

# CHILDREN OF DIPLOMATS IN (RE)SOCIALISATION TURBULENCES OF MIGRATION<sup>1</sup>

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COBISS 1.01

## ABSTRACT

### **Children of Diplomats in (Re)socialisation Turbulences of Migration**

(Continuous) temporary employment of diplomats abroad is a form of migration. The article focuses on the population of children of diplomats and the question of the (re)socialisation processes they experience when moving abroad with their parents. The interpretative scheme of the article is based on the theory of the social construction of reality (Berger, Luckmann) and the theory of acculturation (Redfield), while employing the concept of hegemony (Althusser) and processes of stigmatisation (Goffman). Examples of turbulences discussed are: language competence, status incongruence, status of a foreigner, stigma, split personality, generational conflict, and processes of reintegration upon returning back home, bearing in mind that return in the social/cultural sense, and above all in terms of identity, is not possible.

KEYWORDS: migration, resocialisation, acculturation, diplomacy, children

## IZVLEČEK

### **Otroci diplomatov v (re)socializacijskih turbolencah migracij**

Članek izhaja iz predpostavke, da je poklicno gibanje diplomatov (permanentno) začasno delo v tujini ter s tem oblika migracije. Osredotoča se na populacijo otrok diplomatov in vprašanje, v kakšne (re)socializacijske procese so vpeti otroci, ki svoje starše spremljajo pri selitvah. Interpretativna shema je izoblikovana s prepletanjem teorije družbene konstrukcije realnosti (Berger, Luckmann) in teorije akulturacije (Redfield) ob upoštevanju pomena procesov stigmatizacije (Goffman). Kot primeri turbolenc so obravnavani: jezikovna kompetenca, statusna inkogruenca, status tujca, stigma, razcepljena osebnost, generacijski konflikt in proces reintegracije ob t. i. vrnitvi, pri čemer se ugotavlja, da vrnitev v družbeno/kulturnem, predvsem pa identitetnem smislu, ni mogoča.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: migracije, resocializacija, akulturacija, diplomacija, otroci

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<sup>1</sup> The article is the result of research conducted as part of the research programme National and cultural identity of Slovenian emigration (ARRS) and the research project: Professional Bases, Strategies and Theoretical Frameworks of Education for Intercultural Relations and Active Citizenship (European Social Fund EU and the Ministry of Education and Sport). The title was inspired by the book *The Turbulence of Migration* (Papastergiadis 2000).

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## INTRODUCTION

Working in diplomacy is distinguished by the fact that it mostly takes place abroad. Diplomats are a population that is (continuously) temporarily employed abroad.<sup>3</sup> They are rotated between their homeland and different countries as part of their professional obligations. Their temporary employment abroad is a specific type of migration, where principles of circularity can be seen: emigration – immigration – remigration/(re)integration. With emigration, which is at the same time immigration, they experience the processes of resocialisation, sometimes also integration, and upon returning home the processes of reintegration. Circular migrations are permanently repetitive but differ from the classic model, as the countries of immigration change. We may also speak of transmigration and transnationality.<sup>4</sup>

In this article, the professional movements of diplomats are referred to as migration. This is in opposition to the authors who use the term mobility to describe spatial movements of individuals in reputable and high-status professions.<sup>5</sup> They argue that diplomats, journalists, international humanitarian workers, businessmen etc. are part of the so-called (international) professional mobile class.<sup>6</sup> Methodological nationalism<sup>7</sup> and social racism are behind this categorisation. Social racism, which in the framework of global capital is indirectly linked to nationalism, implies that poor people are migrants and rich people are mobile. My belief is that the use of the term mobility is ideological and theoretically undefined, and I use the terms migration or temporary work abroad as types of international migration.

The article is focused on the population of children of diplomats who circularly migrate, or transmigrate, together with their parents. The questions that I will attempt to answer are: What processes do children who migrate with their parents experience? How can we describe processes of primary and secondary socialisation and resocialisation? Are agents of socialisation harmonised, and if not, what does that mean? If processes of resocialisation<sup>8</sup> occur before socialisation is concluded, what situations may arise? The debate focuses on the critical evaluation of migration contexts, when analysing the chosen processes in the light of the theory of the social construction of reality, with emphasis on

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<sup>3</sup> “... You can’t be a diplomat if you don’t work abroad. If you work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and have never worked at an embassy or a consulate, you are just not a diplomat.” (Interviewee 2)

<sup>4</sup> More about transnationalism and transmigration in: Vertovec 2001 and Lukšič Hacin 2009.

<sup>5</sup> For a debate on the use of the term movement instead of migration when discussing spatial movements of members with privileged social statuses, see Mojca Vah Jevšnik (2009: 20–21).

<sup>6</sup> An interesting insight into the migration dynamics of humanitarian and development workers is provided by Mojca Vah Jevšnik (2008, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Methodological nationalism is understood as defined by Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick-Schiller (2003).

<sup>8</sup> In epistemological terms, resocialisation, defined as processes of changing of a person on an individual level, meets with the similar term acculturation. In migration contexts, these two categories intersect. I decided to use the term resocialisation, as I am interested only in the processes at the level of the individual, not the community.

resocialisation processes. The interpretative scheme of the article is based on the theory of the social construction of reality (Berger, Luckmann 1998) and the theory of acculturation (Redfield et al. 1936), while employing the concept of hegemony (Althusser 1980) and processes of stigmatisation (Goffman 1963).

The article provides the results of the research conducted by the Policy Planning and Research Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and Slovenian Migration Institute ZRC SAZU in 2008 and 2009. The research focused on the question of equal opportunities in the Slovenian diplomatic corps, but the interviewees (diplomats) also discussed the issue of family dynamics and lives of their children abroad and upon return home. A quantitative and qualitative approach was used. Eleven in-depth interviews were conducted and a questionnaire was filled out by 235 diplomats.<sup>9</sup> The article also uses the findings of research on the difficulties of children of Slovenian diplomats in returning to Slovenian schools (Skok, Videtič 2002) and the results of research on Slovenians abroad published in books *When Abroad Becomes Home* (Lukšič-Hacin 1995) and *Multiculturalism and Migration* (Lukšič-Hacin 1999).

## KEY FEATURES OF THE (RE)SOCIALISATION CONTEXT

Processes of humanisation simultaneously ensure social/cultural continuity, as they reproduce the existing relations. Every individual with their inherited predispositions is born into a social/cultural environment. The environment sets the limits to fulfilment of predispositions and enforces its own strategies for meeting needs. Through those processes, an individual internalises the principles and values of the environment into which she/he was born. The intensity of the impact of the environment on shaping a child's personality varies according to age. The first years of life, when primary socialisation occurs, are important. This period is emotionally very dynamic and includes more than just cognitive development. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann stress the importance of the emotional attachment to a significant Other, which ensures that a child internalises the world surrounding her/him. A child identifies with significant Others through various emotions. Whatever they may be, internalisation always occurs together with identification (1988: 123). A child is entirely open to the influences from the outside world. The most important element of primary socialisation is speech<sup>10</sup> or the so-called mother tongue. It follows a child from her/his first years on. The intertwining of language and (changing) situations transmits the world of meanings and symbols, which are two essentials of human communication, to the child. During those processes, the subconscious<sup>11</sup> is formed, which accompanies a person throughout his/her life. Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser also

<sup>9</sup> More in Pirnat 2009: 27–42.

<sup>10</sup> The term speech is understood as in Saussure's triad: language – langue (language) – parole (speech).

<sup>11</sup> Also important in primary socialisation is the tendency to imitate. The tendency to subconsciously imitate is gradually transformed into a conscious imitation of significant others. Imitation that simultaneously realizes identification strengthens the existent (social/cultural) value system through

denote these processes as being of key importance in their concepts of hegemony. Primary socialisation is completed when the concept of the generalised Other (and everything it encompasses) becomes embedded in an individual's consciousness. A person becomes an effective member of a society and subjectively owns himself/herself, as well as the world. But this internalisation of society, identity and reality is not yet completed. Socialisation is never complete and final (Berger, Luckmann 1988: 128).

Processes of primary socialisation slowly evolve into secondary socialisation. The latter can build upon the effects of primary socialisation, and even partly change them, but can never replace them. The personality is already roughly shaped. The world of secondary socialisation is institutionalised and impersonal. Anonymity is present. Emotional ties make way for more formal, impersonal relations. Necessity makes way for possibility. The effects of these processes are not as deeply rooted in a person's personality as the effects of primary socialisation. Changes also occur in identification patterns. Faith and trust are replaced by rationally developed motives. According to Berger and Luckmann, secondary socialisation is about the internationalisation of institutional structures and about acquiring knowledge that stems from social roles. These are linked to the acquirement of a specific vocabulary, as well as internalisation of meanings that structure explanations and behaviour inside an institutional area. Silent understanding, valuation and emotionality of those semantic fields are acquired. Also, subuniverses are acquired, while the basic, social world is acquired through primary socialisation (Berger, Luckmann 1988: 129).

In order to achieve successful socialisation,<sup>12</sup> the basic structure of secondary socialisation needs to be similar to primary socialisation. Processes of secondary socialisation should continue in the manner established in primary socialisation. Discrepancies may lead to unsuccessful socialisation, which, as will be discussed in more detail further on, often occurs in migration contexts.

According to the analytical model, processes of resocialisation occur after the completion of secondary socialisation. Career changes, mobility, accidents at work that result in necessary adjustments and change, migration, etc., all demand adjustment to new situations. A person constantly needs to adapt to new situations, i.e. resocialise. Resocialisation can be partial<sup>13</sup> or more intense. Intense resocialisation includes alternation,<sup>14</sup>

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a bipolar division of good vs. bad. Identity or the process of identification is slowly developed in this manner.

<sup>12</sup> Successful socialisation means that a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality is established. As a result, a so-called balanced identity develops. In case of unsuccessful socialisation, asymmetry between objective and subjective reality occurs (Berger, Luckmann 1988: 151). Subjective and objective are intertwined categories, not independent, absolute categories.

<sup>13</sup> Partial resocialisation occurs due to demands of increasingly intensive technological development. It is linked to the dynamics of employment, labour and social (class, education) mobility, accidents etc.

<sup>14</sup> Alternation is the most intense resocialisation phenomenon. It is a conversion to a different world. The intensity of the process can be compared to primary socialisation, as it re-establishes reality through strong emotional identification with a significant Other (similarly as in childhood). It differs from primary socialisation in the fact that it is not developed 'ex nihilo'. It must first destroy and erase the

indoctrination<sup>15</sup> and acculturation.<sup>16</sup> Acculturation is an example of intense resocialisation that also occurs in various migration situations, regardless of whether the migration is voluntary or forced.

## **CHILDREN OF DIPLOMATS IN THE CONTEXT (RE)SOCIALISATION**

By moving abroad, diplomats and their children undergo processes of resocialisation or acculturation<sup>17</sup> which occur when individuals change their social/cultural environment. These processes are well-known from life stories of Slovenian expatriates. People leave for new, different environments, with which they become familiar only when they immigrate. A flood of new impressions may lead to a phenomenon known in anthropology as culture shock: a state of hopeless astonishment, bewilderment and confusion; different people, relations, values and norms; a new position within one's social and ethnic stratification; the relativisation and devaluation of habits and customs; feelings of the uselessness of the acquired knowledge of life; dilemmas about how to judge and understand new situations; feelings that old ties with relatives and friends were broken.<sup>18</sup>

As the Croatian saying goes, far from the eyes, far from the heart. When you're far away from your house, you start losing contact. The longer you stay abroad, the less people you know. (Interviewee 6)

After the first impressions and culture shock, people gradually become involved in their new work, social, cultural and language environments. Migrants undergo a process

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subjective reality internalised during primary socialisation and establish a new organisation of language apparatus. Examples of alternations include religious conversions (Berger, Luckmann 1988: 146–147).

<sup>15</sup> Indoctrination is a special case of alternation. It refers to conversions due to the pressures of a political regime and a predominant ideological system.

<sup>16</sup> Acculturation refers to changes that occur due to cultural contact, at the level of an individual and a community. In migration contexts, at the level of an individual, these changes can be described as resocialisation. The terms are different with respect to content, but in case of first-generation migrants, they become overlapped, as they are both used to describe processes of partial or significant reconstruction of personality and identification occurring in a new environment. More on this issue in Lukšič-Hacin 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Throughout this article, I will only use the term resocialisation, although the dyad resocialisation/acculturation is relevant in the given context.

<sup>18</sup> "Before e-mail it was hard to stay in touch with your friends if you weren't good at corresponding by mail. You always felt like you were forgetting them. And moving and packing all your stuff is a hassle, especially if you have to move from a huge apartment to a tiny one and have to get rid of your things. Not only that, but every time you move you have to learn new things like new music, new rules, new transportation systems, new schools. It's hard enough moving around, but you also have to move from a very understanding overseas lifestyle to a place where no one understands moving, especially meeting people who have known each other since childhood." (Cultural Adjustments, <http://future.state.gov/where/stories/transition/44233.htm>)

of (re)construction of their social status. In a foreign-language environment, this process is largely dependent on the level of language competence and internalised elaborated or restricted language code. On a symbolic level, the latter determines the intensity of stigmatisation (Goffman 1963) in the new environment, and feelings of foreignness. Better knowledge of the language may lead to lesser intensity of feelings of foreignness and stigmatisation. Ultimately, these new experiences may lead to apathy and retreat from the outside world. Adapting to new norms often results in experiencing a cultural void,<sup>19</sup> which can lead to social pathology.<sup>20</sup> Most people are more or less successfully resocialised, but some remain isolated and that leads to loneliness.<sup>21</sup>

When considering the population of children, the specifics of socialisation pertinent to their age need to be taken into consideration. Children migrate together with their parents before processes of primary and/or secondary socialisation are concluded. For smaller children, the processes of primary socialisation become disrupted upon entering a different environment and facing new situations. For older children, the processes of secondary socialisation become disrupted and are, in many cases, also inconsistent with their primary socialisation. Parallel to unconcluded socialisation and contradictions in the process of socialisation, children are also included in processes of resocialisation. Berger and Luckmann argue that socialisation discrepancies can have serious consequences. If a discrepancy appears during primary socialisation, i.e. the period of strong emotionality, the processes of identification, re-identification and alternation may be accompanied by emotional crisis, instability, or even development of a split personality.<sup>22</sup> The emergence of alternative worlds during secondary socialisation has different consequences, as individuals make decisions in a manipulative manner. This can be understood as the case of cold alternation, when an individual does internalise the new reality, but in a specific manner. His/her identity has been largely developed in primary socialisation, which enables the relativisation of the internalising of a new reality (Berger, Luckmann 1988: 158–159). This may lead to a strengthened awareness of the relativity of all worlds while

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<sup>19</sup> A cultural void occurs when the old patterns and norms become devalued and are replaced by the new ones. Accepting new norms, values, i.e. resocialisation, is a challenging process. (Južnič 1977: 524)

<sup>20</sup> Types of social pathology according to Jurij Zalokar include: marginal identity, nostalgia as an illness, overeating, alcoholism, obsession with work, extreme sociability and talking, tradition as a shelter and object of worship. (1991: 81–93)

<sup>21</sup> More in Lukšič-Hacin 1995.

<sup>22</sup> The condition of split personality may develop in the following ways: 1. The individual fully identifies with the new community, but the community does not accept him/her and considers him/her a foreigner; 2. A split personality may be a consequence of internalising the status of foreigner, which is linked with stereotyping and xenophobia, having a strong impact on a child or an adolescent. This may cause specific disunity, when an individual begins refusing parts of his/her identity. Most often, ethnicity is refused. A negative attitude towards the self may develop into aggressiveness towards members of similar ethnic groups, when an individual wants to prove to him/herself and others that he/she is different.

recognising and acknowledging one's own, resulting in the development of transnational or cosmopolitan identity.

In conversations about the lives of children of diplomats in a new environment, the most important issue that was brought up was language,<sup>23</sup> or more precisely languages – learning the language of a new environment and preserving the knowledge of the Slovenian language. In non-English speaking environments, English appears as a third language, as children of diplomats are usually enrolled in international programmes taught in English. Putting aside the differences between value systems, norms and rules of behaviour at the level of everyday lives in kindergartens, schools or between peers, children face tremendous difficulties due to language. Outside their family environment, they need to use a foreign language in order to verbalise their emotions, knowledge and thoughts. Personality no longer creates a child's social networks, language competence does. Language (in)competence sets limits to interpersonal relations established by children in a new environment. It creates their statuses and roles. It determines the intensity of peer relations and construction of self-image through social interaction with the new environment. Although language is not the only factor shaping this dynamics, it is among the most important ones.

Children are enrolled in international or foreign schools, learn new languages and face many challenges. Slovenian children face additional problems due to unsystematic governmental family policy planning, which is needed to prepare children for the new challenges and contradictions in a new environment.

It is not sufficient that the partner is prepared for moving abroad only by protocol. Other measures need to be taken. The diplomatic corps of some other countries, as well as successful companies, already have developed mechanisms [...] Children should also have the right to learn the language of a new environment prior to moving abroad. [...] In the case that families of diplomats decide to live separately, the family is under tremendous pressure. (Interviewee 2)

The family is not prepared for the challenges in a new environment, but the family as a whole acts as a representative of their country abroad. Interviewees argue that all family members have the status of a diplomat's family not only for eight hours, but for the entire day.

Partners are forced into more active participation. In a way, all members of a diplomat's family represent their country 24 hours a day. (Interviewee 6)

It is often suggested that children of diplomats have an advantage in mastering a

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<sup>23</sup> Language as the system of symbols is the axis of human communication. When the social/cultural environment is changed, language becomes one of the basic obstacles for inclusion and for understanding dynamics in the new society.

foreign language due to their stay abroad. Experience shows that this is not necessarily the case.

The alleged advantages of a diplomatic post abroad quickly diminish: their colleagues who are not diplomats travel more, so travelling is not a good argument. Their children speak foreign languages better than his children, so better knowledge of foreign languages is also not necessarily a result. (Interviewee 2)

There are even bigger problems with learning Slovenian. Most often, this task is left to the parents, as professional teaching is not always an available option.<sup>24</sup>

Ever since we became a young state, we have very unfriendly arrangements for children. This is a terrible thing. The first problem is that we are a small country. Italians, for example, have Italian schools everywhere around the world, diplomats can completely devote themselves to being diplomats and not worry that much about other personal issues [...] Russians, for example, have a huge school in Berlin and they feel like they are in Russia. Germany also has schools all over the world. If not, it establishes them, even if for only ten children. Yugoslavia had this kind of system as well. There are quite a few possibilities; these days a lot can be done on the internet as well. (Interviewee 9)

Recently, internet-based<sup>25</sup> distance learning of the Slovenian language has been considered as a possibility, but the idea is still in the experimental phase.

Some children are included in the experimental long-distance learning project offered by the MIRK Institute, which is the most efficient form of education. Diplomats' children can maintain contact with the Slovenian environment and the Slovenian language. Good knowledge of Slovenian language and Slovenian culture is the key element of their resocialisation after returning home and a prerequisite for their successful inclusion into the Slovenian education system. (Examples of e-education)

The consequences of several years of unprofessional education in the Slovenian language in a family environment become evident after the return to Slovenia, where it is expected that children will effortlessly be able to communicate, as if Sloveneness is in their genes. The fact that they experienced conflicting socialisation and resocialisation and that they need systematic and guided reintegration is disregarded. This unarticulated situation,<sup>26</sup> which is also disregarded and neglected on a systemic level, results in a new,

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<sup>24</sup> Different countries provide different solutions, one of which is as follows: "She worked in Scandinavia and knows that everything can be sorted out in a women- and men- friendly manner. There are no problems there, they even have nannies for children of diplomats who speak the same language as the parents and are paid by the state." (Interviewee 9)

<sup>25</sup> The Internet not only provides a good possibility for learning a language, but is an important medium of preserving cultural heritage in migrant communities. More in Mikola and Gombač 2008: 39–56.

<sup>26</sup> Even the public articulation of the complexity of the situation that children are facing would make



often even more intense shock than experienced abroad. The depth of the language problem can be grasped only when taking into consideration the fact that language is not only a means of communication. It is more than that. It is a system of symbols. Individuals internalise it through processes of socialisation, which are simultaneously being enabled by language. Language is a basic element of socialisation through which it internalises itself. In the first years of socialisation, personality and the subconscious start developing in parallel with the mother tongue. Therefore, human thoughts and emotions are embedded in language, through which a person achieves self-reflection and self-awareness. This explains why language elaboration is of tremendous importance for a child. After living abroad for longer periods of time, some words are often replaced by new ones and new speech develops that is a mixture of Slovenian and foreign words. In some cases, a child retreats to solitude and fails to express her/his feelings in any language. She/he stagnates in a restrictive code and somehow slips through languages, not only with respect to communication, but also with respect to emotions and personality.

In the end, the reason for returning home was language. The mother tongue starts vanishing abroad, you are no longer fluent. How do you keep in contact with the world then? How do you say what you feel you need to say? How do you stay who you are? I had to go back home! (Zalokar 1991: 7)

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION CONTEXTS AS THE REASON FOR (RE)SOCIALISATION TURBULENCES**

As already discussed, the population of children of diplomats and other migrant children is exposed to contradictory, often conflicting processes, as they are going through processes of resocialisation before primary and secondary socialisation have been concluded. This may lead to identity crises. These crises differ in intensity, but depend on the social and ethnic stratification in the new environment, and new statuses ascribed to the child's family and the child him/herself. Migration contexts are often interlocked with ethnic stratification, manifested through stigmatisation,<sup>27</sup> marginalisation and status incongruence. In those environments that are not tolerant toward Slovenians, a child experiences all three processes more intensely, which can become overwhelming and intolerable. Diplomats' families usually have a relatively high social status and reputation in their homeland. When a child with such a background experiences intolerance towards Slovenians abroad and realises that he/she is a 'čefur' (a Slovenian pejorative

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them feel better. The special status of this specific population (including the children of other returnees and immigrants), linked to language competence, would be emphasised. Children would realise that they are not a special case, that things are the way they are and that the challenges they are facing are not linked to personal (in)abilities and talents.

<sup>27</sup> Immigrant children in Slovenia also report about stigmatisation from peers and teachers. See Žitnik 2008: 90–91.

usually denoting Bosnians t.n.),<sup>28</sup> this status incongruence causes great problems and may have a negative impact on his/her personality. Having a systematic strategy for preparing children for moving abroad is thus of significant importance.

A second form of turbulence that children are not prepared for is having the status of a foreigner. This status can be problematic for adults with an already formed personality,<sup>29</sup> but even more so for children experiencing socialisation turbulences in such complex circumstances.

... the first few weeks were horrible. Not knowing anyone there and not knowing the language was the worst thing in my life. I don't think I adapted until 4 months into our stay. I remember how my brother used to come home from school and cry for hours. (Cultural Adjustments)

Children lose their friends, peer networks, and homes, even though they move together with their parents. In a new environment, they feel like strangers in their own home.

Sometimes I wish we had never moved to Germany, because I don't know exactly where I belong. I don't feel Yugoslavian, and don't think like Germans do. I'm a sort of a mixture, as twelve years of Germany has left its mark." (Vizjak 1979: 229)

I have no home, I have no childhood friends, no siblings and my parents are older now. I'm 22 and the only thing that justifies my life is moving around. Doing my degree I've stayed in the same places for over 3 years for the first time in my life. I've decided to stay one more. But after my Master's degree there is no doubt I'm heading straight for the foreign office to do the same all over again and I can't wait. [...] I've said goodbye and cried so many times. [...] I was truly alone at the new school in a new country with no siblings and no friends. I am a master at making friends now and a master of seeing them go. I can spend time with myself better than anyone I know. (I was just doing an ...)

Foreignness is especially emphasised as it can have a significant impact on the development of a personality during socialisation and enculturation processes. Being familiar with the language of a new environment is important for all migrants, especially children,

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<sup>28</sup> "The Finns are for Swedes what we are for Austrians – 'some Bosnians', but they are twenty years ahead." (Interviewee 10)

<sup>29</sup> "Abroad. [...] This damn, many times damned abroad. [...] It wants to drain my heart and soul, my entire self, in such a horrific manner that I know not what saves me or what will – if at all – save me. [...] Abroad is a curse and mesmerisation; a mesmerisation and a curse. It attracts you and repels you. [...] I am alone everywhere, a foreigner in a foreign world. [...] From a foreign country, but in this world; a citizen of my own, but a foreign country. [...] You become aware of this foreignness, [...] when you become a foreigner to yourself, when and because you are always on the road and on the run, [...], when you are somehow without personality, without a body, but you are nevertheless here [...]" (Jazbec 2006: 107)

but the attitude of the majority towards ‘different’ and ‘foreign’ is even more essential.<sup>30</sup> The multi-layeredness and complexity of the status of a foreigner is constructed in different contexts through interaction. It is important to establish whether the status of a foreigner in the country of immigration is stigmatised and marginalised. Social stigmatisation, xenophobia and stereotyping are strong negative factors that influence (re)socialisation and have a strong impact on a child. Reactions to negative pressures from the majority include the development of a split personality, marginal identity and alternation.

Stigma has a strong impact on a child and can, in some cases, result in negation of parts of one’s own identity. Specific internalisation of stigma occurs, the impact of which is most significant on individuals whose personality is not yet formed. But it needs to be stressed that defence mechanisms, which can be triggered to ease the effects of stigmatisation, may in some cases lead to the development of a cosmopolitan identity through relativisation. In any case, children need to be prepared for potential difficulties and challenges prior to moving abroad.

For me, being Slovenian also means to be able to return to homeland often, at least for two days, to ski or swim, and then on Monday tell my Austrian school mates that I’m not “čuš”, as some people call us Slovenians. [...] It’s better to be poor than well-off but still a foreigner in Austria. (Umek 1979: 9)

A split personality, which is the consequence of conflicts between the objective and subjective worlds, is an even stronger phenomenon. It can occur due to internalisation of alternative conflicting value systems.

From stories told by friends and many published articles, I could paint a picture about the life of foreigners in the Federal republic. I knew that almost half of young people are mentally ill, as they can no longer deal with frame-ups. They stand no chance on the labour market. For those who grew up here, the return to their homeland is not possible. They have no homeland. (Wallraff 1986: 9)

Children whose environment of primary socialisation is changed due to moving abroad may face the aforementioned disconnect between primary and secondary socialisation linked to language barriers, status incongruence, stigma and marginalisation. They may experience different psychological traumas, including alternation: denying their ethnic origin and thus denying themselves.

My daughter did research and found out that children of diplomats tend to be much more depressed than their peers due to the change of environment. Supposedly 50 per cent of children of diplomats in Europe have serious psychological problems,

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<sup>30</sup> The attitude of the majority (especially the sphere of media and popular culture) towards migrants (especially children) in Slovenia is discussed by Jernej Mlekuž (2008).

problems with fitting in. [...] Moving abroad is not necessarily a good investment for a child. (Interviewee 9)

Generational conflict is another issue that causes turbulence in socialisation. The phenomenon itself is common during socialisation and growing up, but it is not as relevant in migration contexts. However, due to complexity of relations in migration contexts, generational conflict tends to be more intense in such situations. This is seen in cases of ethnic alternation and language barriers – if a child uses the new language and the parents (or one of them) do not. Communication is thus compromised, and so are the emotional dynamics between them.

We grew up here, so this is our home. We have childhood memories of Slovenia, which seem like a dream. Slovenia is beautiful, we are fond of it, but it is not our home. The Slovenian language is difficult, so we speak English with each other, which feels more natural to us. Older people then say that we are not loyal Slovenians. Maybe so: but we are loyal Slovenian Americans and Canadians. (Košir-Arko in Brumen 1967: 260)

Another form of turbulence in the lives of children of diplomats, the most difficult one, is reintegration upon their return to Slovenia. Similarly to processes of resocialisation that occur abroad, reintegration starts with the return to the homeland.

Children have to change their environment when they move abroad and when they return. When you start to sum up all the negative arguments, you draw the line and realise that you will not leave. That is why many people decide not to move abroad. (Interviewee 6)

According to the narratives, the experiences of our sample population are similar to the experiences and reintegration of other Slovenian returnees. The processes and problems encountered by the individuals and families are similar. The first and most important is their realisation that reintegration upon returning back home is a more traumatic experience than resocialisation in a foreign environment.<sup>31</sup>

While overseas you think of yourself as American; in the school system here, I'm thought an oddity. It was embarrassing to have to explain to the counsellor that even though the slip I held said I came from Austria, I was not Austrian and would not need any special attention. [...] On my first day in this class, the teacher gave us a test on everything we were supposed to know about the 'Original 13 Colonies.' When I got the test I looked it over and practically cried; not only did I not know which of the 13 colonies was based around fishing; I didn't even know we had 13 colonies.

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<sup>31</sup> For a further insight into this issue see the article *Problems of Children of Slovenian Diplomats with Inclusion into Slovenian Schools* (Skok, Videtič 2002)

My teacher excused me, and I went straight to the guidance office to be switched out of the class. The next day I switched to a less advanced class. (Adapting)

... my son had big problems. He went to school abroad and when he returned to Slovenia, the situation was critical. And what happens when three years from now you leave again? The child needs to go to the international school, of course. (Interviewee 9)

Second, also very important, is the realisation that there is broadly speaking no return. We may only speak about return one-dimensionally, in terms of physical movement of people. In all other perspectives that take into consideration more complex social/cultural dimensions, return is not possible. Resocialisation changes people and simple reintegration is no longer possible. People change, but it is not only migrants who change. During their absence, people and the environment change as well.

When I returned to the States in sixth grade after living in the Ivory Coast for 4 years, my classes were filled with people who had known each other forever. Their minds were filled with mutual memories and knowledge they had gained from opportunities I had never had. (Changing Points of View)

Migrants, both parents and children, leave their social networks behind, and when they return to Slovenia they no longer exist. Migrants have memories of their homeland and do not expect that the environment will change during their absence. But it does. Similarly, people from the homeland expect that expatriates (family) will return the same as they were, but they have changed. Lack of communication causes people to drift apart. The migrant becomes a foreigner in their own country, which becomes evident upon her/his return.<sup>32</sup> Feeling home only on the surface and feeling different in reality creates a more complex situation than the one abroad. These are important circumstances that emotionally complicate processes of reintegration, as a person feels a foreigner in an environment where she/he is supposed to be at home.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The article focuses on the population of children of diplomats and discusses the (re) socialisation processes that they undergo when moving abroad with their parents. The most important examples of the so-called turbulences include: language competence, status incongruence, status of a foreigner, stigma, split personality, generational conflict

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<sup>32</sup> Narratives by the interviewees about feeling different are similar to experiences of emigrants who live abroad and consider returning home and those who already returned to Slovenia. Results of the research are published in the book *Home Again? Return Migration between Politics, Practice and Theory* (Lukšič-Hacin, Mlekuž 2006).

and processes of reintegration upon returning back home, bearing in mind that return in the social/cultural sense, and above all in terms of identity, is not possible.

The research provides many answers to initial questions about the (re)socialisation of children of diplomats. In many respects, their situation is not different from other migrant children. Experiences differ more according to which countries they move to. For most migrant children, migration causes turbulences in the delicate period of growing up. When taking into consideration the situation of children of diplomats, systematic family policy could ease the intensity of the turbulences. Children and the entire family should be familiar with the potential contradictions that arise with migration. Language courses should be offered before moving abroad and Slovenian language courses should be organised upon immigration. Internet-based language learning is a new possibility. Strategic planning of education would need to include other populations of children and adults with similar needs – Slovenians abroad, returnees, and immigrants before their arrival to Slovenia.

Let me stress once again that the question about the meaning and role of turbulences in the (re)socialisation process cannot be answered with a single answer. Different people react differently to the challenges of migration contexts and develop their own survival strategies. In addition, the meaning and role of turbulences are highly ambivalent. The aforementioned turbulences of (re)socialisation in migration contexts may cause a split personality on one hand, but may provide an alternative for the development of a tolerant, cosmopolitan identity.

The experiences of children are different. Some do not know who they are and where they come from:

There are two things that are very difficult. Firstly your sense of identity. The simple question of ‘where are you from’ can take hours to reply to. I was born in one place but lived here, there, and there. There are so many countries I can support when it comes to things like sports. I also grew speaking with 4 different accents and was very patriotic towards each place by the time I left for the next! In a sense you wish sometimes that you were just born in one place and lived there and that’s that. [...] A lot of people where I live now have friends that they have known since they were kids. I don’t have that as I was always saying goodbye to them and moving on. So that can be difficult. I’m not sure about other children of diplomats, but I did develop a close bond with my siblings. Probably because we would move to another country and the only friends we had were each other. (I’m 31 years old now).

There are so many advantages to this lifestyle. [...] But what a lot of people don’t realise is that there are many, many disadvantages. The feeling of always being unstable – ‘We’re here for two years, where next? Home? Europe? America?’ No matter how much you want to enjoy the moment, that thought can be distressing. And losing all the people you meet and love. We all say ‘keep in touch’ but how hard is that? A quick ‘Hey’ on Facebook is not keeping in touch. It makes me so sad thinking about all the people I’ve left, what life would be like if I could still be with them. (I am the child of a diplomat).

And some point out to many benefits of being a migrant and developing a transnational identity:

I relished my differences even more when I started to reap the benefits of my diversified childhood. In eighth grade, I discovered that living outside of the United States had developed my mental abilities as well as provided me with enriching experiences. I had taken French during my 4 years I was in the Ivory Coast, and this early exposure to the language has made it always seem natural to me. I feel comfortable with learning languages, in general, and seem to pick up the grammar and intricacies of foreign tongues easily. Also because I have lived all over the world, I see it as filled with possibilities of future explorations instead of places that are out of reach. Reading or watching the news takes on a different meaning when I know someone from the topic country or have been there myself. [...] I had lived in Alexandria for 6 years and now had the kind of base group of friends that I had dreamed of when I first moved there. I knew that Alexandria was my home. However, even home can become confining and the routines too familiar. I was ready for the excitement of living overseas again. I had enjoyed living in West Africa and was positive that I wanted to try a different kind of life once more before going to college. I can now say that I have lived in five countries on four different continents in the past 17 years and am proud of what I have learned and seen. I wouldn't have had it any other way. (Changing Points of View)

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## POVZETEK

### OTROCI DIPLOMATOV V (RE)SOCIALIZACIJSKIH TURBOLENAH MIGRACIJ

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Članek z naslovom Otroci diplomatov v (re)socializacijskih turbolencah migracij izhaja iz predpostavke, da je poklicno gibanje diplomatov (permanentno) začasno delo v tujini ter s tem oblika migracije. Podrejeno je načelu rotacije med matično državo in različnimi državami sprejema, saj so v aktivni fazi opravljanja poklica uslužbenci v tujini. Krožne migracije se permanentno ponavljajo, a odstopajo od klasičnega modela, saj države sprejema niso iste, ampak se spreminjajo. S tem so dani pogoji ne le za krožne migracije, ampak tudi za transmigracije in transnacionalnost.

Razprava se osredotoča na populacijo otrok diplomatov, ki spremljajo svoje v diplomaciji zaposlene starše na poteh krožnih migracij, pogosto tudi transmigracij, in skuša odgovoriti na naslednja vprašanja: V kakšne procese so vpeti otroci, ki svoje starše spremljajo pri selitvah? Kako potekajo procesi primarne in sekundarne socializacije ter resocializacije? Ali so agensi socializacije usklajeni, in če ne, kaj to pomeni? Kakšne situacije se vzpostavljajo ob dejstvu, da se začnejo procesi resocializacije v času, ko socializacija še ni končana? V ospredju razprave je kritična evalvacija migracijskih kontekstov, ki se razpirajo, če analiziramo izbrane procese v luči teorije družbene konstrukcije realnosti, s poudarki na resocializaciji. Interpretativna shema prispevka je izoblikovana s prepletanjem ključnih spoznanj teorij družbene konstrukcije realnosti (Berger, Luckmann) in teorije akulturacije (Redfield) ob upoštevanju procesov stigmatizacije (Goffmann).

Avtorica v članku kot primere turbolenc obravnava vprašanja jezikovne kompetence, statusne inkogruence, statusa tujca, stigme, razcepljene osebnosti, generacijskega konflikta in procesa reintegracije ob t. i. vrnitvi, pri čemer ugotavlja, da vrnitev v družbeno/kulturnem, predvsem pa identitetnem smislu, ni mogoča. V zaključku poudari, da (re) socializacije v migracijskih kontekstih po eni strani predstavljajo možnost npr. razcepljene osebnosti, po drugi strani pa nudijo alternativo za izoblikovanje tolerantne, kozmopolit-

ske identitete. Izkušnje otrok so različne. Eni poudarjajo, da ne vedo, kdo so, od kje so, da imajo težave, itd., drugi pa poudarjajo prednosti, ki so jih pridobili v migracijskem načinu življenja, in lahko bi rekli, da opisujejo razmere, v katerih lahko govorimo o pojavu transnacionalnosti. Ugotavlja, da ni enoznačnega odgovora na vprašanje o pomenu in vlogi turbolenc v (re)socializacijskem procesu, oziroma da sta izrazito ambivalentna.