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COSMOPOLITAN SOFT SKILLS: SELF- AND SOCIAL AWARENESS FOSTERING HUMAN FLOURISHING**

KOSMOPOLITYCZNE UMIEJĘTNOŚCI MIĘKKIE: SAMOŚWIADOMOŚĆ I ŚWIADOMOŚĆ SPOŁECZNA SPRZYJAJĄCA ROZKWITOWI LUDZKIEMU

ABSTRACT: While globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon, present educational foci tend to lie not on preparing students for a complex, globalised 21st century, but on preparing students for a 21st-century economic globalisation. In order to advocate a change of consciousness, this present study examined the concept of human flourishing and the skills – referred to as cosmopolitan soft skills – fostering the phenomenon. The theoretical analysis undertaken by the study identified flourishing to be a three-dimensional concept and established that flourishing cannot be fully realised unless an individual is flourishing from a positive-psychological, a moral-political, as well as from a moral-ethical perspective. The empirical analysis eventuated a comprehensive list of skills and competences that contemporary educational institutions aim at equipping their students with for the sake of flourishing. Through an interplay between theory and empirical data, the study resulted in a possible conceptualisation of cosmopolitan soft skills, consisting of the four core skills of attention, acceptance, respect, and responsibility as well as 78 other skills organised into four main categories. Provided the critical realist stance taken, the results are believed to be of a flexible and ever-changing but universal nature that facilitate future research into the educability of cosmopolitan soft skills and the empirical realisation of human flourishing.

KEYWORDS: flourishing, cosmopolitan soft skills, critical realism, positive psychology, capabilities approach, cosmopolitanism.

ABSTRAKT: Podczas gdy globalizacja jest zjawiskiem wielowymiarowym, edukacja obecnie zazwyczaj nie skupia się na przygotowaniu uczniów do złożonego, zglobalizowanego XXI wieku, lecz na przygotowaniu do globalizacji ekonomicznej XXI wieku. Aby promować zmianę świadomości w badaniach zaprezentowanych w artykule, skoncentrowano się na koncepcji rozkwitu (dobrobytu i rozwoju) człowieka oraz kosmopolitycznych umiejętnościach miękkich, sprzyjających temu zjawisku. Przeprowadzona analiza teoretyczna wykazała, że rozkwit jest trójwymiarową koncepcją i ustalono, że może być w pełni realizowany, tylko jeśli podmiot rozkwita zarówno z perspektywy pozytywno-psychologicznej, moralno-politycznej, jak i moralno-etycznej. W wyniku analizy empirycznej powstała wyczerpująca lista umiejętności oraz kompetencji, w które celem rozkwitu współczesne instytucje edukacyjne starają się wyposażać swoich studentów. Dzięki połączeniu teorii i danych empirycznych, badanie umożliwiło konceptualizację kosmopolitycznych umiejętności miękkich, na które składają się cztery podstawowe umiejętności, mianowicie uwagi, akceptacji, szacunku i odpowiedzialności,

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a także 78 innych podzielonych na cztery główne kategorie. Zgodnie z postawą krytycznego realizmu wyniki są elastyczne i stale się zmieniają, ale mają charakter uniwersalny. Ułatwia to przyszłe badania nad możliwościami kształcenia kosmopolitycznych umiejętności miękkich i empiryczną realizacją ludzkiego rozkwitu.

słowa kluczowe: rozkwit (dobrobyt i rozwój) ludzki, kosmopolityczne umiejętności miękkie, realizm krytyczny, pozytywna psychologia, podejście do zdolności, kosmopolityzm.

Although it is a multidimensional phenomenon, current educational foci tend to lie mostly on the economic dimension of globalisation (Held et al. 2000; Papastephanou 2005). Educational aims and the norms governing educational institutions have economised and national and international competition have become the promoters of quality in education (Rönnström 2012, p. 199, 2015). In fact, even the advocacy for teaching interpersonal socioemotional soft skills is articulated predominantly from an economic perspective and for the sake of employability in contemporary educational discourses (Balcar 2016). However, is it really the idea of the human capital theory that economic success and growth is and ought to be the main goal of education in general? Is it not concerning that today's society wants its individuals to be well and to be functioning well with others for the sake of economic productivity? But if not for the sake of the global economy, why are these skills that the economic vocabulary refers to as soft skills important? Do all adults, having successfully undergone compulsory education, embody these skills? And most importantly, what *are* these skills in the first place?

As a matter of fact, these questions pithily summarise the very motivation of conducting the research that is shortly summarised in this paper. By accentuating an alternative discourse to the utilitarian, neoliberal understandings of globalisation and so to the very purpose of education, the research set out to advocate a change of consciousness concerning global interconnectedness and to frame it ethically. The starting point of the research was, in other words, the conviction that it is the commonality of our human (adjective) being (noun) and not the world-economy that connects us all. The overall aim was to investigate the concept of human flourishing and to determine what skills and competences are essential for an individual to develop in order to flourish in the accelerated and extendedly interconnected context of the 21st century. On the one hand, the intention was to provide an (alternative) understanding of why soft skills are essential, and on the other, since the lack of a unanimous definition and agreement on what actual skills this skill set de facto incorporates was recognised, the research intended to gather these skills in order to facilitate future research into their educability. The purpose of this article is therefore to present a short summary of the process and results of this educational inquiry.

Firstly, the results of a theoretical investigation into the concept of flourishing are put forward, this section is designed to develop and sustain the argument that flourishing is a three-dimensional concept. It is established that human flourishing cannot

be fully realised unless an individual is flourishing from a positive-psychological, a moral-political, as well as from a moral-ethical perspective. The section explains and gradually unfolds a theoretical framework that establishes that it is via the cultivation of virtues – i.e. what the present paper calls and conceptualises as cosmopolitan soft skills – that one can achieve flourishing. Secondly, the empirical investigation carried out with the intention to compile an empirical basis for the conceptualisation of cosmopolitan soft skills is discussed. The section argues for the methodological decisions made, so it defends the general critical realist and abductive-retroductive approach taken, puts forth the empirical qualitative comparative multi-case study design chosen and unveils the process of a rigorous qualitative content analysis. Thirdly, the paper presents the results this research arrived at by the intersecting of theory and empirical data, it also presents a conceptual map of cosmopolitan soft skills. Finally, the discussion section and the concluding words contemplate how the findings are relevant for adult education and for education in general and aims at developing a novel insight into our understanding of 21st-century global interconnectedness and the educational implications this change of consciousness might entail.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Very simplistically, flourishing can be understood as a synthetizing term for happiness, well-being, and welfare. Although flourishing that implies well-being and the living of a good life has been a central theme in classical philosophy for more than two millennia (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015, p. 311), there have not been many who have investigated the comprehensive state of flourishing in academia (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. 2016, p. 1351). In fact, Agenor et al. (2017, pp. 915-920) draw attention to the fact that many argue for the lack of conceptual and operational consistency within the flourishing discourse, so the researchers contend that a multidisciplinary approach is needed for the further theoretical and empirical development of the concept. The theoretical investigation undertaken by the critical realist study that this paper presents was therefore concentrated on critically and comprehensively assessing the existing knowledge about flourishing and was designed to show and argue for the multidimensionality of the concept. The present section will demonstrate how specific interpretations of positive psychology, the capabilities approach and critical cosmopolitanism – so theories that are generally considered to be unrelated – can be regarded not only as complimentary and linked to one another but also as equal and fundamental constituents of the concept of flourishing. An understanding of how these three theories relate to one another and together constitute a bottom-up approach to flourishing should help accentuate the necessity of identifying and describing the virtues – i.e. cosmopolitan soft skills – an

individual needs to develop in order to achieve flourishing in its comprehensive, three-dimensional understanding.

The positive psychological dimension of flourishing

Flourishing in academia is most commonly understood as the positive-psychological well-being of the individual. Although sociologists and positive psychologists have done a relatively great amount of research on flourishing understood as individual well-being (Agenor et al. 2017, p. 920), it is important to see that the present study does not identify well-being as a synonymous term to flourishing but instead as an inevitable constituent or dimension of the concept. Simply put, positive psychological well-being is understood to be the fusion of the hedonic theory of subjective well-being and the eudaimonic theory of the psychological well-being of the individual.

Hedemonia, as found in Epicurus's works in classical philosophy, means the pursuit of pleasure (Nelson & Slife 2017). Accordingly, the subjective well-being of the individual refers to 'people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives' (Diener 2000, p. 34). In order to flourish, one therefore needs to possess a high level of positive emotions i.e. positive feelings such as happiness, joy, or hope (Agenor et al. 2017; Coffey et al. 2016; Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. 2016; Seligman & Csíkszentmihályi 2000). Eudaimonia – the other classical philosophical vision of the good life – entails, on the other hand, the pursuit of virtues, so not pleasures (Nelson & Slife 2017). Although the word virtue has contemporarily been replaced by words such as human functionings or capabilities, the essence of the approach is unchanged: the realisation of a purposeful life (Coffey et al. 2016). Eudaimonic well-being can thus be understood as psychological or social well--being, and despite a lack of consensus, meaning, positive relations, engagement, and personal growth have generally been identified as constituents of the concept (Keyes 2002; Ryan et al. 2008; Ryff 1989, all as cited in Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. 2016, p. 1352).

That said, flourishing as individual well-being is generally conceptualised as the combination of positive feelings and positive functionings in the 21st century (Agenor et al. 2017; Coffey et al. 2016; Keyes 2013). Aiming to fill the gap concerning the constituents of positive psychological well-being, Agenor et al.'s (2017) synthetising research and conceptual analysis of flourishing identifies six emerging attributes i.e. defining features of the concept across four prominent models of flourishing: meaning, positive relationships, engagement, competence, positive emotions and self-esteem. Positive psychological well-being can therefore be understood as the 'combination of feeling good and functioning effectively' (Huppert & So 2013, p. 838). Since people by nature tend to have the ability to adjust to good and bad conditions (Diener 2000, p. 40; Sen 1999 as cited in Giovanola 2005), however, this paper argues that the concept of positive psychological well-being cannot alone account for a comprehensive flourishing theory.

The moral-political dimension of flourishing

Next, the capabilities approach is introduced as a theoretical framework complementing – very importantly: *not* critiquing – the positive-psychological theory of well-being within the flourishing paradigm. The capabilities approach is best understood as Amartya Sen's human development theory and Martha Nussbaum's basic social justice theory. As the approach provides 'a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements' (Robeyns 2005, p. 94), it is first and foremost a theoretical framework *about* well-being, development and justice, and not a rigorous and specific theory *of* well-being (Sen 1992, p. 48; Robeyns 2005, pp. 94-96; Qizilbash 2008, pp. 53-54; Sen 2009a; Robeyns 2016 all as cited in Robeyns 2016). In contrast to the positive psychological theory of well-being, the capabilities approach 'calls attention to the objective circumstances of a person's life', and identifies an individual's opportunities, freedom, and agency – i.e. capabilities – to do and to be what they truly value as indispensable for the living of a good life (Choo 2018; Crosbie 2014; Giovanola 2005; Koggel 2013; Nussbaum 2011; Robeyns 2005; Sen 1999, 2005; Wilson-Strydom and Walker 2015, p. 313). It is an information pluralist approach where capabilities represent a set of alternatives of what one could desire to do and to be (Anand et al. 2005), and it '[favours] the creation of conditions in which people have real opportunities of judging the kind of lives they would like to lead' (Sen 1999, p. 63). In other words, through the conceptual lenses of the capabilities approach all humans are taken as ends and not merely as means (Nussbaum 2011).

That being said, Nussbaum (2011, p. 19) argues that without a threshold, even Sen's theory is insufficient, so she proposes a list of ten Central Capabilities as 'a definite account of basic justice'. As an attempt of answering the question 'What does a life worthy of human dignity require?', she claims that the – here only very pithily outlined – capabilities of life, bodily health, bodily integrity, thought, emotions, reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment (Nussbaum 2011, p. 32-34) are 'important for each and every citizen in each and every nation, and each is to be treated as an end' (Nussbaum 2000, p. 6). Nussbaum (2000, p. 8) thus provides a universal account of the capabilities approach that, she maintains, is at the same time 'sensitive to pluralism and cultural difference'. In this understanding, there are universal capabilities but personal (and particular) ways of developing them (Giovanola 2005, p. 260). So, for Nussbaum, the notion of human dignity realised via the Central Capabilities represents an 'objective' or substantive Good that is 'compatible with the plurality of individual preferences' (Giovanola 2005, p. 258). Finally, while Nussbaum maintains that her list is provisional and can always be subject to change (Crosbie 2014, p. 93), she also asserts that it would be the task of 'a decent political order [to] secure at least a threshold level

of these ten Central Capabilities' (Nussbaum 2011, p. 33). Her approach thus provides a normative political basis for ensuring each individual's minimum social well-being, and so this present paper identifies Nussbaum's list as a set of humanistic goals that prescribe a moral-political normative framework for the realisation of flourishing.

Giovanola (2005, p. 250) in turn, contends that the notions of agency and human dignity in Sen's and Nussbaum's works go beyond the (utilitarian) economic individual and indicate a more profound anthropological model: the person. The real significance of the capabilities approach, according to her, is ergo its philosophical anthropology and underlying idea of two-dimensional personhood. Giovanola (2005) argues that in addition to the almost self-evident extrinsic diversity that exists *among* human beings – i.e. personhood's social/relational dimension – there exists an intrinsic diversity *within* each and every human being – i.e. a dynamic dimension of personhood – that also needs to be realised. That is, it is vital to see that there is 'an internal multidimensionality and plurality which characterises each person', and so the Italian thinker contends that everybody is in the constant dynamic state of 'becoming' through their capabilities to do and to be (Giovanola 2005, pp. 250-251). Most importantly, since Giovanola (2005, pp. 262-264) defines flourishing as 'realizing the highest Good in a virtuous life in the highly important context of social relations and friendships', she concludes that the dynamic and the social/relational dimensions of personhood together have the potential of fostering self-realisation, human richness, and so flourishing. While positive psychology sees 'positive relationships … [as] elements of how a person achieves their own well-being … rather than [as] a consideration of what this might mean for well--being beyond the personal or for wider human development', the capabilities approach's underlying idea of two-dimensional personhood suggests a more social conception of well-being and works with a form of *ethical individualism* (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015, pp. 314-315). Thus, it moves beyond the *ontologically individualistic* well-being concept of positive psychology (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015, pp. 314-315).

It then becomes clear that flourishing has a relational component as well, as it does not relate only to one's own life but it 'also regards the outcomes resulting from 'sympathies' (Sen 1987 as cited in Giovanola 2005, p. 261). Consequently, the concept of flourishing is 'intricately intertwined with morality' (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015, p. 314). This paper nonetheless claims that morality plays a role in understanding flourishing not only in the sense that the state has a moral obligation of providing minimal well-being to its individuals (Nussbaum 2011) but also from the individual's own perspective (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015). Simply put, this paper argues that by prescribing a bare minimum for each individual's social-justice well-being, Nussbaum's list of Central Capabilities can be regarded as a normative political framework that prescribes the philosophical foundation for 'the highest Good' as Giovanola (2005)

mentions in her definition. However, the capabilities approach and Giovanola's (2005 p. 262) definition of flourishing highlight that this 'highest Good' and 'a virtuous life' can only be realised in the 'highly important context of social relations and friendships' i.e. by acting in a moral way. To flourish is then the same as to 'live, act, and reason with others according to the human development values of equity, diversity, empowerment, participation, and sustainability, so by and large according to the values that are realised in Nussbaum's capabilities (Wilson-Strydom & Walker 2015, p. 311; Walker and Boni 2013). However, the approach seems to turn a blind eye to how one can achieve becoming a person of such qualities.

The moral-ethical dimension of flourishing

Summarising what has been outlined so far, this article argues that each individual is responsible for their own positive-psychological well-being, while taking the moral-political dimension of flourishing into account, the state was found to be accountable for the minimum social well-being of each individual. In addition to that, the present paper also contends that flourishing has a moral-ethical dimension that concerns the fact that humans are social beings that exist in social contexts. It is argued that flourishing is impossible without this context, therefore how we live together and how we interact with one another is taken into account. That being said, while Nussbaum's list of Central Capabilities was found to be effective in prescribing *what* a person needs to do and to be in order to live a virtuous i.e. flourishing life, the present paper disserts that it fails to provide a description, method, or means of *how* a person can achieve to do and to be so. What follows will introduce critical cosmopolitanism as a way of accounting for this deficiency.

The Greek word *kosmopolitês* is most commonly translated as citizen of the world, so the word cosmopolitanism denotes 'a wide variety of important views in moral and socio-political philosophy' concerning human interconnectedness (Kleingeld & Brown 2014, p. 1). The concept can be approached from a political, moral, economic, as well as from a cultural perspective. The present discussion concentrates, nonetheless, on David T. Hansen's (2011) moral and Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2006) cultural cosmopolitanisms that together can be understood as a critical cosmopolitan theory. Hansen (2011, p. 21) describes cosmopolitanism as a philosophy of the art of living and as 'the lived quality' of the diverse human species 'dwelling' together (2017, p. 210). Hansen (2011, p. 3) understands cosmopolitanism as a framework that enables people to 'develop broad, deep, and rich understandings of the self, community, and the world', so for him a cosmopolitan is first and foremost an *inhabitant* of the world and not a citizen (Hansen 2011, p. 45). Appiah (2006, p. xi), in his turn, realises and calls upon the most significant consequence brought about by globalisation and the knowledge-based era,

namely, that not only can we know and learn about life now anywhere, but we can also affect lives everywhere. Moreover, Appiah's (2006, p. xi) emphasis on social responsibility can be understood as the very idea of shared morality, that in this sense means 'an emergent, generative mode of regarding and treating one another, subject matter, and the world – without subscribing to the same values or ideologies' (Hansen 2011, p. 15). Appiah (2006, p. 78) and Hansen (2011, p. 2) therefore contend that while people might cherish different values, as *some* values are and must be local, people do share *the capacity* to value which results in *some* values being and having to be universal; such as the cosmopolitan value of living together.

Similarly to the capabilities approach, critical cosmopolitanism sees people as ends and not means, and as creative creatures that are capable of reason and moral agency (Hansen 2011, p. 7). It also advocates a "golden means" between universality and particularity. By advocating a kind of cosmopolitan-mindedness for a shared morality of our shared humanity, however, critical cosmopolitanism surpasses the capabilities approach in terms of methodological sufficiency. That is, according to Hansen (2011) and Appiah (2006), cosmopolitan-mindedness can be realised via reflective openness to the new and reflective loyalty to the old, known, or local, and it also entails curiosity intertwined with imaginative engagement regarding other people, their ideas, values, and beliefs. Also, cosmopolitan-mindedness imposes a willingness and capability to engage in conversation – with the self, others, as well as the general Other, and both in the sense of literal talk and as an engagement with others' experiences and ideas. Thus, Hansen (2011) and Appiah (2006, p. 85) argue that cosmopolitan i.e. moral and creative conversation is the key to both self-cultivation (ethics) and the undertaking of the social responsibility of living together (morals). That being said, both thinkers put great emphasis on the acknowledgment of the fact that the goal of cosmopolitan engagement and moral, creative conversation is not consensus but mutual understanding and acceptance of differences. The competences of reflexivity, curiosity, imaginative engagement, conversation, understanding and acceptance, therefore, imply a deliberative way of speaking, listening, and interacting with others (Hansen 2011). These competences, the theorists argue, constitute the very basis of a universal moral-ethical cosmopolitan-mindedness. Thus, critical cosmopolitan theory promotes a way of thinking where 'the universal claim of the cosmopolitan takes form in ongoing reflection, appreciation, and criticism concerning what is universal' (Hansen 2010, p. 162). Consequently, it can be understood as a framework that offers *a way* of looking, thinking, and acting (Hansen 2011, p. xiv) which is considered to be vital for both self-cultivation and social responsibility i.e. for the realisation of a shared morality of our shared humanity. *How,* then, can this notion of cosmopolitan-mindedness help us conceptualise a comprehensive flourishing theory?

As a matter of fact, this paper argues that 'realizing the highest Good in a virtuous life in the highly important context of social relations and friendships' is possible via Confucius's two-and-a-half-millennia-old idea of humanness – or virtue as it has also been translated at times (Hansen 2011, p. 22). This paper contends that it is via the cultivation and embodying of virtues that one can achieve flourishing. Yet, a virtue is 'not a state of mind, a purely psychological attribute, or a final accomplishment, [r]ather it dwells *in* life itself, in moments of challenge, confusion, doubt, or confrontation that call upon whatever capacities of responsiveness the person embodies' (Hansen 2011, p. 22). As Hansen puts it (2011, pp. 22-23) virtues are 'at once an orientation toward other people and a mode of conduct' that 'requires focus and cultivation'. Based on the theoretical framework presented in this review, it is argued that the concept of virtues incorporates all (a) six positive psychological attributes needed for one's positive psycho-logical well-being, (b) Nussbaum's ten Central Capabilities that prescribe a normative political framework for each individual's minimum social-justice well-being as well as (c) the competences that the idea of cosmopolitan-mindedness incorporates which are considered to be essential for a harmonious 21st-century human coexistence. It is argued, however, that further research into the flourishing concept itself and into the educability of the concept is highly troublesome without a concrete description of the virtues that these three dimensions incorporate. What follows is the description of an empirical attempt at the identification of these virtues i.e. of what the present paper calls and conceptualises as cosmopolitan soft skills.

Methodology

In order to narrow down the focus and specify what exactly this present study has set out to know more about, the following research questions were formulated as the guiding backbones of the entirety of the research process:

1. How can positive psychology, the capabilities approach and critical cosmopolitan-ism be understood as interrelated concepts that together foster flourishing?
2. How can the examination of school policy documents concerning set-out educa-tional objectives help conceptualise cosmopolitan soft skills?
3. How can the viewpoints of school principals complement the examination of docu-ments and provide a deeper understanding of the conceptualisation of cosmopolitan soft skills?
4. What form could the description of cosmopolitan soft skills take based on the intersecting of the theoretical and empirical analyses undertaken by this study?

It was decided that the aim of this research would be best realised within the frameworks of a qualitative study that abides by the critical realist paradigm and

abductive-retroductive reasoning. Given its realist ontology and relativist epistemology, the conviction that permeates the whole of this study is one that while society and social events and structures exist externally, social sciences – i.e. the studying of and knowing about the social world – is always activity-, concept-, and sociotemporally dependent (Harvey 2002, p. 170), Provided the break with the positivist/anti-positivist dichotomy and the distinction of ontology and epistemology, critical realism – and so this study – can be best associated with a form of abductive and retroductive reasoning which implies a back and forth movement between the concept-driven deductive and data-driven inductive approaches (Schreier 2012; Graneheim et al. 2017). It was the above outlined theoretical investigation that was designed to answer research question 1, while the empirical part investigating one particular event concentrated on answering research questions 2 and 3. Given the general research approach and metatheory of the study, research question 4, and so the final results of the study, were actualised by paying an equal amount of attention to the theoretical and empirical analyses carried out. In practice, this entailed an interplay between theory and empirical data, the re--description and re-contextualisation of the investigated particular event, which in turn allowed us to make creative and imaginative inferences about the more general, more universal context or structure of human flourishing (Danermark et al. 2002, pp. 88-93). This abductive-retroductive approach is also what provides the possibility of transferability of the results, i.e. the here-constructed form of cosmopolitan soft skills, into contexts other than the investigated one.

The general critical realist metatheory and the aim of the study motivated the choice of a qualitative comparative multi-case study to consitute the empirical part of this research. By purposive sampling three contrasting cases within a specific context were identified and investigated by using identical methods. Three fundamentally different 12-grade schools (i.e. institutions integrating both primary and secondary levels) in Budapest, that all possessed the public policy document this empirical investigation had planned to analyse, were chosen as cases to be examined. Trying to capture the different dimensions of flourishing, the empirical investigation concentrated on (a) one of the best schools in Budapest according to national rankings where the primacy of economy is empirical reality, (b) one school which applies a person-centred approach and relies on the principles of integration and differentiation, and (c) one international school where the emphasis is on cultural diversity.

For the sake of a diversity of views and a higher level of credibility and confirmability, the triangulation of two sources of data was decided upon. Data were collected in the forms of both policy documents and semi-structured interviews. The so-called pedagogical programme of the schools – that can be understood as the "mission statement" of a particular school defining the basic principles and aims of the ongoing

educational work in that institution – was chosen to be investigated. As opposed to the curriculum, the Hungarian pedagogical programme is concerned about *the how* and not about *the what* of the ongoing institutional educational work. Additionally, semi-structured interviews about the general aims and principles of education were conducted with the three school principals in order to both complement and to gain a deeper understanding of the pedagogical programmes. Given the semi-structured nature, cross-case comparability was ensured and a rigorous but flexible interview process allowing the participants to express their own perceptions and opinions about complex issues that one is usually not used to talking about – such as ideals or values – could be maintained. A rigorous interview guide was designed to increase objectivity and trustworthiness, and a pilot interview with a fourth school principal was carried out as well to enhance the quality of the guide. Correspondingly, three interviews were carried out in the beginning of March 2019, on three consecutive days. Two of the three interviews were conducted in Hungarian and one in the English language. All questions contained in the guide were addressed in all three interviews, however, given the semi-structured nature they were not addressed in the same order and they allowed different follow-up questions. The interviews lasted approximately 75 minutes, were tape-recorded and finally transcribed in order to be able to execute a unified research analysis on the two different sources of data collection.

Since it is a recursive and reflexive theme-searching method that can be in line with the abductive-retroductive reasoning, qualitative content analysis was conducted on the data. It is important to highlight again that what the empirical part of this thesis intended to identify was a list of skills and competences possibly required for flourishing that the investigated schools actually aim at equipping their students with. Out of that comprehensive list of empirical skills a possible form of cosmopolitan soft skills could then be constructed by integrating the results of the theoretical investigation as well. The qualitative content analysis of the policy documents and semi-structured interviews focused mostly on the question 'What has been said?' and not on 'What was intended to be said?' (Bengtsson 2016, p. 9), so, with a relatively high level of abstraction and relatively low level of interpretation concentrated on the descriptions of the manifest content of the material (Graneheim et al. 2017, p. 32). Yet, as qualitative content analysis is a flexible and complex research method with 'no simple, "right" way of doing it' (Elo & Kyngäs 2008, p. 111), it is necessary to mention that it is Elo and Kyngäs' (2008) step-by-step description of the qualitative content analysis process that this research mostly relied on.

As part of the preparational phase, first the units of analysis were identified. The documents – i.e. the first unit of analysis – themselves played a major role in preparing and conducting the interviews i.e. the second unit of analysis. In other words,

the analysis itself started with the documents and consisted of identifying features of them that would require either confirmation, further elaboration or explanation. Ergo, the interview guide was designed in a way that would allow a deeper insight into the educational objectives outlined in the documents. For instance, the interview aimed at questioning the principals about words that the documents presented as self-evident and axiomatic i.e. it aimed at breaking with the tradition of taking words for granted. The principals were asked about what words such as morals, empathy, norms, talent, other or social and civic skills, to name a few examples, mean. Also, since phrases such as modern society, societal expectations, contemporary challenges, healthy body and mind or human dignity were constantly, but rather trivially, appearing in all three documents, these were also inquired about.

As part of the organisational phase, the documents and the interviews were first coded, perhaps somewhat unconventionally. That is, the present organisational, analytical process where meaning units were identified and abstraction and interpretation took place can neither be identified as a purely inductive nor as a purely deductive endeavour. Instead, it can be understood as a back and forth movement between the two approaches (Graneheim et al. 2017, p. 31), so between the two sides of Elo and Kyngäs' (2008) description of the process. The documents and interviews were analysed both by an inductive open-coding procedure aiming at identifying actual skills and competences mentioned, and according to a deductive categorisation matrix synthetizing the aims, the basic principles and the tasks to be carried out by the educational work ongoing in the institution. Then, the meaning units collected during the coding procedure were interpreted and organised in order to compile the intended comprehensive list of empirical skills. First, the skills that were literally mentioned in the material were directly placed on the list of skills. Second, all other meaning units that did not directly name a specific skill but implied the need of development of some ability or competence were reformulated so that they could also be understood as skills. This interpretative process resulted in a list of 146 empirical skills and competences.

Furthermore, given the dual reason for conducting and analysing interviews in addition to the policy documents, the interviews were approached in one other way. Due to the great amount of further and deeper elaborative explanations that were gained via the interview conduction, the information deriving from the interviews had a major role not only in identifying and collecting a comprehensive list of empirical skills but also in the process of making sense of the list of collected skills i.e. in the process of abstraction and categorisation. Though, it is essential to assert that at this point the theory and empirical data came completely together. That is, the list of skills resulting from the empirical analysis of both the policy documents and interviews was interpreted, reduced and organised with the above-presented conceptual and theoretical

framework at all times kept in mind. Thus, the six positive psychological attributes of meaning, engagement, competence, positive relationships, positive emotions and self-confidence, Nussbaum's list of ten Central Capabilities as well as the cosmopolitan--minded competences of curiosity, imaginative engagement, conversation, reflective openness, reflective loyalty, understanding, and acceptance played a vital influential role in the constructing and organising of the conceptual map of cosmopolitan soft skills. The mentioned, constituting skills of the map themselves nevertheless all originate from, and were all named in the empirical data (with the exception of the skill to play which was the only one that was nowhere mentioned in the empirical data; however, given that it constitutes one of Nussbaum's Central Capabilities it was decided to be included in the map). The section that follows will present the conceptual map of the identified 82 cosmopolitan soft skills i.e. the results of the discussed research project.

Results

Based on the theoretical and empirical analyses carried out within the frameworks of the present study, four core skills were identified as the fundamental basis of cosmo-politan soft skills: the skills of attention, acceptance, respect and responsibility. Being
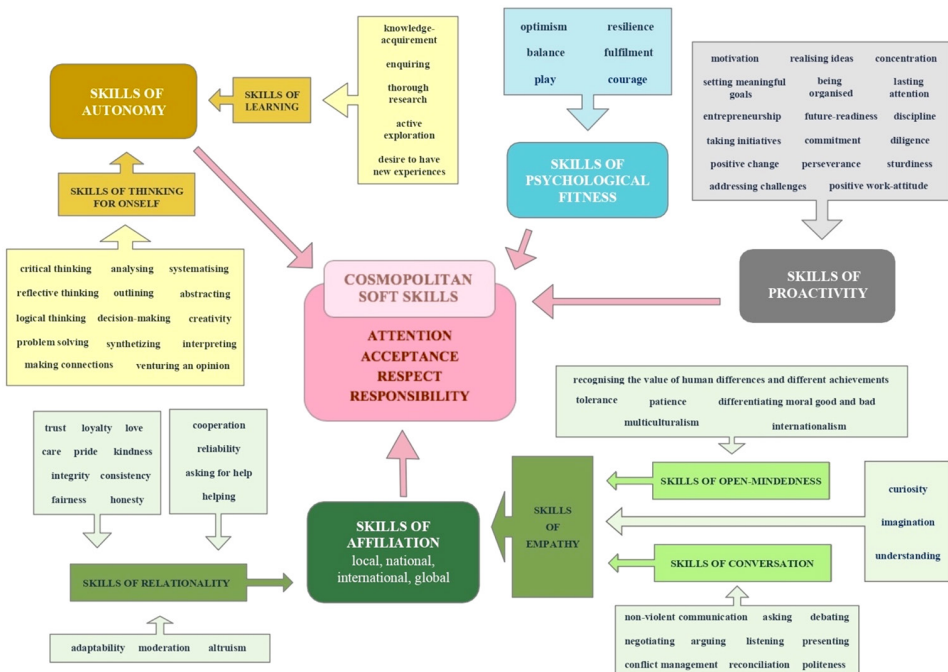

Figure 1. The conceptual map of cosmopolitan soft skills (Source: Created by the author)

attentive to, accepting of, respectful to and of, and responsible for the self, for others, for human differences, for one's communities, and for the environment were found not only to be of utmost importance but also to have a multidirectional concentration. These four skills were therefore decided to form both the starting and the end point of the conceptual map. While it was found to be crucial to be attentive, accepting, respectful and responsible to begin with, developing and embodying to some degree the other 78 skills presented by the map was also found to be contributing to the mastery of the core skills; that is the reason why they were decided not to be organised under a specific category. Apart from the four core skills, cosmopolitan soft skills were found to be built up of four main categories that are largely originate from and reflect the different dimensions of the theoretical flourishing concept. Nevertheless, the categories' different internal structures and the differing number of skills they synthetize is only a matter of choice of organisation which does not imply that some categories and skills are more important than others. All the presented 82 skills need, in and of themselves, to be considered as equally important and fundamental cosmopolitan soft skills.

Firstly, the category named skills of autonomy – composed of two subcategories: the skills of learning and the skills of thinking for oneself – was identified in order to synthetize the skills that were determined to be essential for the realisation of an individual's agency, human dignity and self-esteem. Secondly, while the six positive psychological attributes can be found in different categories and subcategories of the conceptual map, it was seen as vital for cosmopolitan soft skills to have a category dedicated primarily to positive psychological well-being concentrating mostly on the ability of experiencing positive emotions; hence the category named skills of psychological fitness. Thirdly, the category named as the skills of proactivity was designed to synthetize the skills needed for an individual to realise the positive psychological attributes of meaning, engagement, and competence. Finally, the category named skills of affiliation was designed to incorporate the skills necessary for a harmonious human coexistence on a local, national, international, as well as global level. Guided by the competences of cosmopolitan-mindedness and the positive psychological attribute of positive relationships, the category was found to incorporate two subcategories, one synthesising the skills of empathy and the other the skills of relationality. In order to put these results into context, the last section of this paper will aim at explicitly actualising and accentuating the 21st-century educational implications of the here-attained results and form of cosmopolitan soft skills.

Discussion and Conclusions

As shortly implied by the introductory section of this paper, the present-day primacy of economy in education is far from being unproblematic. It is by and large the human capital theory that prescribes educational aims in western, 21st-century educational frameworks, so while educating for the needed human capital tends to get more and more attention, educating for the sake of humanity appears to be more and more overshadowed. Being able to participate in a multidimensionally globalised society is, however, crucial as it is not solely a worldwide economy that the knowledge-based era has brought about and that one needs to be prepared for. Different people, ideas, values and practices are not living in separation any longer but instead encounter one another both physically and virtually on a regular basis. Social media and the complex problems of mental unwellness and low self-esteem, or the extremely intensified speed of information flow and enhanced level of human mobility brought about by the rapid advancements in communication technology and technology in general are, for instance, just some further challenges globalisation has eventuated. This paper thus argues that education systems have a more comprehensive job than solely preparing people for participation in the global labour market. Education systems should also be able to prepare people for an uncertain future and for the real face of human diversity, and to become responsible members of the global community that the diverse human species has grown into and can now be regarded as. Accordingly, it was for the sake of contributing to the formulation of a change of consciousness and articulating an alternative understanding of 21st-century global human interconnectedness that this present research concentrated on the investigation of human flourishing.

The research started out with the assumption that it is not the world economy but our belonging to the human species that connects us all, and it was set out to investigate what human beings as individuals and the common *human* being of all human beings needs for the sake of flourishing. The thorough theoretical examination carried out identified the concept of flourishing to have a positive-psychological, a moral-political, as well as a moral-ethical dimension, accounting for that flourishing is possible via the cultivation of virtues, and so argued for a comprehensive theory of how individual and collective human flourishing could be realised in the highly globalised and interconnected context of the 21st century. However, while the theoretical conceptualisation of flourishing and the idea of virtues drew attention to contemporary deficiencies and offered a normative alternative, it was found to be insufficient for providing more than a guiding structure for the realisation of flourishing and the identification of the virtues that foster flourishing. In order for the theory to take a more detailed, more tangible and more practical form, an empirical investigation was also carried out to capture

the actual virtues that the three-dimensional flourishing theory was conceptualised to embrace. The second part of this research was thus an empirical attempt of identifying the virtues that the positive psychological attributes, Nussbaum's Central Capabilities and the competences of cosmopolitan-mindedness prescribe and incorporate.

What the theoretical investigation identified as virtues were however named cosmopolitan soft skills for three different reasons. First, the word virtue was found to be rather remote and controversial for an everyday 21st-century usage and so the word *skill* was determined to be a contemporary equivalent to it. Second, the skills that this study was after were named *soft skills* because it was an already existing and a more generally known term with a considerable amount of research already done on the topic. Due to the clear resemblance, it was decided that instead of creating a whole new concept, the already known and to some extent accepted term of soft skills would be applied and further developed here. That being said, the here-investigated skills were named *cosmopolitan soft skills* because the skills identified and described in this paper go way beyond economic considerations. What is meant by this is that while the original term soft skills is an economic one that draws attention to the need for people to develop interpersonal socioemotional skills for the sake of better employability, cosmopolitan soft skills is a synthesising term for all the cognitive and non-cognitive skills required for the realisation of human flourishing – i.e. for the realisation of both individual well-being and a harmonious human coexistence. Cosmopolitan soft skills are a cultivatable set of skills incorporating both brain-based and socioemotional competences, but what is more is that embodying these skills is crucial also for being able to comprehend what it means to coexist within the globalised context of human diversity and human, socio-cultural differences. Ergo, the understanding of cosmopolitan soft skills can and should not be limited to an interpersonal socioemotional skill set that is required for a successful professional life in 21st-century economic globalisation, but instead should be understood as the set of interpersonal socioemotional skills that is required in general for a flourishing human life in a complex, highly globalised 21st century. It is argued that cosmopolitan soft skills can best be understood as a set of skills that allows one to get to know both themselves and others with backgrounds different than one's own, so as a set of skills that redound both self- and social awareness. This research has established that developing cosmopolitan soft skills fosters a level of consciousness that is vital for human individual and collective flourishing.

Formulating ideas about how flourishing and cosmopolitan soft skills education could be incorporated into different forms of 21st-century educational frameworks is therefore of utmost importance. While embedding it in some form into formal education is without question an obvious and necessary step to be taken, resolving how the adult population of society could be reached appears to be a bit more challenging. For

that reason, further interdisciplinary research into the educability of cosmopolitan soft skills is essential, the possibility of which this present research has undoubtedly contributed to. As a result of an interplay between theory and empirical data a tangible form of cosmopolitan soft skills was arrived at, facilitating future investigations future investigations into the educability of the flourishing concept and of cosmopolitan soft skills themselves. While the chosen critical realist stance taken certainly invites a great amount of criticism, the approach is exactly what allows us to assume that the arrived-at form of cosmopolitan soft skills describes the general, maybe even universal, structure of human flourishing. The critical realist approach thus made it possible to bring the theoretical conceptualisation of flourishing slightly closer to practice. The collaboration of educational scientists of both pedagogy and andragogy, as well as more research on the educability of flourishing and cosmopolitan soft skills are nonetheless crucial for the ethical sustainability that the cultivating of cosmopolitan soft skills might just have the potential to uphold.

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