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STUDENT NONCONFORMITY AT SCHOOL[1]

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Abstract

The aim of this qualitative research was to describe forms of student nonconformity at school and how these were codified. An analysis of 61 student teachers' narratives about their own school attendance gave us some insight into their childhoods. Based on this analysis, we describe the normative worlds of the family and peer collective that can reinforce or weaken student nonconformity at school. The paper then focuses on norms specific to schools and how they are codified. These determine the forms of student nonconformity, which are divided according to five criteria: type of social norm, number of actors, sanctions, students' perception of the nonconformity, and location. This study describes learning outside formal curricula at school as well as students' perspectives and their active role in this process.

Keywords

Discipline at school, conformity, nonconformity, narrative analysis, routine deviation, school rules

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"Your daughter got a reprimand from the class teacher for building a snowman in the middle of a school hallway."

(from student narratives)

Introduction

Childhood is usually understood as a period of development. However, it can also be viewed as a coherent social practice (Jenks, 1996) or a structural category of societal analysis (Corsaro, 2015). This text focuses on socialization into the second most relevant environment after the family – the school environment. Family and school are important normative institutions and socialization into these environments is therefore interwoven with social practices that copy and reconstruct social norms, but also confront and oppose them. One practice that both reconstructs and confronts social norms is nonconformity. This empirical study focuses on such violations of social norms. The paper explores the normative world of school and its connection to family, forms of school norms and how they were codified, and the related forms of student nonconformity. It is a response to Jenks' (1996) challenge to describe collective life as a path to understanding social practices in childhood.

School as a normative institution

School is a very peculiar world. In terms of social norms, school is an interesting environment from both macro and microsocial points of view.

From a macrosocial perspective, there are contradictory ideologies about school. Firstly, school plays a significant role in social reproduction. On the one hand, Bourdieu (1998) points out that school contributes to the continuation and transfer of cultural capital division and thus also the social space structure. It maintains the existing order, namely the distance between students with various amounts of cultural capital (cf. empirical research by Willis, 1977; Katrňák, 2004). Social inequalities can be reproduced in school, as has been emphasized particularly by critical educators (Giroux, 2001; Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 1999). On the other hand, school can also contribute to social mobility. Since education ensures equality of opportunity, the ladder of social mobility is there for all to climb (McLeod, 2008). From this perspective, there can be two competing ideologies at school: social reproduction and achievement. Secondly, at school, students learn culture, knowledge, values, and norms (Saldana, 2013). This relates to

school as an institution of social control,[2] i.e. a situation where an individual or group controls the behavior of others. In terms of defining social norms, a minority controls a majority, which applies in school as well as in society (Schostak, 2012). Social control creates a complex of the controlling and the controlled, including those who enter into resistance, which can be viewed as part of the power relations (cf. Lojdová, 2015). From this perspective, there can also be two competing ideologies at school (Pace & Hemmings, 2006): individual freedom (the purpose of school for children) and group cohesion (the purpose of school for society). These competing ideologies open up the question of whether school conformity is more useful to a student or the entire society.

From a microsocial viewpoint, school is interwoven with norms that regulate its functioning and the very process of cultural transmission. This process is interactive – some social norms or rules will be accepted while others will be questioned, doubted, or even rejected by students (Thornberg, 2008a). Each school has a number of written and unwritten rules. Of course, written school rules are used at school and many schools also have class rules that are often hung on the wall, but this is only a small part of the system governing behavior at school. Research on unwritten rules at school was conducted by Hargreaves et al. (2011) and Thornberg (2008a).[3] Hargreaves et al. (2011) found that the majority of what they, as researchers, considered to be rules were not listed as rules by participants from the academic world. For this reason, they conducted school observations as the next phase of their research. This resulted in a typology of rules: institutional, situational, and personal rules. Institutional rules are those school rules that are valid for the entire institution. For example, throwing rubbish into rubbish bins, punctuality, and not damaging school property. Situational rules relate to certain classes or situations within a classroom, while personal rules relate to the specifics of individual teachers. It is the role of the teacher that is crucial for the realities of school. Woods (1980) described a strategy of a teacher being benevolent towards the violation of rules that can be applied to an entire class or individuals within the class, in a situation where the teacher might consider such behavior as acceptable. Certain student behavior may therefore deviate from the school norms although the teacher may consider it normal for the given student. The teacher then tends

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2 Social control cannot be viewed as merely a negative phenomenon. It is part of all social systems (cf. Giroux, 2001).

3 Thornberg's analysis resulted in five rule categories: relational rules, structuring rules, protecting rules, personal rules, and etiquette rules.

to be lenient with such behavior and refrain from attempting to redress it (cf. secondary adjustments[4]).

Some social norms can also be understood as a means of coercion (Baier, 2013). In the school environment, coercion has specific contours. Foucault (1975) discusses a series of procedures used at school as a punishment: mild deprivation, slight humiliation, and light corporal punishment. Such penalties relate to such areas as time (delays, absences), activities (inattention, recklessness), and behavior (incivility, disobedience). Foucault's perspective draws attention to generally rigid conformist behavior at school and resonates with the traditional concept of school. These procedures have not disappeared completely from current schools, but have become more subtle. Some coercion mechanisms are necessary to maintain discipline, given that it is difficult to imagine an effective learning process in school without discipline. Therefore, school normativity need not necessarily mean a burden on the child that also restricts the child's freedoms (Kaščák, 2008). The child's subordination to the school may be advantageous for the child because it contributes to his or her intellectual development (Dewey in Giroux, 2001). Leaving aside extremes where conformist behavior is rigidly required and situations where students can do whatever they want at school, school normativity is interculturally a natural characteristic of the educational environment.

The present analysis focuses on student behavior that deviates from social norms at school. Such actions therefore represent deviant behavior, which can be either positive or negative. In the context of the school environment, Hargreaves (2011) talks about routine deviation, which is a common and non-serious violation of norms. It is this everyday deviation that had received very little attention until now, since researchers (particularly in the area of labelling) have mainly focused on serious violations of norms, such as juvenile delinquency. Given the context of the theory of labelling, the concept of deviance is burdened with negative connotations. To conceptualize the notion of non-compliance with norms, we chose the term nonconformity. To define nonconformity, it is necessary to start with conformity.

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[4] In a study, Corsaro (2015) found that nursery school children attempt to avoid adult rules through secondary adjustments, which enable children to gain a certain amount of control over their lives in these settings. Children produced a wide variety of secondary adjustments in response to school rules. Teachers ignored minor transgressions. Teachers overlook such violations because the nature of the secondary adjustment often eliminates the organisational need to enforce the rule. For example, if children always played with forbidden personal objects in a surreptitious fashion, there would be no conflict and hence no need for the rule forbidding the objects. Such repetitions can even bring about changes in adult culture.

Conformity and nonconformity at school

Conformity can be defined as the tendency of individuals to adjust their views and behavior to others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Rejection and violations of group norms can then be characterized as nonconformity (Haynes, 2012). In accordance with Merton (2000), school conformity can be defined as adaptation to cultural objectives and the institutionalized means to achieve these objectives (see criticism of the static understanding of roles in Whelen, 2011). School nonconformity is perceived as a type of dynamic role behavior which relates to a student's specific social role as well as situations occurring within the institution of school. To connect nonconformity with the student's role, we use the term *student nonconformity*. Student nonconformity is defined as a student's deviation from school norms. The focus is not on the nonconforming students, but rather on student's acts of nonconformity that represent partial non-adaptation, mainly to norms or the teacher who represents those norms. Student nonconformity is understood as a specific social practice.

Childhood can be characterized as a battle between old and new rules (Jenks, 1996), and it is therefore a period that opens up vast space for nonconformity. Student nonconformity thus results from the interaction between the institution of school and the developmental period of childhood or adolescence (cf. institutionalized innocence[5]). As many authors (Manke, 2008; Pace & Hemmings, 2006; Winograd, 2005) have noted, this is natural because teachers and students are in a potential conflict. School attendance is mandatory, the status of teachers and students is unequal, and their culture and objectives often differ.

Lastly, it is important to mention that conformity and nonconformity are neither positive nor negative terms (Aries, 2015). According to Forsyth (2009), nonconformity might mean dissent but also anti-conformity, which may be motivated more by a desire to rebel than an attempt to behave in accordance with one's own beliefs. Forsyth (2009) also adds that linking conformity with negative connotations reduces the complexity of social interaction. According to this author, conformity is often the most reasonable way to respond to a given situation. People behave in a conforming manner because they implicitly accept the legitimacy of the group and its norms. In addition, student conformity and nonconformity are neutral terms and can have different meanings according to specific situations at schools.

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[5] Institutionalized innocence (Metz, 1978) is characterized by the fact that children respect norms and teachers out of admiration or fear of rejection.

Methodology

Interest in conformity research was instigated particularly by the famous psychological experiment by Asch (1951) in which participants influenced by group pressure wrongly estimated the lengths of lines. Their answers were obviously incorrect but in accordance with the opinion of the majority. Nonconformity at school was addressed in particular by British ethnographic papers from the 1970s that can be considered part of the field's canon.[6]

The aim of the present research was to describe forms of student nonconformity at school. Working in the field of undergraduate teacher education, we found student teachers' experience with nonconformity during their own school years to be important to their future career in schools. The goal of the study was to broaden educational theory and also implement research results into teacher education. We asked the following research" question: How is nonconformity constructed and perceived by student teachers in their stories about school? This research question prescribed the captured data as requiring a narrative character. Narratives and stories are not the most common type of textual data used by social scholars, although they can be considered to be the most relevant. Narratives make it possible for people, groups, and societies to make events around them understandable (Hájek, 2014). We collected stories from student teachers on the topic "My biggest trouble at school." The assignment indicated a violation of school norms either caused by students or which occurred accidentally, and so led to stories of nonconformity. This concerned irregular violations of school norms, not long-term deviance. At the same time, however, the assignment limited the reality of student nonconformity, such

[6] Willis (1977) examined nonconforming young male students from working-class families from the viewpoint of social reproduction; Hargreaves et al. (2011) described problematic paths of students at school in terms of school results, respect for rules, and emotional problems. Famous studies by Woods (1980; 2012) looked at adaptation to the school environment, from conformity to rebellion. In the American context, the area was primarily covered in critical educational studies. In the United States, McLaren (1999) described conformity and nonconformity as a social ritual that relates not only to school rules, but also to the reproduction of cultural codes and social order. Examples of current ethnographic research in students' perceptions of rules include a Swedish study by Thornberg (2008). In addition, student nonconformity is also studied in specific areas, such as the area of gender, where questionnaire-based investigations are used most often (Higdon, 2011; Collier, 2012; Collier, 2013; Toomey et al., 2010; Toomey et al., 2012; Workman & Johnson, 1994).

as through the fact that it implies negative deviations from norms. Nonconformity might also involve positive deviation which is not captured in this assignment. At the same time, narrowing the scope of narratives makes the topic tangible for the research. Of course, this type of research also has many disadvantages. The stories themselves are already interpretations (Riessman, 2008). An individual constructs past events and acts into personal narrative units to show a specific identity and the result of creating his or her life (Čermák, 2002). It is the student teachers' perspective that is important for us, and the chosen methodological procedure enables us to see it from the inside. Cortazzi (2014) discusses narrative analysis as if it were opening a window into the narrator's mind and culture.

Stories on the specified topic were written by bachelor's degree students at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, Czech Republic, during the 2015 autumn semester. A total of 61 stories were included in the research. Student teachers narrated stories relating to their primary, lower secondary, and, in a few cases, upper secondary education (International Standard Classification of Education levels 1–3). The narratives can also be understood from a historical perspective, since they often had taken place more than a decade previously. This long period between the incident and when it was written as a story might have affected the data, although narratives are never exact pictures of reality but constructions by storyteller. This research is therefore studying the narrative construction of a school reality from many years previously. On the other hand, the student teachers remembered these stories even years later; it could therefore be assumed that the stories played an important role in their lives and construction of normative school reality.

Data analysis was conducted inductively. The process can be labelled thematic narrative analysis. As Riessman (2008) mentions, this term encompasses a wide range of approaches that differ in data types, theoretical perspectives, epistemological positions, research questions, and even definitions of narrative. The essence of thematic narrative analysis is work with narrative data where the primary attention is on what is said rather than how, to whom, or for what purpose. Gubrium and Holstein (2012) state that this type of analysis directs the researcher to investigate the substantive meanings of stories. Thematic narrative analysis is very close to open coding (cf. Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015), although while open coding means coding data segments, thematic narrative analysis means coding stories (although the border is very hard to detect and very open to interpretation). In open coding, the extent of coded segments might differ (word-by-word, line-by-line, and incident-by-incident coding); coding in thematic narrative analysis is centered on cases. This approach can generate case studies of individuals, groups, and typologies (Riessman, 2008).

The research results begin with an introduction to the correspondence between the school world and the normative worlds of the family and peer group, which affect student nonconformity, continue to norms at school, and conclude with types of student nonconformity. The results contribute to understanding the learning process at school, which includes not only formal curricula but also hidden curricula, which these results are part of (cf. Lojdová, 2015b).

Correspondence of normative worlds

It should first be mentioned that a child belongs to an entire complex of normative worlds, with school being only one of the sub-worlds.[7] The described socialization into the school world is secondary socialization. Secondary socialization is traditionally defined as internalization of institutional or institution-based sub-worlds (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). During this process, however, the child is not a passive object. Children negotiate, share, and create culture with others and one another (Corsaro, 2015). That is why Corsaro (2015) emphasizes that children do not internalize the world but rather try to interpret or make sense of the culture around them and participate in it.

In this paper, we use the term socialization but also consider children to be active agents in the interaction process. We can discuss the normative worlds of secondary socialization that are different from the normative world of primary socialization – which is the family. In primary socialization, the social world is mediated to the child via the child's significant others – primarily the parents. During this stage, the child mostly accepts the parents' view of the world, without confronting it with other interpretations of the social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In secondary socialization, the gates of new social worlds open to the child, and it is apparent that the normative systems of these social worlds can, to various degrees, correspond with or contradict each other. This chapter describes the relationship between the normative world of the school and that of the family and peer group, since these worlds can strengthen or weaken a student's enaction of nonconformity at school.

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7 Cf. the ecological systems model of development by Bronfenbrenner, 1979; the orb web model by Corsaro, 2015; and students as double agents in relation to school and family by Pražská skupina školní etnografie, 2004.

The normative worlds of school and family

Across human communities, the child is considered to be a member of a small social group – the family. This group provides structural arrangements such as race, cultural and social capital, family traditions, and social status. The structural arrangements of these categories affect the nature of childhood (Corsaro, 2015). During adolescence, children can emancipate themselves from some of their families' characteristics but not all (Allport, 1958). Children behave in accordance with their families' culture and norms (Newly, 2011). This is evident even in their relationships with their teachers and school. In family environments where the teacher is considered an authority and the norms of the school are taken seriously, violating these norms is usually sanctioned twice. As a student said:

> *At the same time, I was aware that if I did something wrong at school, I'd also be correspondingly punished for it at home. That's because my parents think that a teacher is an authority and I have to act accordingly. For this reason, it never even occurred to me to disobey a teacher.* (Aleš)

Student nonconformity at school might also be nonconformity in the family, if the norms relating to education are the same in both environments. This is illustrated in particular by punishments within the family linked with violations of norms at school. In cases where the family is consistent with the school, the student might perceive the secondary sanction as more normative than the primary sanction at school. The family can therefore significantly strengthen the normative world of school, or, conversely, it may weaken this normative world. A student commented:

> *Our unexcused disappearance from school led to a reprimand from our school teacher. But it wasn't really a big deal. After the initial bad feeling, we didn't really take it too much to heart, and we were lucky that our parents only laughed at the paper with the reprimand which didn't even affect our final report at all.* (Karla)

In this example, students were not troubled by a school sanction because their families were not troubled by it. If a family does not attribute great importance to the violation of school norms, then the student does not attribute much importance to the norms or the related sanctions. Woods' (2012) research shows that middle-class families are more likely to explain school norms to children and more characteristically have a pro-school culture (emphasizing school success, attitude, dress, and middle-class values more broadly). The family therefore mediates school norms, attributes importance to them and defines sanctions connected with violations of norms at school. In cases where the family does not replicate school norms, it is easier for the students to behave in a nonconforming manner.

The normative worlds of school and the peer group

The normative world of school has multiple levels. The present analysis mostly focused on school norms represented by teachers and school management. Nevertheless, the normative world of the peer group is equally important, and although it is part of the institution of school, it can have differing norms.

Therefore, the peer group, most often the class, is a major factor affecting student behavior at school. Peers influence students' behavior directly, whether positively or negatively (Newly, 2011). As members of peer groups, students do not only endeavor to adapt to group norms. Peer cultures are not preexisting structures that children encounter or confront. It is in this sense that these cultures differ from institutional fields such as school (Corsaro, 2015). Thus, peer groups construct and strengthen school conformity or nonconformity.

Peer group norms may be consistent with school norms or may contradict them. School norms are generally stable, while peer group norms may be more fluid, constantly reconstructed by members of the peer group. If school norms and classroom collective norms differ, student nonconformity may be ambiguous. The student can be (a) nonconforming with the school but conforming with classmates, or (b) nonconforming with classmates but conforming with the school.

a) Nonconformity with school and conformity with classmates

Nonconformity in relation to school may be valued by the classroom collective; it can be expected behavior and thus also conforming behavior. Examples include stories of class heroism based on violating school norms. Often, when students have evaded school norms, they are met with the admiration of classmates and live up to the norms of their peer group. A representative example of stories of student heroism are situations where students outwit their teachers, such as a story of students who prepared an inflatable boat to cross a river during an outdoor PT class, thus avoiding the need to run around the river, and so reached the finish line long before everyone else. In this case, they were met with a positive reaction from their classmates and a negative sanction from the school management. A student remembered that: *"The boys got slapped by their parents but praised by their classmates, and they received a reprimand from the head teacher and a few extra laps each PT class."* (Zdena)

In addition to stories of heroism, such contrasting aspects of nonconformity also include stories of conflicts between students and the school culture (cf. McLaren, 1999). Nonconformity with the school may be conformity within the peer group, particularly when students do not share a conception of social norms with teachers. This can be seen in Monika's story about accompanying a friend to hospital, which resulted in Monika's own unexcused absence from school. In the story, Monika attempted to reconstruct her dialogue with a teacher:

> Teacher: "*Personal reasons for absences include funerals and weddings, but certainly not a supposedly sick friend. I'm not going to accept this as a valid excuse! Do you realize you'll have an unexcused absence on your record?"*
> Monika: *"Yes, I know, but I honestly don't really care. It was very important to my friend Verča, and she's my best friend. It was important to me as well, and I'd do it again."*
> Teacher: *"Monika! I've never seen such insolence! There will be consequences! It's time for you to realize that friendship means nothing in this world, so wake up and think about what you're doing!"*

The story illustrates resistance against school norms (being at school even when a friend needs help) and a normative conflict between a student and a teacher who had personally different values used to legitimize school norms. The student behaved in a nonconforming manner because she perceived it to be the right thing to do, and she retained this understanding even years later when she wrote the story. The student's nonconforming attitude can be understood as pro-social because it benefits another person without demanding any reward. Nevertheless, it is inconsistent with school norms.

b) Nonconformity with classmates and conformity with school

Another type of nonconforming ambiguity is a situation where students do not conform to classmates but do conform to the school. Students may respect school norms by complying with the rules or drawing attention to the rules. In ambiguous situations, however, this activity contradicts the norms of the school collective. For example, Lucie noticed that after a class in which students had been writing a test, a classmate whom she considered to be lazy remained in the classroom. Therefore, she and her friend ran to the headmaster's office to report that their classmate had been changing his answers:

> *All breathless, we told the headmaster about what we had seen, and he called both the student and the Maths teacher into his office. But to our bad luck, it turned out that this classmate had not changed his answers after the test. At that moment, I was so ashamed that I would've just disappeared if it were possible.* (Lucie)

This is an example of telling on someone. Telling on somebody can be defined as reporting someone else's deviation from a norm to a third party (Ingram & Bering, 2010). Telling on others is often seen as undesirable from the perspective of teachers, and so could be viewed as diverging from school norms. However, the very act of telling on someone is directed at complying with norms. Lucie's intention was for equal conditions for all students on tests to be preserved through adherence to the school rule of not copying from others. From this perspective, telling on a classmate is conforming to school norms. Nevertheless, telling on a classmate can be viewed as violating the norms of the group, which is nonconforming in relation to

classmates. It does not matter if the accusation is false, as in this case, or true. What matters is the norm within the student collective – whether the norm is pro-school or not. The following sections will focus more deeply on types of norms at school and related forms of student nonconformity.

Norms at school

Norms at school can be subdivided into society-wide norms, which are also in force in other social groups, and school norms, which are typical for the school institution. When focusing on society-wide norms, the main types are legal, moral, and aesthetic norms. In addition to norms applicable to the entire society, school norms are also in force at schools. These norms regulate interactions between teachers and students as well as among students themselves and are typical for the school institution. Their codification is illustrated here in three examples: violating school norms, violating school routine, and public discipline. Student nonconformity is interactively constructed in these processes.

Violating school norms and making them visible

As many norms at school are not communicated in advance, they only become visible after they are breached. Rendl (1994) also describes what he calls silent rules of school life, many of which do not have a written or explicitly stated form. Their effective existence is reproduced over and over though the fact that they are violated and talked about. An example of such a violation of a school norm can be found in Alena's story:

> *At Christmas, we all got lots of presents. I got a beautiful pair of black sweatpants with four white stripes on the sides. The first day of school after the Christmas holiday I decided to wear them and show them to everybody. When I entered the school building, everybody stared in disbelief at what I'd dared to wear to school. At the end of the day, we had a class with our class teacher. In front of the whole class, she started lecturing us on how sweatpants aren't appropriate clothing for school. I was completely indignant, and I felt tears welling up in my eyes.* (Alena)

This story presents a failure to comply with a dress code. To add cultural context, in Czech schools there are no school uniforms that would restrict clothing choices. Clothing norms are more implicit, not defined beforehand. Sweatpants, however, represent outdoor clothing. Outdoor clothing is worn by children that do not identify with school (Obrovská, 2016). Violating the dress norm means that in this specific case student nonconformity was not intentional. As shown in Alena's story, her goal was to appeal to her classmates, that is to conform, but the effect of her action was exactly the

opposite. Based on Alena's nonconformity, the topic of clothing norms became a topic in the educational process.

School norms are mostly connected with space and time. Vendula was met with a spatial norm separating younger and older students at school that was also introduced ex-post based on her misdeed:

> *When I was in second grade, one fifth-grader saw me and apparently fell in love with me. He started coming to sit next to me at lunch, which our teacher did not like to see since children up to third grade had to all sit together at one table and so he was messing up the numbers. But when she sent him to sit somewhere else, the next day he came back again. It all came to a head when he left a letter for me in our mailbox. My first love letter in my life and I didn't even get the chance to read it. Mum was shocked when she saw it and came with me to my school the next day and had a long discussion with my teacher. After that I was forbidden from talking to any older boys, and till the end of that school year all students from higher grades were forbidden from visiting younger students during breaks. I thought I must have done something terrible, though I didn't really understand what exactly it had been and how not to repeat it.* (Vendula)

It is hard to be socialized into such norms as they are not known beforehand; they are diachronic. As Vendula reports in her story, she accepted the newly introduced norm from people in the position of authority but did not understand the reasons why this norm had been established. Therefore, her behavior was only nonconforming ex post, after the norm had been introduced. At the same time, the school's normative system changed. An originally descriptive norm—students of different ages meet each other—changed into an injunctive norm (cf. McDonald & Crandall, 2015), which was the opposite: students of different ages must not meet. The dynamics of the student's descriptive norm may result in an injunctive norm from the school, which is then constructed as the opposite of the students' normative world. The normative worlds of the students and the school thus enter into conflict.

In the same manner, breaches of legal or moral norms in the student teachers' stories were often accompanied by the revelation that labelling a violation of a norm meant this norm was (re)defined in the school discourse and strengthened. An important mechanism of socialization into school norms are instances in which they are violated.

Violating school routine

Schools are interwoven with organizational norms and associated rituals of everyday routine. Rituals pervade the structure of school life and are almost automatically accepted by students and teachers, and so they serve as mechanisms of social control (Woods, 2012). Rituals are relatively stable patterns of behavior which attribute a broader meaning to a situation

(Bernstein et al., 1966). The school environment is characterized by many rituals that not only organize school life but also bear aspects of the relationships among social participants. The ritual can also contain a simple organizational rule, which originated from the socially superordinate position of the school management, and its violation, which is perceived as a very serious breach that erodes the system. Another student remembered:

> *In first grade, we were instructed to put our slippers into bags and hang them on hooks in the changing room before leaving school. At first, I followed the instructions to the letter, and my slippers were always hung up. But later, I started noticing that more and more of my classmates were putting their slippers in the shoe rack. I thought that they were making a mistake, and that they would get into trouble because they were breaking the rules. Days passed and there was no scolding or problem with it. Once, in a hurry, I put my slippers in the rack as well. It was so easy, not spending extra time taking the bag down from the hook, undoing the knot, placing the slippers inside with clumsy little first-grader hands. I liked it much better. Two weeks later, I came to the changing room in the morning and my slippers had disappeared from the rack. And not only mine, but also those of the other wrongdoers. So, I went into the classroom in my outdoor shoes. In the doorway, I passed the scowling teacher and saw my slippers in a pile in front of the board. The teacher forbade me to take them and after the bell rang to announce the start of class, she called all the sinners to the board (and there were a lot of us). One by one, she asked us all why our shoes hadn't been put into their bags, and everybody answered that they'd forgotten. When it was my turn, I answered that I didn't like the routine and that it was faster to put the shoes in the rack. Then I was lectured on how lazy I was and that putting slippers into the bags had been ordered by the headmaster and that the cleaning lady cleans the shoe rack and that I was creating extra work for her. Then she continued with a list of questions about whether I had anything against the headmaster or whether my mother would like it if she had to clean the shoe rack when it was cluttered with slippers.* (Jana)

This story illustrates nonconformity in relation to the ritualization of everyday routines. Students may deliberately violate norms because they appear illogical and they want to create a norm that they find more suitable. Deviations from the norms and rituals established by the school management may be perceived as very serious and therefore be severely punished. At the same time, the story reveals the sources of legitimacy for norms and related rituals. In this case, it was the authority of the headmaster, who had introduced the rule of putting slippers into bags. Breaking the rule is then identified with disrespecting the headmaster. But this is the perspective of adults, not children. Jana did not consider her action to be rebellion against the headmaster.

Many rituals are connected with the school bell that marks out time frames and also has a symbolic and practical meaning (Kaščák, 2006). This is described in Zdeněk's story of his entire class leaving the classroom to have lunch after half an hour of waiting for the teacher. In his story, the norm regulating movement within the space of the school building was breached, since the students did not wait for either the teacher or a ringing bell. Student nonconformity here resulted from the long wait for a legitimization of a space change (by the teacher or ringing). Even in cases where no teaching is occurring, students are required to respect norms. When the students decided to change spaces independently, they behaved in a nonconforming manner. In order to preserve norms and traditional rituals, schools apply discipline mechanisms.

Public discipline

At this point, we are touching upon the topic of schools' reactions to student nonconformity. A school, of course, has a number of formal instruments to discipline students. These include in particular notes, reprimands, and lowered grades for behavior. These types of punishment were explicitly referred to in many stories. More interesting, however, are the informal or implicit penalties that are not listed in school regulations. One such penalty is public discipline.

Compared to other social environments, the school environment has a wide variety of public discipline mechanisms. If there is a violation of a social norm, this violation is often presented with a significant performative character. For example, Zuzana was so consumed by one of her tasks that she submitted a paper full of crossed-out words. Public discipline followed, as the next quotation shows:

> *With a disgusted look on her face, the teacher held a paper in her right hand meaningfully by the corner, as if she detested it. The moment I recognized my paper, my heart began pounding in my chest as if I'd been in a race. Her eyes found me among the other children. 'And what is this supposed to be? I was absolutely shocked by the condition of your proposal! How could you dare to submit something so disgusting?' The head teacher's litany continued in front of the entire school. I felt like the stupidest person on the planet. I was staring at the ground and trying hard not to cry. I felt completely abandoned among my friends and schoolmates. I avoided the others' stares. After some time, which seemed like an eternity to me, her monologue ended and she announced the names of students who'd been successful, which, of course, didn't include my name.* (Zuzana)

What reinforces the disciplinary punishment in this example is its performative character. Punishing a student in front of an audience is a ritual of teachers' dominance over students within the normative school system (cf. McLaren, 1999). It reproduces normative systems through social performance.

Disciplinary punishment is based on non-compliance, or anything that does not correspond with the rules, that defies them, or that deviates from them. The entire undefined area of nonconformity is punishable: an offense may include not only any mistake made by the student but also the inability to fulfil given tasks (Foucault, 1975).

Teachers play a role as the holders of power (cf. Goffman, 1990). Students are involuntary actors in this performance because the script was not written by them but is based on the school's normative system. Punishment that pervades all points and oversees all moments at disciplinary institutions compares, distinguishes, hierarchizes, homogenizes, and excludes; in one word – it normalizes (Foucault, 1975). As reported by McLaren (1999), dominance is not easily reproduced but constantly works together with the rituals of everyday routine. Discipline is an important part of this process. Through performative student nonconformity and disciplining rituals, students and teachers become actors in the process of normalization at school. Students' active role in constructing nonconformity should be emphasized. Such an active role can be seen in some types of student nonconformity. We will therefore discuss these types in the next section.

Types of student nonconformity

When discussing specific types of nonconformity at school, various criteria can be used to divide it. According to the type of violated social norm, there can such instances as legal, moral, aesthetic, an school-specific (violating specific school norms, e.g. no changing space without the legitimization of a bell or teacher) nonconformity. These types of nonconformity were discussed above. The current section will summarize types of student nonconformity according to four criteria: a) number of participants, b) sanctions, c) students' perception of the nonconformity, and d) locations at school. This can be helpful for future research on student nonconformity.

a) According to the number of participants, individual, dyadic, and group nonconformity can be distinguished. Individual nonconformity is found in our research in the stories of individuals such as Marek, who tried to submit a failed test in a creative manner: "*I was thinking there was no point in trying to grope blindly for knowledge that I don't have anyway, so I decided to turn the test in. To make it more interesting, I folded the sheet of paper into the shape of a little ship.*" Dyadic nonconformity describes two students breaking a norm together. An example can be seen in the story of two friends who decide to play truant together. In contrast, the crucial factor in group nonconformity is the dynamics of the social group from which the nonconformity arises:

> *Some friends had the idea to play catch. The ordinary throwing and catching turned into more brutal aiming at live targets, individual players of this innocent game. It couldn't have ended up differently. Then Honza, all smiles, threw the ball at Tomáš but Tomáš nimbly jumped out of the way and there was a disaster. The spinning ball found its target: a jar with a preserved octopus. It teetered and eventually, with a lot of noise, shattered on the linoleum-covered floor. I don't know what the liquid was but the room stunk horribly even after a thorough cleaning with toilet paper. The bell rang to announce the beginning of class and our strict Maths teacher walked into the room. After less than five minutes, she started questioning what smelled so bad, 'Did somebody have a snack of rotten fish?' That was the first question she could think of. Of course we all denied it to a man. Finally, she invited a colleague into the classroom to resolve the issue together. The broken jar with the octopus was, of course, soon discovered. What we, as teenagers, didn't know was that the fumes from the fluid were toxic. Emergency services were immediately called to deal with the damage.* (Zora)

Group nonconformity in the classroom often takes the shape of forbidden games that deviate from school norms (running in the hallways, throwing things, playing with the class register, some sort of improvised football, etc.). These games are normalized means of communication and, therefore, an integral part of student culture. They often feature violence (cf. Bittnerová, 2002). Student teachers' stories contained a number of forbidden games linked to a similar scenario. It involved a spontaneous, improvised game that culminated in school property being damaged or a student getting hurt. An investigation and sanctions then followed. We will next touch upon the topic of sanctions connected with student nonconformity.

b) Regarding sanctions, we can differentiate nonconformity without sanctions, with negative sanctions, and with positive sanctions. Nonconformity without sanctions includes nonconformity that was not discovered, and so not punished or rewarded. The stories most commonly featured negative sanctions, namely various types of punishments. The school environment typically has a variety of formal sanctions: notes, warnings, reprimands, and black marks. Informal sanctions appear as well: chores at school ("*as punishment, we had to polish the display cases in the physics classroom*"), an investigation of letting someone down during an examination, buying a destroyed thing or replacing a damaged item ("*we had to rewrite the soaked class register"*), and warnings from teachers (*"the teacher came in with a stern expression and gave us a lecture on broken arms and legs*"). The disruption of the student's relationship with the teacher can also be viewed as a negative sanction (*"since then, the teacher started to dislike me a little bit*"). However, nonconformity can also receive positive sanctions. A student suggested:

> *During the break, the ninth graders were bugging us as usual. Their main leader was the much-feared, muscular, and obnoxious Robert. This specific break he was all set on taking "my" mirror in our classroom which I, however, didn't want to give up so easily. Just when he was about to take it down from the wall and carry it away, I ran at him and smashed his nose with my fist so hard that he started bleeding. And there was a lot of blood. The situation immediately started being resolved and I was summoned to the headmaster's office. I went there completely scared, fearing what would happen to me and how I would be punished. The headmaster, however, was not angry at all. On the contrary, he was in a good mood and told me that Robert had deserved it for all the skullduggery that he kept getting up to.* (Kamila)

Kamila tells a story in which she violated school norms but at the same time was informally rewarded by the headmaster, who legitimized her behavior with the idea that the boy in question deserved it. This is a story of the heroism of a weaker person against a stronger person. The story points out the pivotal role played by the teacher or headmaster who can relabel the violation of norms (cf. Woods, 1980). As for negative sanctions, these can be subdivided according to their acceptance or non-acceptance by students. The latter basically implies that the punishment is perceived as unfair. Stories of injustice at school are fairly common and could easily be addressed in a separate study (cf. Thornberg, 2008).

c) Another criteria of nonconformity is connected to students' perceptions of the nonconformity and sanctions. Nonconformity in narratives is strongly connected with the students' emotions accompanying the behavior that violates a norm—for example playing a forbidden game is characterized as fun—as well as the resulting effect – e.g. a copied test or outwitted teacher. Because negative sanctions predominated in the narratives, negative emotions connected with them predominated as well: "*I felt very uncomfortable, almost ashamed*"; "*I felt like a dog that'd been beaten*." However, students might also be proud of their nonconforming behavior and its effects or results: "*Until the end of the week, I was considered a heroine in the class*," concluded Kamila in her narrative about hitting a schoolmate – obnoxious Robert. A sanction as a symbol of nonconforming behavior might be viewed as a trophy: *"She had her class teacher's reprimand framed and hung it over her bed*."

d) Nonconformity can also take place in various locations at school. According to this criterion, it is possible to distinguish among nonconformity during lessons, during breaks, and outside of school (cf. Bourdieu & Passeron 1990; Obrovská, 2006). Nonconformity during lessons is characterized by the presence of a teacher who represents the norms. It often concerns the study matter. The most typical cases of nonconformity during lessons are prohibited types of communication at school – disturbances, copying off others, and

giving answers to others. It can also include criticizing a teacher's lesson, where such initiative on the part of the student is not customary. For example, a student corrected her Maths teacher, who had made a mistake in a calculation, and was met with a negative sanction. She disrupted the basic stereotype: teachers are bigger, stronger, and smarter than students (Woods, 2012). Nonconformity during a break has a completely different character. It is usually not related to the study matter or teachers. Mostly, it involves the aforementioned forbidden games that deviate from the school norms. Nonconformity outside of school refers to excursions, training, and school trips, but can also include truancy. In these cases, the school space and the specifics of the school space and time are therefore weakened. This escape from the school space might itself evoke a violation of norms – such as alcohol consumption on school trips.

In these types of student nonconformity, students' active role in enacting nonconformity is visible. Nonconformity is created by the dynamics of the social group, the interaction of students within school and outside the school environment, and their own perceptions of nonconformity.

These types of nonconformity combine with one another. An example is playing forbidden games, which could be labelled as group nonconformity during a break violating school norms. It might be associated with positive emotions during the game and negative emotions if a negative sanction is put into effect.

Discussion and conclusion

Students at school familiarize themselves with, negotiate, and recreate a variety of social norms. This study focused on norms being negotiated at school through student nonconformity as constructed in a narrative by student teachers who described stories from their childhoods. Student nonconformity is not only delineated as breaking formal norms, but more precisely as deviating from the unwritten ritualization of school interactions. Such nonconformity does not represent the anti-school attitudes of those known as troubled students or students with an anti-school culture, but is rather everyday deviation from school norms. It is often described by students with a pro-school culture. In this way, we gain a picture of the everyday world of school in which it is nonconformity that constitutes and strengthens school norms, as described by Waller (in Woods, 2012). Unlike famous ethnographic studies such as Woods' (2012) typology of students' adaptation to school norms (from conformity to rebellion), this study provides an even more subtle and changeable description of nonconformity. Rather than students' strategies of nonconformity, it captures one-off practices of nonconformity

that constitute school interactions. This perspective shows students as active agents in the process of socialization and contributes to the new sociology of childhood[8] (cf. Thornberg, 2008; Corsaro, 2015) by putting childhood at the center of analysis.

The research results come from the Czech context but have a broader relevance. We have described the phenomenon of student nonconformity, aspects of which were also reflected in studies by Foucault (1975), Hargreaves (2011), McLaren (1999), Thornberg (2008), Woods (1980), and many others in different cultural and historical contexts.

Our research firstly revealed that student nonconformity is not shaped only by school norms. The importance of the peer group and most importantly the family environment for conforming behavior at school was demonstrated. In particular, the family environment predisposes students towards having a pro- or anti-school culture. This study found that family culture mediates school norms and strengthens or weakens school sanctions. Normative ambiguity in relation to school norms might also occur within the peer group.

Secondly, school norms and their codification were described. We can answer our research question focused on how nonconformity is constructed and perceived in three ways. First, student nonconformity is constructed by violating school norms. By labelling an action as a violation of a norm, this norm is (re)defined in the school discourse and strengthened. Nonconforming behavior is often labelled as such ex post, after the norm has been violated, because some norms are invisible prior to being violated. This process changes the school's normative world by naming and recreating norms. Second, student nonconformity is also constructed by violating school routine. Within schools, it is possible to identify teachers' dependence on rules and rituals and the related reluctance to change the rules. As described by Woods (2012), rituals are the bearers of tradition and any change to them implies discontinuity. Third, nonconformity is constructed by public discipline. Because institutions and teachers want to create an effective learning environment and also preserve tradition, they react to nonconformity with public discipline. In connection with a transformation of the prison system, Foucault (1975) describes punishment as a theatrical performance disappearing at the end of the 18th century and the ceremonial aspect of the punishment gradually receding into the background. This does not appear to be the case at school. Discipline mechanisms are much more subtle,

[8] The second tenet of the new sociology of childhood (after children being active agents who construct their own cultures and contribute to the production of the adult world) is that childhood is a structural form or part of society (Corsaro, 2015).

however, as they are not corporal but symbolic, as opposed to the public torture described by Foucault (1975). Their main feature takes the form of a public performance. They include rituals of teacher's dominance over students, and in this manner school and societal norms are continually reproduced. Among other reasons, student nonconformity is made possible through discipline, which labels nonconformity and reproduces school norms.

The last section covered types of student nonconformity and how students perceive nonconformity. Violations of school norms and routines leading to nonconformity are often not intentional. In this respect, student nonconformity differs from student resistance (cf. Lojdová, 2015). Students connect nonconformity more with fun or simplifying everyday routines than with rebellion. An example of fun are the forbidden games described above. Circumvention or simplifying school norms is often connected with perceptions of school norms as illogical and not perceiving norms as a manifestation of the school or headmaster's authority (as in Jana's example of slippers). This is where teachers' and students' points of view differ. For this reason, it is necessary to study students' perspectives through narrative research. From the viewpoint of educational theory, this study has uncovered the hidden curriculum at school (including social control; McLaren, 1999) and the peculiar world of socialization and learning at school. It contributes to the theory of critical pedagogy, which understands the school as a public democratic sphere that is the location of teaching as well as an area of social life (Giroux, 2001) in childhood.

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