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Growing up and support the growth of others - Educational ideals, social agendas, individual narratives, and collective questionings

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Contribution Details

1. Title of Proposal

Growing up and support the growth of others
Educational ideals, social agendas, individual narratives, and collective questionings

2. Proposal Information

European societies, including their social institutions simultaneously face the universal and timeless question of “How to care for and to educate our progeny?” and those related to the challenges of a modern world with its modern or even hypermodern individuals (1). The collective challenge of raising children seems to rely increasingly on the responsibility of close family members. European societies have created institutions and spaces where individuals can encounter and experience social support collectively and individually. The institution carries a collective dimension through its organization, agenda, and functions. Thus, these collective functions which appear to have an anthropologic purpose will be examined in this paper.

The paper at hand is based on the experience of a co-moderated setting called "accompaniment-research" in partnership with a social centre in the Parisian suburbs. The question of the transformations of activities and professions within the social sector was central to the accompanied team as well as to the moderators of the framework. These transformations resonated with the fears, uncertainties, and fragilities encountered "on the field" as well as in the subjectivity of the professionals and the group. Due to this, this paper is part of a psychoanalytically oriented clinical thesis (2,3) on ideologies as well as a "multiple field" research project on the themes of fragility and vulnerability (4). Furthermore, this thesis is written under a French-German co-directorship between Université Paris Nanterre (France) and Freie Universität Berlin (Germany). These plural references which are coherent through the common clinical approach make it possible to account for and illustrate the "geography" of this accompaniment and research experience.

The name "accompaniment-research" underlines the specificity of the setting which is part of both a municipal institution and a university research team. The aim was to think about and build a support proposal that could respond to or bring to work a multiplicity of factors, demands, injunctions, and even desires.

The paper will highlight and analyse a certain number of phenomena observed during the group elaborations in matters of educational ideas, or even ideals (5). The professionals' representations which are tinted by their own experiences help us to understand how their ideas and ideals on education feed into their professional positioning. Moreover, the group dynamics and biographic narratives illustrate the societal needs and intentions to contribute to the education of future generations. The question regarding “who children belong to?” (6) resonates with the anthropologic preoccupation of human collectives to make the new-born and growing child a member of the group. Do children in our European societies belong to their families, to the nation, or no one but themselves? How does the subject perceive and negotiate its belonging within these diverse groups? Which processes does the subject go through in order to have his or her inscription in the collective?

3. Methodology or Methods/ Research Instruments or Sources Used

The experimental framework was created with a theoretical endorsement on group dynamics, institutional intervention, psychoanalysis, psychosociology, anthropology, and educational sciences including a clinical and psychoanalytical approach. Hence, this research is qualitatively analysed via the theoretical approaches mentioned above.

The modalities of the construction of the framework will be presented in order to show how this work of co-moderation made it possible to bring together staff members around a moving object of work. Due to this group dynamic, two separate invitations were given to elaborate on so that each person could seize one of them and by that contribute to the collective reflection. The proposal to express oneself either by describing a work situation, with reference to the analysis of professional practices, or by evoking a personal and biographical narrative, with a clinical and anthropological reception, allowed the emergence of a hybrid form of accompaniment, intervention, and research. These two axes of elaboration, meaning the work of analysis of professional practices inspired by Balint Groups with a clinical orientation and the more subjective elaboration of a biographical narrative seem to have made it possible to initiate work on the potential links between the "personal" and the "professional" as well as on the potential psychological, social, and anthropological functions of a social centre that has to face new needs and injunctions for support.

The multireferentiality of the methodology emphasises the theoretical matter which lies at the junction between psychoanalysis, anthropology, biographic research, and psychosociological intervention.

4. Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

The analysis of the group's working process will provide several keys of comprehension regarding the educational functions of a social centre in the suburbs of a European metropolis. Additionally, it will illustrate how such a centre, an extra-familiar collective, can contribute to the education of children and adolescents and especially, how this contribution can be articulated along with the caregivers.

The notion of anthropologizing functions (7) of institutions will be transposed from the original school frame to that of a social centre.

Through the concept of the narcissistic contract (8,9) I will illustrate the subject's relationship to the collective. Thereby, some observed phenomena will help to indicate the potential risk of a confinement of identities throughout the process of subjectivation (10).

As part of the codirectorship of my thesis, a four-month stay is planned in spring 2022. This might provide more international material and insights which can be included in the final research.

5. References

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6. Intent of Publication

Another paper related to this research has been submitted and accepted by GIS Hybrida IS. The setting analysis deals with other transferential and counter-transferential phenomena. Conference dates 18th-20th may 2022 RENNES (France).

7. Keywords

Educational policies, ideals, modernity, anthropologic functions of the collective

8. Keywords on Research Methods

Clinical approach, psychoanalysis, anthropology, psychosociology