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## Victimological Aspects of the Development of Restorative Mediation Practices in a Multicultural Society: Problems, Needs, Development Prospects

Olga O. Andronnikova\* and Olga E. Radzikhovskaya

*Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University  
Novosibirsk, Russian Federation*

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**Abstract.** The article discusses the difference between victimization tension in a multicultural and multicultural society. The authors determine a characteristic of the current state of development of society and indicate the consequences of transition, globalization and geopolitical changes. The problems of education arising in a multicultural environment are highlighted. The analysis of the effectiveness of using the restorative approach of school mediation services in Russia and abroad is presented. The article provides an analysis of victimization of Russian society, which determines the main zones of victimization arising as a result of geopolitical and migration processes. Six main territories that are vulnerable from the point of view of the emergence of a multicultural environment were identified. Communities with victim motivational and fundamental characteristics aimed at preserving identity without the exchange of cultural patterns are described. It is indicated that for educational purposes in territories with multicultural tendencies, the educational type of mediation is the most interesting.

**Keywords:** restorative mediation, multicultural society, multicultural environment, victimization, education.

Research area: education, psychology.

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## Introduction

The transitivity of modern society, which leads to changes at all societal levels, contributes to the formation of deformation of both the processes of socialization of a personality and malfunction of such interactive systems as “personality-society”, “personality-personality”. Considering the transitivity of modern society, it is necessary to identify four main phenomena expressed at all societal levels that significantly affect victimization: firstly, the culturological changes in society that arise as a result of macro-factor geopolitical changes and lead to micro-social transformations of the reference group; secondly, the instability of the course of social processes; thirdly, the transformation of traditional values against the emergence of new formats of thinking and social elevators; fourthly, the occurrence of pronounced changes in the interpersonal interaction, including new forms of marriage and family relations. All this contributes to the emergence of significant tensions in all social environments, causing increased victim and criminal vulnerability of society (Andronnikova, 2019).

It should be noted that such serious transitive processes are caused by the combined effects of globalization and geopolitical changes. Globalization as a comprehensive integration of the countries of the world in the technological, informational, cultural, economic and political spheres leads to the emergence and widening of a gap between countries in terms of their economic security, causing tension and growth of social problems: victimization of the population, growth of social intolerance, growth of social phobias, autization, an increase in the growth of mental illness, prevalence of extremism, etc. Geopolitical changes leading to violation of identification patterns of a nation (ethnic, regional, state) also increase social tension, leading to the maladaptation of an ethno-cultural nature (Jade, 2011).

The processes of globalization and geopolitical changes concern not only the economic sphere, but also the socio-cultural one, which causes a number of urgent processes that lead to changes in ethnic self-determination, displacement of the habitual spheres of culture

due to migration and consolidation of ethnic groups living in the same territory. All this inevitably causes the interaction between ethnic groups, its interpenetration, the emergence of a multicultural or intercultural space. At the same time, regardless of the essence, in a situation of multiculturalism and polyculturality, it is the education system that undergoes significant transformations associated with the need to assimilate all the changes that take place in a single educational environment to fulfil its tasks (Andronnikova, 2015). This brings the issues of multiculturalism and “polyculturality” to the centre of educational policy, especially those schools in which children of different nationalities and religious affiliations study.

## Statement of the problem

It should be noted that the terms “multiculturalism” and “polyculturality” differ in meaning. S.I. Levikova (Levikova, 2014), considering the concepts, specifies a social, economic and political problem hidden behind multiculturalism, which, with increasing tension, can lead to global conflicts going beyond cultural relations. K.S. Arutiunian points out the multiple interpretations of the term and the lack of a single understanding of it in modern sciences (Arutiunian, 2018). The author notes the duality of assessing the phenomenon of multiculturalism both as positive, aimed at the mutual development of cultures and overcoming negative attitudes (Mal'tseva, 2014), and pessimistic, including “fear of mixing cultures” (Ushanova, 2004).

We consider “multiculturalism” as a consequence of geopolitical changes and globalization, leading to the coexistence of various cultural groups in a single geopolitical framework with common state and regional rules, but without achieving mutual relations at equal levels (Andronnikova, 2019). This means that in a situation of multiculturalism, different cultures, when contacting in a single social space, do not interact with the effect of synergy, but retain their isolation, considering other cultures as “alien.” Tolerance, in this case, is the only condition for maintaining social calm.

The polyculturality, according to researchers of this concept, lies in the mutual

penetration of cultures, within which a new cultural environment is formed while maintaining the dominance of the prevailing culture, with a variety of cultural norms and behavioural patterns of cultural groups living in the same territory (Levikova, 2014). In the context of education, the concept of polyculturality was given by V.I. Matis, considering it in the context of the principle of educational organization aimed at integrating and maintaining identity in a multinational society (Matis, 2016).

Thus, two different processes are hidden behind the terminological difference, the first of which leads to the preservation of the identity of nations and requires conditions conducive to the preservation and development of tolerance towards other ethnic groups, the second one is characterized by the synergy of cultures with the formation of a new multicultural space with possible tension resulting from the loss of traditional orientations and life activity models, which requires technologies for developing new forms of life that satisfy all ethnic groups. Both of these processes, naturally, cause a series of tensions that are specific in their tasks, manifestations and require a differentiated approach to possible solution technologies. It is also worth noting that the maximum concentration of tension will be observed in the educational space, as one of the primary social institutions.

Considering that one of the traditional tasks of school is to achieve the socialization of students, including through their participation in the cultural space, it is necessary to understand how this task is realized in modern multicultural and polycultural society. This issue is especially acute when taking into account risks arising in multicultural societies: on the one hand, rigidity and isolation arise due to fear of losing one's own identity; on the other hand, cultural uniformity becomes a defence against the expansion of globalization eroding cultural identity. The multiculturalism of a school space, in this case, requires directed influences to protect all participants in the educational process from victimization.

Thus, schools will face a serious challenge, the solution of which will critically con-

front these two opposing processes: cultural uniformity versus global homogenization.

### **Theoretical framework**

The problems of education that arise in a multicultural and polycultural society have been discussed by scientists from all countries over the past decades. Studies on the impact of multicultural society on the transformation of educational tasks in Europe and America are actively conducted: Escarbajal-Frutos A., Izquierdo-Rus T., Aznar-Díaz I., Cáceres-Reche M.P. (2019), Hajisoteriou C., Angelides P. (2017), etc.

The authors note the role of the intercultural dialogue in building a truly safe educational space. The difference of cultures in the situation of using the intercultural dialogue is not considered as a risk, but as a value leading to complex synergism. The differences in this case enrich the culture, and allow schools to solve one of the fundamental tasks – to prepare students for life and coexistence in a changing and heterogeneous environment (Arroyo, 2013: 145). A restorative approach and mediation among peers act as an effective means of solving the transformational tasks set before education, thanks to which intercultural interaction is built, the atmosphere of mutual respect and dialogue improves.

In Russian education, multiculturalism and polyculturality are discussed by many authors (G.D. Dmitriev, G.V. Palatkina, Zh.M. Makazhanova and others) who contribute to the development of theoretical foundations of the concept of modern education. However, it should be noted that there is no single definition of concepts, and each author interprets them in their own way. Thus, Zh.M. Makazhanova, analysing the main approaches to understanding polyculturality of education, considers it to be the equality of all cultures while recognizing value and respect for other cultures (Makazhanova, 2018). The author also emphasizes the differences between multicultural and polycultural approaches.

A clearer identification of the specifics of the multicultural and polycultural approaches in the organization of modern education is significant in determining the emerging problems

and tasks of modern education. The situation of a multicultural educational space will be characterized by the presence of several culturally distinctive groups located in a single space territorially and tolerantly related to each other. Such cultural groups do not interfere with each other, but also do not enter into close interaction with the goal of developing a single cultural field. A culturally diverse society emerges, and within its framework each culture takes its own place, preserving its originality. This situation may well suit all the participants until educational, social, political or cultural interests meet within the limits of resource or a zone of influence. In a situation of increasing tension and the emergence of conflict, tolerance as the basis for interaction will cease to play its buffer role and a leap in victim tension may occur, which can lead to open culturally-conditioned conflicts. In this case, there is victimization of communities and individual groups or individuals, which naturally increases their victim vulnerability.

Community victimization is directly related to the emergence of victim society as a society with a different type of victim mentality and corresponding cultural frames that approve victim behaviour. In fact, it is legitimate to talk about the emergence of victimization culture, with the consolidation of victim values as normative grounds for behaviour.

Considering the issues of victim vulnerability of communities, let us note that the model of victimological forecasting should be built in four main parameters – biological, mental, social in the context of the existing culture. Taking into account the four indicated parameters allows us to create a comprehensive picture of the determinants and conditions of victimization of both an individual and social communities. The multiculturalism of modern social environments, with the density of their distribution within metropolises and the specifics of geopolitical and globalist processes, leads to changes in a social environment and the emergence of victim tensions.

The situation of multiculturalism leads to a shift in the factor of social impact, its confusion and increased tension, the occurrence of deficits in interpersonal interactions (lack of

attraction, empathy, mental reflection, satisfaction with communication, trust of subjects of interaction). Given that victimization directly manifests itself in interpersonal interaction, the degree of victimizing influence will increase in all institutions of socialization of a person, especially in a family and school. Thus, there is a need for the development of special practices to reduce the deficits for use in the education system.

An analysis of existing practices in Russia and abroad makes it possible to single out restorative mediation technologies as effective for resolving conflicts in the field of education and reducing victim tension.

In the modern scientific literature, different models of mediation are highlighted (Karnozova, 2010). The specifics of the model will depend on the situation itself, its correlation with criminal liability and the severity of the damage received. Currently, depending on the concept, several mediation models are distinguished. Historically, the primary type of mediation emerged from restorative justice programs and was transferred to other types of conflicts, such as school conflicts, prisoner conflicts, where the specificity and strict distribution of roles for the offender and the victim is often difficult. As a result, the direction of restorative mediation was identified by R. Maksudov and A. Konovalov. Restorative meditation, in fact, is a set of practices aimed at resolving an emerging conflict (Konovalov, 2012). Several programs are presented under the auspices of restorative mediation in modern literature: a family conference, mediations based on problem solving and reaching an agreement, narrative and transformational models, etc. Within the framework of restorative mediation, all of the above models can be integrated and implemented in a single strategy, despite the difference of the theoretical basis.

L.M. Karnozova, considering the basic ideas of restorative mediation, notes the possibility of combining the ideas of different models in practice (Karnozova, 2010). The author notes that in spite of the differences in the models, it is possible to distinguish features common to the mediation approach, which serve as the basis for the organization of activities. This

is the voluntary participation of the parties in the reconciliation procedure, their activity and responsibility in making a common decision, with the mediator being neutral. The role of the mediator in this case is in the organization of the process itself and the clear conduct of the mediation procedure, taking into account the interests of all participants.

Given the specifics of school mediation, it should be noted that its tasks include not only resolving conflicts that arise, but also the educational context. This turns the practices of restorative mediation into technologies aimed at improving the children's communicative, cognitive and emotional competence, reducing the level of their victim vulnerability. In the educational space, the mediative approach of the "group of equals" acts as the most popular. Mediation training in "peer groups" is aimed at increasing a responsible attitude to one's own life, developing respect, empathy, the ability to put oneself in someone's place, and the ability to correctly respond to conflicts.

Thus, the development of school mediation services can significantly reduce the victimogenic charge of a multicultural educational space, increase the level of security in cooperation with the need to preserve ethnic uniqueness.

Conducting an analysis of the effectiveness of the use of mediation practices, Freire, S.F, Branco, A.U. (2019) note the importance of taking into account the interaction of "I-another-culture" systems in the context of the condition of social interactions of the ontogenetic development of a person. Ibarrola-García, S., Redín, C.I. (2017), having analysed the effectiveness of school mediation over the years, note the effectiveness of using mediation in the school not only to counteract conflict dynamics in the classroom, but also to develop resources and special skills to overcome everyday difficulties. The authors especially note that participation in school mediation enhances cognitive and moral learning, and develops the ability to emotionally regulate mediators themselves. In their further studies, the authors confirmed that participation in the role of mediators leads to the development of the emotional sphere in two different dimensions: emotional awareness and

emotional regulation (Ibarrola-García, Iriarte, Aznárez-Sanado, 2017).

García-Raga L., Boqué Torremorell, MC, Grau Vidal, R. (2019) examining the role of mediation in creating a positive climate in a university, they present an analysis of 1771 questionnaires, which highlights the potential of school mediation in improving the psychological well-being of an individual, interpersonal relationships and school climate. Students in the responses to the questionnaire also noted the need for more effective dissemination of information about the mediation service, the importance of teaching all students. Thus, the authors note the effectiveness of using the mediation service in solving problems of interpersonal relations and conflicts.

Analysing the impact of the use of mediation practices to reduce victimization, Konold, T., Cornell, D., Shukla, K., Huang, F. (2017), in sampling of 48027 students in grades 9-12, note the differences in the perception of the school climate by students of different race (between black and white groups, but not between Hispanic and white groups). The relationship between the school climate and peer involvement or aggression is also significant. However, a positive school climate, regardless of race (black, Hispanic, and white groups), has similar advantages in encouraging student involvement and reducing victimization experience (Konold et al., 2017). Thus, researchers of the role of mediation services in solving the problems of a multicultural society reliably prove their effectiveness.

Since 2001, a mediative approach has also been actively developing in Russia. The paradigm of restorative justice practices includes pre-trial settlement services and school mediation services. Currently, according to the monitoring of school reconciliation services for 2018, there are 914 services in Russia (Kononov, 2018). The essence of the restorative approach is based on the responsibility of the aggressor to compensate for the harm caused to the victim and to heal the victim by the offender with the minimum participation of specialists. The activities of rehabilitation services are aimed at organizing a specific situation for resolving interpersonal conflicts, a multilateral

analysis of the situation, and gaining experience in using a constructive dialogue to restore justice.

### Discussion

To predict the possible development of school mediation within the framework of Russian society, we need to understand the degree of need for devictimizing influences in different territories. An analysis of the victimization of Russian society allows us to make a forecast of natural development that defines the main zones of tension. Based on geopolitical location; migration flows defining territories of multicultural tension; socio-economic stratification; the stratification process, we can distinguish zones of maximum vulnerability, which will include the territories of large cities located at the intersection of migration flows. V.Iu. Zorin, in his work, notes that the main flow of migrants is absorbed by the urban agglomerations of Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Krasnodar Territory (Zorin, 2019). A large flow is observed in Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk. However, the attitude towards migrants in Siberian cities is more intense. Thus, the six main territories are at risk of victimization as a result of the multiculturalism process. In addition, based on the provisions of geopolitical theory in the context of competition between societies, the “centrality” of the location of these territories and their ability to expand their influence, with the subsequent tendency to clash for global leadership, also increases victim vulnerability. Within the framework of the established networks of unequal exchange of the nucleus (Moscow, St. Petersburg) with semi-periphery (Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk, Krasnodar) it leads to an increase in victimization in society itself, especially in relation to migrants with a distinctive ethnic group.

Considering current social processes through the prism of community victimization, refracted in the context of active-passive mentality of cultures, according to P.A. Sorokin, relevant urgent behavioural attitudes for the sensual type of culture of modern Russia were highlighted (Andronnikova, 2016). As a result, four types of victimization motivational and

orientational characteristics of societies that determine the reaction in cultural interaction can be identified. The first type is characterized by a high level of dynamism and a desire for reform, in the event of aggression in case of obstacles. Communities of this type are prone to a multicultural process and mutual enrichment of cultures. The second type of community is inclined to preserve cultural identity and care only for their own well-being through the utilization of the external environment. They are inclined towards a multicultural type of assimilation in new territories, maintaining their own uniqueness with an aggressive type of upholding ethnic identity. The third type is focused on meeting needs through changing the environment, taking into account the needs of other cultures. It is prone to multicultural interaction. The fourth type is fixed on the satisfaction of sensual desires, regardless of ethnicity and territory of residence, prone to aggressive reactions, nihilism.

Thus, the analysis of social processes allows us to identify areas of high risk of victimization and determine the needs of the organization of school mediation services for building a safe educational space in multicultural areas. These areas include large conglomerates with a high flow of migrants and the presence of communities with a second and fourth type of victimization (1. those preoccupied with maintaining their cultural identity without a desire to assimilate into a dominant culture, learn a language, adopt social rules; 2. those experiencing negative feelings and a high level of nihilism migrated from the suburban territories with the low socio-economic status).

An additional complication arises in the situation where representatives of these communities have a low need for restoration technologies for conflict resolution. Representatives of both the first and the second communities believe that the responsibility for the conflict lies in the field of social inequality and do not take responsibility for its resolution. Hence, there is an urgent need not only in restorative justice practices (although they are also needed), but primarily in the educational type of mediation aimed at teaching adolescents a culture of conflict resolution, taking responsibility

for resolving the conflict, taking into account social reality. Such a movement will give an impetus to the polyculturality of territories and the reduction of victim tension.

### Conclusion

The analysis of the development of restorative mediation practices in modern society revealed a high need for the use of the mediative approach in modern society, with a low interest in implementing these practices of semi-peripheral areas with a high level of victimization (Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Krasnoyarsk, Krasnodar) arising from the specifics of victimization and the tendency to shift responsibility for conflicts to social inequality. Polyculturality and multiculturalism have fundamental differences in the context of victim tension compensated by tolerance, which loses

its buffer role in a conflict situation. At present, in Russia there are six main areas of tension caused by the processes of migration, geopolitical changes and globalization. In semi-peripheral territories, there may be a specificity of assimilation of migrants on the basis of multiculturalism and the desire to preserve ethnic identity, which causes additional tension between the dominant culture and ethnic groups. This situation exacerbates interpersonal interaction in educational institutions and the need for mediation technologies.

Of the various existing models of mediation, the “peer group” is the most suitable for educational purposes, which allows overcoming the victim vulnerability of communities through teaching children conflict competence, empathy, communication and problem-solving skills.

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## **Виктимологические аспекты развития практик восстановительной медиации в поликультурном обществе: проблемы, потребности, перспективы развития**

**О.О. Андронникова, О.Е. Радзиховская**

*Новосибирский государственный педагогический университет  
Российская Федерация, Новосибирск*

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассмотрены вопросы разницы виктимного напряжения в поликультурном и мультикультурном обществе. Дана характеристика современного состояния развития общества, обозначены последствия транзиторности, глобализации и геополитических изменений. Выделены проблемы образования, возникающие в мультикультурной среде. Представлен анализ эффективности использования восстановительного подхода школьных служб медиации в России и за рубежом. Проведен анализ виктимизации российского общества, определяющий основные зоны виктимного напряжения, возникающие вследствие геополитических и миграционных процессов. Выделены шесть основных территорий, уязвимых с точки зрения возникновения мультикультурной среды. Описаны сообщества с виктимными мотивационно-установочными характеристиками, направленными на сохранение самобытности, без обмена культурными образцами. Обозначено, что для целей образования на территориях с мультикультурными тенденциями максимально интересным выступает воспитательно-образовательный тип медиации.

**Ключевые слова:** восстановительная медиация, поликультурное общество, мультикультурная среда, виктимность, образование.

Научная специальность: 13.00.00 – педагогические науки, 19.00.00 – психологические науки.