Innovating the concept of trust to research the positioning of Children with Migrant Background in education

ESA RN4 Mid-Term Conference

UHI Inverness, July 13, 2022

Horizon 2020 Child-UP. Interviews with teachers working in G.London primary schools

!8 audio-taped interviews

interviews were concerned with the integration of CMB in education. Trust was not envisaged as a theme of the interviews.

BUT

emerging narratives where the positioning of CMB is determined by the type of trust that underpins teacher-children relationships

personal trust (Giddens).

trust based on categorical inequalities (Luhmann; Tilly)

This presentation

teachers' trust in learners and how different types of trust, or distrust, can influence the positioning of learners, in particular CMB, in the classroom
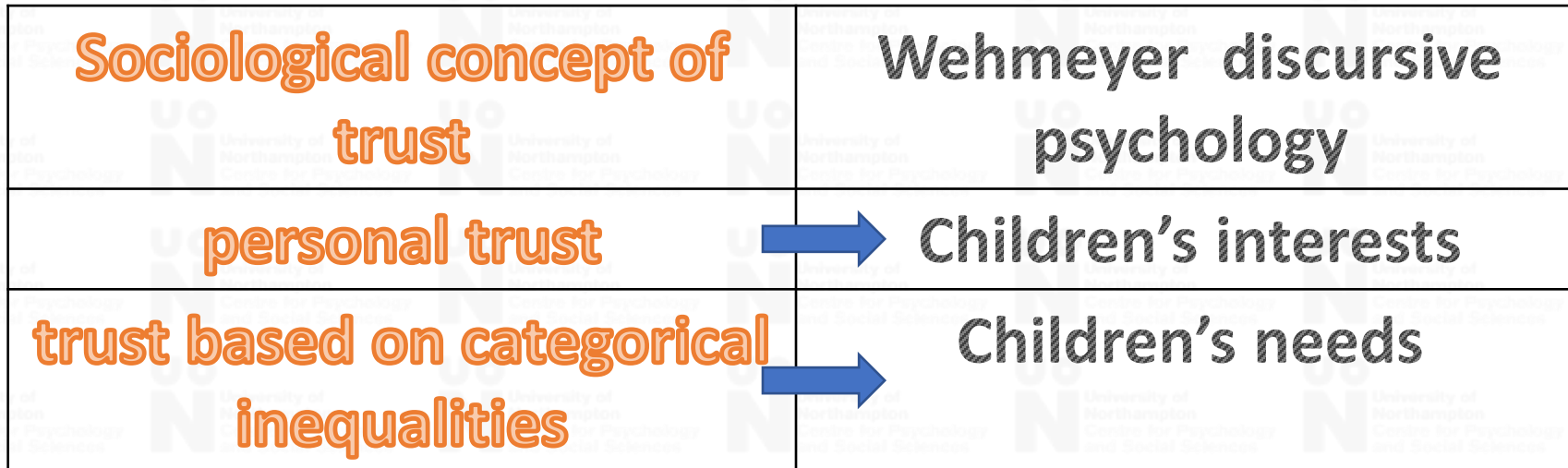
focus on the implications of

trust based on categorical inequalities.

Trust in expertise (Luhmann)

children's commitment to education depends on their trust in teachers' expert guidance and teaching. Children engage with teaching, assessment or any other social situation in the classroom based on trust in the expertise of teachers

Interactions with teachers as access point in the education system (Giddens)

Sociological concept of trust	**Wehmeyer discursive psychology**
personal trust ➡️	**Children's interests**
trust based on categorical inequalities ➡️	**Children's needs**

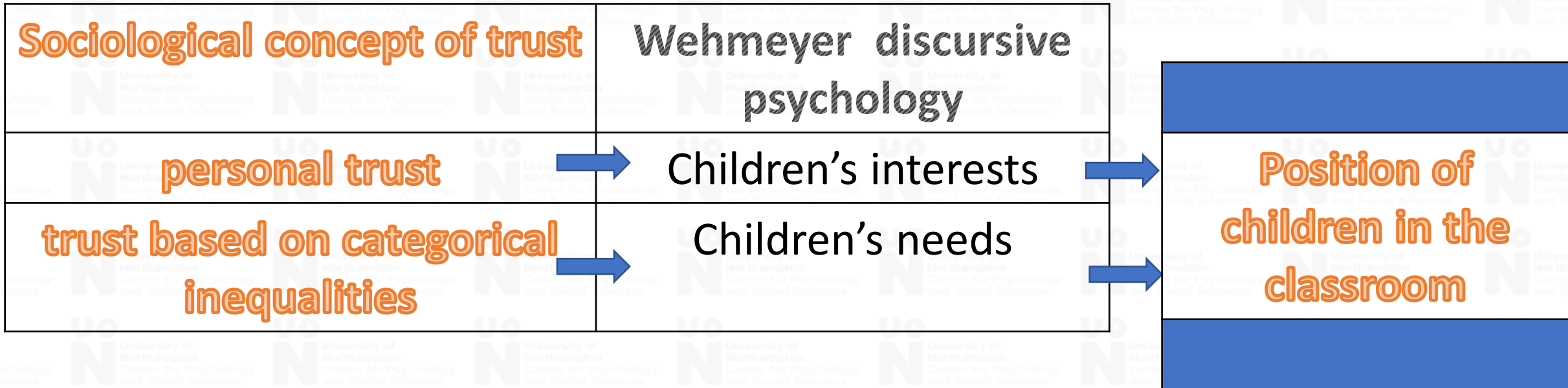| Children's interests	positions children as capable to theorise their interests and pursue them in practice as subjects whose action can make a difference in the contexts of their experiences
Children's needs	positions adults as advocates who act on behalf of children, to provide them what adults consider to be needed for their development

children's needs and the children's interests paradigms → application of the theory of *positioning* (Davies and Harré)

Positioning: discursive practices. Individuals position themselves and others in joinly produced storylines ascribing rights and claim them for themselves as well as placing duties on others
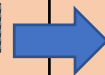
Position: a cluster of contextualised, short-term, disputable rights, obligations and duties. Not all participants in social situations have equal access to rights and duties to perform specific actions, in that specific moment and with those specific co-participants

Sociological concept of trust	Wehmeyer discursive psychology	
personal trust	Children's interests	
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Position of children in the classroom

trust based on categorical inequalities (Tilly)

It is a type of trust that develops from categorisations that create inequalities

inequalities based on categorisations (categorical inequalities)	foundation in the material dimension of meaning (Luhmann) of the difference between trusted and dis-trusted partners

differences in academic performances or in the adherence to behavioural rules, if repeated over time, become *durable* inequalities, because they support the development of differentiated expectations that lead to durable *and* categorical inequalities

foundation in the material dimension of meaning (Luhmann) of the difference between trusted and dis-trusted partners

Whilst some children are categorised as trustworthy partners of teachers in their educational journey, other children are categorised as untrustworthy

Some children are trusted and seen as a resource for education and can make decisions that are consequential in their educational journey; other children are distrusted, are considered a risk for education and observed as objects of teachers' control. Depending on the categorisation of each learner, trust based on categorical inequalities can support inclusion or marginalisation

Differentiated allocation of trust and contributes to the positioning of children in a discourse of children's interest (trust) or in a discourse of children's needs (trust in distrust).

When positioned in the children's needs paradigm, CBM are not trusted as decision-makers

Teachers act for them and on their behalf, replacing children's agency with control, as exemplified by two excerpts:

The question is to have a clear picture of what each child needs. It is important to understand what realistic expectations are at one moment in time and move from there. If a child comes with needs in terms of language for instance, we have got to have plans that are right for that profile, to make the right decisions for the child who can be a bit displaced if we do not understand what he needs

(Teacher, 29 y.o., primary school year 6)

I have, we have got some experience and it is not easy but not hard to see what a child needs maybe at the beginning of a new journey, coming from a completely different situation of learning and sometimes from a series of different situations if the family is more, more mobile. If it has been a long-complicated journey for the child. I feel that we are the child's advocates and his voice really, also with the family, to explain what the child needs, the work that needs to be done which not all parents have the knowledge of education in here to ((understand))

(Teacher, 47 y.o., primary school year 4)

The classroom can be the first environment in which CMB can actively participate in the host society

However, lack of trust can favour the positioning of CMB as objects for teaching practices *on* rather than *with,* them.

Positioning CMB in the children's needs paradigm risks transforming categorisation in the ingredient of self-fulfilling prophecies of educational marginalisation

Trust based on categorical inequalities is intertwined with trust based on expertise: teachers' expertise legitimises selection, and selection legitimises categorical inequalities. Trust based on categorical inequalities and trust based on expertise are coupled: one presupposes the other…

…As I have said it is the experience and the pedagogical knowledge that support the teacher who is a well-prepared professional to see up to how far that individual child can go, what is the profile that fits better at the moment, where the child stands and what are the situation where the child can be given more space without this being detrimental for the child

(Teacher, 37 y.o., primary school year 6)

The connection between educational selection and standardised role performances can create conditions of marginalisation already from the early stages of education (Karoly and Gonzales)

CMB's positioning as active participants in their own education can be affected by categorically-based withdrawing of trust that represent the foundation, as well as the consequence, of categorical inequalities

Reflections:

Whilst permeated by the commitment to protect and support CMB, the children's needs paradigm may contribute to marginalising CMB, because they are distrusted based on their categorisation as members of a *deficit-group*.

Ultimately, the discussion points to a challenge for inclusive education: the challenge is to establish the conditions for mutual trust, that is, mutual humanization and mutual reassurance, based on acknowledgment of interests of all participants

Thank you!

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