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## DEAF CULTURE, HEARING CULTURE. THE TRUST ON GROUP BOUNDARY CONCEPTS OF INTERCULTURAL FRICTIONS

The word „culture” is used in an ambiguous context. One of these contexts is the recognition of social reality in the form of, both tangible and intangible determinants for a particular group. In this case, the general conception is referred to as Deaf<sup>1</sup> culture. Most definitions are components that relate to the language community belonging to a specific group. Language is the key in emphasizing the broad spectrum of identity and cultural definition. In the case of deafness, it was not initially part of individualism, but a lack of language. For example Aristotle stated that, the inability to speak Greek, claimed a fact of disqualification. “A person unable to speak is incapable of civilizing the barbarian”. For centuries Christianity stigmatized deafness as a result of sin. This led to a relationship of “normality” and “deafness” that determined an intergroup relationship and an intercultural trust.

Today’s Deaf studies, emphasize the role of colonization, this is subject to the colonizer-colonized way. In this system, Ladd (2008, p. 42) defines 4 fields of colonization of the Deaf culture: economics, welfare, cultural and linguistic.<sup>2</sup> A majority found that these areas contribute an ideal desire to be a colonizer and to adopt the inherited values.

This article focuses on the intercultural issue of trust. By trust, Sztompka P. (2007, p. 69) quotes that: “assumed on the uncertainty of future actions of other people.”

Trust or distrust, is a special relationship, which often emerges at the crossroads of cultures between the Deaf and the hearing (D-H); Functioning ambiguously – depending on the person’s perspective – cultural or pathological definition of the deaf community impairing on the effectiveness of an intercultural dialogue. Inevitably, people that are part of the Deaf culture must

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<sup>1</sup> According to Woodward (1972), members of the cultural minority are signified by the use of a capital “D”.

<sup>2</sup> Cultural and linguistic issues of colonization are also strongly accented in Lane (1992).

be perpetual cultural educators. "Within the culture of the hearing, being able to hear is critical" (Mimoun, 1994, p. 665).

In the case of intercultural dialogue, the first problem between the Deaf and the hearing is: can deafness be placed within the framework of culture. Most importantly, the matter raised in this article will cause problems embracing cultural deafness.

### THE CONCEPT OF MEDICAL AND CULTURAL DEAFNESS AS A GENERAL FACTOR OF INTERCULTURAL DISTRUST BETWEEN D-H

The common discourse of deafness is focused primarily on its medical properties. The motive is in context of defects, near miss or loss. This is reflected by the existence of myths and stereotypes concerning deafness. Various forms of deficiency of the hearing organ cause the inability to hear, it is socially stigmatized that a "deaf person" is one who has a disability. Approach of recognition of deafness in education is often called the medical approach. There exists a piece of literature that indicates a high level of conception values of the Deaf culture (see: Ladd, 2003). For example, Lane (2005, p. 292) defines the Deaf culture as an ethnic group characterizing by set of properties: collective name, feeling of community, norms of behavior, values, knowledge, kinship, customs, social structure, language, art forms and history.

It is easy to observe that the concept of Deaf culture has a set of environmental differences between the Deaf and the hearing. Lack of confidence can be observed in the general construction of deafness as a cultural conception.

**H:** *Culture? What culture? Besides, they're just deaf.*

The situation rejecting the Deaf culture, have challenged the right to define a Deaf person within the scope of the Deaf culture environment as perceived to entirely negate trust. This is caused by a specific tendency identified by a hearing person that a Deaf person should be able to fit in. Audism (see: Lane, 1992, and Bauman, 2004) is defined as one of the key elements that factors into account problems of trust and contact with the intercultural between D-H.

**D:** *Why should I trust a hearer? They want me to be their copy, talking like them, behaving like them What is worse, is when I do something according to their wishes. I get commanded, almost like a "good dog". "talk, do not sign", almost like "Come here, give me your paw."*

**H:** *There is no culture here, only ideology. Besides, talking is a normality. There are plenty of situations, where speech is useful. O.K, you can write a card, but you need to know how to write, right?*

<sup>3</sup> D = the Deaf person, H = the hearing person.

Distrust is understood by future actions that have concluded as certain assumptions. From the hearing culture perspective, this group has a certain set of paradigm values or beliefs that the hearing reflect on the quality of life. In contrast, the Deaf culture explicitly reject this idealization and cite their rights of self-determination by proving their own criteria for the quality of life. By these assumptions, the focus is on the possibilities of forcing a defective ideology that is unwanted by the interlocutors.

It can be noticed that one of the fundamental factors that affect relationships between cultures is a dogma, that hearing is not only significantly affecting quality, but is also a “normalcy” of life.

### INITIAL DIALOGUE SITUATION OF THE INTERCULTURAL D-H

The situations that link dialogue between the intercultural D-H are often prosaic and on common everyday issues. However, our area of interest implies on instigating a dialogue relationship and obtaining some kind of response. By instigating a dialogue, we can observe conflicting differences in certain issues, ideas, attitudes and behavior, etc. In a linguistic context, the dialogue concept of the intercultural must allow for communication of persons in a different manner. Often this is omitted.

**D:** *There are many conferences concerning deaf problems. It is rare to find someone Deaf. It's quite often that there is no deaf (or Deaf) audience.*

**D:** *Many discussions regarding the deaf is not at all about the deaf. These discussions are about hearing defects, and, how it is a large problem and how people with the hearing impairment are in need of assistance, etc. These are not discussions about the deaf, neither with the Deaf.*

In every contact of intercultural dialogue between D-H, it is essential to distinguish between situations of hindrance and facilitation of a dialogue.

Situations in dialogue hindrance is primarily succumbed to stereotypes, prejudices and myths about the culture, this occurs among a group of people.

**D:** *When talking about the deaf, their statements demonstrate a form of compassion. Poor deaf people, they have it bad!*

**D:** *The hearing persons believe that, it is sufficient to speak louder to a deaf person.*

**H:** *I hear and it's enough to pigeonhole me – I am an enemy of the Deaf.*

It should be clearly stated that it isn't possible to have a trustworthy dialogue that show visible signs of stereotypes and or even suspicion, than, the stereotype that might be hidden within the dialogue.

In turn, the situation of facilitating a dialogue is openness, the ability to show respect for another person, creating a situation allowing for co-operation and mutual agreement, to be tolerant as a novelty and acknowledging the idea of equal rights.

## AREAS OF INTERCULTURAL DISPUTE D-H

Certain issues on this subject regarding the important role of the hearing and the Deaf, require special analysis. Examples of such areas are: linguistic, social and medical issues.

### a) Linguistic dispute

The context of trust by the intercultural D-H focus on language. In this view the language is the main criterion for the division WE - THEY. By deviating from the language conception, it awakens a form of uncertainty and distrust.

**D:** *I do not speak clearly. That's the way I am. This arouses distrust. People look at me strangely, like the sick or handicapped. It is easier for them*

**H:** *They have their sign language? That's good; But, I understand it this way: if they are demanding us to sign, then we have the right to demand them to speak.*

The differences, in the meaning of the language and its role in communication.

**D:** *I am Deaf. My language is sign language. Unfortunately, the hearing do not understand. For them, language is their language. When they speak of a language, they are talking about their own language. That's good. I do not want them to talk about my language. For them, it is only pantomime and gestures. My language is bad, their language is better. I do not trust a hearer, when they talk about my language.*

It is also important to be able to use sign language in situation with intercultural contact.

**D:** *You cannot talk about the culture of the Deaf using only the language of the hearing.*

One of the most important issues within the language area is that the Deaf community have the right to be bilingual.

**D:** *This is the way it is, that we are living in a society of the hearing. There is no doubt, that it is essential to learn how to read and write in the hearing language. However, extorting the learning of speech and removing us from our language is plundering our culture.*

### b) Social dispute

The dialogue in intercultural society spheres concentrate on the roles Deaf people have on society. Moreover, within this dialogue, there are other subjects which are considered such as integration, tolerance and autonomy.

**D:** *Within the natural functioning environment and acquisition of the Deaf culture, there are schools for the Deaf. Directing Deaf children to schools of the hearing is an encroachment on our culture.*

**D:** *Integration and tolerance? The Deaf don't want to integrate. It is a hearing whim. We do not need tolerance, we need autonomy.*

Other manifestation of social barriers are signs of behavior and ethnocentrism.

**D:** *The hearing think that since there is more of them, they can control us.*

**H:** *Sometimes I get an impression, that the ideas expressed within the Deaf environment cause a construction of a dividing isolating wall between the hearing.*

**c) Medical dispute**

In the medical field, the main focus on deafness is described as a medical condition performing cochlear implants for deaf children. The deaf society perceives this as an act of extermination. As mentioned above, the whole Deaf culture concept protests against deafness medicalization. Hence, the main cause of division within the medical service is in context of distrust.

**D:** *I am deaf, meaning I'm sick with the lack of hearing.*

**H:** *The cochlear implant makes it possible to live in a world, where you can enjoy sounds.*

#### **CULTURAL DOMINATION AND A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN D-H**

By contemplating the issue of trust between the rivalry of cultures, it is essential to consider the role of the domineering hearing culture. It has been questioned that the culture values of the Deaf social group is significant, however, this isn't the only barrier in granting trust. The problem is to conduct a public discourse on the conception of "normal-abnormal". Creating a social concept with undesirable characteristics places the Deaf under the spotlight. These people are perceived as those with a defect, incapable or with a limited capability to undertake certain commitments in life. This is at the same time ignoring the fact, that the outlook of these tasks are imposed by the culture.

**D:** *I'm deaf, my wife is also. Our family believes that our child should be nurtured by the grandparents, because we are deaf and won't be able to handle it ourselves.*

The world, where the hearing and the Deaf must live in harmony, is created by the hearing. It is strongly directed towards the hearing centric. It is assumed that the Deaf culture is a culture of distrust, where a negative course of action of the intercultural relations is an accepted assumption.

#### **DISCUSSION**

As stated, The above situation illustrates a certain manner, that raises a form of distrust. It's not difficult to realise that a vast majority of issues originate from the Deaf culture. Distrust is traditionally a form of defense, against the negative recognition of a person with a defect. The strong distrust that involves Deaf children and adolescents tend to awaken normalization, this defines a number of postures such as behaviors, role models, and aspirations. The reality of deafness is categorized as the audiology in medicine. The

counterculture is defined as an element of distrust that is expressed in a manner of both colloquial and official language.

Distrust in the relationship can also be regarded as a specific cultural trend that expresses a form of presumption and generalization. The level of acceptance or denial of cultural recognition of deafness only applies to the dialogue within the context of trust and distrust, (ambivalence is perceived in a negative category). It is necessary to devote a moment of attention to the issue of pseudo in communication of the Deaf culture. A good example, can be conducting psychological tests in situations where the Deaf do not understand the language used in the tests, this raises a number of "scientific" evidence on "the negative effects of deafness". This generates an adverse image of both intercultural dialogue on how the Deaf function in society and how this phenomenon strengthens paternalism.

In contrast to Sztompka (2007, p. 334) paternalism in Deaf studies impose certain values as appropriate, this socially provides a question of what might be a specific form of subtle acculturation. Such actions of intercultural dialogue should be regarded as an element of hindrance, this can be examples of stereotypes, prejudice and current opinions. Alternatively, Mutual trust, is trust that falls into the appropriate preventive manipulation category, rather than a single act or a sequence of acts of distrust. Luhmann (1979, cited by Sztompka, 2007) mentions the linear relation of trust with the possibility of cooperation. In this case, the Deaf society are definitely (sometimes irrationally), reluctant to cooperate with the hearing. By displaying strong negative interpersonal and intercultural opinions. In Contrast, establishing cooperation is rarely rejected by the hearing.

It is important to mention the context of trust on the Deaf's perception and equally the perception of the intercultural. This research material concludes, that distrust is expressed between two fulfilling roles. Despite the fact of distrust towards the hearing, this acquires a strong intragroup support. The main strength of the Deaf is self-esteem, by treating distrust as a method of intragroup independence and simultaneously as a cultural binder. In the intercultural category the behaviour of distrust can be expressed as isolation and considered as social distance. The Environment of the self-determined Deaf culture can be defined as a highly trustworthy intraculture or simultaneously as a strong intercultural of distrust. This gives rise to erroneous opinions. For example, it identifies a type of ghettos for the Deaf or group isolation.

The outlined situation of trust in the dialogue between the cultures, requires more relevant information. Distrust doesn't tend to exclude the ambience of trust within the contact. There are exceptions that substantiate a possible existence of effective intercultural dialogue with a mutual relationship between the Deaf and the hearing. The lower tendency of interpersonal trust, may be an impulse to extrapolate a intercultural path. Current attempts in es-

establishing interpersonal dialogue on a level of trust are rare, as it risks breach of distrust between groups.

This article describes a few attributes of the intercultural dialogue between the Deaf and the hearing that constitute a fragment of their daily lives. This outlines one of the problems in the intercultural dialogue of trust between the cultures. There are a number of interesting interdisciplinary attributes. However, due to the narrowness of the scope, this dialogue isn't entirely specific to the reality of the interpersonal relationships between the hearing and the Deaf.

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