. “possibilities”) and it builds a sequence of positive expressions in the text. This semantic isotopy²⁷ gives the institution the image of a meritocratic institute, where the abilities of people and not their social or geographical background are taken into consideration. In another section, the idea of educational sustainability is emphasized:

7. Es werden junge Talente aufgebaut, die Region gestärkt und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung übernommen. ‘Young, talented people are supported, the region is developed and social responsibility is taken.’

By reading further sections on the website, the reader is informed that the amount of a grant given by the University is 300€ per month (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/marketing/deutschlandstipendium.php>>). Although the amount is not low, it is not enough for a student to cover all the costs of studying, particularly when we consider that a room in a residence hall costs at least 230€ per month. A student who cannot receive financial support from his / her family must therefore find other financial support. Equal opportunities are simply not guaranteed to all. The university describes itself as one of the most successful German universities in the field of scholarships. This is an objective statement, based on quantitative comparisons and rankings. The utopia is thus present, as explained above. The idealization of the scholarships as a guarantee for talented students is also emphasized in the photography presented in the specific section for the scholarship application (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/marketing/studierende.php>>). The photography has the communicative function of introducing the text, where students can find out about the required information and the prerequisites for the application. In the photograph, there are three students (from left to right: boy,

27 See Heinemann (2000).

girl, boy) who stand in a line holding a tray in their hands with a fork, a spoon, a knife and a paper napkin on top of a place mat. The figure on the place mat has an associative relation with the photography present in all sections of the website: a blue sky with white clouds. It is evident that semantic isotopy is not only produced in the verbal component of the website but also in the graphic component. The relation between photography and text is one of denotation. The photography can be interpreted in two ways:

A. Students stand in a line waiting for the results of their application; and B. The three students have received their scholarships. They now have a specific position in the list and are metaphorically waiting to attend lecturers and learn.

In both interpretations, it is evident that only a few students can receive the scholarship: there is a ranking and not all students with good marks will obtain the scholarship. The importance of the photography for the text is visible in the corresponding section in English (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/marketing/students.php>>). The text is here less informative, as it is semantically reduced, and the photography is different from that in the German section, but it is still extremely communicative. Here, five students (four girls and one boy) are together walking outside, but only one of the students is of a clear non-German ethnic background. The idea of educational sustainability, as expressed in the German version, is abandoned here.

4.3 Eating

Nutrition is a field in which sustainability is a value of great importance (see Crestani, accepted). The presentation of canteens and cafeterias (<<https://www.uni-due.de/de/services/mensen.php>>; <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/gastronomie/>>) is based on schematic descriptions of opening hours, menus and costs. A short description of the buildings where the canteens are located is also offered. The concept of sustainable food is highlighted in the general presentation of the canteens offered by the *Studentenwerk*:

8. Wo dies möglich ist, setzen wir auf ein regionales, saisonales und biologisches Angebot. So verarbeiten wir ausschließlich Bio-Nudeln und Bio-Reis und beziehen ausschließlich Fair-Trade Kaffee, in der Regel auch in Bio-Qualität. ²⁸“When possible, we serve regional, seasonal and organic food. We use organic pasta and rice and we buy exclusively fair-trade coffee, which is usually organic quality.”

28 <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/gastronomie/>>.

In all canteens, attention is paid to products like coffee, pasta and rice, which are certified as organic. The reader can immediately recognize which products on the menu are certified with the logo.

The idea of green is also really emphasized in the cafeterias, for example in the cafeteria *ins Grüne* (<<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/gastronomie/mensen/bistro-insgruene/>>):

9. „insgrüne“- die Duisburger Mensa hält, was der Name verspricht. Die Räume an der Bismarkstraße präsentieren sich lichtdurchflutet und stilvoll im Grundton Grün eingerichtet.²⁹““insgrüne’ – the canteen in Duisburg holds the promises of its name. The rooms in the Bismarkstraße are flooded with light and are rich in style with their light green color.”

The general presentation of cafeterias underlines sustainable aspects through keywords and expressions such as *Bio-Kaffee* “organic coffee”, *aus fairem Handel* “fair-trade goods”, *die Schonung von Natur und Umwelt* “the conservation of nature and the environment”, *eine sorgfältige Müllvermeidung bzw. -verminderung* “proper waste prevention and reduction”, *Mehrwegflaschen* “returnable beverage bottles”. Compounds in the field of sustainable food often use the confix *bio-* as first element or deverbal nouns as second elements to build *Rektionskomposita* (synthetic compounds, see Gaeta 2010 and Crestani 2015b). These compounds are informative and very compact; they substitute entire clauses (e.g. *Müllvermeidung* → Es wird vermieden, Müll zu produzieren) and they help to describe the ideal of sustainable nutrition. The *Studentenwerk* presents itself as a sustainable institution:

10. Das Studierendenwerk Essen Duisburg ist biozertifiziert durch die DE-ÖKO-039-Kontrollstelle. Der Einsatz fair gehandelter Kaffeeprodukte sowie die Berücksichtigung regionaler Anbieter sind für uns selbstverständlich.³⁰“The *Studentenwerk Essen Duisburg* is organically certified by the DE-ÖKO-039-Kontrollstelle. The use of organically produced fair-trade coffee-goods and the consideration of regional farmers are our principles.”

The idea of regional products is one of the principles of sustainable nutrition (see Crestani, accepted) and it is frequently highlighted in the website (e.g. *regionale Lieferanten* “regional suppliers”, *regionale Produzenten* “regional producers”). Other principles include the conservation of the environment (*Umwelt- und Ressourcenschutz*) and recycling methods and recycled products (*Recyclingpapier, Mehrwegflaschen-System*).

Despite paying great attention to the processes, nutrition, in the sense of what food to eat, receives little attention on the website. The lack of information about

29 <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/gastronomie/mensen/bistro-insgruene/>>

30 <<http://studentenwerk.essen-duisburg.de/gastronomie/kundeninformationen/umwelt-und-ressourcenschutz>>

nutrition is utopian in a negative sense because students need to be informed about the best food for their health and for the preservation of the planet. These days, a large number of students are interested in a healthy diet³¹. It also seems ineffective that an informative section about diet is not included in the university presentation.

5. Conclusions

In our paper, we discussed how the concepts of ‘utopia’, ‘sustainability’ and ‘education’ can be analyzed together in the specific communicational context of online presentations. The hypothesis that guided this study was that online presentations of institutions, which are important for specific groups of citizens such as young adults and their families in the case of university websites, are a very good place where utopic ideas and concepts can be expressed. To verify our idea, we concentrated on the website of the University of Duisburg-Essen, a very young institution of higher learning, which had to find effective modes of communication in order to reach a wide audience of users interested in becoming students.

In order to analyze how the institution communicates utopian ideals in their online presentation, we adopted the method of multimodality, using the following principles to orient our study:

- The online presentation is a multimodal object that can be studied as the interrelation of several modes of communication (visual and verbal, visual and non-verbal, visual and acoustic etc.) and of several levels of construction.
- The user of the website is the subject who interprets the meaning of the text using a decodification system in order to discern meaning and give an interpretation of the modes of communication and the levels of construction of the text.
- The act of making meaning is an act that depends on cultural values and on the social conventions present in the text, as well as the values adopted by the user.
- We offered an analysis that considered the different modes of communication and their interrelations. The interrelations can be summarized as follows:

31 See <<http://www.asu-arbeitsmedizin.com/ASU-2008-11/Studie-zur-Ernaehrung-von-Studentinnen-BRTeil-II-Wie-ernaehren-sich-Studentinnen-in-Deutschland,QUIEP TIyNDA3OCZNSUQ9MzAwMTA.html>>. According to a survey conducted among female students in Germany in 2007 about their nutrition habits, the students periodically consume organic products; more than 50% consume fruit, salad and vegetables at least once a day and only few eat fast food meals. Many students (in particular those who are overweight) often consume sweets and snacks. Despite this, the conclusion of the survey is that female students are generally interested in a healthy way of eating.

- Symmetric: the modes of communication are interdependent and they are in a relationship of support with each other. An example is the text on the MINT-MIX project, where the graphic and the verbal parts follow the same principles, with the graphic component emphasizing the verbal component.
- Antonymic: the modes of communication are in opposition. An example is the opportunity for foreign students to apply for a scholarship from the university. They are allowed to apply (as explained in the rules), but the photography contradicts the possible results of the application (there is only one foreign student in the group of five students).
- Scalar: the modes of communications are used to express meanings, which are in increasing degrees of a range. An example is the project of fair education. This value is expressed on the university's page of information for prospective students and it is increasingly emphasized in the different sections and subsections of the website, in both verbal and non-verbal aspects.

The utopian ideals are visible in particular when the modes of communication are in antonymic relation. Utopian communication is also realized with the symmetrical and scalar relations; in order to understand the hidden utopia, the user has to carefully read all sections of the presentation (including external links) to decode the text as a whole.

In conclusion, when it comes to communicating about fairness and sustainability in education, positive words and expressions can be effectively used to create a utopian world. This world exists in the verbal component of the presentation, but it is sometimes 'destroyed' in the graphic component of the website. Two examples of this include:

- The verbal component that speaks about financial support for foreign students, while the photography shows students with blond hair, which is stereotypical for German students.
- The numbers and data about the scholarships are evidence that not all excellent students can be financed.

In other cases, the photography supports the utopian ideals (e.g. the blue sky as a symbol of the absence of pollution and of a good way of life). While photography apparently has characteristics of objectivity and reality, it is actually the result of a process of selecting and structuring the real world (see Brucculeri 2009: 17).

The interaction between verbal and graphic components seems to show the desire of the institution to find a balance between reality and utopia. Utopia is intended as a place to be reached gradually, and with concrete actions.

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Giampietro Gobo

The Care Factor: A Proposal for Improving Equality in Scientific Careers¹



“Usually behind every great man there is a great woman;
but behind a great woman there is always a great domestic servant.”

–Luciana Littizzetto, comedian

In academia, as in other spheres of work, there exist disparities associated with discrimination based on discipline. In academia, for instance, some research

1 I wish to thank Emanuela Abbatecola, Maria Carmela Agodi, Miriam Bait, Marina Marzia Brambilla, Diana Urania Galetta, Chiara Guglielmetti, Mita Marra, Antonella Nappi, Gloria Regonini, Paola Ronfani, Renata Semenza, Silvia Salini and Anna Lisa Tota for comments and suggestions.

topics are considered more mainstream than others, and some research methods more relevant than others. Discrimination also happens in terms of ethnicity and gender, etc. For some of these disparities, there is significant reflection literature written on the topic; but other forms of discrimination have come under less critical scrutiny.

An issue not yet sufficiently explored concerns the relationship between care activities and scientific research, particularly the question of how the former could have an impact on the latter. More specifically, how with increasing care-giving we can have a slowdown in scientific output. Moreover, since the latter is one of the main criteria for hiring or promoting a candidate, it becomes especially important to shed light on this relationship.

This correlation does not, at first, pertain to the theme of the genre, but who (man or woman) is engaged in care (both motherhood and fatherhood). In the younger generations, care activities are further balancing out between the genders, albeit slowly, with men assuming greater responsibilities and demands in the domestic sphere.

However, since they still expect women to be more engaged in the care, this correlation is particularly unfavorable to women. For this reason, practical proposals to reduce inequalities in scientific careers are urgently needed.

1. How is the Scientific Product of an Individual (Currently) Evaluated?

Because publications are an increasingly important criterion for evaluating a candidate who is applying for a job or being considered for a promotion, it is important to carefully analyze the inner mechanisms of the evaluation process. This provides insight into how these evaluative mechanisms tend to discriminate, often unconsciously, against the very people who are most involved in care activities, which (we assume) is the main cause of the slowdown in the production of scientific research. In the following sections, we will analyze this evaluation process.

Measurement?

Usually the “measurement” of the scientific production refers to the output of an individual. In fact, measurement is an evaluative operation allowed only

- a. with variables that have *continuous* properties (e.g. time, weight, height, income, age etc.); and
- b. where there is a *measurement* unit (based on a predetermined amount or size, which is conventionally accepted).

Only these two requirements, which must both be present, allow for measurement to be used (see Marradi 1981, 1990 for a discussion).

Instead, the evaluation of scientific production rests on other procedures or methods, including counting, classification and reading (the content of a publication). None of these methods, however, are measurements (see Tab. 1).

Tab. 1: Three procedures used in the evaluation of scientific products

Counting	Classifying (not countable)	Reading (the content of the scientific product)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • h-index (based on the number of quotations) • number of publications (above or below the median) • Impact Factor of the journals in which the article was published • number of readers and downloads for a publication • number of tags, bookmarks, comments, tweets or blog posts to assess the impact of authors or publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the language (preferably English) in which s/he published • if it is books or articles, or chapters (of books) • whether published with editors (in the case of publications on journals) • taxonomy of the journals (top, average, bottom journals, with preference for the top ones...) • taxonomy of publishers (with preference for prestigious ones...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thorough reading • fast reading • skimming

The contemporary tragedy is that counting and classifying are rapidly replacing reading, which should be the main evaluative method used. In other words, how do I evaluate an article if I have not previously read it? How can I assess the scientific output of an individual if I have not read their work? Bibliometric and classificatory *nouvelle vague* has invented shortcuts: just a few counts and classifications, and you are done. In this way, two (useful but surely) peripheral modes that do not focus on the content of a publication have now become the main evaluative procedures. This results in a loss of the possibility to evaluate the **merit** of a publication².

2 This is precisely the criticism contained in the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), drawn up by a group of editors and publishers of scientific journals, gathered in San Francisco, California, on December 16, 2012 at the annual meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB). Since then, this declaration has been signed

The situation is such that evaluators and recruiters are often flooded with an avalanche of publications that must be *evaluated in a short time* (an oxymoron!) in the midst of all the many other things a scientist has to do. The result is that candidates' scientific publications are not read closely, except for a few cases, with evaluators only skimming to search for the soundness of scholarship. This is, in short, a humiliating practice for the authors of these publications.

2. Monitoring or Evaluating?

This reflection on the (current) assessment practices of the scientific research published by a candidate is that perhaps what evaluators and recruiters are doing is not a genuine evaluation, even if the intent is honest. In fact, evaluation should be “a cognitive activity [that] aims to provide a judgement of an action (or set of coordinated actions) performed intentionally/or being undertaken, designed to produce external effects, using the tools of the social sciences, according to strict and codified procedures” (Palumbo 2001: 59). If we accept this definition in the context of the evaluators' scientific community, counting and classifying (the first two procedures) should not be fully included in the evaluation because the result of these methods is not (subjective) judgment, but simple data that could be provided by any person (including an administrator!) who has been given instructions and a spreadsheet for ranking criteria like journal quality or publisher ranking. In the third method of reading, however, the expert, whether a scientist in the discipline or research area is indispensable to judge, discern, identify, and understand the content of the publication.

Unlike the first two procedures, there is little evaluation and much **monitoring**. The latter, like basic research, applied research (Palumbo 2001: 64), auditing (Bezzi 2001: 65, 67), benchmarking, certifying, and social budgeting, is **not** evaluation. Indeed Bezzi (2001: 66) states that monitoring is the opposite of evaluating, which includes the tasks of monitoring and auditing, but is not limited to them.

by hundreds of organizations (scientific journals and associations) and thousands of scholars. Joining DORA commits to supporting the adoption of scientifically correct research practices evaluation. DORA contains 18 recommendations addressed to the different actors of the research world: funding agencies, institutions, publishers, organizations producing bibliometric data and individual researchers. One of them insists on eliminating the use of metrics related to journals – like Impact Factor – for funding, recruitment and promotions (or) as a surrogate measure of the quality, or to evaluate the contribution of the individual scientist, or decisions relating to recruitment, promotion and funding.

Evaluation goes further because it adds critical judgment. Counting and classifying can therefore only be a pre-condition of the evaluation, an initial screening and not an assessment itself.

3. Against Abstractive Evaluation: Desperately Seeking Society

The two procedures (that have become dominant in the evaluation of scientific products) fall into an abstracted evaluation pattern, divorced from the social dynamics, epistemologically naive, politically inexperienced and not reflective. This pattern, ostensibly rational and transparent, does not take into account how indicators are (socially) constructed, and which representations, mental models and tacit knowledge are embedded in them.

What Makes a Person a Good Researcher: A Problem of Conceptualization

All methodological textbooks teach that in order to conduct research, it is first necessary to conceptualize the phenomenon, i.e. defining the so-called 'object of research'. One cannot start researching family or poverty, for instance, without first defining what a family is (and we know how definitions are controversial and change over time) or what poverty is. In other words, what criteria I adopt include that particular relationship between people in the category of 'family', or what requirements a person must have to be defined as poor.

The same applies when it comes to evaluating a researcher. **Before** evaluating a researcher, you must conceptualize who (or what) is a good researcher. **Before** choosing performance indicators, we should discuss what the attributes (according to constructivism) or properties/characteristics (following realism) of the concept of 'good researcher' (the so-called 'intention') are. Instead, the common practice is actually moving in reverse: indicators are chosen in a confused, abstract and naïve way without reflecting on what is behind these cognitive tools or what their cultural background is. This information is then used to form the concept of what a good researcher is.

An Evaluation Without...Society

Existing tools for the assessment of scientific production measure people as if they were impersonal databases, not social entities. These tools forget that they are people with biographies and social trajectories etc. It is as if the authors and their products belong to two separate and unconnected worlds. A (welcome) opposite tendency is represented by the think tank New Economics Foundation (Nef), a

group of 50 economists famous for bringing into the agenda of the G7 and G8 issues such as international debt, whose motto is (significantly): “Economics as if people and the planet mattered.”

Starting from the assumption (therefore theory) that there should be a direct correspondence between what we are paid and the value our work generates for society, Eilis Lawlor, Helen Kersley and Susan Steed (the authors of the Nef report) calculated the economic value of six different jobs, three paid very well and three very poorly. As the authors explain in the introduction:

We take a new approach to looking at the value of work. We go beyond how much different professions are paid to look at what they contribute to society. We use some of the principles and valuation techniques of Social Return on Investment analysis to quantify the social, environmental and economic value that these roles produce – or in some cases undermine. (4)

Following the criterion of linking salaries to the well-being that a job brings to the community, Nef concludes that bankers abandon society and cause damage to the global economy. Under this logic, when comparing a garbage collector to a tax affairs lawyer, the former contributes with his work to the health of the environment through the recycling of garbage, while the second harms society because he comes up with schemes to enable his clients to pay fewer taxes. So, when looking at the social contribution of their job, it turns out that the kinds of jobs that are paid less are actually the most useful to society.

This example shows how the assessment is primarily a social and political practice, guided by certain “theory-driven”, cultural assumptions (whether tacit or explicit) and by particular mental models of what makes (in the case of scientific careers assessment) a good researcher. It is not a simple observation based on neutral formats and criteria. As Chen and Rossi (1981, 1989), Chen (1990), Weiss (1995, 1997), Pawson and Tilley (1997) and many others have long pointed out, assessment is only secondarily a technical issue.

4. The Tacit Assumptions of the Academic Evaluation: the Hidden Cultural Model

Given that evaluation is primarily a theoretical activity, it is worth trying to explore the main cultural assumptions (tacit and/or explicit) and the particular mental model of what makes a good researcher. In academic common sense, an ideal researcher is one who:

- Teaches a lot and delivers high-quality teaching.
- Publishes extensively, particularly scholarly or prestigious publications, but at least peer-reviewed articles and books in innovative areas of research.
- Conducts good research.
- Wins national and international grants.
- Participates in national and international conferences.
- Accepts institutional duties.
- Participates in the intellectual life of the department in the form of seminars, conferences, etc.

Any academic would subscribe to the responsibilities outlined on this list (Keith and Moore 1995; Pescosolido and Aminzade 1999; Golde and Walker 2006; Sweitzer 2009).

Society Enters Evaluation: Assessment as If People Mattered

Ask ourselves now: who could perform better (equal intelligence) in all of these areas? A sociologically plausible ranking would be:

1. Single
2. Person with partner, without children
3. Person with partner, with 1 child
4. Person with partner, with 2 children
5. Person with partner, with 3 children
6. etc.

Intervening social factors (like having to care for a sick or disabled person, having a partner away for work, having the support of grandparents, or having access to financial resources to pay for a babysitter etc.) must be left out of consideration in this case because otherwise it becomes difficult to manage the complexity and evaluate it with standardized instruments.

Obviously, we are talking about people of both genders here, not men or women in particular. For the moment, gender does not come into play. And, when it does, it will make the evaluation even more social. If this ranking is sociologically plausible (and we will soon see how it is) other questions arise:

- What is the cultural model underlying these evaluation criteria?
- What tacit assumptions are embedded in it?
- What is the underlying profile?
- Maybe that associated with Nobel Prize winner Rita Levi Montalcini (single) or the famous astrophysicist Margherita Hack (partner, no children)?

- Is it reasonable to assume that researchers who have had children have also experienced a drop in scientific production, defined as reduced capacity to conduct research and guarantee an institutional presence?

Female Nobel Prize Winners

An interesting example to test this hypothesis is using the Nobel Prize award, particularly because only a few women have been awarded the Nobel Prize (see Cole 1987, Wade 2002). In fact, the Nobel Prize has only been awarded to women 47 times between 1901 and 2014 (only one woman, Marie Curie, has been honored twice). During this same period, 814 men were awarded Nobel Prizes. Women's creativity is clearly underrepresented in science.

But even more interesting for our hypothesis is the fact that many of these women did not have children (Stemwedel 2009). By comparing the 11 female Nobel laureates in physics, chemistry and physiology/medicine between 1901 and 2006 with 37 males who received the Nobel Prize in the same area one year prior and one year after them, it was found "that female Nobel laureates were significantly less likely to marry and have children. When female laureates had children, they had significantly fewer children than male laureates. Female laureates also had fewer publications than their male counterparts" (Charyton, Elliott, Rahman, Woodard and Dedios 2011: 203). These authors conclude that eminent women scientists tend to choose the pursuit of scientific discovery over starting families more frequently than prestigious male scientists.

If this were to hold true for the vast majority of women working in the academy, would it be reasonable for women to ask for a correction, a weight, an adjustment to the current assessment procedures that takes into account the number of children and the demands of care giving?

5. The International Context and Southern Europe

Growing literature on the topic and other research shows that at least in Southern and Eastern Europe, fathers and mothers are not yet equal in their performance.

Weekly Hours

Among Europeans, Greeks work the most of all countries, with an average of 42.2 hours per week (British Office for National Statistics, 2012). The Germans, on the other hand, work only 35.6 hours. These two countries are at opposite ends of the current crisis in Europe. The hours worked and economic performance seem to be upside-down, with the hardest workers in Greece, and almost 'lazy' workers in

Germany. In Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, people also work on average more than 40 hours per week. Denmark is even more extreme than Germany, at not even 34 hours, and Scandinavian countries in general work less than the classic 40-hour week.

One explanation for this could be the difference in productivity: Germany is dominated by well-organized companies and modern technologies, financial opportunities, supply chains and advanced distribution, and low corruption. At the other extreme is Greece, where the people work longer with less achieved. In 2012, in a measure of productivity in the European Union, Germany was at 123.7, while Greece landed at 76.3.

It must be acknowledged that it is not the number of hours worked that creates wealth and efficiency. We must understand why in many countries, workers but especially managers stay so long at the office, while women tend to concentrate their presence at work in order to take care of other domestic and family responsibilities. The reason behind this typically male behavior is that many companies' people construct their career through relationships instead of on merit alone. Staying late in the office creates solidarity, especially among male workers because most of the women have already gone home. And in organizations where you advance through cliques, membership and loyalty are decisive factors. This is not true everywhere. But certainly at companies where workers put in long workdays are not necessarily focused on quality and productivity. Taino (2012) reports some statements of Anglophone managers: "When the clock strikes five, the team goes home," says Max Cameron, CEO of Big Bang Technology, a hi-tech Canadian company "I tell everyone that the game is over and they lost". Cameron believes that the mentality of the hero who sacrifices himself for the company is highly damaging to the company. On the one hand it leads to burnout, a mental disorder of those who work under stress for too long. On the other it creates an environment where no one can become a leader without sacrificing his life, who then cannot be promoted even if s/he has the qualities to be so. As Cameron says, this "erodes the leadership".

Barry Sherman, the CEO of the American company Pep Productivity Solutions, says that the non-economic reasons why someone works overtime are twofold: "The first is that s/he does not want to go home and the second is that s/he does not know how to work effectively" (Taino 2012). People who work overtime probably do it to please their boss and advance in their career, but also because the external environment permits it. In Sweden, for example, staying at the office beyond the typical end of the workday is considered objectionable from the point of view of society; it is seen as a selfish choice and suggests that that person has no interest

in others or the outside world, beginning with the family. This cultural belief is so dominant that only 1 percent of Swedes work more than 50 hours per week (OECD 2012) and overall men on average devote 177 minutes per day to cooking, washing and caring for children, compared to 249 minutes for women. In Italy, however, men spend 103 minutes for activities related to the family compared with 326 minutes for women. Career and social relations both inside and outside the office, therefore, explain many of the reasons for overtime.

In 2002 in Sweden, the Toyota company in Gothenburg, the second largest city in the country, switched to a six-hour working day, resulting in happier employees (in a country where winter depression affects people more than elsewhere), a lower rate of turnover and an increase in profits. This experience is also expanding in other companies in Sweden, where many employees have set themselves the goal of accomplishing more work in a shorter amount of time so they can have more time to devote to their personal lives. Filimundus, an application developer company based in Stockholm, also introduced six-hour days in 2001. “The eight working hours are not as effective as you think,” says Linus Felds, CEO of the company. “To remain fixed on the same work for eight hours is difficult. To do that, we usually intersperse work with breaks”.

Japan is a country where merit is poorly rewarded and networks of relations prevail, and where there are still high barriers between male and female workers. According to the trade unions, on average, one supervisor out of ten leaves the office after 11 pm, and 84 percent of workers generally work beyond the established working hours. To this point, Japanese has the word *karoshi*, which means death from being overworked. Similar situations in which workers stay at the office until the boss leaves are seen in South Korea and Singapore. Then there are those who work too much, leading to organizational dysfunction. In this case, the problem is serious for the company; it may be getting lots of overtime from its employees, but the trade-off is quality and creativity. There are also serious problems for workers: a 2012 study at the Institute for Health and Employment of Finland discovered that those who regularly work more than the classic eight hours per day had a 40–80 percent increased risk of having heart problems and ran a greater risk of developing dementia due to “prolonged exposure to stress” says Marianna Virtanen, who led the research.

Productivity and Prolongation of Working Hours: Two Variables... Inversely Proportional

A comparative analysis of dozens of companies commissioned in 2014 by the Californian company Seagate Technology reveals that managers and employees

waste a good deal of time each day sending and replying to emails and participating in meetings. They “really” only work a few hours, and yet the time is never enough.

In one American multinational, for example, employees spend on average 20 hours per week in meetings and send or receive 3700 emails per year. A typical manager of a company this size “consumes” 400 hours a week of its employees’ time in email correspondence and meetings. “The meetings are frequently the realm of multi-tasking,” quips an expert, “people spend their time writing messages on their mobile phones, in practice not even listen[ing] to what others say” (Franceschini 2014). In addition, meetings almost always last too long: when a meeting exceeds 90 minutes, attention wanes and participants lose sense of the meeting objectives. These bad practices are especially detrimental to the careers of people who have very tight timelines at work due to their child-care commitments.

The Double Burden

In the 1970s, the first reflections on the concept of “double presence” (Balbo 1978) or “double burden” “double day”, “double duty”, “second shift” (Hochschild and Machung 1990) appeared. These expressions indicate the dual roles shouldered by women: public and private, reproductive in the family and productive in society. Under this concept, a woman is squeezed between her dual responsibilities both to the family and to her independence, represented by the work, which has a negative impact on her. This phenomenon is found in all companies and continents, naturally in different contexts and intensities. In fact, men’s contribution, in order to alleviate double burden, is understood as an option for most couples, even those who share family responsibilities equally...the male role in the allocation of family work is limited to a minimum necessary assistance (Jana 2011: 176–177).

6. Social Policies to Reduce Gender Inequalities

Worldwide since the late 1970s, there have been numerous public policies launched in favor of gender equality. There are many different policies, some of which are potentially complementary, others ideologically incompatible due to the distinct cultural and theoretical perspectives that guide them. Let us describe these policies briefly (for more see Marra 2014). The first group of policies is focused on promoting affirmative action. First borne in the United States, they aim to overcome specific inequalities between men and women, such as instituting quotas for the boards of listed companies or universities, which aims to ensure the autonomy of women not only in terms of social distress but also (and especially)

in the higher levels of the socio-economic and political-institutional organization of an economically advanced democracy (Shalev 2008; Marra 2014).

In contrast, in continental Europe policies in favor of women have resorted to social protection (i.e. services provided by the institutions of the welfare state, monetary transfers as maternity or illness allowances, retirement etc.) rather than the opportunities for emancipation and economic growth that the labor market could offer.

According to this second approach, it is necessary to remove “the unequal division of extra-work duties and care-giving, the inadequateness of reconciliation services (whether public or private) and the resistance by enterprises and public administrations to rethink the models of work organization” (Marra 2014).

A third group of public policies appeared in the middle of the 1990s, brought about by the European Union and international organizations. It refers to the approach known as gender mainstreaming, which originated in Northern Europe (Rubery 2002; Verloo 2005; Gornick and Meyers 2008; Knijn and Smit 2009). It argues that, since there is not a biological relationship between gender and social roles and responsibilities, the existing differences between the genders can be filled in order to make the tasks in the two main social spheres of work and family interchangeable and assimilable. This mutual replaceability would allow for the development of a more egalitarian society. According to this approach, it is necessary to remove “the unequal division of extra-work duty and care, the inadequateness of the reconciliation services (whether public or private) and the resistance of enterprises and governments to rethink the models of work organization” (Marra 2014).

Finally, a fourth group of proposals refers to more purely feminist approaches (Pillow 2002; Sielbeck-Bowen et al. 2002) that are sometimes in conflict with the gender approach, which is accused of promoting an unconscious acceptance of the capitalist model of production, tacitly embodied in the public policies they propose. Instead, feminist scholars recognize the importance of caregiving, social reproduction, and appreciate the differences women make in lifestyle choices. For them, the differences between and within genders are irreducible and an asset to society, a resource to respect and promote balancing the pressures to homologation embodied in the social organization of the most advanced economies (Marra 2014).

These four approaches are often difficult to reconcile, so much so, in fact, that it has been suggested to move beyond the feminist and gender-based approaches (Marra 2014). Let us take an illustrative example: in order to combine work with caring for young children, a society may enact different public policies including

increasing available places in kindergartens and nursery schools; providing monetary support and contributions to help families who decide to send their children to these institutions; reducing school fees; and providing supplementary payments to cover the costs of babysitting or creating other services.

However, this logic is very functional within a model of capitalist production. What if a parent prefers not to make use of daycares or babysitters during a child's first three years of life? In any case, what is better for a child than to spend the first years of life in close contact with (at least) one parent? Why impose institutionalization from the very first years of life for an infant? Why entrust their education to babysitters who often come from countries with highly sexist cultural models? Why abdicate our own educational tasks to grandparents or other relatives, who perhaps do not share the same educational models as those the parents wish their children to have? Due to these reasons, the balance of the burden of responsibility for family care through new welfare benefits and flexible forms of work organization cannot be tailored to suit everyone. A much better approach is the increasing number of colleges and universities that have instituted (over the last decade) a variety of policies for new parents including tenure clock extensions, reductions in teaching duties, and parental leave, to name just a few (Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012).

However, greater equality between men and women would probably be achieved if the tasks of care were equally distributed between genders. Unfortunately, this is (still) not a reality for most couples. Therefore, mother-scientists can hardly compete, in terms of scientific production (journalistic), with their male colleagues, whether or not they are themselves fathers. And, often, these women cannot make it.

Can We Think of Something Faster?

Several studies (Barclay and Lupton 1999; Harrington, Van Deusen and Humbert 2011; Miller 2011; Jana 2011; Hook and Wolfe 2013; Kaufman and Bernhardt 2014; Rehel 2014, Pizzorno, Benozzo, Fina, Sabato and Scopesi 2014) show that the traditional division of gender roles in child rearing is changing. A new model is emerging in which there is greater equality in managing a couple's double careers: more and more fathers participate in family life and are involved in care-giving activities (Marotte, Reynolds and Savarese 2011). In addition, social and conciliation policies (Marra 2012), which help to rebalance care-giving activities between gender roles, are increasing. This is seen, for instance, in the increase of flexible regulation of work hours both for men and women; the increase and improvement of health services; and better reconciliation practices for women and men in

businesses, trade unions and at the state level in civil society (see Gasauka 2011). However, these changes are slow and the effects of these policies take decades to manifest themselves.

Instead of waiting for these effects to take root, could we immediately introduce some correctives to reduce (at least partially) the existing inequality, particularly in the scientific production of the mothers, which (as we have seen) is often the first criterion used to evaluate a scientist or academic professional?

7. For a Care-Sensitive (and Mother-Sensitive) Assessment

If care-giving results in a slowdown of scientific production, then we need an evaluation practice that takes this into account. However, because men and women currently do not participate equally in the child-rearing and family responsibilities, it becomes necessary that the assessment should be geared more towards the mothers. If men and women are different (and often unequal) in society, we cannot assume that the effects of this diversity (and inequality) are simply suspended when we turn to scientific production. The same applies to mothers. There is however currently little attention given towards providing a differentiated assessment of scientific production, which essentially assumes that men and women, fathers and mothers, are or should be equal.

Unfortunately, for Mothers ... Little Data

Researchers who compare the scientific output between men and women to see if there is a real difference rarely report whether these women under study have children. There is little academic data that includes this information and has the related variable that would be useful for a more accurate assessment.

In fact, when it comes to scientific output, it does not seem reasonable to hypothesize differences between men and women if both are childless. Instead, the discussion would become more interesting if we could ascertain whether children (in addition to illness, providing care for parents, lack of livelihood etc. which here we do not consider) are a possible and important cause of the slowdown in scientific output and contribute to difficulties in doing research and participating in the institutional life of the department, conferences etc. which, again, we do not consider here. Currently there are many studies conducted in different countries which show that child rearing is still strongly attributed to the mothers.

Unfortunately, current research and comparisons rarely outsource this data and therefore do not help us to understand whether children have an impact on women's scientific production. For example, Tower, Plummer and Ridgewell

(2007) conducted a study on six of the top journals in the world, as rated by the 2006 Thompson ISI index. They chose two for each category: two in science (*Science* and *Cancer Journal for Clinicians*), two in business (*Academy of Management Review* and *Quarterly Journal of Economics*) and two in the social sciences (*Archive of General Psychiatry* and *Harvard Law Review*). Leaving aside the questionability of this selection (namely, I am not sure how many social scientists know of the existence of the last two journals), they found no difference in productivity when the percentage of the women participating in the academic work force is factored in: women comprised 30–35 percent of participation rates in academic university positions and represented almost 30 percent of the authors in the top-tiered journals. In addition, they did not find any significantly statistical difference in journal Impact Factor ratings between women and men. This is an example of abstractive statistical analyses, which are totally decontextualized. Because their analysis only covers six top journals, the generalizability of these results should be taken cautiously, and the authors do not check whether those women have children. They only take into consideration the (abstract) variable of gender without providing any contextual analysis to understand the biography of these women and men (e.g. age, marital status, children, etc.). The same problems are to be found in the studies by Rothausen-Vange, Marler and Wright (2005) and Dasaratha, Raghunandam, Logan and Barkman (1997).

So there only remains the option of looking at comparative research between men and women, and then weighing these results using a virtual or “thought experiment” (*Gedankenexperiment*) with the use of “counterfactual” conditionals (Van Dijk 1977: 79–81), a type of research used in economics, physics, cognitive sciences, history, etc. (see Gobo 2008: 151–152).

Women’s Scholarly Productivity

Much of the literature on work and family issues in academia suggests that women with children have a harder time maintaining an ideal career because of the difficulty of combining work and family activities, both of which are regarded as “greedy institutions” (Hochschild 1975). Women “are expected to (and often do) take on more child-rearing and housework responsibilities. If separated or divorced, women are more likely to be the custodial parent. There is considerable literature that women academics are hampered in their efforts to have an ideal career” (Spalter-Roth and Van Vooren 2012). According to a report from the Committee on the Status of Women in Sociology (2004): “Women may face serious disadvantages. Careers often are built ... around a model of a worker who has no competing responsibilities to work and is able to devote full attention to (usually

his) professional life. Persons who do not conform to this pattern of the unencumbered worker will be disadvantaged in achieving success within the profession”.

In a study of doctoral students at the University of California, over 70 percent reported that they considered academic careers in universities unfriendly to family life (Mason 2012). Women with children “may be unable to regularly stay late to muse over intellectual questions with colleagues at the office or a local pub, but instead may have to pick up children from school or daycare or return home to prepare dinner” (Spalter-Roth and Van Vooren 2012). In addition, women may sometimes need to bring the baby to class with them (Kennelly and Spalter-Roth 2006).

Research suggests that parenting within the academy is a gendered phenomenon. Mason and Goulden’s (2002) widely-cited study of a nationally representative sample of PhD recipients between 1973–1999 finds that raising children, especially early in one’s academic career, has a negative effect on women’s careers. However, this was not true for men. Women who have children are more likely than men with children to have marginal or alternative careers.

However, the research on women’s scientific productivity offers other controversial results, which are not always easy to interpret. Kyvik (1990) argues, on one hand, that women become more productive when the children get older, because the children are more independent and less in need of care. In the same article, amazingly enough, Kyvik also states that both men and women, married and divorced people are more productive than singles.

The latter statements are not credible in the light of the the former statements. For example, the following: women with children are more productive than women without children (Kyvik 1990). These statistics are out of context, without accounting for social dynamics. In other words, it would be important to know: who are those women with children? How many children do they have? Do they have domestic help? To which social class do they belong? Without this information, interpretation appears shaky.

According to the study by Long, Allison and McGinnis (1993), although men and women start out as assistant professors with similar levels of productivity, after six years men have significantly more publications. Kyvik and Teigen (1996) observe that in the span 1989–1991 (of their database), men had published an average of 6.9 articles, while women had only published 5.6 (20 percent less). During the same period (1989–1991), male faculty members under age 40 published twice as many article equivalents than their female counterparts, whereas for faculty over age 40 the difference is small (10–15 percent) (Kyvik and Teigen 1996).

From this research, some clarity begins to emerge on the differences between men and women.

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) conducted a longitudinal study, interviewing over 100 women who are both professors and mothers, examining how they navigated their professional lives at different career stages. They studied how tenure-track women faculty members managed work and family in their early careers (pre-tenure), when their children were young (under the age of five), and then again in mid-career (post-tenure) when their children were older. The findings suggest that family plays a role in how people develop in their academic careers, just as careers play a role in how people evolve within their family.

Women and Bibliometric: What Happened in Italy?

In 2012, in Italy, the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University System and Research (ANVUR) settled the minimum requirements to become a full professor with a ministerial decree. Shortly after, Corsi and Zacchia (2013) did a simulation by applying the ANVUR's bibliometric 'recipe' to the scientific output of female economists (full faculty members as well as potential candidates for promotion to full professor), to see how many of them satisfied the criteria established by the ANVUR. The results were surprising.

If we look at the median number of journal articles and book chapters, out of a total of 301 female economists (including 110 associate professors) only 22 percent of lecturers and associate professors satisfied the first requirement, which had a median equal to or greater than 8. Unlike for men, the percentage of success was 35 percent. If we look at the median number of books published, only 3.6 percent of female lecturers and associate professors had published at least one monograph over the past decade. In this case, the percentage achieved by males was higher than or equal to 9 percent.

Finally, if we monitor the median number of publications in top journals, the criterion of excellence of the economic disciplines SECS-P01/P06 ranges from 0 (in science of finance, economic history, history of economic thought) to 6 publications (Econometrics) in ten years. Although this was poor coverage of the top journals in the Econlit database, only 26 percent of female economists had at least one publication in the past decade included in the list of the requirements of "excellence": specifically, 25 percent of associate professors and 27 percent of lecturers. In this case, the gender gap was more pronounced because about 90 percent of men had at least one article in the last ten years published a top journal.

Causes of Gender Disparities in Academic Publishing

In literature, the underproduction of academic women in research outcomes has been traced to the following root causes:

- Women and men tend to collaborate with co-authors of the same sex; because there are relatively few women in faculties, women have more difficulties finding co-authors (Ashcroft, Bigger and Coates 1996; Suito, Mecom and Feld 2001; Bentley 2003).
- Females are more likely to work in non-tenure track, part-time and temporary positions, or work at teaching colleges, leaving less time for research and publishing (Dasaratha Raghunandam, Logan and Barkman 1997; Mathews and Andersen 2001; Robinson 2006), more involved in service activities at the expense of research (Dasaratha, Raghunandam, Logan and Barkman 1997; Maske, Durden and Gaynor 2003; Corley and Gaughan 2005; Robinson 2006) and disadvantaged by family responsibilities. Men spend more time at the university and less time at home, even among married faculty, especially during child-rearing years (Mathews and Andersen 2001; Bentley 2003; Suito, Mecom and Feld 2001).

These factors are slowly changing. However, change is happening gradually, and social and cultural changes are not easily predictable. Therefore, it is necessary to do something now.

8. Contextualizing Indicators (and Consequently Factors and Indices)

To accelerate the achievement of equality in scientific careers, it is necessary to adopt different criteria for evaluating CVs, particularly for scientific output. If, as the literature has documented, men and women indeed face different realities (and diversity management is now a reality), it is not clear why they should be treated as equal.

To this end, the proposals can be various and diverse. If a candidate is strongly committed to child-rearing, their scientific production could be evaluated in the context of how many children they have³. That the weighting can be reasonable

3 Obviously taking into consideration that the number of children owns cardinal properties only apparently: in fact three children are not 3 times 1 son. Again social dynamics should be taken into account, because the burden of caring for three children depends on many factors: whether there are twins, how many years apart the children

is testified by the practice (now widely accepted and published) of normalizing the scientific production for the age of the candidate. So we can assume different remedies (even standardized as weights, corrective coefficients, adjustments, normalization etc.) that take into account the social dynamics and inequalities on behalf of those engaged in activities of care, in order to better assess their scientific production. For example, this could take the form of the following methods:

1. To normalize, to attribute a score, an additive weighting etc. to those who have children.
2. To give priority to the quality of publications, rather than quantity. Candidates could indicate three publications they consider their best, their most innovative, etc. and the assessment will be conducted on those only. So at least the referees would read them, which they do not do when they receive 20 publications.
3. To give space on the CV to quality management (practical skills, multi-tasking, negotiation skills, ability to reconcile different commitments etc.) that come from playing a role of a mother/father strongly present in the family (see 11).
4. To make a multidimensional assessment of research (see Tucci, Fontani and Ferrini 2010).

The Multidimensional Assessment of Research: The R Factor

In proposing a multidimensional evaluation of research, Economists Tucci, Fontani and Ferrini start from two very “social” assumptions (2010: 107):

1. The publication of articles is only one aspect, albeit an important one, of a researcher’s scientific activity;
2. There are a number of activities, not always visible (and not always transformed into articles and citations), which nonetheless contribute to scientific progress.

To take better account of these two assumptions, they construct what they call the “index R-factor”, which consists, in turn, of the following sub-indices:

- Articles published in journals
- Monographs and essays
- Grey literature
- Coordination activities (conferences, research groups, coordination, doctoral classes, theses supervision)
- Dissemination activities (seminars, conferences etc.)

are from each other, etc. This is why when society also enters into the equation, mathematics will be (welcome, but) always too late.

- Type activities publishing (journal editor, board member etc.)
- Administrative activities (dean, chair, coordinator, director of research centers).

Although not mentioned by the authors, additional information could also be included:

- Number of teaching hours
- Annual number of exams
- Number of theses and dissertations supervised.

As we can see, the term “evaluation” (attributed to this proposal) is very stretched, being nothing less (and no more) than a complex monitoring. However, the proposal looks very interesting and fruitful. In addition to these indices, a “care-factor index” would also be included, built on:

- Number of children
- Age of children
- Health status of children.

While taking into consideration other indices (such as parental capital, economic capital, etc.), even if significant, it could be complicated.

9. The C Weighting and Its “Enemies”: Men and Women

Although there is broad consensus on the need to balance parental roles, when we move to operationalize this need through technical proposals, various opposing claims arise. The main “enemies” of the C weighting are primarily men (especially in the Latin countries, where men are generally more reluctant to split care practices with their partner) who reductively see this policy as an exclusive advantage for women. In fact, it is difficult to make it clear to men that this policy could also be applied to a father who decides to spend more time with children and family. It is no coincidence that, although in many countries there are rules allowing fathers to take advantage of parental leave (for child-rearing), requests for such leave are relatively rare: many men are ashamed to express this desire and prefer to give up the benefit rather than be exposed to jokes and macho criticism by males (and perhaps also by some female colleagues).

A second aspect concerns competition between universities: if the goal of a university is to maximize its results, it will tend to recruit candidates who publish more, do more research, have more education, are more institutionally present etc. Why should it hire or promote career advancement for those who are probably less productive? However, this type of reasoning (however widespread it may be) is based on limited rationality, unable to think globally, because ultimately the

universities stand on (both economically and educationally) students. Moreover, the children of today could be the students of tomorrow. If for someone the reproduction of the species cannot be a positive value for the community (therefore as such not be positively evaluated), the fact remains that someone has to take responsibility for this task. Of course, we can decide to discourage reproductive activity among scientists and delegate it to the unemployed, the poor, migrants etc. However this (aberrant) plan should be explicit, and not tacitly activated in recruiting practices.

It may seem paradoxical, but there are already several generations of women in front of the C factor (as they still are or have been for years due to the affirmative action). One such example is the “wonder women”, who were famous 1940s comic characters. These mothers who spent their lives doing somersaults balancing work and family and in the face of enormous personal sacrifices “made it”, and became professors. They did not believe that having children would make them less productive. Indeed, they thought that if they made it, then other women would too, entering into a macho loop that damages younger generations of women (many of whom have raised the age of motherhood or chose not to procreate). Therefore, they believe that mothers do not need affirmative actions to win the men’s competition.

10. Conclusions

Several research studies on care-giving highlight how it has had an impact on a scientist or academic’s productivity, causing a related slowdown. The latter could prove to be detrimental when the candidate takes part in recruiting or promotion processes, as the number of publications is often used as an important criterion in evaluation.

Reconciliation policies are certainly a useful tool to help dilute this effect. It is also important to promote family-friendly cultures, environments and workplaces. Institutions of higher education are increasingly recognizing that being family friendly is an asset in terms of recruiting and retaining top faculty members (Evans and Grant 2008; Ward and Wolf-Wendel 2012; Mason, Wolfinger and Goulden 2013). However, they require social and cultural changes that are (unfortunately) not immediate. So practical proposals in the short and medium term to reduce inequalities in scientific careers are urgently needed. Affirmative action examples include company laws in which one third of the members of boards of directors of listed companies and publicly owned corporations must be women. There are also short and medium-term affirmative action policies (e.g. valid for 10 years) within which it is hoped to achieve the goal of removing the obstacles that have so far

limited women's access to leadership roles, encouraging a process of cultural renewal in support for greater meritocracy and growth opportunities. Through these actions thousands of women had (and continue to have) the opportunity to take on leadership roles. That said, it would not hurt to extend this rule to academic staff such as the university senate and the boards of directors of the university.

One of these affirmative action policies in the academy could be the use of the Care Factor, a tool to weigh the scientific productivity of a candidate who is involved in child-rearing. It is a transitional instrument, certainly not permanent, but useful to balance the gap between those who are involved in care activities and those who are not.

However, the Care Factor should not be conceived of as a proposal that rewards those who care for children. It is not meant to reward those with care-giving responsibilities, but these people should also not be penalized. The care activity should be enhanced even further and become one of the different criteria for recruitment and promotion. In fact, child-rearing is not to be conceived exclusively as a burden, a responsibility outside the realm of academic activities. Unfortunately, as Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2012) show, much of the existing literature on balancing work and family presents a pessimistic view and offers cautionary tales of what to avoid and how to avoid it. In contrast, child-rearing brings sorely needed skills into the academy, like every other working sphere. As Balbo (1978) theorizes, the "double presence" is a way to "pass through many worlds" and thus be more innovative in both work and family. Competences and practical skills learned from juggling tasks in many areas, from negotiating and reconciling different needs to mediating between different instances, come in handy especially in collective dimensions of research work, as well as in the management of the university.

The viability of the Care Factor is being shown by Acumen, an EU Seventh Framework Program funded European project, which aims to find assessment parameters, not so much of the research as the work of researchers. For example, in its *Guidelines for Good Evaluation Practices* (April 2014), the calculation of academic age is based on a conventional value, which considers the number of children raised (p. 10), special allowances and other 'penalizing' factors (like illnesses, part-time jobs etc.).

The dream is that examples like Carol V. Robinson become much more common: Robinson went to work at age 16, then graduated and earned a bachelor's and a master's degree and finally, a PhD in chemistry. She then left the university for eight years to raise three children. Upon her return, she gained a professorship at Oxford on the basis of her research, becoming the first full female professor in

chemistry. She also earned countless awards, including *Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire*.

Robinson succeeded without the Care Factor. However, hers is also an isolated case. Can we do something to make her experience more widespread? The *Care Factor* helps us move forward in this direction.

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Claudia Gualtieri

The Release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Findings on Indian Residential Schools in Canada, 2 June 2015¹

But for those thinking about what they could do now, here are three suggestions: (1) Read the TRC findings. [...] (2) Challenge colonial thinking. [...] (3) Listen to indigenous leaders, including survivors. [...] By listening and learning, by beginning to travel that road, we can work together to make the changes our society desperately needs.

Jocelyn Thorpe²

1. Introduction: Theory and Controversial Issues

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada held its closing event in Ottawa from May 31–June 3, 2015. On June 2, a summary of the Commissioners' findings on Indian³ residential schools was released in an official ceremony that was broadcasted in major cities across the country. In Ottawa, starting on May 31, the calendar of events was dense, meaningful, and moving. It included community actions of remembering, reconciliation, learning, and celebration, which reached its high point on June 3. This paper looks at this ground-breaking moment in contemporary Canadian history marked by the release of the TRC findings from the spatial location of Winnipeg. The province of Manitoba, with its large population of indigenous peoples, is indeed an advantageous location from which to observe a historical moment that directly addresses and involves

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- 1 The author wishes to thank Maureen Matthews, curator of ethnology of the Manitoba Museum, for her useful comments and suggestions on this essay, and for her wonderful hospitality during the period of research in Winnipeg.
 - 2 Thorpe, Jocelyn, "We can start to reconcile now", *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 16, 2015, p. 9.
 - 3 The word "Indian" is employed here because it was the official name for residential schools in Canadian history. In other contexts, the terms "indigenous" and "aboriginal" will be used instead.

indigenous peoples. In addition, the TRC's headquarters are located in Winnipeg, and the research conducted by the commission and the statements gathered from the survivors will be stored at the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation at the University of Manitoba. I was conducting research in Winnipeg and took part in the ceremony held on June 2, 2015⁴.

The theoretical lenses through which the release of the TRC findings will be examined in this paper are borrowed from cultural studies and postcolonial theory, which means that this analysis will focus on two key notions: contextualization and colonialism. The historical, spatial, and cultural coordinates – the networks of relations, practices, ideas, and changes which shaped the context in which the examined event took place – are fundamental tools for exploring the dynamics that regulate institutional relations between Canada as a nation-state and the indigenous peoples who live within its borders. Likewise, the history of colonialism and its legacy – which still shape domestic politics – must remain in the foreground in order to understand the complex entanglement of processes and structures of power addressed by the release of the TRC findings.

To begin with, one should be reminded that although indigenous education has a long history in Canada, Indian residential schools initiated by Canada immediately after confederation were intended to facilitate the assimilation of indigenous peoples into colonial settler society.

This paper uses two case studies to analyze the ways in which the release was covered in two Canadian newspapers: *The Globe and Mail*, a national newspaper, and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, a local newspaper. The TRC website will also be examined and other institutional websites will be marginally referenced in order to shed light on the range of responses from the media, and to provide examples of how the official position of the Canadian government was called into question. From a cultural perspective, the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous civil society and the federal government will be the main focus of the analysis. These networks of relations are analyzed in order to observe how these communicative networks help shape public discourses, along with political and cultural interactions in Canadian society.

Supported by a political rhetoric of emergency and fear, contemporary scenarios of global risk, economic crisis, and impending catastrophe have made utopian projects for better societies difficult both to conceive and plan. In this alarming context, the neoliberal paradigm has 'colonized' public imagination and

4 British Columbia is the original homeland of many indigenous Canadians who are actively involved in the process of reconciliation. See <<http://reconciliationcanada.ca/>>.

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spread into all areas of civil society, supporting and justifying its own inevitability as the only viable path for addressing future challenges. In addition, theories of neo-managerialism in the public sector, and forms of new public management through information technologies have advanced the idea of a strategic pact between states and citizens along the lines of transparent communication. If these theories present reciprocal, profitable development both for the public sector and citizens, they indirectly offer a justification for the incessant renewal of the neoliberal system. From a critical standpoint, they undoubtedly carry the danger of reinforcing the hegemonic neoliberal economic agenda by suggesting a model of citizenship based on individualism, competition, and consumption. This non-inclusive prospective citizenship exposes ambiguous dynamics of inequality within the neoliberal paradigm. Connected to this, theories of new public management that confidently support the idealistic claim of successful communication as socially cohesive discursive constructions, seem to overlook the important role that race and class play in society as practically joint categories of marginalization and exploitation.

In the case of indigenous peoples in Canada, these categories of subjection overtly surface in economic inequality, appearing in urban and land usage policies, different allocation of welfare services and education, and access to jobs. They still represent symbolic and practical boundaries within the economic neoliberal project applied to the public sector, which alarmingly risks severing the state from civil society. In this context, Larry Terry's warning in "Administrative Leadership, Neo-Managerialism, and the Public Management Movement" that "public entrepreneurs of neo-managerialist persuasion pose a threat to democratic governance" (Terry 1998: 194) is worth taking seriously. Indeed, the cases presented in this paper argue that public discourse and national management in postcolonial societies should address the traumas and divisions provoked by colonial history according to a long-sighted vision that extends beyond the Western neoliberal ideology, constructing entrepreneurial relations between states as companies and citizens as stakeholders.

The situation of Canada as a settler colony is rooted in the occupation of land inhabited by indigenous people by European colonizers. This historical fact still shapes issues of land property and rights, native titles, cultural recognition, definitions of identity and citizenship, access to national resources and welfare programs in both the national agenda and native claims. As postcolonial theory makes clear, the hybridization resulting from different cultural encounters and increased movement and migration complicates the ways in which concepts of identity, subjectivity and cultural affiliation may be constructed in contemporary societies,

thus challenging the neo-managerialist, top-down administered structure of relations based on discursive techniques strategically organized as collective bonds.

In general, the work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as they operate in various contexts of conflict around the world is built on the significance of historical and personal memory, of truth and reconciliation, healing and forgiveness, silence and speech, and community and participation in both private and public domains. The ideal aim of TRCs is to attempt to re-read history in a way that might help increase cohesion and acceptance in society, hopefully opening up possible trajectories to modify governmental structures and institutional practices of subjection and exclusion. A critical view may suggest how the most impressive examples of TRCs (e.g. South Africa) have actually failed to substantially create a more equal and just society. In contrast, these cases often provide evidence of the most pervasive effects of economic globalization and increasing social injustice.

The TRC of Canada is an interesting example because it makes explicit how institutional impediments, political inconsistencies, and opposition towards social inclusion and sharing may obstruct and hinder the successful implementation of the Commission's work from the very moment these findings were released. Participative societies acting as national communities in postcolonial frameworks are difficult constructions whose utopian anticipation may be helped by processes of self-awareness, criticism, and shared responsibility encouraged through education, public debate, and political action, as both the Canadian TRC presentations and press coverage repeatedly emphasized.

One important educational step towards forging a communal sensibility among Canadian indigenous and non-indigenous peoples was taken by the Manitoba Museum in Winnipeg with the permanent exhibit "We are all Treaty People" that opened on August 12, 2015⁵. For the first time, all the Manitoba treaty medals were displayed along with the pipes and pipe bags used in the traditional ceremony. Maureen Matthews, the curator of ethnography at the Manitoba Museum and exhibit coordinator, explained that "[i]t is unusual for a museum to display sacred artifacts like these pipes and pipe bags, but without them we would have failed to represent First Nations agency and understandings"⁶. Matthews also emphasized the participation of indigenous peoples in the preparation of the exhibit: "We have collaborated with Treaty Relations Commission, consulted with the AMC Elders

5 <<https://manitobamuseum.ca/main/museum-opens-two-new-permanent-exhibits/>> (accessed September 28, 2015).

6 "Manitoba Museum makes aboriginal history permanent exhibit", *Winnipeg Sun*, 21 August 2015, <<http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/08/12/manitoba-museum-makes-aboriginal-history-permanent-exhibit>> (accessed September 28, 2015).

Council and feasted the artefacts in advance of this exhibit”⁷. This innovative perspective voiced a wider need to re-examine the problematic history of treaties between British and Canadian colonial authorities and First Nations, indirectly addressing the history of the occupation of Manitoba by colonial Canada⁸. This latter issue is beyond the scope of this paper, though it is worth mentioning in order to raise a specific awareness of treaties as part of the process of re-reading, re-telling, and re-writing history from different perspectives, of which the colonial is but one. The master narrative of empire has dominated the historical record and its preservation in institutional archives, while indigenous views have largely been excluded and/or underestimated. Elders, indigenous lawyers and experts in Canada have worked through traditional and institutional channels in order to convince indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to adopt the idea, first voiced by Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, that “We are all Treaty people” and share treaties as part of a common identity, an outcome of a collective history now being re-formulated⁹.

From these premises, it seems relevant to formulate crucial questions regarding the ways in which the process of historical reconstruction in postcolonial Canada may be read vis-à-vis scenarios of effective institutional communication to citizens. How was information about the TRC findings spread? Which key issues were focused on? Will the TRC findings released in June 2015, and the final report of December 2015, affect the agenda of the Canadian government after the general elections of October 19, 2015? Do discourses of neo-managerialism and nation branding affect the processes of healing and reconciliation heralded by the TRC? And, connected to this, may policies of multiculturalism help or hinder reconciliation¹⁰?

7 <<http://www.communitynewscommons.org/our-city/education/we-are-all-treaty-people-exhibit-opens/>> (accessed September 28, 2015).

8 See Pratt / Bone and the Treaty & Dakota Elders of Manitoba (2014) and D’Arcy / Bone and the Treaty & Dakota Elders of Manitoba (2014).

9 See: Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba website, <<http://www.trcm.ca/>>; Office of the Treaty Commissioner website, <http://www.otc.ca/>; (), Government of Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, A history of Treaty-Making in Canada, <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1314977704533/1314977734895>;) and Government of Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Treaty Research Report, <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028653/1100100028654>>.

10 In the past four decades in Canada, multiculturalism has been central to the national agenda, particularly when applied to the issue of migration. Provisions related to multiculturalism were included in the Constitution Act of 1982. Canada’s Multiculturalism

It is important to define ways in which the connection between neo-managerialism, nation branding, and multiculturalism will be applied here. This paper will not consider how the cultural wealth of the nation is exploited for tourism and nation branding¹¹, or how native cultures and their symbolic resources may be employed as modes of development of national economies¹². The relationship between nation branding and neo-managerialism will be used to problematize ways in which scenarios of democratic participation may be thought of, and pursued in postcolonial contexts, thus affecting the dynamics and politics of the inclusion of cultural diversity in society. Since neo-managerialism and nation branding share a common concern of employing effective communication as a means for social cohesion, their association with multiculturalism may help to expose the inherent ambiguities that lie beneath and complicate their practical use as political projects of social participation. This will hopefully provide insight into the ways multicultural policies may be thoughtfully and fruitfully implemented. In a provocative reading of Canadian multicultural policy in *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, Richard Day interrogates what he calls “the problem of the problem of diversity” throughout Canadian history, and challenges the notion of multiculturalism as a Canadian obsession¹³. He argues that no state intervention can bring an end to tensions related to ethno-cultural relations of power, and suggests that the idea of unity imposed by the nation-state must be abandoned in order to pursue effective politics of multiculturalism. According to this perspective, the very notions of diversity and unity are questioned and set up as fields of contention within culture and society, which also underscores the demand for reconstructing their meanings within the frame of the nation-state.

Richard Day’s argument can be put together with Melissa Aronczyk’s claim in *Branding the Nation* to highlight the links between managing and branding the

Act was adopted in 1988. The ideological and political experiment of multiculturalism marked an attempt to frame diversity as unity, which was consistent with the constructed mosaic image of the nation. There is a vast literature on Canadian multiculturalism that features both harsh criticism and defensive assessment of this national policy, also comparing the Canadian form of multiculturalism to similar political projects in different countries. See: Banting and Kymlicka (2010); Kymlicka (2012); Garcea, Kirova and Wong (2008); Banting, Courchene and Seidle (2007).

11 See Bandelj and Wherry (2011).

12 In colonial imagery, indigenous cultural expressions and artefacts are often perceived as exotic stereotypes that match the romantic representation of the primitive good native or of the savage Indian in Hollywood Western films.

13 See Day (2000: 3).

nation. Aronczyk advances the idea that “nation branding has become a solution to perceived contemporary problems affecting the space of the nation-state: problems of economic development, democratic communication, and especially national visibility and legitimacy amid the multiple global flows of late modernity”. Because nations have lost their ideological and cohesive allure as imagined communities (to borrow Benedict Anderson’s famous definition) in the era of economic globalization and domineering finance, they have gradually transferred their appeal to quality branding in order to attract world capital into national economies and to further reassert the driving force of economic neoliberalism. By adopting this view, managing the nation according to economic neo-liberalism and, at the same time, pursuing ideals of democratic citizenship seems to be an unconvincing argument. This is because the management of public resources and discourses according to technocratic self-empowering economic principles works against democratic and representational forms of government that serve the common good, which stem from and are endorsed by heterogeneous civil society. As Aronczyk argues, “[n]ation branding represents a transformation of business in the articulation of national identity. [It] reveals how the social, political, and cultural discourse constitutive of the nation has been harnessed in new ways, with important consequences for both our concept of the nation and our ideals of national citizenship” (Aronczyk 2013: 3–4). This reading offers a useful background against which an analysis of the release of the TRC findings may be contextualized, and sheds light on how complex and multifaceted the case appears if one adopts an indigenous perspective. In fact, as the work of the TRC highlighted during the years of hearings, the place and presence of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canadian contemporary history, politics, and society have yet to be affirmed with respect to their traditional histories and beliefs.

It is therefore useful to analyze the TRC release and the summary of its final report to illustrate how the scars and shadows of colonialism survive and remain active and present in contemporary Canada. Canadian colonialism produced a radical disparity of power, created forced and dysfunctional relationships, and brought about cultural alienation typified by stereotypes, institutional racism, and inconsistencies of bureaucracy. In fact, while governmental agencies over the years have produced data on their own failures with regard to indigenous issues, remedies have been sought in civil society in an attempt to accommodate the rights and recognition owed to indigenous peoples¹⁴. Education is emphasized by

14 A reassuring and inspiring analysis of the ways in which “[t]he promise of democracy rests on the practice of active citizenship” is offered by David Campbell in the

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the TRC as paramount in raising awareness about different historical narratives. Within this history, past and present colonial practices should be remembered, revealed, investigated, and evaluated in order to inaugurate a symbolic process of healing and reconciliation.

2. The Colonial History of Indian Residential Schools in Canada¹⁵

Indian residential schools were boarding schools for First Nations, Inuit¹⁶, and Métis¹⁷ children funded by the Canadian government and mainly run by administrative and religious institutions. Pre-confederation cuts of the British Parliament in the mid-nineteenth century anticipated the system eventually created¹⁸. In 1844, the Bagot Commission recommended making use of indigenous education as a means of assimilation. According to the 1867 British North America Act, powers having to do with the education of Canadians were allocated to provincial governments, while the treaty for Indian people's education fell under the jurisdiction of the federal government¹⁹. In 1879, Nicholas Flood Davin's *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*, commissioned by Prime Minister John A.

fascinating 2015 essay *Metis, craft, civic mindedness: Essential attributes of democratic citizenship in communities*.

- 15 See Government of Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Indian Residential Schools, <<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015576/1100100015577>> and Indian Residential Schools Resources website, <http://irsr.ca/>.
- 16 The involvement of Inuit children in residential schools differs from that of First Nations children. The Inuit population was affected by the Indian Act of 1924 and constitutionally classified as "Indian" in 1939. Schools for Inuit children began to operate in the North in the mid 1950s. <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100016900#chp2>> (accessed September 30, 2015).
- 17 It was with the Northwest Half-breed Claims Royal Commission of 1885 that the federal government addressed the issue of Métis education. <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028809> (accessed September 30, 2015). Ways in which residential schools affected Métis children and culture, and the Métis community's involvement in the telling of the history of residential schools, are often perceived as being overlooked and underestimated.
- 18 See Government of Canada, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Historical Legislation, <<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010193/110010010194>>.
- 19 Part of the legislation about assimilation was the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857, the Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians of 1869, and the Indian Act of 1876.

MacDonald, provided the rationale for the public funding of residential schools²⁰. Subsequent legislation made residential schools the standard educational system for these indigenous children, and attendance was made compulsory both for day schools and residential schools, depending on availability in the territory. Historical records are inconsistent when it comes to locating and naming schools. It seems that the first ones were established in the 1830s, and by 1931, a total of 80 active schools were reported. The last residential school run by the government was closed in 1996. Approximately 132 residential schools operated between 1831 and 1996. For the purpose of providing compensation to former students, the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement identified 139 residential schools²¹.

Residential schools were part of a structured and strategically devised system aiming to assimilate indigenous peoples into the Euro-Canadian colonial society²². Ideologically colonial institutions, residential schools helped to justify European colonization and Christianization; their civilizing mission was perpetrated on people perceived to belong to a morally inferior race. It was part of the British colonial policy to try and eradicate indigenous cultures from conquered lands, and to physically eliminate traces of cultural indigeneity in the native people²³.

A similar project was undertaken with the so-called half-blood indigenous peoples of Australia, which was, like Canada, a British settler colony. In Australia, “stolen generations” were part of a planned systematic program of action to irreversibly separate children from their families and eliminate the Aborigines from the newly settled land. Assimilation also aimed to introduce indigenous children into colonial society as a new labor force. To this end, they were trained in manual and subservient work. By the mid-nineteenth century in Canada, farming had become the economic engine of the prairie, replacing the centrality of the fur trade of the previous 200 years. On the plains, agriculture became a basic productive activity in the colonial settler economy, which disrupted indigenous systems of

20 The document is conventionally called “The Davin Report”.

21 www.trc.ca.

22 In 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs from 1913 until 1932 made the government’s position towards native peoples explicit by stating: “I want to get rid of the Indian problem [...]. Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politics, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (*Report of the Special Committee of the House of Commons examining the Indian Act amendments of 1920*).

23 See *Still taking ‘Indian’ out of the child?* (Winnipeg Free Press, 2015: 8). This colonial strategy of assimilation, recalls, in its most abjected form, the explicit sentence “Exterminate all the brutes” addressed to Africans in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.

land use, making the need for new territory a central obsession of colonial occupation. Instructing pupils to work the land at residential schools reinforced this strategy of assimilation.

Historical records and the TRC findings document the complex variety of situations and conditions under which children were sent to residential schools. However, even if it is debatable which pressures and constraints individual families endured, what is unmistakably evident is the overall callous treatment and harsh conditions endured by most of the children. The system was meant to isolate children from their culture of origin: in many schools they were forbidden to speak their languages or practice their beliefs, were kept away from their families for long periods, and rebuked for transgressing the rules. This separation from their family and original community and culture was coupled with instances of cruel punishment, despicable violence, and physical and psychological abuse. Furthermore, schools were overcrowded and inadequately funded. Poor sanitation and lack of medical care caused disease and death in high numbers²⁴. The TRC found that about 150,000 indigenous children attended residential schools, and more than 1,000 died at these institutions. The exact number is not known because no official death records were kept, and many children were buried in unmarked graves.

The legacy and long-lasting effects of residential schools on Canadian indigenous peoples generated an unresolved historical trauma that has been described as “cultural genocide”²⁵. The conditions of indigenous peoples in today’s Canadian society bear testimony to this trauma as a collective wound, seen in the high rates of criminal convictions, alcoholism, drug addiction, lack of education and skills, psychological disorders, and low income²⁶ among indigenous Canadians. In addition to these psycho-social factors, inter-generational suffering and the violent consequences of family dysfunction are passed on, thus reproducing historic trauma across the generations²⁷. First and second-generation survivors of residential schools are now pulling together their efforts, calling upon the Canadian government and society to share this painful historical legacy. Memory and healing are key words in this process of sharing and reconciliation. Their symbolic power provides a guiding path in order to identify ways in which justice and reparations may begin to take effect.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was active in South Africa from 1995 until 1998, facilitating the peaceful transition from apartheid to a post-apartheid

24 See Bryce (1922).

25 See Pankratz (2015: 9).

26 See *From residential schools to jails* (Winnipeg Free Press, 2015: 8).

27 See Reconciliation, <www.trc.ca> (accessed September 30, 2015).

democracy. Through voluntary confessions, both victims and perpetrators of racial crimes would be publicly forgiven, provided they spoke the truth. Victims could have access to reparations and compensation, while amnesty was guaranteed to perpetrators. By comparison, the Canadian TRC did not mark a radical change in Canadian history and politics, and had no official or legal power to support the witnesses or to offer amnesty in exchange for truthful accounts from the staff of these residential schools or to those identified as having abused indigenous children. Instead, the Canadian TRC mainly acted to record the accounts of victims and listen carefully and sensitively to their testimonies. Little evidence was provided by the staff of the schools and by representatives of official institutions²⁸. Financial compensation for victims was outside of the scope of the TRC, but survivors of residential schools were provided with compensation by a parallel process that was co-funded by the churches that ran the schools and the Government that funded them.

While symbolic reparations may yet be pursued through networks of solidarity and respect for human rights, financial compensation and long-term projects aimed at transforming the poor conditions of indigenous peoples in Canadian society and at reshaping the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, progress will not happen unless positive action is included in the political agenda. Contrasting the TRC process with the South African model, the editorial published on June 1, 2015 in the *Winnipeg Free Press* noted the absence of the Canadian state: “Unbelievable that with all this time and attention spent on TRC, the federal government can’t be counted on to show true leadership”. Civil society is said to have taken the lead, “[e]ven the chairman of the TRC, Murray Sinclair, is not expecting much from Mr. Harper. Instead, he’s hoping that charities and non-profit groups, schools and educators, academics and neighborhood associations will engage to discuss the findings”²⁹.

3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools³⁰

First Nation activists and leaders brought the issue of residential schools to the fore of national politics, and investigations were triggered by institutional agencies, which involved enquiries into the status of native peoples in Canada. A Royal

28 See Galloway (2015: 1, 6–7).

29 See *Still taking ‘Indian’ out of the child?* (*Winnipeg Free Press* 2015: 8).

30 Full text is available at <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/prb0848-e.pdf>> (accessed October 5, 2015).

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), established in 1991, issued a report in 1996 examining historical relations and legal agreements since colonial times, and provided the Canadian government with detailed indications for implementing changes³¹. In 1998, the federal document “Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan” openly addressed Indian residential schools. It contained a statement of reconciliation and a plan for political action, which was implemented with a compensation package. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) was established to support community-based actions for former students. In 2000, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation founded the Legacy of Hope Foundation in order to raise awareness about residential schools and to support survivors.

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), which was established in 2007 as a result of a major class action settlement in Canadian history, began to allocate financial compensation according to specific criteria for the damage inflicted to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students in residential schools – a process which continues today³². These criteria relate to the time and place of attendance at residential schools, forced attendance, subjection to serious physical and sexual abuses, and the quality of testimony³³. Proving eligibility may present a twofold problem because schools were not always properly registered and documentation of students in attendance was often incomplete. In addition, testimonies were provided orally. Oral evidence is often thought to be secondary to written documentation and reminds us of the multiplicity of ways of interpreting, narrating, and archiving history in cultures where orality is a trusted source of knowledge and a reliable basis for the transmission of history. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools in Canada worked to keep this indigenous principle in mind.

The duty of the commissioners of the TRC was to gather, document, and preserve the survivors’ memories. The Commission was launched on June 2, 2008. After initial obstacles, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established

31 Full text available at <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb9924-e.htm>>; see also <<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1307458586498/1307458751962>>; and <<https://archive.org/details/RoyalCommissionOnAboriginalPeoples-FinalReport-Vol.1-Looking>>, (accessed October 5, 2015).

32 The IRSSA financed the Independent Assessment Process (IAP), which was mainly concerned with claims of serious physical and sexual abuse. Hearings are expected to continue until around 2017. See <<https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rpp/2008-2009/inst/ira/ira02-eng.asp>>.

33 Competent bodies include the Common Experience Payment (CEP), Independent Assessment Process (IAP), and Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

in October 2009 by Governor-General Michaëlle Jean. It was chaired by Justice Murray Sinclair, an Ojibwe-Canadian judge, with Commissioners Chief Wilton Littlechild, former Conservative Member of Parliament and Alberta Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, and Dr. Marie Wilson, a senior executive with the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was assisted by an Indian Residential School Survivor Committee (IRSSC) composed of 10 representatives from various Aboriginal organizations and survivor groups selected by the Federal Government in consultation with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). An Inuit sub-commission was also established, headquartered in Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories. It ensured that Inuit survivors of the residential schools were included in the national truth-telling and reconciliation process. From January 2011 to April 2012, the AFN carried out work on behalf of the TRC in Nunavut, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories under the co-direction of Jennifer Hunt-Poitras and Robert Watt³⁴.

The TRC mandate was originally scheduled to complete its report in five years³⁵. However, it was extended to 2015 due to the number of records provided by survivors. The Commission explored activities alleged to have occurred in residential schools and their negative impact. As the TRC website states, most of the statements were gathered at national and regional events, and at community hearings. Some were presented publicly in panels and circles³⁶. Seven national events were held during 2008–2013. The investigation brought to light appalling events related to the students' deaths at these institutions, including burials in unmarked graves without the parents' notification or consent³⁷. To supplement and confirm this information, the Commission gained access, through a court order, to historical

34 See <<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=158>> (accessed October 15, 2015).

35 Full text is available at <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/pdfs/SCHEDULE_N_EN.pdf> (accessed October 15, 2015).

36 "Share your truth", www.trc.ca (accessed September 30, 2015).

37 As *The Guardian* reports in an interview to residential school survivor Sue Caribou, "As many as 6,000 children died in residential institutions, which ran from 1876 to 1996. The accurate figure could be much higher however, since the government stopped recording aboriginal students' deaths in 1920 in light of the alarming statistics. Caribou believes that dozens of pupils perished at the institution where she was detained. 'Remains were found all over the fields. But numbers do not reflect the reality. Many of my friends committed suicide after their release,' said Caribou, who said she was frustrated that an inquiry did not take place twenty years ago, after the last of the residential schools closed." "Canada confronts its dark history of abuse in residential

records in the National Archives during 2012–2013. As Adele Perry writes in an article from the *Winnipeg Free Press* on July 10, 2015, “[t]his history is not over”: the effect of the TRC’s work has just begun. Its fundamental achievement being shared responsibility and common action for reconciliation and change. “Reconciliation is not an aboriginal problem,’ said Sinclair. ‘It is a Canadian problem’”³⁸.

By June 2, 2015 the TRC had compiled a summary titled ‘Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future’, which anticipates the six-volume Final Report, published in December 2015. The summary contains 94 recommendations, namely, “Calls to Actions”, grouped in the categories of legacy and reconciliation, which precisely identifies major fields for future interventions. “Calls to Action” aims at rebuilding and radically modifying the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. In an interview, Justice Murray Sinclair related reconciliation to education, and expanded the conventional meaning of education to include adult people at all levels of society. He stated that “[p]art of the misunderstanding that we see so prevalent in Canadian society is young adults, and adults in positions of leadership, constantly demonstrate a total lack of understanding and misunderstanding about who aboriginal people are”³⁹. Here, he launched a clear attack against persistent colonial attitudes towards indigenous peoples in Canadian society, thus laying the foundations of the national debate on the recognition of the colonial ideological legacy.

4. Media Coverage of the Release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings

A chronological reading of the media coverage of the release of the summary of the TRC findings began on May 29, 2015, when, in a speech given at the fourth annual Pluralism Lecture of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin set the tone of the political and cultural debate by explicitly maintaining that Canada’s residential schools policy was an

schools,” <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/06/canada-dark-of-history-residential-schools>> (accessed 30 September 2015).

38 Robson, Mia, “Canadians United for change”, *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 1, 2015, p. 3.

39 Chiose, Simona, “Universities must address residential schools legacy, Justice Sinclair said”, *The Globe and Mail*, May 29, 2015, <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/universities-must-address-residential-school-legacy-justice-sinclair-says/article24709958/>> (accessed October 5, 2015).

attempt to commit “cultural genocide” against indigenous peoples⁴⁰. The term “cultural genocide” was echoed in many newspaper articles, building on the existing debate about the extent to which residential schools had contributed to the disruption and destruction of indigenous cultures in Canada⁴¹. The emphasis on “genocide” and “cultural genocide” conjured an immediate connection to the Jewish holocaust, addressing complex legal matters⁴², and calling into question Canada’s official rejection of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples⁴³.

Experts weighed the UN definition of “genocide” and its possible applications against the system of forced assimilation in Canada. Although the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted in 1948, did not use the phrase “cultural genocide”⁴⁴, the debate showed that “[i]t is broader than just an aboriginal issue”⁴⁵. Experts also tried to map out the political effects of McLachlin’s statement, even if, as many believe, it would not practically change current Canadian legislation. Nevertheless, one of the recommendations in the TRC “Calls for Action” is exactly that Canada reconsider its position on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In an article entitled ‘McLachlin said what many have long known’, scholar and treaties expert Ken Coates emphasizes how much words matter, arguing that it is

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- 40 Fine, Sean, “McLachlin: A history of ‘cultural genocide’. Supreme Court Chief Justice delivers ‘unparalleled’ remarks over Canada’s treatment of First Nations people”, *The Globe and Mail*, June 29, 2015, pp. 1, 12.
- 41 Chief Justice McLachlin authored the important decision about indigenous rights of June 2014 to grant title to the Tsilhqot’in nation. It determined the terms of ownership of ancestral land for indigenous people. See Kopecky (2015: 30–39).
- 42 See Fine (2015: 6).
- 43 Full text available at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf> (accessed October 15, 2015). See also Towtongie and Coon Come (2015). The article severely criticizes the federal government’s opposition to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration: “Ultimately, what lies behind the rhetoric about the declaration is the federal government’s resistance to sharing, constructively and creatively, the extraordinary power and control it exercises over so many indigenous peoples in Canada, notwithstanding it was the misuse of this power that impoverished and dispossessed indigenous peoples. That is the real heart of the matter.”
- 44 Full text available at <<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2078/volume-78-I-1021-English.pdf>> (accessed October 5, 2015).
- 45 These are the Northwest Territories Minister of Education and former residential school survivor Jackson Lafferty’s words, as they are reported in Galloway and Curry (2015: 10).

important to change both the national vocabulary and the ways in which official history has been constructed. He contests the old narrative of Canadian benevolence and argues in favor of a more realistic story based on the recognition of injustice and on the acceptance of shared responsibilities. However, in spite of the media coverage of the TRC findings in both the national newspaper *The Globe and Mail* and the *Winnipeg Free Press*, and notwithstanding what was perceived to be the popular support for accepting the term “cultural genocide”⁴⁶, statistics showed that few Canadians actually paid attention to the issue of residential schools⁴⁷. This poses serious questions as to what extent the official discourse of the nation – defined as addressing model citizens in national official and governmental communication – can be expected to engage with the indigenous question, and to speak to indigenous peoples as citizens.

In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to indigenous peoples for the residential schools system and its program of assimilation, but his government denied that it was a form of genocide, calling it instead “forced assimilation”⁴⁸. Since then, apologies seem inconsistent and there is still a widespread cynical attitude amongst indigenous people and their allies as to whether the federal government is going to take any action based on the TRC’s suggestions⁴⁹. In contrast, immediate political action seemed to be understood by the TRC, activists, and journalists, as the only possible path in order to set up a line of continuity with past positive efforts and institutional progress. Actions were intended in diverse fields of application.

The TRC argued that improving indigenous education and supporting indigenous cultural preservation was their foremost recommendation, joined with a strong emphasis on the revision of colonial history, and a concrete actualization of

46 Rabson (2015: 12).

47 Rabson (2015), <<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/New-poll-shows-many-Canadians-not-paying-attention-to-issue-of-residential-schools-312964481.html>> (accessed October 1, 2015).

48 “‘Canada confronts its dark history of abuse in residential schools’: Landmark report reveals school system’s brutal attempt to assimilate thousands of native children for more than a century and gives voice to survivors”, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/06/canada-dark-of-history-residential-schools>> (accessed September 30, 2015). In 2009, Pope Benedict XIV released an official statement about the Roman Catholic Church’s role in residential schools.

49 See Lett (2015: 5): “Harper repeatedly referred to his 2008 apology and to ongoing government programs to help improve conditions for aboriginal Canadians. The political translation: We have done everything that we’re prepared to do.”

legal justice for indigenous peoples. “There is no forgiveness without recognition”⁵⁰, as Murray Sinclair stated, and recognition is achievable through education and the application of equal justice. In an article entitled ‘Education a way to reconciliation: justice’, Simona Chiose presented interviews with indigenous leaders and law experts highlighting the importance of popular actions, such as the Idle No More movement, mainly led by indigenous women in the cities⁵¹. Movements of people were perceived as a powerful means for raising a collective voice in favor of historical and cultural recognition. Risks were underscored, such as “the difficulty of making space for difference without romanticizing Aboriginal identity”, the huge contrast between “Western legal concepts [...] rooted in concepts of property and individualism [...] and indigenous legal traditions [...] that ideal of living a good life and a collective life”⁵², and that “the issue has become too ‘compartmentalized’, too detached from other injustices embedded in Canadian history”⁵³. Educational institutions were cited as proper places where these dangers might be confronted and controlled. Suggestions proposed that more indigenous material be included in post-secondary courses, that universities try to capture multiple cultural viewpoints and that revised versions of colonial history be told in schools nationwide. Finally, the history of residential schools should become part of the educational curriculum in every province⁵⁴.

According to the TRC’s recommendations in ‘Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future’, change in educational practices rests on a radical revision of colonial history, which will also bring about important modifications in the national legal system. At present, it is considered essential that Canada officially reject both the Doctrine of Discovery and the notion that the lands claimed by European conquerors were *terra nullius*⁵⁵. As ideological positions and legal principles, both notions helped to justify and consolidate colonial occupation. They still impinge on national culture, administrative practices, and political choices, thus preventing a successful process of reconciliation and the realization of a just society.

This pressing drive towards a different narrative of Canadian national history triggered debate among scholars, teachers, journalists, and representatives of

50 See Chiose (2015: 5).

51 <<http://www.idlenomore.ca/>>

52 See Chiose (2015: 5).

53 See Swan (2015: 3).

54 Galloway and Curry (2015: 1).

55 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future. Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015, www.trc.ca (accessed October 1, 2015).

various institutions. “Are we up to the challenge of rebooting history?”, wondered Dan Lett, analyzing how television programs still perpetuate stereotypes brought to Canada by European settlers. Lett also emphasized how insidious elements and incorrect ideological assumptions in the national narrative of history need to be deconstructed in order to reformulate it in more fair and balanced terms⁵⁶.

Conflicting ways of interpreting history and enacting change were evident from the very day the TRC findings were released. In response to Jeffrey Simpson’s ‘Fixating on the past is not productive’ which alerted readers to the danger that “a relentless fixation on ‘the past’, especially the tragic and embittered parts, risks driving elements of a society apart, making reconciliation paradoxically more, not less, difficult”⁵⁷, historian Adele Perry stresses ways in which “[h]istory is fundamentally about interpretation. [And] the TRC Summary does demand that we place indigenous peoples’ version of history of residential schooling, and indeed Canada, at the center rather than the margins of the history we tell”⁵⁸. Opposing versions of history provoked indignant reactions. In an article titled ‘Debunking the half-truths and exaggerations in the Truth and Reconciliation report’ published on the National Post website on June 4, 2015, former University of Manitoba professors Rodney Clifton and Hymie Rubenstein⁵⁹ expressed their dissatisfaction with the TRC report for having exaggerated the negative impact of residential schools and for providing incomplete evidence of positive examples of formal education in these institutions⁶⁰. In reply, Norm Gould referred to these remarks as “retrograde opinions”. He argued against this form of historical denial and proposed that academic freedom and responsibility were indispensable tools to overcome this phenomenon⁶¹. In a similar vein, Dan Lett replied with a scathing article in response to Bill Marantz’s online statement on Winnipeg’s *Jewish Post and News*, in which he referred to the TRC report as “the Half Truth and Recrimination Report”⁶². Milder criticism of the TRC’s work included suggestions

56 See Lett (2015: 4).

57 See Simpson (2015: 11).

58 See Perry (2015: 9).

59 See Geary (2015: 13).

60 See Clifton and Rubenstein (2015) <<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/clifton-rubenstein-debunking-the-half-truths-and-exaggerations-in-the-truth-and-reconciliation-report>> (accessed October 10, 2015).

61 See Gould (2015: 9).

62 See Lett (2015) <<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/columnists/Apology-welcome-but-doesnt-excuse-condemned-editorial--311029771.html>> (accessed October 30, 2015).

that the Commission might have gone further in investigating events and, most of all, in specifying decisive solutions⁶³.

While it was clear that the media and public debates were active, and hopefully useful for future development, contrasting factors emerged concerning the scope of the discussion, on the one side, and the silence of federal institutions, on the other. The complex network of ideas onto which practices of assimilation, cultural and physical genocide are entangled in history show how any process of reconciliation must be rooted in historical recognition. As Adam Muller argues in 'Indian residential schools were unqualified genocide', many "have drawn attention away from myriad, long-standing, and enduring ways in which unqualified genocide has been perpetrated in Canada. [...] To admit less than this [...] is to blur the distinction between the methods and the aims of genocidal conduct"⁶⁴.

In Canada, while investigations and reflections dug deep into histories of cultural destruction, multiple institutional strategies of subjection surfaced, and dangers of marginalization emerged. The discussion showed the connection between the residential schools system and the "Sixties Scoop", a child welfare program that took indigenous children away from their parents and adopted them into non-indigenous families, mainly in the United States. The survivors are now asking for similar justice and reparation⁶⁵. The Métis people, too, who have a complex and specific group history in Canada, claim that they were ignored in the process of historical reconciliation led by the TRC⁶⁶. In addition, the contemporary emergence of the issue of more than one thousand missing and murdered indigenous women illustrates that the problem of indigenous children's welfare is still not over, which further complicates the indigenous question in Canadian society. These contemporary issues are also in desperate need of prompt institutional action⁶⁷.

In spite of positions of active engagements proposed by local institutions voiced in the press and public channels, the federal government – which bears the legal responsibility for the victims of residential schools – has remained silent. Speaking on behalf of Canada's provincial and territorial leaders, Paul Davis,

63 See Perry (2015: 9): "In some ways, the TRC summary report doesn't ask for enough"; 'Join them on a path to healing' (Editorial, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 2015: 6).

64 See Muller (2015: 9).

65 See Puxley (2015: 9).

66 Conversation between Claudia Gualtieri and Lawrence Barkwell at the Manitoba Métis Federation in Winnipeg, June 15, 2015, not published; Puxley, Chinta, "Métis fear they are being sidelined", *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 16, 2015, p. 4.

67 See <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/06/canada-dark-of-history-residential-schools>> (accessed October 25, 2015).

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier, declared that “Canada’s premiers support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations and will act on them with or without Ottawa’s help”. He also emphasized that “Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s longstanding absence from first ministers’ meetings is a missed chance for collaboration”⁶⁸. In addition, responding to the TRC’s call for action, an agreement to develop a strategy to preserve and promote indigenous languages was signed by the provincial government of Manitoba together with indigenous and local educational and cultural agencies. However, as Nick Martin ironically remarked, “there was one potentially useful partner missing Monday — the federal government”⁶⁹. The federal government will provide some financial support, Martin added, but it has remained an external, peripheral, and uninvolved actor⁷⁰.

At the formal ceremony of the release of the Summary of the TRC findings in Ottawa on June 2, 2015, the federal government’s silence and passivity were brought to the forefront by media analysts. Bill Curry noted that “Stephen Harper took part in an emotional closing ceremony for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but the Prime Minister did not say a word”⁷¹. And Shannon Sampert, one of the few white pupils in the residential schools system, stated: “I would have liked to see my prime minister and his ministers sitting in the audience in Ottawa on Tuesday, surrounded by survivors. [...] In an era of optic politics, it would have sent a clear message this is being taken seriously, or that their voices have been heard”⁷². Sampert also emphasized that the State was highly underrepresented at the official release. And Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, defined the government’s prolonged silence as “confusing”⁷³.

The Canadian Prime Minister did deliver a written speech after the release of the Summary of the TRC findings, stating that: “While this is an important milestone in getting our country past the days of Indian residential schools, work is still

68 See Bailey (2015) <<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/native-leaders-to-discuss--violence-children-in-care-at-meeting-with-premiers-315246151.html>> (accessed October 1, 2015).

69 See Martin (2015) <<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Mutlitude-of-groups-signs-on-to-preserve-foster-indigenous-languages-328513801.html>> (accessed October 1, 2015)

70 See Curry (2015: 1, 9).

71 See Curry (2015: 1, 9).

72 See Sampert (2015: 9).

73 See Kusch (2015) (accessed October 1, 2015).

needed to help heal the pain and restore trust from that wrong⁷⁴. The government spoke in favor of informed and well-reasoned decisions, as the official website briefly stated⁷⁵. The general feeling was that the government was taking its time, waiting for the federal elections of October 19, 2015 and the release of the final TRC report to take place. However, the article ‘Truth and consequence’ published in *The Economist* on July 6, 2015, considered how hopes might be frustrated, given that the expectations raised by the Prime Minister’s apology in 2008 were left without effects, in the same way the findings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples had been largely ignored in 1996. From a different standpoint, it may be argued that the government’s minimal participation was in fact an open statement for its potential voters, and therefore a clear assertion for those Canadian citizens who would not favor changing institutional relations with indigenous peoples. In any case, a contrast was evident between the TRC’s 94 recommendations calling for immediate action and the government’s restrained participation in the TRC recommendations release.

As a member of the audience on June 2, 2015 in Winnipeg during the announcement of the recommendations, the relevance of various symbolic actions was palpable. We watched the day begin in Ottawa and Winnipeg, with the sacred fire, left to burn until the end of the final ceremonial event. The emotional side of the celebration was as important as the rational one. Grief was passed on from person to person. The members of the TRC themselves had clearly experienced shock and distress while listening to the reports and collecting the terrible stories. This point was acknowledged in their individual statements⁷⁶. The underlying message travelled around the room and across the country, linking past and present histories at all levels of the community, touching first and second-generation survivors, and expanding to include a community of participants. The histories implicitly referred to were personal, familiar, collective, and national stories of subjection and despair, remembrance and hope, recognition and action, celebration and joy. Photos published in newspapers showed survivors holding their children and

74 See Curry and Galloway (2015: 6): “We are still awaiting the full report. The government will examine all of these and, obviously, read them before deciding what the appropriate next steps are”, Mr Harper told the House of Commons”.

75 “On June 2, 2015, the Government of Canada and the other parties to the Settlement Agreement received the TRC’s executive summary, including its key findings and recommendations. The government will study these findings and recommendations carefully. We look forward to receiving the entire six volume final report to be able to fully understand the TRC’s conclusions and respond in an informed manner.”

76 Moran (2015: 11).

grandchildren⁷⁷. Ceremonies are essential in indigenous cultures, and the TRC release was meant to be a collective national ceremony, too. Public spaces were occupied in order to infuse them with collective meaning. In Ottawa, “a symbolic show of reconciliation” took place on 1 June with a walk across the city⁷⁸.

On June 2, 2015 in Winnipeg, the official release was broadcast at the University of Winnipeg, where a crowd of about 700 people had gathered to witness the event. In attendance were first and second-generation survivors of residential schools, as well as descendants, politicians, institutional representatives, academics, and supporters like myself. Of the several local speakers, Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs delivered an outspoken and provocative speech, claiming that “[t]he atrocities of yesterday are happening right now”, which was clearly challenging political institutions to take action and “make changes within this lifetime”, in order to accomplish the TRC’s work and the struggle of indigenous peoples in Canada⁷⁹. Winnipeg celebrations continued with a march along the public urban spaces of Portage Avenue and Main Street, as far as the Thunderbird House, where a ceremonial pipe smoking ceremony and singing took place. Members of the public in attendance were concerned and emotional. People were respectful and appreciative towards the survivors, who had endured terrible struggle, and now took part in the celebration showing both their pride and sorrow. External observers, like myself, could perceive the distress, the inexplicability of the history being resuscitated, and the need for new stories to be articulated. However, the general climate was one of festivity combined with constructive anticipation for effective action to be devised on the political, social and cultural arenas.

The TRC’s proposal for future action entails teaching and education. On the TRC website, teaching is presented as a permanent project, a lifestyle, a necessary tool for survival, exchange, individual and collective growth⁸⁰. To this end, the protection and preservation of indigenous languages has been a major concern. The

77 See Curry and Galloway (2015: 6): “Former Northwest Territories premier Stephen Kakfwi, a residential school survivor, holds his granddaughter Sadeya Kakfwi-Scott while standing with the audience at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Tuesday in Ottawa”; see Rabson (2015: 3): “Charlotte Boubard holds her daughter, Toni, while singing at the Winnipeg’s Thunderbird House after the Walk for Reconciliation on Tuesday”; see Welch (2015: 4): “Caroline Ouskun and her nephew Travis Spence [...] at the U of W”.

78 See Rabson (2015: 3).

79 See Welch (2015: 4).

80 www.trc.ca.

oral recording and written transcription of native languages is being undertaken by experts in the field. In order to raise awareness, elders speak in public about their versions of history and cultural practices important to them and characteristic of a good life. This is part of the rewriting of history that the TRC has envisaged. Literacy for indigenous children is demanded, too, so that young people may have access to information and resources that would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

The website “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” contains statements, documents, and research materials gathered by the Commission, which will be stored in the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation⁸¹. The website is rich and detailed, up-to-date, and user-friendly. Sharing information and attracting engagement from the community are visible objectives. The heading “Findings” leads one to the executive summary, “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future”, the principles “What We Have Learned. Principles of truth and reconciliation”, the document “The survivors speak”, and “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action”. Examples show how simple gestures may become meaningful. “It matters to me” brings to the fore expressions of reconciliation, and the “Personal ribbon campaign” proposes the exchange of symbolic gifts. Invitations for “Sharing the truth” and “What can I do?” give detailed instructions for statement gathering. And activities are suggested for groups of people and for children in order to mark a symbolic beginning for teaching a new history⁸². Emotionally and rationally, the website is engaging and thought provoking.

5. Coda: The Land We Are

In the inspiring climate around the release of the TRC findings summary, the timely book *The Land We Are*, published just after the release of the TRC summary, is worth mentioning because it warns against the myth of historical transformation. It points to the dangers of patronizing, top-down manipulation and romantic illusions of fulfilment, however appealing they might seem.

Postcolonial theory favors resistance, marginal points of view, and dissenting attitudes. They are essential theoretical and methodological tools that allow multiple voices and perspectives to engage actively with one another in context.

81 <<http://umanitoba.ca/nctr/>>.

82 Information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be found on the websites of the federal government of Canada at <<http://www.pm.gc.ca/>>; <<https://www.gg.ca/>>; <<https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/>>; and on the website of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation at <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-history-of-residential-schools-in-canada-1.702280>>.

From this standpoint, the book offers a challenging reading of the notion of reconciliation in contemporary Canada, while putting forward ambitious solutions. Visual artists and performers in *The Land We Are* refute the idea of reconciliation when it is aimed at moving beyond and setting aside a problematic chapter of history. Instead, they advocate reparations and restitution as integral steps towards reconciliation⁸³. Otherwise, they argue, reconciliation could simply instantiate acceptance of the status quo. Their criticism stems from various artistic fields. With visual installations, performances, and creation of artworks, artists criticize the public use of indigenous artistic traditions for gentrified urban developments, reclaiming public areas as meeting spaces for indigenous peoples. Their works also deconstruct institutional discourses, and propose collaborative practices that use the transformative and transgressive power of art and performance. The book articulates an open statement mainly addressed to non-indigenous Canadians who have the real and unavoidable responsibility to abandon the normalizing colonial narrative of history from which they benefited, and to change, both practically and radically, their relationships with indigenous peoples by giving up privilege and power. For artists in *The Land We Are*, reconciliation in Canada is just a beginning. It can only progress if non-indigenous people learn to live with and collaborate with indigenous residents of their country.

In conclusion, the debate around the release of the summary of the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools in Canada has not been examined as a direct example of neo-managerialism. However, it raises important questions concerning the type of citizens to whom public communication is addressed, as well as those citizens' place in society and in the national community. If an inclusive society appears to be based on transparent communication by the public central administration – which should set the basis for a new deal between the state and the citizens – then the example offered here is a key case for understanding how problematic and blurred the category of citizenship (and the related active participation of citizens in the civil society) may be in countries with a colonial history as a settler colony in inhabited lands. One should also be alert to the dangers that Larry Terry points out when he focuses on challenges to democracy if the state takes on the characteristics of a firm or of a futuristic e-democracy in countries where education, literacy, and basic social welfare for indigenous people are issues to be urgently addressed. It seems that a contradiction is inevitable when public administrations model themselves on corporations while also claiming to articulate long-term idealistic objectives of

83 See Hill and McCall (2015). See also, Dudley (2015: 1).

inclusive democracy. It must be further explored and verified whether addressing citizens as stakeholders through effective communication will allow the different voices of civil society to be represented. In addition, a vigilant attitude should be maintained so as to never to lose sight of the ways in which race and class act as formidable driving forces of marginalization, particularly when hegemonic neoliberal economic regimes control political, social, and cultural interactions. Surreptitious and ambiguous dynamics of social ostracism and cultural isolation must be assiduously pursued and exposed by speaking the truth against homogenizing neo-imperialist discourses and practices. This is beneficial advice given by postcolonial theorist Edward Said that helps bring dissenting and minority views into the public discourse. To this end, the Summary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada offers precise indications and suggestions about the nature of social obligations, citizenship, and minority rights that extend beyond the contextual frame of the Commission's field of investigation into the organized abuses of indigenous peoples. Reading the extended final report, delivered on December 15, 2015⁸⁴, brings to the fore relevant lines of analysis and reflection, as Jocelyn Thrope suggests in the epigraph to this paper that Canadians "By listening and learning [...] can work together to make the changes our society desperately needs". It is a considerate recommendation that may also effectively inspire more general, perceptive and receptive attitudes of cultural awareness beyond the contingency of the case examined in this essay. Expectations and hopes about the real possibility for a cultural, social, and political change in Canada have risen since Justin Pierre James Trudeau won the federal elections held on October 19, 2015, becoming the Prime Minister of a majority liberal government that has been leading the country since November 4, 2015. His government set the indigenous question at the core of its political agenda.

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