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Editorial

In recent years we have seen major changes in the political landscape of Europe. Populist, nationalistic and separatist voices are being strengthened in many countries. In combination with the growing migration (both inside and outside the European Union), these phenomena become an important contemporary challenge for social services as well helping professions. Despite the dominance of migration issues in the social welfare discourse, relatively new phenomena are accompanied by well-known older ones that social work has been facing for a long time, such as the issue of older people or problems in the development of non-governmental organizations.

Contemporary social work needs to be understood broadly, including (beside traditional fields of activity) preventive and educational activities at school, fundraising for non-governmental organizations, integrative action, especially in the intercultural context, etc. Methods used by social workers in these fields must also be differentiated: from care, through support, to various types of therapy. But regardless of the method, the participatory approach seems to become the general framework for the activities of helping professions.

This edition of the Journal of Czech and Slovak Social Work, which we have pleasure to publish, is engaging in most of these issues.

Alice Reissová, Marta Žambochová and Markéta Vlčková in the article *“Fundraising as an Opportunity for Non-profit Organisations – Possibilities and Limits of Individual Fundraising”* are focused on different forms of willingness of individual donors who give donations. The Authors are interested which



donation method is preferred and what are the socio-demographic characteristics of a regular donor. The findings of the research presented in the article might be found as interesting by practitioners who are working in NGOs, because some mistakes can be avoided in preparing an individual fundraising plan.

Anna Jarkiewicz the author of the article *“Empowering Youth At-Risk in School Through Participatory Methods of Work Developed Within the FYS-Forums Project – Research Findings”* is scrutinising deliberative capacities of young people. Her analysis, grounded in international research, is oriented onto reconstruction of attitudes and beliefs of youth. But, considering the participatory approach, a very important goal of the research is to increase the participation of youth in the decision-making process in as well as out of school. The research conclusions (but also the participatory method “Future Youth School Forum”) might be interesting for those who act to improve the potential of social inclusion of youth at risk in schools and to reduce the risk of dropping-out the school.

The question of engaging children in the decision-making process is also discussed by *Monika Chrenková, Kateřina Cilečková* and *Alena Vaňharová* in the contribution "*The Participation of Minors in the Proceedings Regarding Their Upbringing and Maintenance*". The authors are analysing the process (and its conditions) of taking into consideration the child's opinion in the legal proceedings that affect his/her future life. Some of the findings might be interpreted as alarming, because minors' rights (even with low guarantees) are not always respected, and their participation is limited. Although the research is restricted to judiciary practice of two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region (Czech Republic), conclusions can be inspiring for practitioners working in the field of the social and legal protection of children all over Europe and even beyond.

The topic of conflict in family is also analysed by *Iveta Bendulová* and *Beáta Balogová*. The authors of the article "*Solving Relationship Issues Through Sociotherapy*" take a very important and interesting question of methods applicable in social work. The topic seems to be extremely important in the context of professionalisation of social work as well as development of its clinical variation. The authors, applying a case study, analyse the usability of cognitive-behavioural and task-oriented sociotherapy to solve family problems. The proposed method might be a useful tool of case work, specifically when conflict is a fundamental problem.

Ivana Kowaliková and *Oldřich Chytil* in their contribution titled "*Analysis and Description of Availability and Sources of Social Support in Selected Difficult Situations for Seniors by Type of Their Household in the Czech Republic*" are answering the question of social support for older people, especially those who are living in single-person households. The main empirical database of the research is the Czech Social Sciences Data Archive called Sociální síť. The analysis can be an interesting source of knowledge for social scientists as well practitioners especially when compared to contemporary conditions of social services oriented to older people.

As mentioned at the beginning of the editorial introduction, migration seems to be one of the most important social issues of recent years. The phenomena are analysed in many different perspectives, yet we remain far from such level of explaining (understanding) the social consequences of migration to make possible organising successful support and integration. Two contributions in the current volume are focused on this topic:

Soňa Vávrová and *Jitka Vaculíková* in their article "*Attitudes of the Czech Public Towards International Adoption of Minors*" analyse the support for this kind of adoption of children from and in the Czech Republic. Authors of the contribution conducted quantitative research using a representative sample of 1050 adult citizens of the Czech Republic. A positive attitude of the public to international adoption might be an important indicator of the acceptance of ethnical, cultural and religious differences. Unfortunately, results of the research are not very optimistic, and most of Czech public don't support international adoption.

The problem of migration and interculturality is also discussed by *Roman Baláž* and *Lucia Čemová* in the article "*The Mainstreaming of Integration Governance and Social Work in the Local Integration of Immigrants*". The authors' answer to the question of the role of social work in promotion of the integration governance at the local level. The analysis is a theoretical combination of migration study and social work perspective in the context of globalisation, interculturalism, and critical thinking. The authors also highlight the risk of negative phenomena such as institutional or state racism that might be produced by power structures (integration policy, social work practice, etc.).

Kvetoslava Repková in her article "*Exploring Social Work in Area of Social Services in Slovakia – a Qualitative Study*" reconstructs the triangle of the most important roles being taken by social workers in the framework of Slovakian social services. Considering the process of shifting in function that social work is undergoing, from care towards a systemic support of people in need to improve their standard of living,

the triangle consists of diagnosing, social counselling, and coordination/mediation/networking. The contribution by *Kvetoslava Repková* can be an interesting invitation to further European or international comparative studies.

Considering the question of care work, *Vito Flaker*, the author of the article “*Breathing the Hierarchy of Needs Away*” offers readers a critical inspiration to re-think some ideas often taken for granted. Using classic Maslow’s pyramid of needs and a breathing metaphor, Vito Flaker proposes to deconstruct the way “needs” are understood from a technical, universal, and aprioristic perspective towards a more individual one grounded in empirical recognition and empowerment of the provision recipients. The contribution can be significant framework for development of care work, postulated to be more subjective and even participatory.

The volume’s last (but not least) parts are: “Research Note” and “Book Review”. *Justin Jay Miller*, *Beáta Balogová* and *Zuzana Poklembová* present their joint research project “*The Global Self-Care Initiative: Exploring the Self-Care Practices of Social Workers in Slovakia*”. *Barbora Grundělová* very comprehensively and interestingly reviews the book by Paul Michael Garrett: *Welfare Words: Critical Social Work and Social Policy*.

I hope that this edition the Journal of Czech and Slovak Social Work will be found to be inspirational, interesting, and enjoyable.

Mariusz Granosik,
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Fundraising as an Opportunity for Non-profit Organisations – Possibilities and Limits of Individual Fundraising¹

Alice Reissová, Marta Žambochová, Markéta Vlčková

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The submitted paper focuses on fundraising as one of the funding options for non-profit organisations and aims to explore whether there are any local differences in the willingness of individual donors to give donations, which donor methods they prefer and what the socio-demographic characteristics of a typical donor are. **THEORETICAL BASE:** The theoretical base is defined by the current state of knowledge based on the study of professional literature and the results of research conducted in studied disciplines. **METHODS:** The paper presents the results obtained from the original quantitative research strategy that used structured interviews. **OUTCOMES:** Research has shown that there are local differences in the willingness

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of individual donors to donate funds and also has brought a number of findings concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of potential donors. It has been shown that the willingness to donate money is related to the income and education of the donor, but it does not depend on the gender and religion of the donor. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** The findings contribute to the overall knowledge in the area of funding of activities implemented by non-profit organisations. Based on the results of this study, a number of frequent errors can be avoided in preparing an individual fundraising plan.

Keywords

fundraising, individual fundraising, philanthropy, determinants of donations

INTRODUCTION

Non-profit organisations frequently face the problem of gaining funding. Fundraising is a potential source of financing for non-profit organisations. The origin and beginnings of fundraising date back to the end of the 1940s, when non-profit organisations in the USA needed rules and procedures for raising money to meet their objectives and purpose (Haibach, 2012). Consequently, a number of research studies was carried out in the field of fundraising and philanthropy, and the issue was dealt with in the academic environment as well as in actual practice (Lindahl, Conley, 2002).

The term fundraising comes from English (the word stem is “fund” – reserve or capital, and “to raise” – increase or take measures). The term is used in many languages and is usually not translated, even though its designation is not completely unified.

Boukal (2013) points out that fundraising is sometimes understood as collecting public resources or money, which is not entirely accurate, because a non-profit organisation can obtain financial (as well as non-financial) means and contributions from private sources.

Ledvinová (2013) designates fundraising as an activity where there is a need to motivate other people to do good deeds and persuade them that this non-profit organisation deserves attention and help. Similarly, fundraising is designated by Šobánková (2010), for example, who defines it as a process of soliciting donors for organisations. However, she points out that fundraising should not be restricted only to activities in crisis situations when it is necessary to ensure funding at the specific moment, but to focus on the stability and permanent sustainability of the organisation. The necessity of a systematic approach is emphasised by other authors as well (Fabisch, 2002; Němeček, 2004; Urselmann, 2016). They find it necessary to use knowledge of marketing, Němeček (2004) uses the term “marketing mix”. Čačija (2016) also draws attention to the very close link between fundraising and marketing. He concludes that fundraising should be implemented in the context of a complex marketing process. He finds feedback from the organisation crucial, which is often absent particularly in crises, which is why obtaining financial means is unsuccessful in such situations. However, fundraising is not only the way to survive in a non-profit crisis environment. It should be understood as an exchange of values. Non-profit organisations often make the mistake of trying to motivate donors to make donations to meet the needs of the organisation. The research carried out by the author showed that such a procedure is rather ineffective since the precise converse applies in real life. The first thing to do is to survey the needs of the target groups of potential donors and propose events to meet their needs.

Apparently, although fundraising is not a completely new instrument, it is used only marginally by a number of non-profit organisations, or a number of mistakes in its implementation is made, or this method of obtaining funds is not used at all. Dale (2017) refers to fundraising as a critical point of non-profit organisations and believes it should be carried out on a professional basis. Funding of non-profit organisations should not depend on one source of finance (e.g. subsidies)



as their further development and sustainability would come under threat. Šedivý and Medlíková (2009) point out that the existence of an organisation dependent on only one source of funding can be endangered if the only application for a grant is rejected. Hence, multiple sources of funding are necessary, and fundraising offers such a possibility.

Norton and Culshaw (2000) point out the necessity of fundraising as well and give numerous reasons for why to focus on fundraising. In their opinion, fundraising contributes to the creation of social links in the local community, either in the government or public administration or commercial sectors. Such links create a base for building corporate and individual fundraising. Another contribution of fundraising is that an organisation can pay its necessary expenditures from funds solicited in this way. The eligibility of expenditures is usually strictly determined for drawing funds from projects. Non-eligible expenditures can be paid from fundraising proceeds. Boukal (2013) emphasises that some co-funding is necessary for particular types of projects. Sources obtained from fundraising can be used in such a case.

Fundraising is based on an interdisciplinary approach (marketing, public relations, management of non-profit organisations), and to professionalize it, it should be taught at universities in this complexity (Mack, Kelly, Wilson, 2016). Weinryb and Turunen (2017) also believe that apart from the economic aspects, fundraising also has social and cultural aspects.

Fundraising is most frequently divided into individual and corporate. Funds can also be solicited from foundations and endowment funds, as well as public support (EU funds or state budgets (Gahrman, 2012)).

INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISING

Individual giving is about raising funds from individuals from amongst the general public. In contrast to other forms of fundraising, an emphasis here is placed on a high degree of emotionality. It is important to form a long-term relationship between an individual donor and a non-profit organisation that will benefit both parties (Boukal, 2013).

One of the studies of the Centre for Non-profit Research (CVNS, 2009) has focused on donor motivation. The researchers found that the most frequently present motivation is normative motivation (57%), that is, the donation is based on the internal norms of an individual who sees helping others as his/her moral duty. Approximately one fifth of donors (21%) are motivated by their previous experience with a particular organisation or a project and their motivation is referred to as familiar motivation. If a donor gave money because he/she was persuaded to do so or donated simply because he/she could not reject a request, we talk about negative ad-hoc motivation. According to research, this group of donors represents 5% of the total sample. The least frequent motivation is motivation which is referred to as utilitarian (3%), where a donor expects some future benefit for himself/herself.

In case of individual donors, it is very important to address donors with normative or familiar motivation and maintain a long-term relationship with them to create a sense of belonging to the organisation. It can be assumed that these donors will contribute smaller amounts, but regularly. The motivation of donors has also been previously explored by other authors, such as by Radley, Kennedy (1995), who explained the charitable behaviour with individual motives, social norms, or the environment in which fundraising takes place. Harbaugh, Burghart (2007) distinguish two main motives. The first motif is defined as pure altruism, which is satisfied by the increase of public welfare, and the second motif as “warm glow”, which is only related to voluntary donations (Note: Charity withholdings are compulsory in some countries – they may be also deducted from personal wages).

When addressing potential donors, we also need to consider which method we want to choose (Haibach, 2012). For one-time donations it is appropriate to select, for example, fund raiser events,



public fundraising campaigns, organisation of a lottery or the possibility to contribute through donor SMS/donation text message. These singular events are of a global nature and are not aimed at particular donors. On the other hand, with regular donations we should address very specific donors that are already in the organisation's database using the methods such as writing a standard letter or an email and making a phone call. If an organisation already has its long-term donors who contribute higher amounts, it is advisable to prefer meeting with them in person. From individual donors, NGOs can also receive one-off financial and non-financial means in the form of a large donation or from their last will.

Charities typically seek stable donors with regular, although lower monthly contributions sent via bank transfer or paid by a payment card. Initial donor acquisition costs may be higher, but the donors thus obtained are long-term donors (Sargeant, Woodliffe, 2005).

In the Czech Republic, it is one of the most popular methods of public fundraising campaigns ("collection boxes") and donor text messages (INESAN, 2014). The relatively new phenomenon is donor websites that collect donations from individual donors but are usually organised by foundations. The foundations tend to focus on a limited group of important donors with whom they try to develop and maintain a personal relationship (Machálek, Nersstová, 2011), however their web portal activities show that even the foundations seek individual donors, who give smaller sums.

The most successful web portals include Daruj.cz or Darujme.cz (AVPO - Association of Public Benefit Organizations, 2016). The Darujme.cz web portal helped non-profit organisations to raise almost 100 million Czech crowns since 2015 (Darujme.cz, 2017).

Internet-based donations are also growing across the world. An annual study, The Digital Giving Index, revealed a 2% increase in general donations, but as much as a 9% increase in online donations (Network for Good, 2017).

Considering the results of the research stated above, attention in this investigation was paid to finding which forms and methods donors prefer in their respective locality.

The increase in donations in the Czech Republic, including via the Internet, was also revealed by representative research. In 2015, InsightLab carried out research concerning the willingness of Czechs to contribute to charitable activities. The findings of the research have shown that 10% of people regularly support charitable activities (it was 9% in the previous year), approximately one half of respondents contribute lump sums and in small amounts, and 11% of the population does not contribute at all (InsightLab, 2015). A slight increase in individual donation is also evident from Graph 1 indicating the amount of registered donations for which the tax deduction was applied in previous years.

But not all donors use the tax deduction. According to CVNS (2011) research, out of a total of 153 surveyed donors, only 13 donors applied tax deductions. Tax cuts and deductions are used in many countries, however, their effect is questionable. Some authors believe that tax cuts can be very effective (Chua, Wong, 1999). On the other hand, other authors found that donors were often not familiar with such tax cuts (Horne, 2005; McGregor-Lowndes, Newton, Marsden, 2006) and in case that they knew, their impacts were different for individual donors (Tiehen, 2001).

From the above information it is clear that there is considerable potential in the area of donations in the Czech Republic, both for individual and corporate donations. It can be seen from Graph 1 that since 2000 the amount of registered corporate donations has risen fivefold. The 2007/08 economic crisis significantly affected this development, with the growth stopped and then stagnating until 2012. Now again, there is significant growth. On the other hand, registered donations from individuals have grown only slightly.

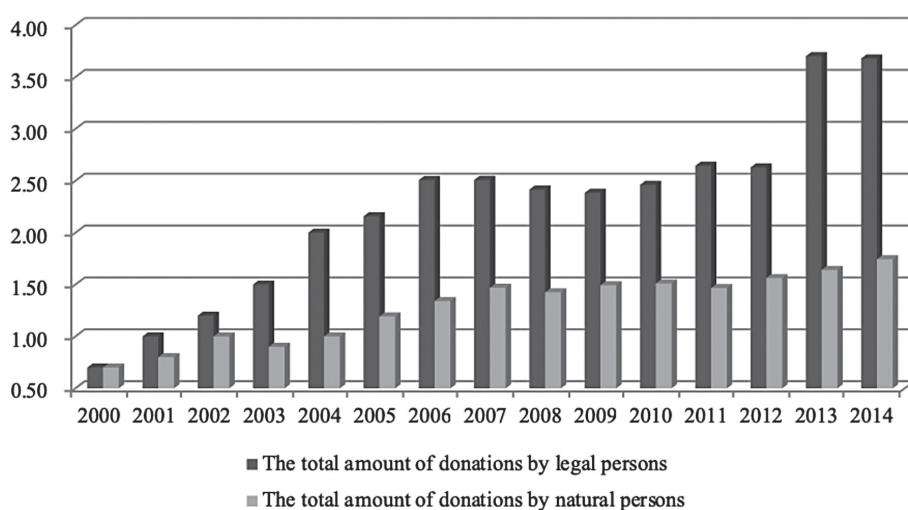
One of the research questions within this study looks into whether the willingness to donate money established nationwide conforms to that in the selected locality. Willingness to donate money is important in the phase of planning and setting the objectives of fundraising.



Non-profit organisations typically have a local scope of activity and focus on providing social services to specific target groups of clients. If a fundraiser is to be successful, they must first know their potential donors who reside or work in the location.

Important determinants of donors may include income (Olson, Caddell, 1994; Madden, 2006; Mayo, Tinsley, 2009), education (Chua, Wong, 1999), age (Chua, Wong, 1999; Wilhelm, Rooney, Tempel, 2007), gender (Marx, 2000; Rooney et al., 2005; Brown, Mesch, Hayat, 2016) and religion (Jackson et al., 1995; Heller Clain, Zech, 1999; Hrun, 2004; Chang, 2005; Lyons, Nivison-Smith, 2006; Wilhelm, Rooney, Tempel, 2007). These studies constitute the theoretical base for the formulation of the second part of the research question, i.e., the willingness to donate money compared to the values obtained nationwide and the identification of fundamental socio-demographic characteristics of potential donors.

Graph 1: Donations from legal and natural persons for which tax deductions were applied (in billions of CZK)



Source: Financial Administration of the Czech Republic, 2017

METHODOLOGY

The objective of the investigation is to identify whether the willingness of potential individual donors nationwide and locally to contribute to beneficial purposes differs, and what the standard socio-economic features of donors are. Apart from that, preferences of potential donors in the selected locality will be investigated both in the field of the applied methods and preferences of the individual target groups. The investigation will also identify threats or obstacles which hamper individual donors in donating money.

The collection of information on donors in the respective locality is of crucial importance for a non-profit organisation with local scope of activities, since individual donors usually come from the respective area and donate money to an organisation they know. Confidence develops upon personal knowledge, which is a very important prerequisite for the donation (Trussel, Parsons, 2007). The territorial delimitation is not necessarily identical with the geographical boundaries (e.g. the district, region, etc.). The respective area in this investigation is the town of Litoměřice, which will be further indicated as the “locality”.



Three research questions were defined. The first research question: Does the national and local willingness to donate money to charitable and beneficial purposes differ? The willingness to donate money is assumed to be different in the locality, and it is also necessary to consider the socio-economic characteristics of the population (age, gender and education) in the respective locality (Chua, Wong, 1999; Madden, 2006; Mayo, Tinsley, 2009; Brown, Mesch, Hayat, 2016).

The second research question: Does the willingness of donors depend on the target group for which the donation is specified? It is assumed that potential donors make decisions depending on the purpose, i.e. the willingness will differ depending on who the aid is specified for (Small, Loewenstein, 2003).

The third research question: What fundraising methods are the most acceptable for donors? It is assumed that some methods can be considered less appropriate, and on the contrary some will be welcomed (Sargeant, Woodliffe, 2005).

The local investigation was implemented in the town of Litoměřice. Data were collected in the structured PAPI interview format (Pen-And-Paper-Interviewing) in August 2017 in various places around the town (centre and suburbs). Four trained inquirers addressed respondents according to the quotas identified in advance (gender, age, education). Further socio-demographic features of a very personal and sensitive character, such as income and religion, were not specified as quotas but were only ascertained as identification features. The selection consists of 150 respondents, of whom 57% are female and 43% male. As to the age representation, 45% of respondents were aged between 30 and 60, 29% of respondents above 60, and 25% of respondents were aged between 18 and 30. The highest completed education is secondary level in one-half of respondents, 25% had completed a college or university degree, and 16% had completed only elementary school. The respondents were asked about their net monthly income. The most frequent income given by respondents ranged from 15 to 20 thousand CZK (35% of respondents). 27% of respondents stated a net income below 15 thousand CZK, and 20% stated a net income above 20 thousand CZK. In terms of religion, 59% of respondents were not religious, 25% were. Not all the respondents were willing to answer primarily the questions related to income and religion, hence, the sum of individual responses does not constitute 100%.

The data were acquired and evaluated by way of MS Excel. After the statistical descriptive evaluation, the following tests were used: Binomial distribution parameter hypothesis test (One-sample one-tailed), chi-square test and Pearson's Contingency Coefficient to specify the dependence rate. To establish whether the established differences were statistically significant, Dixon's extreme deviations test was used.

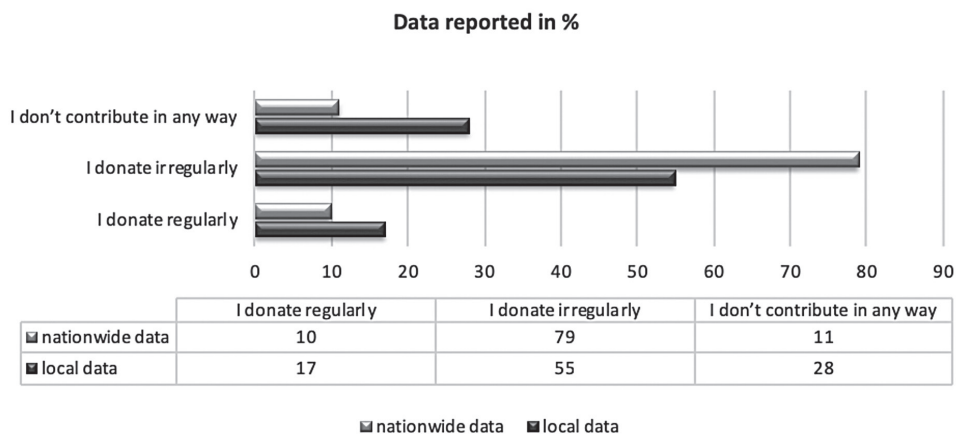
RESULTS

The first research question tried to find the answer to whether the national and local level of willingness to donate money to charity differed. The premise was that this degree of willingness to give differs locally, and therefore it is always necessary to consider the socio-economic characteristics of the population in the given locality. It can be seen from Graph 2 that the differences between national data (adopted from InsightLab, 2015) and local data (as identified in this survey) are considerable.

Binomial distribution parameter hypothesis test (One-sample one-tailed) was used to verify whether the difference in willingness to give was statistically significant. The hypothesis H_0 : $\pi=0,89$ (among respondents in Litoměřice that there is 89% of donors equal to the nationwide average) compared to H_1 : $\pi<0,89$ (the proportion of donors is lower). The testing criterion is -6.65. The one-sided critical field is the $W = (-\infty; -1.65)$ interval to which the testing criterion belongs, and therefore H_0 is rejected. **At a 5% level of significance, it was statistically proven that the willingness to give donations in Litoměřice was lower than the national data showed.**



Graph 2: National and local comparison of donation frequency



Source: author's own and InsightLab, 2015

To verify whether the identified proportion of people who give regularly was statistically significantly higher, a Binomial distribution parameter hypothesis test (One-sample one-tailed) was used. The hypothesis $H_0: \pi=0,1$ (among respondents in Litoměřice that there is 10% of regular donors equal to the nationwide average) compared to $H_1: \pi>0,1$ (the proportion of donors is higher). The testing criterion is 2.72. The one-sided critical field is the $W = (1.65; \infty)$ interval to which the testing criterion belongs, and therefore H_0 is rejected. **At a 5% level of significance, it was statistically proven that the willingness to regularly give donations in Litoměřice was higher than the national data showed.**

To verify whether the identified proportion of people who give rather irregularly was statistically significantly lower, a Binomial distribution parameter hypothesis test (One-sample one-tailed) was used. Hypothesis $H_0: \pi=0.79$ (79% of the respondents in Litoměřice are irregular donors, which is equal to the nationwide average) compared to $H_1: \pi>0.79$ (the proportion of donors is lower). The testing criterion reaches the value of -7.12. The one-sided critical field is the $W = (-\infty; -1.65)$ interval to which the testing criterion belongs, therefore H_0 is rejected. **At a 5% level of significance, it was statistically proven that the willingness to give donations irregularly in Litoměřice was lower than the national data showed.**

Part of the first research question was to find out what the typical socio-demographic characteristics of donors were. They included age, gender, education, income and religion. To verify the relationship between the respondent's age and the amount donated, a contingency Table 1 was compiled. A chi-square test was also carried out to test the hypothesis of independence. For that purpose, the categories with donations above 500 CZK had to be merged because they demonstrated low frequencies, which is inconsistent with the use of chi-square test. On the basis of the calculated expected frequency values, the testing criterion of $T = 13.98$ was subsequently determined. The number of degrees of freedom is 6, the critical field $W = (12.59; \infty)$. The testing criterion belongs to this critical field and **therefore the dependence between age and amount of donation has been demonstrated.** Furthermore, the Pearson's contingency coefficient was calculated. The resulting value of 0.29 points to a relatively weak dependence.



Table 1: Amounts donated depending on the respondent's age

	0	50 – 200 CZK	200 – 500 CZK	500 – 1,000 CZK	1,000 – 10,000 CZK
Up to 30 years old	13	15	3	5	1
30 – 60 years old	15	19	20	9	5
60+ years old	14	19	8	1	1

Source: author's own

An independence test at a 5% significance level was also carried out on other possible determinants that could influence the willingness to donate. The chi-square test results are shown in Table 2. In cases of confirmed dependence, the Pearson's contingency coefficient values were calculated in order to determine the strength of dependence. In the case of monitoring the relationship between the donated amount and the income, the resulting coefficient value was 0.32. In the case of monitoring the relationship between the amount donated and the education achieved, the resulting coefficient value was 0.42. The outcomes show a slight statistical dependence between the respondent's income and the amount of donation, as well as between the education and the amount of donation. This finding is quite logical, because it is likely that people with higher education also have higher income. On the other hand, there was neither evidence of dependence demonstrated between the amount donated and the respondent's gender, nor evidence of dependence between the amount donated and religion.

Table 2: Chi-square test outcomes at a 5% level of significance

Hypothesis H0	Testing criterion	Degrees of freedom	Critical field	Test outcome
Independence between donated amount and income	13.854	6	(12.592; ∞)	Dependence confirmed
Independence between donated amount and achieved education	28.781	6	(12.592; ∞)	Dependence confirmed
Independence between donated amount and gender	2.677	4	(5.991; ∞)	Independence confirmed
Independence between donated amount and religion	1.783	3	(7.815; ∞)	Independence confirmed

Source: author's own

The second research question was whether the willingness to give was dependent on the target group. The premise is that potential donors make their decision also depending on the purpose, i.e. there will be a different degree of willingness in relation to whom the help is intended. In this case, a target group of vulnerable children was expected to be the preferred group. Graph 3 shows that donors very significantly differ in their preference in terms of the target group. It is therefore important for whom the donation is intended. The preferred target groups include, as was expected, not only vulnerable (38%) but also disabled (35%) children. On the contrary, families in a difficult social situation (10%), the homeless (9%) and women in a difficult social situation (8%) are much less preferred.

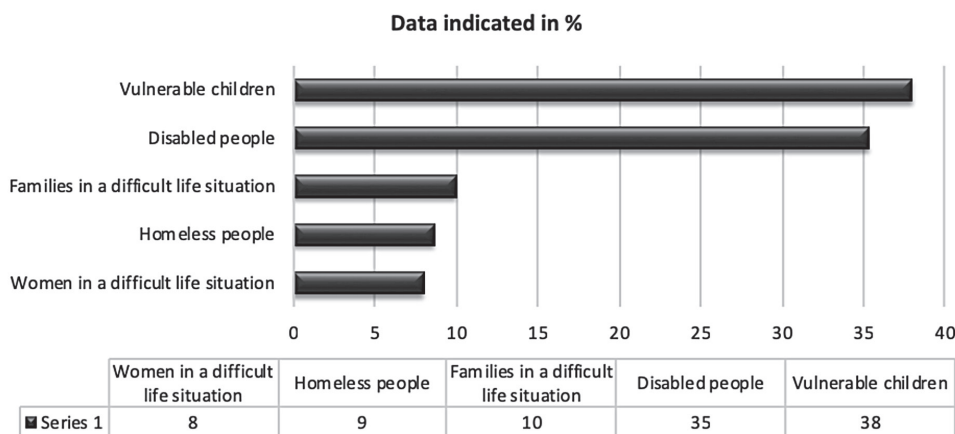


The results show that the willingness of donors will also be affected by the target group to which the donation is intended. To determine whether the differences are statistically significant, Dixon's extreme deviations test was used to verify the H_0 hypothesis at a 5% significance level. The frequency of donation selection for vulnerable children is not significantly different from other target groups. The testing criterion Q_s reaches 0.089 and the critical value $Q_{s, 0.05}$ is 0.642. The testing criterion compared to the critical value is lower and thus the H_0 hypothesis is confirmed. **Although the identified values are different, they are not statistically significant.**

The third research question tried to explore which fundraising methods are most acceptable for donors. The premise is that some methods of selecting a type of donation can be considered more appropriate or acceptable, and it is also clear that these methods change over time (especially in the context of the progress in an IT area that brings along new possibilities). Donors who occasionally or regularly give donations prefer the option of purchasing an item – by its purchase they support charity (32%), and also putting money in a collection box (30%).

Compared with the results of the Donation in Numbers research (CVNS, 2011) and the INESAN analysis, the results of our questionnaire survey slightly differ in terms of greater popularity of the item purchase compared to donations using a collection box for contributions. Graph 4 shows that 8% of respondents opted for a different method other than the ones offered. These respondents further specified what types of donations they preferred (donation to a particular person, a standing order, wage deduction, participation in a marathon race, etc.).

Graph 3: Preference of target groups



Source: author's own

The research also tried to identify where the respondents saw barriers that prevent their giving. The biggest obstacle was seen in the respondents' lack of trust that the donation would be used as declared (38%) and also mistrust in persons asking for donations (32%).

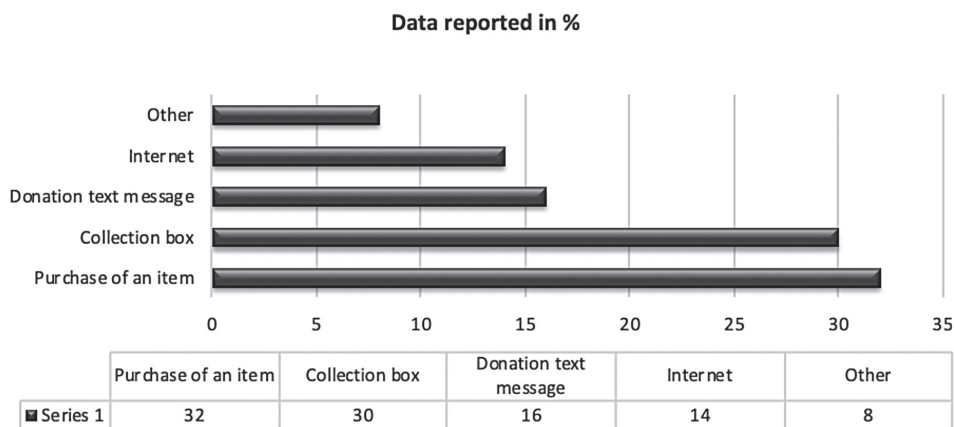
38% of respondents identified mistrust that donations will be used for a declared purpose as a barrier to their donation of higher sums, and 32% of respondents reported that they did not trust those who asked for donations. Although relatively rigid rules are in place to organise public fundraising campaigns, the level of mistrust is relatively high and is likely to be the result of media-disclosed cases when public collections were misused. Other responses to this question were of lesser frequency. They included reluctance to contribute to a particular target group (10%) and 9% of respondents stated they had not had a chance to contribute because no one ever asked them. The remaining group of respondents (approx. 9%) checked the "other reasons" option and



subsequently supplemented their choice with statements such as “I prefer to support my own family”, “Let the state take care of them”, “I have little of my own.”

Mistrust can be eliminated by the organisation if it communicates with the public in an appropriate manner and presents the results of its work. There are four major providers of social services in Litoměřice: Diakonie, Naděje, Farní charita (Caritas), and Centrum sociální pomoci (the Centre for Social Assistance). The survey investigated whether respondents were familiar with the organisations and the disadvantaged groups these organisations care about. People were most familiar with Diakonie – 61% of respondents knew it. The second place was assumed by Farní charita with 56% and the least known organisation was Centrum sociální pomoci with only 18%. Knowledge of the target groups with which individual non-profit organisations work is only partial among respondents. For example, only 31% of respondents who were aware of the existence of Naděje knew that they provided services for homeless people, and only 15% of them knew that Naděje was also dealing with the disabled, and another 15% of respondents knew that it cared for families in a difficult social situation. Two percent of the respondents have wrongly assumed this organisation to provide care for the elderly.

Graph 4: Preferred donation methods

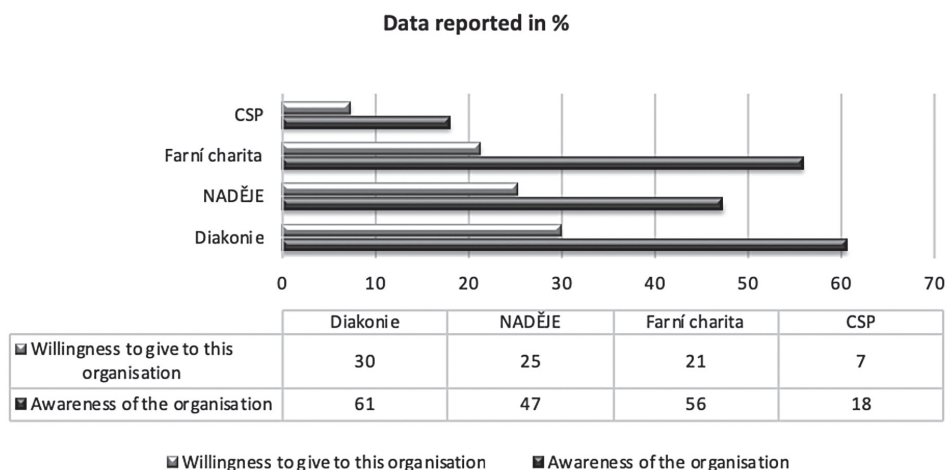


Source: author's own

However, the willingness to donate is very closely related to knowing an organisation. Graph 5 shows the dependence between the awareness of an organisation's existence and the willingness to donate funds.



Graph 5: The relationship between the willingness to donate and the knowledge of a non-profit organisation's existence and mission



Source: author's own

The frequent argument of non-profit organisations that they lack money for their advertising is not entirely justified. For example, Diakonie in Litoměřice shared the stories of its clients using life-size duct tape figures placed in busy locations across the city. In the public and the media, the figures and their life stories have attracted interest, and the mentioned promotion most likely helped them in the upcoming public fundraiser event. The costs of such a local campaign are not high, however, they assume a creative approach.

DISCUSSION

Non-profit organisations primarily pursue satisfaction of their needs when obtaining funds. This is the reason why their fundraising activities are unsuccessful. It is important to understand the incentives of the donors (Čáčija, 2016) and appropriately segment potential donors, e.g., according to socio-demographic characteristics. The discussion very often focuses on the research issue whether there are reliable determinants that are typical of potential donors; in other words, whether there is a relationship between philanthropy and socio-demographic characteristics. This study revealed that there is a positive relationship between income and education. However, some authors believe that there are multiple positive determinants. Mesch (2006) lists several of these determinants. He notes there are significant differences in philanthropic behaviour by gender, race, and marital status, even when checking differences in income, age and education. In his work, he emphasises the importance of a correct methodological approach to the issue. A large study was carried out in the mid-1970s. The study found out that the disposable income of a donor affects the amount of donation (Olson, Caddell, 1994). This study also brought other interesting findings. Individuals tend to be more generous towards small organisations, but are less generous to whose participants' incomes are high, and where the organisation receives significant additional income (e.g. from rent, subsidies, etc.). This finding is particularly important for smaller non-profit organisations that believe they cannot succeed in competition with those large and well-known ones that have "big and powerful" donors.



A detailed analysis of why rich people contribute to charity was submitted by Madden (2006). He focused on very wealthy Australians with whom he conducted in-depth interviews and focus groups. He has come to the conclusion that donating money is for the rich, associated with the sense of identity and responsibility within social groups and with their positive assessment of the importance and contribution of non-profit organisations. A number of other studies have discovered similar findings (Kitchen, 1992; Chua, Wong, 1999; Mayo, Tinsley, 2009 and others). Some authors connect the determinants of income and age. In the US, extensive family finance research had been carried out, which has among other things addressed the issue of why the number of households contributing voluntarily to charity continues to decline. The research found that the largest decrease was recorded among the poorer and younger households (Banks, Tanner, 1999). In the same period (i.e. the 1970s and 1990s), similar research was conducted by Pharoah and Tanner (1997). Their findings are totally consistent with the previous research, that is, the poorer and younger households contribute less. While there is no doubt that there is a positive relationship between the willingness to donate and the income level, the effect of the age factor is rather opposite, i.e. younger people donate less. However, it is necessary to interpret this finding in the whole context, i.e. younger people who were willing to donate less, were receiving a lower income at the same time. It would not be entirely accurate to label young people as less altruistic or less philanthropic. Rather, it is more appropriate to say that the increasing willingness to give grows with increasing age, and at the same time it can be observed that with the higher age, as a rule, disposable income also usually grows.

Similar to a gender determinant, many authors conclude that women donate more often, but men donate larger amounts. Again, income becomes the main factor because men clearly have a higher income than women. This is also confirmed by the large representative research conducted by Gallup's Institute. It has come to the conclusion that women are more involved in charitable organisations and believe that they can contribute to the general welfare of society. For these women, it is typical that they are Caucasian, have higher income, and voluntarily participate in human services (Marx, 2000). Differences in philanthropic behaviour by gender were identified by Rooney et al. (2005). He says that single women are better able than single men to supplement government-provided goods with private philanthropy, at least after controlling for differences in income and other relevant factors. In one recent research, Brown and Hayat (2016) conclude that gender as a determinant of philanthropy has no effect. No evidence has been found to suggest that women are less generous than men. Even in this study, there was no evidence that there was any gender difference in the area of donation.

A relatively problematic determinant seems to be religion. There is a relatively low number of religious people in the Czech Republic. Most research that has been carried out in this area comes from an environment where the situation is different. In terms of methodology, the research is often conducted in two lines. The first line is dedicated to donations which benefit the Church, and the second line is focused on donations which benefit charity organisations. According to Hrungr (2004), it is not appropriate to identify donors' total charitable donations, but what needs to be separated are donations to religious organisations from donations to non-religious organisations. Although a number of churches strive to increase their members' contributions and their active involvement, some of the funds are then put into charity anyway (Clain, Zech, 1999). Similarly, Chang (2005) distinguishes between religious giving (donations to churches) and charitable giving. Furthermore, he distinguishes academic, medical and political giving. According to his conclusions, there are positive relationships between age and giving in the case of religious and charitable giving, but there are no links between age and giving in the academic, medical and political areas. Older people, however, are more likely to engage in volunteer work and participate in events organised by the Church. There are also intergenerational differences that are evidenced by various models (Wilhelm, Rooney, Tempel, 2007). These findings are fully consistent with a number of studies already mentioned above and concerned age as a donation determinant.



However, religion and faith as a determinant of giving is very controversial. This study did not reveal that religion had any impact on charitable giving. Jackson et al. (1995) carried out an extensive survey on a sample of 800 residents in the state of Indiana. They found out that participation in church groups had a positive relationship with both volunteering and charitable giving, while attending church services does not show this positive relationship. Lyons, Nivison-Smith (2006) report that people who refer to themselves as religious donate on average more than people who refer to themselves as the non-religious. The authors, however, question these conclusions. "However, when we also omit giving to charities and look to giving to civic causes alone, we find that the frequency of attendance at religious services has an ambiguous relationship with giving" (Lyons, Nivison-Smith, 2006:419). It is likely that it also depends on the type of religion. Lunn, Klay and Douglass (2001) concluded that conservative Presbyterians are more generous to the local church, while liberal Presbyterians give more to charity. Regnerus, Smith and Sikkink (1998) tested whether it was possible to identify the differences in philanthropy between Catholics and liberal Protestants who are referred to as "friends of the poor" and politically conservative Christians who are considered rather indifferent in this area. However, such evidence was not found in their survey. Should a fundraiser be successful in his/her work, he/she must not only have working knowledge of donation determinants and the socio-economic characteristics of potential donors (usually local ones), but also carefully consider how to choose the appropriate fundraising methods. The target group for which donations are requested is important. One of the findings of this study is that the willingness of donors also depends on the purpose of the donation, i.e. for which target group donations are intended. The research has shown that the greatest willingness to give was for the target group of vulnerable children and disabled people. Research implemented by the Centre of Empirical Research (STEM) has shown that two fifths of respondents contribute to children's homes, SOS children's villages, homeless shelters, etc. (STEM, 2014). In the context of this study, individual fundraising was seen as a regional issue, which may display specific features compared to national events. But there are also differences between individual nations. In an international Charity study (Lades, 2011) as many as 14,000 respondents from 14 European countries were questioned. The conclusions show that the Czechs contribute the most to victims of natural disasters, and also to the struggle against poverty. Non-profit organisations working in these areas may therefore expect a higher positive response from individual donors. The study entitled *Philanthropy and the Czech public* (STEM, 2014) came to the similar conclusions when, according to the survey, it found that the most frequent recipients of the charitable contributions in the Czech Republic were the victims of natural disasters, which for whose sake one half of the respondents contributed, and the second most frequent choice of Czech donors was in the area of social services. It is not just natural disasters but also other misfortunes that move donors. There was a high degree of solidarity and altruistic behaviour, which showed in various forms immediately after the September 11 terrorist attack in the US. Donation of money, blood and prayer were amongst the most frequently reported types of help (Piferi, Jobe, Jones, 2006). Distrust may present a possible barrier for potential donors. This study found that more than one third of respondents did not trust that their donation was going to be used for the purpose that was declared, and the other third did not trust the person requesting donations. Trussel and Parsons (2007) identified four key factors that may affect future donations. These factors include the financial stability of the organisation, reputation of the organisation, available information for donors, and the transparent allocation of funds to individual programmes. **If the organisation fulfils these four factors, it is likely that it will be more successful in donor acquisition and stabilisation. Public trust is crucial for non-profit organisations.** One particular research project concerning the relationship between public trust and charitable giving found that the overall trust of a donor increases the amount he/she subsequently gives (Bekkers, 2003). This article also referred to the issue of the donation amount. It was noted that many non-profit organisations are trying to get donors who, despite contributing lower amounts, will contribute



regularly. Harbaugh (1998) states that if a non-profit organisation announces its donors, it may help create so-called donor categories. These categories are created based on the interval (Note: in the Czech Republic the categories are for example up to 200 CZK, from 201 to 500 CZK, etc.). Donors are then announced within these categories. The above research revealed that donors tended to give the minimum amount required for putting them in a higher category. This approach may be inspiring for some non-profit organisations.

The Discussion apparently shows that it is very difficult to unambiguously answer the question whether the results established upon the conducted local investigation conform to or differ from the results of the studies conducted earlier. Conformity was established in some aspects (e.g., positive correlation between donations, income and education). As to the variables of gender or religion, studies from different countries apparently come to different conclusions. The contribution of this study lies in it comparing the results of other studies and realizing the importance of knowledge of the respective locality and donor's personality (motivation, preferred forms and methods of donations, and a number of others). It would be a mistake to compile a donor's profile entirely upon several general features of the donor in practical application of fundraising in a non-profit organisation. The fundraising plan should be prepared while considering the type and scope of the non-profit organisation, and it should primarily focus on the knowledge of potential donors and their needs, not the satisfaction of the needs of the organisation. If the non-profit organisation works on a local level, it should focus on the knowledge of donors in the respective locality and choose adequate forms and methods accordingly. Generalization of the conclusions made in the studies already carried out can easily conceal local specifics, and a fundraising plan not based upon knowledge of the personality of the donors, and their preferences will not be effective. The current published findings and conclusions of other studies are very helpful in strategic planning (particularly Harbaugh, 1998; Bekkers, 2003; Trussel, Parsons, 2007, and others).

CONCLUSION

This paper has dealt with fundraising as a possible source of funding for non-profit organisations. The main section focused on individual fundraising. We set up and tested a hypothesis, whether the national and local degrees of willingness to donate money for charity differ. It has been demonstrated that the local rate of willingness to donate is statistically significantly different from the nationwide level at a 5% level of significance. While there was a statistically significant higher number of regular donors in the monitored area, the number of occasional donors was statistically significantly lower. Part of the first research question was also to learn about typical socio-demographic characteristics of donors. The characteristics included age, gender, education, income and religion. Two determinants, which are related to the amount of the donation, were identified in this survey, namely income and education. The most important determinant is income because it is assumed that income is usually increased with higher education. On the other hand, there was no evidence of dependence demonstrated between the amount of donation and gender or religion.

The second research question was concerned with seeking to find an answer to whether the willingness to donate money depended on the target group for which donations are intended. This was based on the assumption that potential donors also make their decisions depending on the purpose, i.e. there will be a different degree of willingness in relation to for whom the aid is intended. The preferred target groups included vulnerable children (38%) and disabled people (35%). On the other hand, families in a difficult social situation (10%), homeless people (9%) and women in a difficult social situation (8%) were considerably less preferred by respondents. Although, at first glance, the measured values may have appeared different, Dixon's extreme deviation test at a 5% level of significance found that these differences were statistically insignificant. It is therefore



likely that donors will be more generous towards certain groups, but it is obvious that every target group in social work can find its donors.

The third research question attempted to explore the fundraising methods which are most acceptable for donors. Here we assumed that some methods of choosing donations could be more acceptable or more convenient for donors. The survey subsequently revealed that the preference is currently given to the purchase of an item by which donors contribute to charitable purposes (45%), followed by money dropped in a collection box (43%). However, almost one fifth of respondents reported additional preferences (donation to a particular person, a standing order, wage deduction, participation in a marathon race, etc.). The least preferred method of giving revealed by respondents was giving via the Internet (18%).

For non-profit organisations, this survey also brought important information in the form of identifying obstacles to giving. The greatest barrier was identified by respondents' mistrust that the gift was spent on the declared purpose (38%) and also the mistrust of the person asking for the gift (32%).

For non-profit organisations, it is therefore essential that they have a good reputation, transparent accounting, and develop open communication towards their environment. The more the organisation is known to a potential donor, the higher the willingness will be to donate money. This hypothesis was also confirmed by the survey. There is no need to spend large sums of money on communication with the public, especially if it is a non-profit organisation that provides its services in a particular location. However, it is necessary to learn about the specific environment and specifics of the locality. It applies that creativity is more important than the sum of money for effective communication with a local donor.

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Empowering Youth At-Risk in School Through Participatory Methods of Work Developed Within the FYS-Forums¹ Project – Research Findings

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The research conducted by myself focused on understanding the attitudes and beliefs of young people within their need to be part of the decision-making process “in” and “out” of school and impact (on youth) of methods of work based on a participatory-approach. **THEORETICAL BASE:** A key for this approach is to increase the participation of youth in the decision-making process, the effects of which are observable in real social life. **METHODS:** The study used a qualitative approach to collecting data. The qualitative approach was based on 2 rounds of focus group interviews with youth involved in the project. This approach was adopted to achieve in-depth responses, giving the chance to respond to each participant. **OUTCOMES:** The article shows the research findings with youth who were involved in the project based on the participatory approach. Analysis of responses across the whole focus group revealed the situation of youth before the project starts and how the situation itself and youth have changed through the participation in the project. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** Its aim is to improve the potential of social inclusion of youth at risk in schools as youth participation can empower youth, increase their self-esteem, and reduce the risk of dropping-out of school.

Keywords

participatory approach, empowerment, youth at-risk, school, dropping-out

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INTRODUCTION

Future Youth School Forums (FYS-Forums) is an EU Erasmus+ funded project running from 2015–2018, taking place in Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, England and Poland.

Three basic objectives of the FYS-Forums were: to create an inclusive, sustainable, networked model of EU-wide curriculum-linked global citizenship youth forums that are delivered by schools for schools; to provide teachers and young people with the tools to promote effective and inclusive youth leadership across formal and informal education through youth forums; and to influence at local, national and EU levels to promote more inclusive and participatory youth-led policies and opportunities within EU education systems. We wanted to achieve these aims (especially the 1st and 2nd) with the use of a youth forum and a series of workshops preceding the forum.

The Forum was defined as the event led and organised by students in their schools to express their ideas, opinions and proposals concerning relevant topics with a democratic decision-making process. They build students' capacities to act consciously within and outside schools towards a more democratic and equal society. The elements that differentiated this forum from other similar ones organized in various parts of the world were real outcomes of the decisions taken during the forum, important for the school life as well as students and staff's activity on the local and global level. Our idea was to create a space for young people where they won't only speak and make "symbolical" decisions but also carry out post-forum actions connected with the choices made by them in the Forum. That is why it was very important to limit the role of the teacher. In schools, teachers typically play the lead role in planning and organising various events. During the Forum it should be different. Teachers are expected to abandon their usual role of the leader and become supportive observers. It is a big challenge, as in schools, where attitudes of young people are shaped by teachers. It is not surprising that the educators start thinking about the Forum and the post forum actions only in terms of restraint and control when it comes to young people. That is why it was so important to conduct workshops in both groups: the teachers and the students. During the workshops with youth, young people were developing basic and transversal skills (such as: communication, organisation, entrepreneurship, self-confidence, learning to learn, social and civic competencies, etc.) using innovative methods. The teachers were learning how to work with pupils (not for pupils) with the use of a participatory-based approach, and how to support young people's engagement, thus empowering them.

The partners in the project recognised that in all of our contexts the education system driven by high stakes exam accountability and the subsequent pressure on teachers, combined with often limited professional development opportunities, creates limited space for schools to organise high quality learning opportunities, which take time and space for teachers to organise. Therefore, opportunities are often self-selecting and exclusive for more able/academic/motivated youth rather than the at-risk pupils. Very busy teachers do not tend to engage younger students or those at risk. Our needs analysis identified that many existing forums are attended by youth who are less at risk socially/culturally/economically/educationally. So the FYS-Forums project aims to engage youth who are more at risk in these respects. From the project perspective, to involve numerous youth-at-risk was significant as we assumed that their participation in the project will help them to achieve such things like self-esteem, self-confidence, and make the school milieu more friendly for them. It is worth adding that most of the pupils categorized by teachers as at-risk were from the family under the support of social work services.

HOW CAN YOUTH BECOME AT RISK?

School and education are perceived in society mostly in positive categories. Education (especially a formal one) is a way to success and it is difficult to imagine a situation in which it could be



different, and in which someone would try to lead us away from the idea of education. Teachers are expected to make all efforts to create a supportive environment for pupils at schools. As noticed by Brendan, Mei-Mei Ang (2007) positive youth development in schools “concerns assisting adolescents in developing multiple areas of competence, personal confidence, social connections, personal character, and the ability to care and contribute to society” (Brendan, Mei-Mei Ang, 2007:97). But what if things are not going in that way, if a school is perceived by young people as an unfriendly place? What if, for various reasons, a student does not feel good in school?

The national needs-analysis³ conducted within the FYS-FORUMS project in 5 partners countries exposed a lack of a formal definition of what “youth at risk” means. The term has a strong intuitive meaning and, when used, refers to indicators such as socio-economic background, migration or minority background, learning disabilities and special educational needs, school failure (no “pass” marks or grades). However, the term has no consistent definition and can be understood in various ways. In practice, it is not uncommon for a teacher who learns that one of the above-mentioned factors applies to a particular student, to observe the student more closely, anticipating future educational problems. Later, such a negative hypothetical primitive categorization becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, turning into a real category, and a student who is potentially at risk becomes at risk in reality.

Students of Social Pedagogy in Poland taking the academic program called “Interpretive⁴ Assessment” (see Granosik, 2013) have an obligation to cooperate for one semester with young people indicated by their teacher(s) as students at risk (the risk of failing a class or early-school leaving). During this period of time, their task is to understand the causes of problems in school from the perspective of the youth (not from the point of view represented by teachers or other professionals working with the family). After this time, many students presenting their findings refer to the wrong attitude of the teacher(s), who instead of helping and supporting the young people categorized by them as at-risk, often become the cause of escalation of their problems. One of many situations observed by the students may serve as an example.

The day before the event the girl who cooperated with the student revised the material for the next classes with her. The student was very happy about her achievement and motivated the girl to actively participate in the lesson. During the lesson, the girl did so. The teacher, seeing that she waved her hand, told in front of the whole group that she would not ask her “because for sure she has nothing interesting to say”

The socio-economic situation of that girl was not good. From many years her family has used social work support, and that fact was well known by the teacher. The conclusion made by the student was that in this case, the teacher rather than providing support and help, actually escalated the problem of that girl made it wider in the context of school. Unfortunately, these type of situations aren’t unique. Every year during the course of interpretive assessment the students gave us similar examples of teachers’ behaviour towards pupils from families under the help of social work services⁵.

The key to making the educational process successful in school is the attitude of the teachers. The conclusions from the research carried out by Daniels and Perry (2003) revealed that for students in the educational process the way teachers encourage and support them to present their own opinions, critical thinking and autonomy is extremely important. Researchers interested in youth learning issues have noticed that in the classes in which teachers supported the abovementioned practices, the students were more motivated, applied more value to learning and were significantly more involved in school work (Ryan, Stiller, 1991; Valeski, Stipek, 2001). The situation changes in a similar way when teachers present a completely different attitude. Due to the above, in our

³ National needs analysis based on official documents and focus group interviews with teachers.

⁴ Divided into normative and interpretive and normative is understood as in Wilson T. (1973).

⁵ Biesta, G. in the article from 2015 wrote about teachers’ judgement and presented it as an essential in education.



project we decided to systematically introduce a participatory approach to schools. Believing that thanks to this the situation of students, especially those categorized as at-risk, will change.

PARTICIPATORY-BASED APPROACH – THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Among the representatives of social sciences, including researchers and practitioners, the participative approach⁶ is being used more and more often, as its supporters strive to increase the participation of children/youth in the decision-making process, the effects of which are observable in real social life. Youth participation is seen as youth being actively involved in decision-making and taking action on issues relevant to them. Within formal education, this could be seen as encompassing a learner-centred and participative approach within both the formal curriculum and non-formal or informal learning environment. (Bourn, 2016)

Thanks to the introduction of this way of working with young people, their perspective becomes audible or, using the full version of this approach, equivalent to adult optics. Underlined by supporters of the approach, the advantages of its use include increase in the authentic and natural involvement of young people in various social activities through which their sense of agency and civic awareness increase. The participatory approach, apart from the democratic way of making decisions, affects the relationships in which the distribution of power is even among all participants and, as Hargreaves (1991) recalls, “positively correlates with the effectiveness of assimilation (by pupils/pupils of AJ) program content” (Hargreaves, 1991:46) and educational influences, which are also chosen through dialogue, and not, as is most frequently the case, externally imposed. The importance of youth participation can be considered from the point of view of school drop-out, because leaving education, lack of education, lack of professional qualifications may lead to a lack of financial resources to maintain a proper standard of living, which may mean dependence on others, limited possibilities of making decisions about themselves, frustration and thus a low level of life satisfaction, which in turn may be the reason for reaching for alcohol and drugs, entering into conflict with the law, or depression. Premature school-leaving is not a quick decision, but a process that starts with the appearance of school failures, through which we not only understand educational progress negatively assessed by teachers, but also conflictual relations with the pedagogical group, whose reasons do not necessarily have to be associated with the negative student’s attitude only.

As the participatory-based approach requires a similar level of active participation, collaboration, and commitment from all participants, Granosik et al. (2014) emphasize that it is a method that empowers participants who occupy an unprivileged position in the classic order. Applying a youth empowerment approach makes young people begin to develop freely and triggers in them an authentic need for action, not in order to achieve any specific benefits (e.g. better assessment at school), but because they feel that it should be done. The basis for the participatory approach to working with children or youth is the approach that people legally categorised as minors are not passive participants of the process of socialisation but legitimate members of the society who, just like adults, create it and have the ability to transform it. Taking the above into consideration, their role in any aspect of life should not be limited but should be active (O’Kane, 2008).

In the next sections research methods used during the implementation of the project and research findings will be presented. One of the main goals of the study was to learn about the impact of the participatory-based approach and the youth forum developed within the Future Youth School Forum (FYS-Forums) project.

⁶ The following authors wrote more about the participatory approach, see for example: Anderson (1998), Herr (1999), Gulczyńska (2017).



METHODS

In the study a qualitative approach was used to collect data. The qualitative approach was based on focus group interviews with youth and teachers involved in the project⁷ and was adopted to achieve in-depth responses and give researchers a chance to respond to each participant.

The main aims of the study were to examine the ways young people (aged 12–18) from different European countries (Cyprus, Italy, Lithuania, UK⁸) understand participation, their needs to be a part of the process of decision making, as well as their attitudes and beliefs. But our goal was also to understand processes of youth engagement in a cross-cultural context and the impact of the participatory-based approach and the youth forum developed within the FYS-Forums project⁹.

To carry out this study, two rounds of focus group interviews were organized; the first one included 4 (1 in each country) focus group interviews and was conducted before the start of the first workshops and forum. The set of questions asked during the focus groups included three types of questions: initial questions, main questions, and prompt points. The aim of initial questions was to create a relaxed atmosphere and help young people to start a discussion. The main questions focused on topics interesting from the perspective of the project such as current possibilities for youth to be active and make decisions in and out of school, the level of their engagement, and young people's perspective on participation. The moderator was obliged to ask both types of questions. The role of prompt points was to help the moderator lead the discussion, while the points could be reviewed and modified depending on the situation during the focus group session. During the second round 10 interviews were held (participants were pupils from 3 schools in Cyprus, 3 in England, 2 in Italy, and 2 in Lithuania). The second round of interviews was conducted in the end of the project after a series of workshops and two editions of the Forum. The young people answered the following questions: the first one was related to young people's expectations about the Forum, including the preparation of the learning activities, participation in the Forum itself, and any post-Forum actions they may have undertaken. Youth were also asked to share their opinions about how to improve the next Forum. The second question referred to young people's skills of "participation" including showing initiative, public speaking, leadership, expressing their own opinions, leading groups, and taking part in extracurricular activities. The question was directly connected with several general skills developed during the workshops cycle with youth. Based on the answers to question number three, we wanted to determine to what extent young people started to get involved in social activities after the Forum. The aim of the next topic of the focus groups was to learn how young peoples' understanding of such local or global issues as gender inequality, climate change, recycling, refugees, and access to education changed after they had taken part in the Forum. And finally, we wanted to look at the changes in, for example, relationships with adults, teachers etc. after the Forum.

It was important to conduct interviews in both rounds with the same groups of people. Participants of focus group interviews were students who had completed the workshops cycle developed within the project and who were participants of the Forum itself.

⁷ In the article I will present research findings from the study with young people.

⁸ In the research the Polish team was responsible for conducting the research. Polish schools didn't participate in the project. This is the reason for the lack of data from that country.

⁹ Biesta, G., Lawy, R. and Narcie, K. in 2009 have published the article in which they presented insights from research which has sought to deepen understanding of the ways in which young people (13–21) learn democratic citizenship through their participation in a range of different formal and informal practices and communities in UK.



Table 1: Number of schools and the focus group interviews' participants (youth)

Country	First round of focus group interview		Second round of focus group interview	
	Number of schools	Number of the focus group interviews' participants	Number of schools	Number of the focus group interviews' participants
Cyprus	1	8 (4 male, 4 female)	3	16 (8 male, 8 female) (All pupils from 3 schools took part in 1 focus group interview)
England	1	6 (3 male, 3 female)	3	1 st school – 3 (1 male, 2 female) 2 nd school – 5 (5 female) 3 rd school – 4 (3 male, 1 female)
Italy	1	5 (2 male, 3 female)	2	1 st – 15 (6 male, 9 female) 2 nd – 12 (5 male, 7 female)
Lithuania	1	6 (1 male, 5 female)	2	1 st – 12 (5 male, 7 female) 2 nd – 4 (2 male, 2 female)
In total	4	25	10	59

Source: Author's own

Data from 14 focus group discussions were analysed in the following way: the data were subject to initial and preliminary coding in order to identify key categories; based on the coding the researchers produced each focus group's responses to the research questions. Responses of each participant were identified and compared with other participants' responses across the focus groups.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

An analysis of responses of the first round of focus group interviews revealed two categories of participants: the experience-oriented versus the learning-oriented. In the answers of most participants, the main responses to these questions were a feeling of interest in and importance of the participation and being active. But we observed some differences between the justifications of the importance of the issue. Some of the participants thought participation important because being active gave them a chance to direct their personal lives and they were interested in it – they were called “experience-oriented”. Other participants explained the importance of the issue referring to school lessons – I called them “learning-oriented”.

The “Experience-Oriented”

Experience-oriented participants of focus groups are involved in a wide range of community activities. They are involved in volunteer work. Their responses reflect their personal (direct or indirect) experience in, for example, Civil Rights and racism. This was expressed by a student in the following way:

“Black¹⁰ people still get insulted today. I've discussed this with my best friend and parents and my best friend said how unfair it was back then, all those people who seemed to make racism an actual thing, they deserved to die a long time ago. I thought violence isn't always the answer. I thought at one point, maybe if you try to talk to somebody and say that racism isn't a good thing, then they could change their mind on how white people and black people see things.”

“I am not a Cypriot, so I would like to have the opportunity to present my country to the rest of the school. We have many kids from other countries in our school, so it would be nice if we had the opportunity to present our history and learn about other places in the world.”

¹⁰ I use italics when referring to the statements by youth.



The “experience-oriented” group of participants has a much deeper and greater understanding of the importance of participation, but it needs to be pointed out that this group was much smaller than the second one.

The “Learning-Oriented”

This group of participants had some difficulties when trying to think about what participation meant. At the same time, these participants, like all others, listed some issues of importance related to being active and having a possibility to decide about things related to them. However, participation is important to them for other reasons than those mentioned by the “experience-oriented” group. Their comments in this particular context reflect their perspective on the significance of the school curriculum and subjects where participation and being active could be beneficial for them.

The first round of focus group interviews exposed that young people generally show a limited understanding of participation and the need to be involved in the process of decision making, but at the same time they express some interest and wish to take part in it. In most cases they connect their wish with some external motivation (especially from teachers), which means that they value a certain activity because it allows them to achieve some personal benefits, e.g. a good grade at school. They described their involvement in developing skills in a similar way: in terms of improving their position in school and in general in their future life. The “learning-oriented” participants provided numerous examples of “skills required” to become a good employee. They came up with a range of ideas about direct application of these skills. In contrast, the “experience-oriented” participants made a series of specific suggestions connected with direct actions and activism. They responded to questions by identifying changes in the educational system, community and the world they would fight for and encourage as a way of being more involved in the problems faced by the world. The way “learning-oriented” participants perceive engagement could be questioned as being in opposition to the idea of human solidarity, and other norms and values stressed by the global citizenship perspective.

This point provoked a question about reasons for the current situation. There are many multifaceted factors affecting the engagement of young people. These include, for example, elements mentioned by teachers during focus groups such as the curriculum and the whole education system, social factors, environmental factors, and motivational variables which all impact upon the engagement and participation of young people. But in general, as some evidence suggests, there is a limited space for young people to learn about themselves or their needs and from the very beginning they try to meet the expectations of others. This situation does not create a good environment for the development of such skills as creative or critical thinking but prepares and teaches students to find themselves a satisfactory place within the system.

An analysis of the second round’s answers was focused on finding the answer to the question how the use of a participatory approach in the young people’s work changed their attitude. To what extent did the young people feel that they wanted and could make a decision in school.

During this analysis two categories of participants were revealed: those currently focused on learning and the currently active ones. These categories are based on their responses, on the way they described their expectations for the Forum and on the way they reflected on their roles and responsibilities in the whole process (including everything before, during and after the Forum).

The currently focused on learning

These participants are currently more focused on learning, and their expectations for the Forum were moving along that path. In the first place these participants expressed the wish of learning new skills and gaining new knowledge. Below are some responses categorized as currently focused on learning: *“My expectation was to learn a lot more about gender equality. The project exceeded my expectations. I wasn’t expecting to meet so many different students from different areas. Everyone had different opinions, so I learnt a lot.”*



"I learnt how to develop my skills of how I work with different people, especially people from the other towns who don't go to our school. This school has a style of doing things, so it's good to learn to be flexible and learn how other people do things."

These participants are currently more focused on personal development and gaining the skills than on active participation. Their responses tended to be more about how they benefited from the participation in the Forum than about how to use the skills gained thanks to the presence in the project. It is hard to say what the reasons behind such attitudes are but on the basis of responses of teachers from the schools where young people answered in that way, we can hypothesize that it is an effect of the limitation of actions taken by the young people. The situation cannot be attributed to their young age, as this kind of response was given by 17-years-old participants as well. Because of that, we looked for some answers in the responses of the teachers. An analysis exposed the fact that teachers from these schools were not able to trust pupils and they preferred to control everything around the Forum. Trying to understand the attitudes of these teachers one needs to remember that the project and organization of the Forum had a specific timeframe so it is possible that some teachers felt much more pressure than teachers from other schools in which implementation of the Forum took place as well. It is also possible that these teachers weren't ready for working with the full participatory approach. As a result, young people continued to play the same role as before the Forum started – the role of pupils – and they were trying to meet the expectations related to that role and their learning.

These participants appreciate that they could participate in the Forum and gain the new skills and knowledge which can be used by them if they wish to. They also emphasized that the methods of learning used during the Forum has been done in interesting way. They also emphasized that the methods of learning used during the Forum were interesting and differed from what they normally do in their classes. They appreciated the fact that they could use new skills and knowledge in practice. Below are some of their responses:

"Gender Equality was always a word that you hear, what I wanted to do not just say it but make more examples of what it is. I wanted to stop talking about gender equality and make it more concrete."

"Not many people like to pay attention in class but if we do it in a fun way some people might engage and might really like it."

However, at the moment the Forum has not affected them to such an extent as to make them participate in real. These participants, like all the others, identified the issues of importance to them such as gender equality and improving the current situation.

The active participants

These participants of the focus groups were involved in the whole Forum process. In their responses one could see that the Forum was not only another extra-curricular activity offered by the school but it became their own space, that the Forum belongs to them. Below is a response of one of the participants:

"We are meant to have three weeks but there were the holidays so that was out of our control. It would be helpful if we had that time. It's hard to bring everyone together from different school groups. We met two days before the Forum but hopefully next year we will have the time we can plan it 6 months ahead."

In this answer it could be seen that the students from this school had much more freedom. Teachers stayed withdrawn which probably had a positive effect on students who started to feel responsible for the Forum. Thanks to that they gained much more experience in participation. This category of participants indicated what they wanted to change and modify in the organization of the Forum in the future to make it more effective, to involve more students.

"Need to improve planning skills, the planning was rushed and we had a lot of ideas but we were confused. We were confused about what we should do and what we shouldn't do."

It should also be mentioned that some of these participants were active before the Forum had started, and still they tend to see the impact of the Forum.



"I was already pretty involved with gender inequality issues. Being part of the forum gave me the opportunity to voice out my opinion to be around people who had similar opinion. These issues are always on the news it's just finding people getting really in touch who listen to what they say. Even if they didn't want to listen it made them think how people are treated and how they could be treated. Especially the power walk where taking a step forward meant that you would have experienced a form of gender inequality. Some people took 7 steps, and the amazing thing is that they got so used to the gender bias that it became normal if they were different genders to have different treatment."

But some of them openly speak that the Forum inspired them to be more active in the future.

"Before the forum I was not the one that would take risks and go to many different clubs, but after joining it I started join clubs and also, I recently started volunteering because of that. There is a science club, there is the debating and I recently started volunteering in the public library and Duke of Edinburgh. The forum inspired me"

"Helped me to look at specific areas, and it was an education, but on the forum day we wanted people to put their own ideas on gender equality. This made people feel more involved. We had a whole school activity where everyone did the bingo then we split up to do different activities such as head, heart, hands and feet and we rotated between 3 so that people got a full perspective."

It is worth mentioning that proportion after the series of the workshops and two editions of the Forum has changed. The number of people who feel the need to be active and truly engaged in the process of decision making has increased.

CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted with youth showed that stimulating participation of young people requires some far-reaching changes in the school space, which should include elements such as: relations between a student and a teacher; change of the teacher's role, which at the moment is limited to being a specialist in a specific school subject, to the role of a facilitator in the development of a young man, a person who would support and encourage young people to some activities; increasing the autonomy and independence of students within the choices and actions taken by them. As could be seen, there are a lot of changes needed, but at the same time there are a lot of arguments which support this idea. Some of them were written by McNeish et al. (2002) who specified the reasons for taking them into account and suggested introducing participatory methods to various institutions in reference to their importance, roles, legislation, etc. The above author noticed that a participatory-based approach acknowledges and respects the rights of children as citizens and users of various services, who participate in different institutions on the same conditions as others (for example adults); it improves and adapts social services addressed to children by systematically consulting their needs with them. Only young people can help and identify the changing needs of their peers; participation gives young people the possibility to have impact on and some choice of the provided services, which can be helpful for understanding their needs and for intentional decision-making. Participation improves the decision-making process as young people become more reflective but also more critical. Young people become active members of the society, for example their school, the local or regional community. It improves child protection and prevents abuse towards children, for example by treating their words as we would treat the words of adults. In a child-adult relations, a child is no longer in a less privileged position. Development of communication skills can be useful in debates, negotiations, when setting priorities and making decisions. This proves beneficial in both everyday private and public life. It strengthens and increases self-esteem. Active participation provides the possibility to test one's own effectiveness and boost self-confidence. From the perspective of the project, it is possible to say that the participation-based approach could empower the youth. In this context, it is crucial the role of the teachers. If the teachers let the pupils act, the chance for their personal



development is much wider and gives a true possibility to empower them. Also, this approach gives an opportunity for the teachers to observe pupils in a different situation, and which could have positive impact on their future relation.

It is clear from the research that involvement work has the potential to result in positive outcomes for youth (not only those at-risk but for all), for the personal development of young people.

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The Participation of Minors in the Proceedings Regarding Their Upbringing and Maintenance

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The objective of the quantitative research was to find out how and to what extent minors are engaged in the court proceedings regarding their upbringing and maintenance, and whether the court takes their views into account when it comes to decision-making. **THEORETICAL BASE:** It is based on legislative and professional legal literature. The research is rooted in two key concepts – child participation and the form of their participation. **METHODS:** The research sample was made up of court decisions involving the upbringing and maintenance of minors, and finally and firmly terminated in 2015 and 2016 at two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region. The content analysis of documents was used to collect the data. **OUTCOMES:** The resulting data brings interesting and often alarming findings that are in conflict with valid legislation, but they often confirm the rigid Czech judiciary practice in the area of decision-making when it comes to the upbringing of a minor. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** The research results can be used for both the professional public in the area of the social and legal protection of children and the judicial practice.

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Keywords

child, participatory rights, legal proceedings, upbringing, maintenance

INTRODUCTION

The protection of children and their rights is one of the fundamental topics in all democratic states. The Czech Republic is one of the many dozens of signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and there is significant attention paid to the protection of children in our country, both within legislation and social work. We can say that the participation of a child in terms of the child's involvement in all the facts that concern him/her is an advanced variant of the protection of the child who, in this way, can be involved in the decision-making processes that concern his/her future. The authors of the submitted research have elected to focus on the gathering of data about one particular participation method, namely the participation in court proceedings on the custody of minors. Such proceedings are always carried out before the actual divorce of the parents and are a necessary condition for the divorce of marriage. The proceedings are also conducted in the case of a breakup of an unmarried cohabitation provided that the parents did not come to any agreement about their child's upbringing and maintenance. The court procedure may also be carried out at the request of one of the parents whenever the conditions of the previous decision need to be changed. The content of the decision is to determine the form of child custody (exclusive, shared, joint), the extent of contact with the other parent and the amount of maintenance. These are decisions that essentially affect a child's life. The motivation for the research was the fact that the data has not been yet empirically investigated in the Czech Republic and also the assumption that the results will therefore be interesting to the professional public in the field of the social and legal protection of children and justice.

BACKGROUND

The theoretical base of the research is anchored in legislative sources and professional legal literature. The fundamental reference is the already mentioned Convention on the Rights of the Child, which brought about a new form of children's participation in court proceedings. In particular, it involves engaging the child in the matters directly affecting him/her, based on their developmental abilities and competencies. It also gives a child the right to be heard and listened to in the above situations. This new area of child rights is regulated in Articles 12 to 15 of the Convention, and also in Articles 30, 31 and 40 (Borská, Vacková, Small, 2016).

However, the Convention on the Rights of the Child does not set any minimum age for the court's obligation to hear the child in proceedings that concern him/her. In this respect, however, it is possible to rely on foreign practice that shows that setting a minimum age limit is not absolute, and even a younger child can express himself/herself if he/she is able to understand and formulate his/her views of the situation. The UN Children's Rights Committee reminds us that even very young children have the right to be respected and perceived as individuals with their own rights since they are active members of families, communities and other social groups with their own interests and attitudes (Hořínová, 2011). In the literature published by the United Nations Children's Rights Committee and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the topic of children's participation is given a great deal of attention and is viewed very broadly compared to our research view, that is as the participation in decision-making processes, the life of the community and care for one's own surroundings (cf. Hart, 1997; Freeman in Alen, 2007; Hodgkin, Newell, 2007).

Regarding the implementation of the child's right to participate in legal proceedings in the European area of which the Czech Republic is a part, the most important source is the Council of



Europe's Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice (The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child, 2016), which are intended as an outline for the creation and amendment of procedural rules, as well as for the judges deciding on the rights and duties of children or persons who are related to the children. The recommendations of this document are reflected in the applicable Czech legislation. We consider Article 44 to be fundamental; it states: *"Judges should respect the right of children to be heard in all matters affecting them or be heard at least when they are presumed to have a sufficient capacity to understand the matter. The means used for such purposes should be adapted to the level of each given child's understanding and the child's ability to communicate and they should also take into account the circumstances of the case. Children should be consulted about the form in which they want to be heard."*

In current Czech legislation, we can find provisions on the implementation of the child's participatory rights in three important legal regulations; they are the Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on Social and Legal Protection of Children in Section 8 (2) and (3), which obliges the child social and legal protection agencies to inform the child of all relevant matters that concern him or her, resulting from the judicial or administrative decision of which the child is a participant. For a child over the age of 12, a rebuttable presumption is given that the child is capable of receiving the information, creating his/her own opinion, and communicating it. Furthermore, it is the Act No. 89/2012 Coll., the Civil Code in Section 867, which states: *"Before a decision affecting the interest of the child is taken, the court shall provide the child with the necessary information in order for the child to make his/her own opinion to communicate it. If, according to the court's findings, a child is unable to receive the information properly or if he/she is unable to make his/her own opinion or if he/she is unable to communicate this opinion, the court shall inform and interview the person who is able to protect the interests of the child, and whose interests are not in conflict with the interests of the child. A child over the age of twelve is assumed to be able to receive information, to create his/her own opinion and to communicate it. The court pays appropriate attention to a child's opinion."*

The essence of participation lies in the possibility of having an influence on decision-making in both public and private negotiation processes. In the case of a child, it has three conditions. The first condition is the intellectual ability of the child to form his/her own opinion, which must be interpreted broadly. Another condition is the age of the child, which can be ascertained and verified. The final, third condition is the child's maturity. Maturity is a psychological category that assumes a certain degree of understanding on the part of the child and his/her ability to assess the future consequences of his/her own decisions or decisions of parents, legal representatives, or public power authorities in the child's affairs (Ptáček, 2016). Section 867 defined the age limit of twelve years when a child who reaches this age is assumed to be able to receive and accept information about the proceedings and the matters under consideration, to form his/her own opinion and to communicate it to the court. It is a rebuttable presumption, that is, when a court finds out that although a child is over twelve years of age, he/she is unable to formulate his/her opinions, then it applies that the court is going to listen to another person instead of the child. Before reaching this age, the court should individually assess each child as to whether he/she is able to meet the conditions stipulated in Section 100 (3) of the Act No. 99/1963 Coll., the Civil Procedure Code, that is to say: *"In the proceedings involving a minor, who is able to formulate his/her own views and opinions, the court proceeds in such a way as to find out his/her opinion on the matter."* This means that the court informs and hears even a younger child if he/she is able to formulate his/her opinions. The content and the value of such an opinion do not matter; it is important that the child is able to formulate (communicate) the opinion.⁴ If the court is of the opinion that the

⁴ Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in Havelka and others against the Czech Republic from 21. 6. 2007, file number 23499/06; Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in Haase against Germany from 8.4.2004, file number 11057/02; Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in Mustafa and Armaga against Turkey from 6.7.2010, file number 4694/03.



child is not mature enough to formulate and communicate his/her views on the case, the court will hear a person who is able to defend the child's interests and, at the same time, an appointed person whose personal interests are not in conflict with the interests of the child (Hrušáková, Králíčková, Westphalová, 2014).

Another question we sought the answer to in the current legislation was the method of finding out a child's opinion. The combination of Section 867 of the Civil Code and Article 100 (3) of the Civil Procedure Code and also Section 20 (4) of the Act on Special Court Proceedings (the Act No. 292/2013 Coll.) provide a clear answer – if the court finds that the child is over 12 years old or is younger and in both cases is able to formulate his/her views, the court is obliged to hear the child. Determining the interest of the child in a mediated way – through a legal representative (who is able to protect the interests of the child) is only possible if the child is unable to receive information and is not able to formulate his/her own opinion. Thus, the finding about a child's opinion through a hearing in the above situation is thus the rule from which the court can deviate in justified cases (the cases mentioned above, the situation where a hearing is in conflict with the interest of the child, for example, due to the child's major mental instability). If a judge perceives the opinion of a minor with his/her own senses, the risk of misinterpreting the opinion of a minor by a third person is eliminated (Hrušáková, Králíčková, Westphalová, 2014). It is worth noting that although the Civil Procedure Code stipulates that the child's opinion and view is determined by a child's hearing, it is not a "classical" hearing, serving as a means of proving the facts. The fact that the child is heard does not try to investigate the facts of the case, but the child's wishes and opinions, with a view to taking these opinions into account (if possible) (Hrušáková, Králíčková, Westphalová, 2014). It is therefore appropriate for the finding of a child's opinion to be carried out in a situation that is as safe and friendly as possible for the child, thus creating an atmosphere of trust. Fundamentally, the hearing should be carried out in a non-public environment and in a manner that is reasonable for the child's understanding. The Civil Procedure Code in its Article 100 (3) allows the court to conduct a hearing without the presence of other persons if it is to be expected that their presence could affect the child in a way that he/she would not express his/her real opinion. Somewhat "more radical" are the requirements of the European Convention on the Rights of the Child (notification of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs No. 54/2001 Coll.); in addition to the child's right to be heard, it also mentions the form in which this right is to be enforced, that is in a child-friendly manner. This requirement implies that the environment and utilised methods should be adapted to the children's needs and their mental capacity. The condition for a legitimate finding about the child's opinion is to create a secure environment of trust, as well as sufficient time for the child to express a truly informed opinion. At the same time, forms of support for children in determining their opinions must depend both on the age of children and on their intellectual and volitional maturity. With this document, we compare the thus far not very successful attempts to reform the child custody proceedings in child-friendly justice that attempts to minimize the elements of the contradictory court trial that are stressful not only in relation to the child but ultimately also to other participants (Macela et al., 2015).

The interest of the child in cases where he or she is unable to form or communicate his or her own opinion is elicited in a mediated manner. The methods of mediated elicitation of a child's opinion are again determined by Section 100 (3) of the Civil Procedure Code, through the child's legal representative, an expert opinion, or the appropriate department of social and legal protection of children. If a child cannot be heard in the case of being too young, the court will hear the person who is able to defend the child's interests and whose interests are not in conflict with the interests of the child, typically the child's guardian (cf. Vypuštěk, 2015).

Thus, in Czech legislation, we can summarize the methods of eliciting the child's opinions and views through the child's hearing or finding out his/her opinion through a child's representative, an expert opinion, or an appropriate department ensuring the social and legal protection of children. Legislation in the Czech Republic that can serve as a theoretical base for the purpose of this



paper is as follows: An essential prerequisite for divorce in the Czech Republic is a court decision on the upbringing and maintenance of minors during and after the divorce. It determines what type of custody the child will be entrusted to, and in the case of exclusive custody to which of the parents the child will be entrusted. The court needs to set the amount of maintenance, or the extent of contact with a parent who has not been entrusted with the child. Parents have the right to make arrangements for childcare after divorce, however this agreement must be approved by the court as well. Prior to the court decision, the court cannot start the divorce proceedings. In the case of unmarried parents, there is no obligation to approve a child custody agreement after their separation by the court, but in the case of failing to reach any sort of agreement, either parent can submit a proposal for a court decision on the upbringing and maintenance of minors after separation of unmarried cohabitation (Act No. 89/2012 Coll., Civil Code).

Parents are the legal guardians of their child, but in situations where there may be a conflict of interest between parent and child, they are not allowed to represent the child. In this case, the court appoints a guardian to the child (Section 892 of Act No. 89/2012 Coll., Civil Code). There is always a risk of a conflict of interest between the parent and the child in proceedings concerning the upbringing and maintenance of minors, therefore the child is represented in the proceedings by a guardian, which is usually the respective office for social and legal child protection appointed by the court (Section 469 of Act No. 292/2013 Coll., on Special Court Proceedings). Although the child is appointed a guardian, the child has legal rights in the court proceedings, in particular the right to be informed and the right to communicate his/her own opinion. The Civil Code includes that a legal presumption is established that a child over 12 years of age is able to independently receive information, to form his/her own opinion and to share this opinion with others. This communication of the child's own opinion should ideally be conducted through a direct hearing in court. If a child is younger, then it depends on the individual maturity of the child. However, even in the case of children who, due to their age or development, are not able to independently receive information and communicate their opinion, the opinion is examined indirectly through the guardian of the social and legal child protection office (Section 867 of Act No. 89/2012 Coll., Civil Code; Section 110 (3) of Act No. 99/1963 Coll., Civil Procedure Code).

Thus, the social and legal child protection services are almost always appointed as guardian, i.e. they represent the child and therefore also communicate the child's opinion to the court on behalf of the child. At the same time, the office of social and legal protection of children is obliged under Article 8 of Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on the Social and Legal Protection of Children, to inform the child about all important facts concerning the child, to pay due diligence to the child's opinion and to take into account the child's wishes and feelings given the child's age and development so as not to endanger or disrupt the child's emotional and psychological development.

There is no doubt that the above obligations present social workers with a difficult task. In order to complete this task, it is necessary, given the different age of children, that social workers are able to apply a wide range of methods for determining the child's opinion, and also not to neglect their statutory duty to inform the child of all serious facts while taking into account the child's age and development. Besides the interview, there is currently a number of special methods that can help us examine the child's viewpoint. Zakouřilová (2014) presents in her monograph on work with families, different methods of identifying the child's view of the divorce or separation of their parents, such as *two little houses*, *an enchanted family* or *three wishes*. The *two little houses* technique is especially suitable for preschool children and consists of drawing two identical houses and then choosing which of the houses belongs to their mother and which to their father. We also use the interview to find out in which house the child would like to live. The *enchanted family* is a technique designed especially for pre-school and younger school aged children. The child is asked to assign each member of the family, including his/herself, an animal and then draw the picture of it. Subsequently, the picture is analysed to see about the relationship of the child to each member of the family. The *three wishes* technique serves to detect a child's current wishes and feelings. A child is asked to imagine



a magical grandmother who can fulfil three wishes for them, which are subsequently discussed with the child in order to find important answers using appropriate questions (Zakouřilová, 2014). In the spirit of the systemic approach described by Úlehla (2009), we can use the concept of empowerment whereby the client, in our case, the child, is given the power to act. The social worker empowers the child just by seeking his/her opinion. Empowerment provides clients with greater control and power over their lives, and is closely related to participatory approaches that started to emerge in social work from the early 1980's. The client participation can be thus viewed as one of the empowerment tools (Matoušek et al., 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The subject of the submitted research is the forms in which minors participate in court proceedings concerning their upbringing and maintenance. The object of the research is then specific court decisions on the upbringing and maintenance of minors. In general, the research is based on the principle that every court decision must be made in agreement with a child's best interests and the finding out of a child's best interest is part of the finding about the child's opinion.

The main objective of the research was *to find out how minors participate in court proceedings regarding their upbringing and maintenance, and at the same time whether their views and opinions are taken into account in the court's decision-making.*

As a follow up to the main research objective, the main research question was asked: *"How do minors participate in court proceedings regarding their upbringing and maintenance and how are their views and opinions taken into account in court decisions?"*

A quantitative research strategy has been used in the presented research. According to Disman (2000), the strategy of quantitative research is based on deductive reasoning and pays attention to the problem that is supported by theory. The main objective of a researcher in quantitative research is, according to Gavora (2010), to sort the data and explain the causes of a phenomenon's existence or its change. Accurate data, according to him, enables generalisations and predictions about given phenomena. Quantitative research is referred to as a verification research strategy.

The choice of a quantitative research strategy in the presented research was based on the fact that the research objective was to verify already assumed relations on a relatively large research sample of 1,050 cases. For the purposes of the article, however, we only use descriptive data, i.e. partial selected results of one-dimensional data analysis, or more precisely of the first-order classification results. Reichel (2009) states that the first-order data classification determines how many times in a particular column, i.e. for some characteristic, a certain code, i.e. a certain category of characteristics, can be found. In other words, for each characteristic the frequency of occurrence of its individual variants is identified. The data is given in factual numbers, in so-called absolute frequencies, as well as in percentages, in relative frequencies. Both tables and charts can be used to present results (Reichel, 2009).

Research sample

The basic research sample consists of the court decisions on the upbringing and maintenance of minors, which were finally terminated in 2015 and 2016 at district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region.

Regarding the delimitation of the locality, the Moravian-Silesian Region was chosen primarily with regard to its good accessibility. The choice of timing was determined on the basis of the up-to-dateness of the topic and also with regard to the effective date of the so-called "new" Civil Code, valid from 1 January 2014, which contains the above-mentioned Section 867.

The sample was selected using a **quota** (non-random purposeful) **sampling**. This sampling method is a way to target participants who meet certain criteria and are willing to get



involved (Miovský, 2006). In our case, the sample was the court decisions on the upbringing and maintenance of minors finally terminated in 2015 and 2016 at two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region that were willing to participate in the research. Given the need for a high degree of anonymisation, the information about which district courts are involved is missing in the research; the courts are referred to by letters A and B. In order to analyse the same research sample, we asked each district court to make available 400 files for research purposes in which a final decision on the custody of minors was issued in 2015 and 2016. Each district court provided the first 50 files of each calendar quarter of 2015 and 2016.⁵ The research sample consists of 1,050 record sheets, or more precisely of individual children. The number of record sheets corresponds to 675 families, or more precisely 675 court files were used in the research, with always one file belonging to one family.

Data collection technique

The content analysis of documents has been selected as a data collection technique. Krippendorff (2004) defines this method of working with data as a research method that produces repeatable valid conclusions from the text units that are systematically and objectively identified. The advantage of content analysis of documents is, among other things, the possibility of the processing of a large amount of text and the possibility to subject the results to statistical analyses.

The document analysis utilized court decisions on the upbringing and maintenance of minors finally and firmly terminated in 2015 and 2016 at two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region. In order to save time, data collected through the content analysis was recorded in a pre-prepared record sheet. The record sheet was divided into three parts. The purpose of the first part was to identify basic data such as the child's age, gender, and the form of their parents' relationship (married/unmarried couple). The second part was devoted to the seeking of the child's opinion, namely whether the child's opinion was sought at all. The third part then focused on the relationship between the ascertained opinion of a child and its consideration by the court.

Research implementation

Due to the nature of our research sample, it was necessary to find out to what extent the courts would be willing to cooperate and allow access to the files. In terms of legislation, accessing of the files is regulated by the Instruction of the Ministry of Justice (File No. 505/2001), according to which this access is allowed for scientific (research) reasons upon request by the chairman of the court. Therefore, there is no legal claim for a permit to study files; it depends on the decision of the chairman of a particular court. We approached five district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region with the request to access files. Two courts immediately refused, and two other courts where the study of the files took place cooperated very willingly. The last (fifth) court conditioned its cooperation on submission of a consent of the Ministry of Justice, however after obtaining this opinion from the researchers, it denied the access. The reason for this was fear of possible disclosure of sensitive data included in the files. Pilot research was therefore concerned with, among other things, the different possibilities of data collection, since the decision to be able to study the files is always subject to consent of the chairman of the court. The Ministry of Justice may give its consent regarding the file study permit, but it does not have the right to replace the chairman's approval.

⁵ The total number of court files re: the custody of minors, in which the Court A finally and enforceably decided regarding the custody of minors in 2015, was 622 files, while in 2016 it was 706 files.

The total number of court files re: the custody of minors, in which the Court B finally and enforceably decided regarding the custody of minors in 2015, was 1,871 files, while in 2016 it was 1,682 files.

Altogether, there were 4,881 files, for which a final decision was issued in the years 2015 and 2016 on the custody of minors by two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region.



In the appropriate courts that agreed to the research implementation (2 out of 5 addressed), the Vice-Chairmen of the courts were addressed by telephone, followed by sending an official request. Subsequently, the protocol on confidentiality was signed in connection with the examination of a permit to file documentation, and the researchers were acquainted with the file classification, their content and handling.

The actual data collection was carried out in July and August 2017. Five female researchers-record keepers took part in the data collection. The record keepers were acquainted with the work procedure in file documentation and with the way of recording in the record sheet, which was created for the purpose of time saving and clarity.

The research data processing and analysis

Data processing and subsequent analysis were performed using the SPSS – Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. In the paper we present the results of one-dimensional data analysis, the so-called first-order data classification allowing for the description of individual sample properties, or, more precisely, evaluating the response frequency rates for individual questions in the record sheet.

OUTPUTS OF ONE-DIMENSIONAL DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned above, the record sheet used for the data collection was divided into three parts, with the first part focusing on the information leading to the description of the research sample, the second part investigated whether and how the child's opinion was elicited, and the last set of questions focused on taking the child's opinion into account by the court. Based on the mentioned sets of questions, the partially selected results of one-dimensional data analysis will also be described.

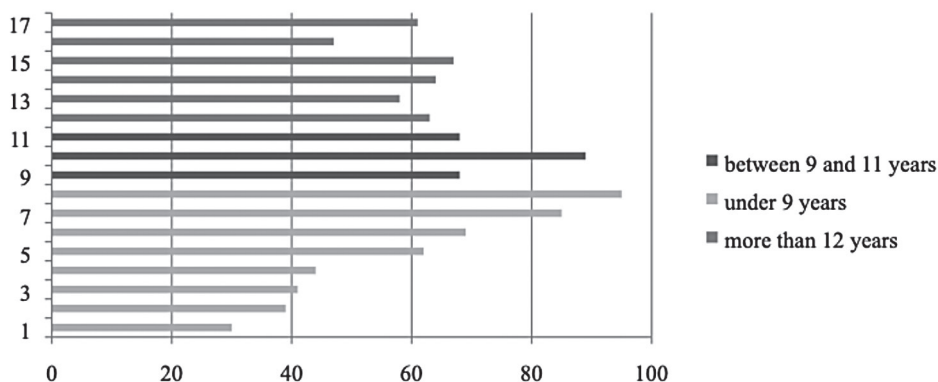
Description of the research sample (part 1 of the record sheet)

As part of the data collection, a total of 1,050 children were included in the research sample, or more precisely, 1,050 record sheets were collected, each record sheet belonging to one child. The listed number of children was included in a total of 675 families, or more precisely, 675 court files were used in the research, with one file always belonging to one family. The largest number of children included in the research came from families with two minors, which was in more than half of the cases (54.6%). The second most represented group was the children from families with one minor child (32.5%). When we looked at the family background from which the children came, more than 72% of children came from their parents' marriages.

The gender distribution in the research sample was almost equal, with girls making up for 49.9% and boys 50.1%. In terms of the age distribution, the most represented group were children under 9 (43.6%) years old, and when looking at age-specific distribution, the largest groups were children under 8 (9%), 10 (8.5%) and 7 (8.1%) years old.



Graph 1: Age of the child



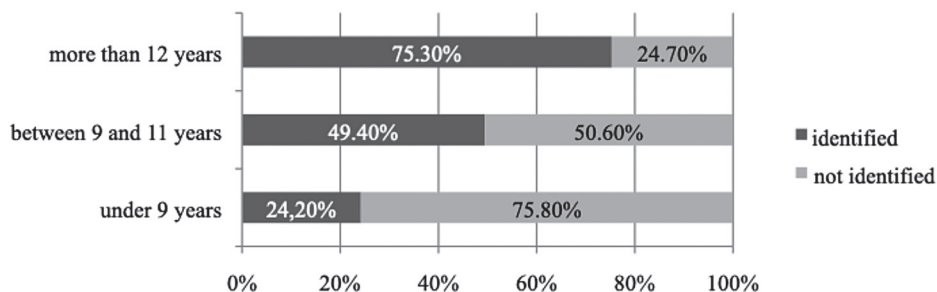
Source: Author's own processing, 2017

Identification of the child's opinion (part 2 of the record sheet)

The following part of one-dimensional data analysis will focus on the description of the actual eliciting of a child's opinion.

The analysis of the data showed that the child's opinion on the issue of upbringing was elicited in almost 53% of cases, compared with an estimated 47% of cases when it was not sought out.

Graph 2: Identification of a child's opinion

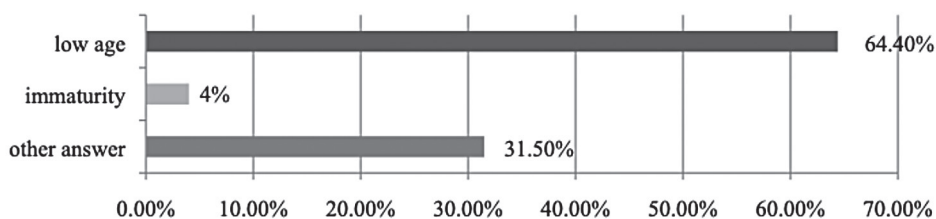


Source: Author's own processing, 2017

According to the results of the analysis, the most common reason for not seeking a child's opinion was the young age of the child. It played a role in a total of 64% of the cases in which the child's opinion was not sought out and the file revealed an apparent reason for not finding it. Within the Other option item, the responses most frequently included *the child could not be reached when conducting the investigation*, as well as the *non-identification of the child's opinion due to his/her disability*.



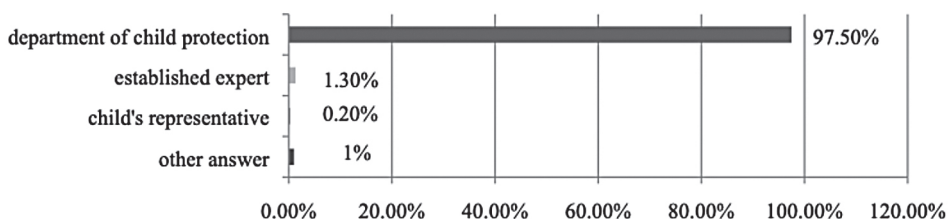
Graph 3: Reasons for the non-identification of a child's opinion



Source: Author's own processing, 2017

In cases where a child's opinion was sought out, the most frequent form of opinion search was the indirect questioning of the child. This variant was true for almost 95% of the cases. Based on the analysis, only 5% of children were interviewed directly by the court. If we look at the most frequent form used for an indirect child questioning, it is undoubtedly the seeking of opinion through a social worker from the department of social and legal protection of children. This option was reported in almost 98% of cases when the child's opinion was elicited through indirect interrogation and this form was detectable from the file. In cases of other forms of indirect interrogation, the most frequent form was by a *psychologist*.

Graph 4: Forms of indirect questioning of a child

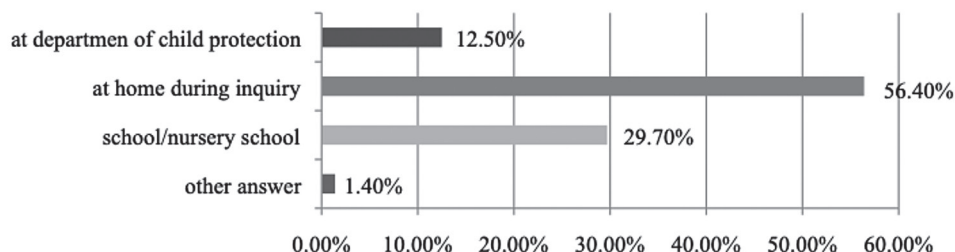


Source: Author's own processing, 2017

As for the methods used for indirect questioning of a child, interviews dominated the research. This method was used in more than 98% of indirect questioning cases where this form was detectable. The question of the form of indirect questioning was also closely related to where the indirect interrogation was carried out. The most frequently represented option, in a total of 56% of the cases, proved to be an investigation in a child's household. Another option that cannot be omitted is the seeking of a child's opinion in a school or a kindergarten, or in the department of the social and legal protection of children. The second option was represented in less than 30% of cases, and the third one in less than 13%. The percentage representation refers to cases where the place of indirect questioning was stated in the file. The answer *Other option* included the following responses – through a *psychologist at the Centre for Psychological Help* or in a *counselling centre*.



Graph 5: Place of the seeking of a child's opinion



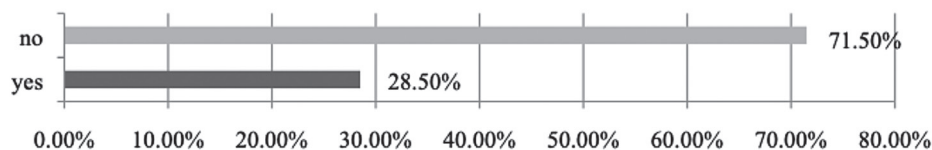
Source: Author's own processing, 2017

The research also examined how many children showed an actual interest in expressing their views. The positive answer was only recorded in the cases of 19 children (3%), or rather 19 children themselves certified that they had been questioned. However, in many cases this information was not detectable from the file.

Taking of a child's opinion into account by the court (part 3 of the record sheet)

The following results relate to information on how courts handle a given child's identified opinion. The first question from the last part of the record sheet was focused on whether the courts in their decisions state the child's view. According to the results of the analysis, the opinion of a child was only mentioned in court decisions in less than 29% of cases, compared to 72% where it was not mentioned. However, here it is necessary to point out that those cases, where in a court decision the child's opinion was not stated, also include the cases where the child's opinion was not sought out.

Graph 6: Child's opinion in a court decision

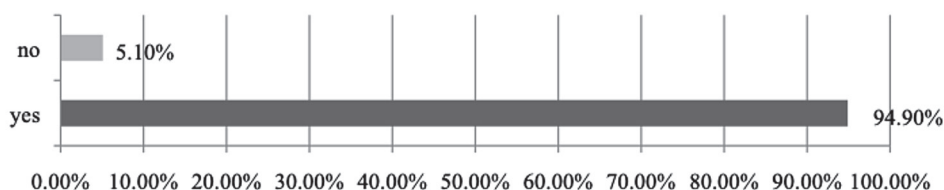


Source: Author's own processing, 2017

Another pair of questions focused on whether a court decides in compliance with a child's opinion and whether a court states for what reason it has agreed or failed to agree. The analysis of the acquired data subsequently revealed that in almost 95% of cases, in which it was possible to judge whether or not the court's decision was in compliance or non-compliance with a child's view, it was decided in accordance with the child's view. In the examined sample, the court in its decision failed to comply with only 22 children, i.e. 5%. The reasons why the court has decided in accordance with, respectively against the view of a child, were only stated in less than 24% of cases. In approximately 76% of cases, this information was not included in the judgment. Again, however, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that the „no“ answer also includes cases where a child's opinion has not been sought out.



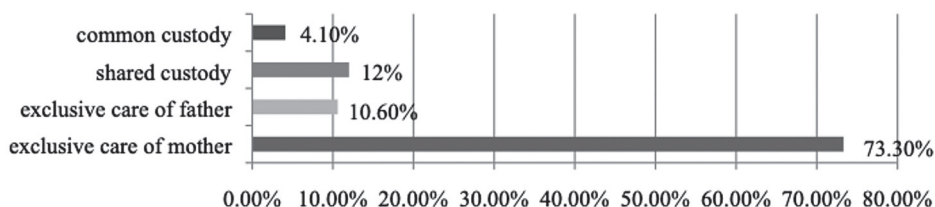
Graph 7: Decision in accordance with the child's opinion



Source: Author's own processing, 2017

The analysis of the data showed that 759 (73%) of children were entrusted to the exclusive custody of their mother by a court, 110 children (11%) were entrusted to the exclusive custody of their father, 124 (12%) children were entrusted to shared custody and 42 (4%) of the children were entrusted by the court to joint (common) custody.

Graph 8: Preferred type of child custody



Source: Author's own processing, 2017

Discussion of research results

The data resulting from one-dimensional data analysis brings interesting and often alarming findings. According to the Act No. 89/2012 Coll., all children over 12 years of age should be heard, but it is clear from the analysis that a relatively high percentage of children over 12 (25%) have not been heard or interviewed.

The research results have shown a very predominant practice of indirect (mediated) questioning through the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children. It is a question of whether courts consider mediated interrogation to be a sufficient form of a child's participation, or whether the reason for the low use of direct questioning is the factual circumstances of the court proceedings, i.e. the pressure on the speed of proceedings, the inability to listen to a child in child-friendly conditions outside the courtroom, etc.

The most common place for investigating a child's opinion was the household in which the child lived – as part of the social investigation carried out by social workers from the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children (56%), while the most frequently used technique was an interview with the child (98%). The fact that indirect (mediated) interrogation is carried out in a quite overwhelming majority of cases via an interview by a social and legal child protection worker is a confirmation of the data from practice. This fact-essential role of the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children should also be taken into account in vocational training and the education of social workers engaged in the social and legal protection of children.

The research revealed that only a very small number of children (19 children, i.e. 3%) showed an interest in expressing their opinion. It makes sense to ask the question of whether and how in practice the provision of Section 8 (3) of the Act No. 359/1999 Coll., on the Social and Legal



Protection of Children, namely the obligation of the department of social and legal protection of children to inform a child, who is a party to court or administrative proceedings on all relevant serious matters that are of concern to him/her are actually being conducted. The serious matters also include getting acquainted with the possibility of expressing the child's opinion independently in court. Within the record sheets, the question of whether the Department of Social and Legal Protection of Children introduced a child to his/her right to participate, was not asked, since it was not possible to detect this fact from the content of the case file. The result of the research, that is, only 19 children who expressed an interest in expressing their own opinion, is not a convincing argument for the fact that the aforementioned provision of the law is being fulfilled in reality.

Other research results focused on answering the question: How did the court handle the child's opinion and to what extent did the court consider it in their decision-making process? It is quite surprising that in the situation where the child's opinion was investigated, the court has not stated this finding – in as many as half of the cases – with the justification of its decision. This is not even the case in which the court has decided in compliance with the view of the child, although in our opinion the court in the actual decision deprives itself from the argument that is acting in the best interests of the child, which should be a determining criterion of every proceeding that concerns the child.

If a child's opinion was examined, the court almost always decided in compliance with the child's view (95%), which is a positive finding, because the child will feel better in a new family arrangement with which he/she has agreed than in the opposite variant.

The predominant type of child custody was the exclusive custody of a child's mother (in 73% of cases). This result is confirmed by the long-time trend displayed by Czech courts in child custody decisions as part of divorce or the separation of unmarried partners' proceedings, where children are predominantly entrusted to the mother's custody (Hrušáková, 2001; Špaňhelová, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The above results show interesting findings, which can be of benefit both to the system of district courts in the Czech Republic and to the professional public in the field of the social and legal protection of children. The research carried out should be understood as a pilot survey, since it only contains data acquired at two district courts in the Moravian-Silesian Region. The continuation of the research will depend on the response of the professional public, particularly from the experts engaged in the social and legal protection of children and the justice system, for which the data obtained could serve as a guideline for better implementation of the Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice and therefore children's rights pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A social worker plays an important role in determining a child's opinion. A social worker should be professionally prepared to perform this role. In essence, we can say that there are two roles in one situation. As a social worker of a social and legal child protection office, he/she informs the child of all important matters concerning the child, pays proper attention to the child's view given the child's age and intellectual maturity, and takes into consideration the child's wishes and feelings, taking into account the child's age and development, so as not to endanger or disturb the child's emotional and psychological development. At the same time, a social worker has the status of a child custodian appointed by the court, that is, she/he must represent the child, make procedural acts and suggestions on the child's behalf. The problematic position of the child social and legal protection office is pointed out in the current literature, for example, by Šínová (2017).

A social worker should also be equipped with knowledge of various techniques in seeking a child's view and should be able to use these techniques appropriately given the age and intellectual maturity of the child. This brings us to the field of social worker education, in which educational topics focusing on the use of various techniques and methods in contact with children should not be ignored.



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Solving Relationship Issues Through Sociotherapy

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The aim of this paper is to present a case study and the possibilities of using sociotherapy to solve partner problems, and to analyze the case from the point of view of the science and methods of social work. **THEORETICAL BASE:** In the process of sociotherapy, we chose a Cognitive-Behavioural Approach and a Task-Oriented Approach. **METHODS:** We applied social therapy as part of a specialized social counselling with a couple. We applied methods of anamnestic and diagnostic interviews, diagnostic observations, and contact with the couple when needed. To achieve the goals, we used the training of a constructive quarrel and special techniques of sociotherapy. **OUTCOMES:** Clients' problems were primarily conflicts, dissatisfaction in social relationships, role-playing problems, social change, and behaviour. Clients have learned the technique of constructive quarrel, improved their communication skills, they manage to prevent crisis situations, and rely on resources and their strengths. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** We have succeeded in meeting the goals we have chosen in cooperation with our clients. Sociotherapy might be useful for future solving relationship problems clients of social work.

Keywords

sociotherapy, social work, relationship problems, good practice

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INTRODUCTION

Partner issues significantly reduce the quality of life of individuals and families. They often lead to unnecessary breakups and divorces. In the better scenario, they are the reason for seeking help. For this reason, the aim of the paper is to present a case study describing the possibilities of using sociotherapy to solve partner problems.

Several foreign authors of major professional publications point to the important position of sociotherapy in social work. They point to the current experiences and historical roots of sociotherapy (Goldstein, 1995, 1997; Kemp, Whittaker, Tracy 1997; Germain, 1999; Compton, Galaway, 1999; Barker, 2003; Holzman, Mendez, 2003; Holzman, Newman, 2012; Campbell, 2004; Coady, Lehmann, 2008; Garrett, 2007; Gitterman, Germain, 2008; Dore, 2008; Howe, 1998, 2009; Whittaker, 2009; Dunlap, 2011; Payne, 2005; Rothery, 2008; Shier, 2011; Turner, 2011; Murdach, 2011; Newman, 2003; Holzman, 2011; 2013).

In solving this case, we have chosen as a theoretical concept a Task-Oriented Approach and a Cognitive-Behavioural Approach. From the methods, we chose sociotherapy within specialized social counselling for couples, interviews, observation, training of constructive quarrel, special techniques of sociotherapy. Both theoretical concepts and selected methods relate to Perlman's Solution-Oriented Approach. Perlman (1957) is seen as one of the most important people of social therapy in social work. Her model was one of the sources of inspiration for Marie Krakešová-Došková, the founder of Czech and Slovak sociotherapy. The current authors who describe the Perlman's model in their works are Coady and Lehmann (2008) or Dore (2008).

The primary goal of the socio-therapeutic intervention was to activate the social potential of clients. Help them eliminate the factors that cause the problem and prioritize the lack of social skills, and then try to develop the communication and social skills of clients, focus on improving client relationships towards each other, environment and client relationships in the environment, through a therapeutic relationship.

SOCIOTHERAPY

Although the term sociotherapy is quite often represented in the professional literature, until 2016 Slovakia lacked a comprehensive terminological and methodological definition. The monograph *Sociotherapy in Social Work* (Šoltésová, Bosá, Balogová, 2016) offers a comprehensive definition of sociotherapy that takes into account current knowledge in the terminological, legislative, and theoretical-methodological level. *"In summary, we perceive sociotherapy as a kind of intervention in social work, which may be based on various approaches, while using a variety of methods, forms and techniques of work aimed at activating the (social) potential of a client, with a focus on the relationship of the client to the environment, the client's environment and the client in the environment, while the key role is played by the therapeutic relation."* (Šoltésová, Bosá, Balogová, 2016:151). The authors of this definition explain that the primary feature of sociotherapy is concentrated on relationships. In the context of sociotherapy, they mean the activation of the clients' social potential in the meaning of his self-actualization. The social potential of the client environment should serve to support client self-actualization or to eliminate barriers to client self-updating ability. Activating the social potential of the client in the environment is intended to promote mutual adaptation. The focus on the client is in helping to have the conditions for self-actualization. It can be very beneficial for the client to focus on the social worker and also on working with the client environment. The clients' social environment can be a source of support for self-updating or a source of help in eliminating and removing obstacles that he or she does not succeed in updating.

Social therapy is a highly specialized activity, it is not just a social control or a simple provision of material assistance to clients.



Specific Features of Social Therapy (Zakouřilová, 2014):

- It cannot be confused with psychological therapy, although it cannot be dealt with without the use of therapeutic and psychological means that are focused on communication and relationship.
- It deals with people's behaviour and interaction characteristics. However, it is mainly focused on social functioning and client relationships.
- It does not go into the depth of the human psyche (like psychotherapy). Its methods and techniques are more focused on gaining important information, real insight, supporting motivation and communication, and awareness of the feelings and emotions of the client. It does not use hypnosis or psychoanalytic treatment.
- Compared to psychotherapy, it uses simpler means when assessing the client's life situation. Clients do not undergo intelligence tests, do not treat their physical condition, and their psychological status is not clinically evaluated.
- A social worker during sociotherapy is „privileged“ when applying different methods and techniques usually by recognizing the client's environment, not just his primary family. Further information is provided in the documentation from other professionals, institutions that have so far addressed the client's situation.
- Realization of social therapy often takes place in the field, on the spot of the day-to-day movement of the client.
- In social therapy, interest is largely focused on the solution. A great deal of attention is focused on the present and the future. The essence of work does not work with the past.
- The content of social therapy is counselling, diagnostics, prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary), crisis intervention, collaboration with key people in the client's life, and the involvement of other experts in cooperation. It also includes rehabilitation, especially social and family (to support, correct or restore family and other important relationships) and leisure time (client's interest, cultural and sporting realization). Resocialization, direct therapeutic work (meeting with the client, therapeutic interview, application of special techniques) and the use of other methods to support successful social therapy (the method of assessing the situation) cannot be omitted client, „creating an individual client plan“, and so on (Zakouřilová, 2014:21–22).
- The most common basic goals of social therapy: to support and adapt the client to the new conditions, to help him/her create a realistic view of the possibilities of adjusting the difficulties and to help him/her find the resources to effectively solve the problem situation, to modulate his own attitude to help the client and his/her family in the removal of undesirable life effects and in the social integration of the client into a full-fledged life. These broad and broadly-designed goals need to be gradually concretized into concrete, individual and short-term goals in the process of social therapy. For example, „Clients are on the way to constructively master the conflict.“
- Communication in social therapy is crucial because social therapy is based on good communication. It is important in the diagnostic, counselling phase and time of implementation of special social therapy techniques. It has a significant effect on the success of the therapy, both in the phase of establishing a confidential relationship with the client as well as in the course of holistic therapy. The basis for effective communication should be trust, understanding, and mutual respect. Requirements for social therapists in terms of communication are good verbal and non-verbal interpersonal skills.
- According to Zakouřilová (2014), social therapy is *“a specific type of professional intervention aimed at direct and indirect effect of the desired change in the behaviour of the client and in his/her social environment, to solve the situation which immediately threatens him/her and to prevent risk behaviour”* (Zakouřilová, 2014:15). In some cases, we only accompany the client, sometimes we handle it or sometimes intervene in the event of a threat. It is essential that social therapy



reflects the current need for comprehensive and expert intervention, and relates to the wider environment of the client. Social therapy as a component of social work also includes measures, procedures, and strategies that lead to desirable changes in the behaviour of the client, his/her family members, and the wider environment. Essential is to be “tailor-made to a client” (Zakouřilová, 2014:15). It includes a purposeful, structured, and dynamic interaction between the social worker and the client. In accordance with the World Health Organization definition of health, we can treat it as a certain recovery of the client, since according to this meaningful and recognized definition a person is healthy only when he is in the state of complete physical, psychological, and social well-being (Zakouřilová, 2014).

Sociotherapy is historically, firmly anchored in the theory and practice of social work. At present, it is not given proper attention. Perceived and described as one of the stages or one of the methods of social work, predominantly as a method of resocialization, especially in connection with the help of persons with non-ferrous and substance addictions (Šoltéssová, Bosá, Balogová, 2016).

According to Krakešová-Došková (1946), this is an educational social therapy, which consists of the tasks of direct educational activity, education, information, ways of correcting inappropriate behaviour and especially of concrete, practically focused tasks for the client. Among the basic objectives of educational social therapy, the author considers support for the development of a critical sense of the reality of the problems and autonomy in the solution. Basic methods are the methods of developing critical thinking and completing the knowledge and experience necessary to solve the problem. Thanks to educational opportunities, clients can gain new knowledge and experience.

Perlman (1957), in a problem-based approach (including a role-based approach), emphasized the importance of cognitive processes in the process of adaptation of man to the environment. During the therapeutic process, the client should be active, his strengths should be constantly highlighted. The author perceived the therapeutic relationship as a condition for making important changes. The aim of the therapist and clients joint efforts is to achieve better adaptation between the client and his problem situation. The therapeutic relationship serves to motivate the client and liberate his/her growth potential. Perlman highlighted the time limits and the therapeutic phases during the collaboration.

Šoltéssová, Bosá, Balogová (2016) consider social therapy as an indispensable part of social work. Using a variety of methods and techniques is a crucial element in helping people find themselves in a difficult life situation, either by their own fault or not, and cannot solve it alone. Social therapy clearly influences the nature and quality of social services provided in the practice of social work.

CASE HISTORY DESCRIPTION

The result of the anamnestic interview during the first meeting

21-year-old Miss T.V. is a graduate of a secondary vocational school with a graduate degree in the field of visage, the mother of a 1-year-old child, currently on parental leave. She and her partner (client) met six years ago. This is her first relationship. For the first four years, he and his partner understood each other perfectly, and did not argue. They had a beautiful relationship based on love, trust, mutual respect, support, and help. They enjoyed each other's proximity. The problems of the couple occurred after the end of secondary school. Miss T.V. moved in with her parents in her hometown. The partner visited her only twice a month during the weekends as he worked abroad. Miss T.V. was short-term unemployed, unable to find employment in her town. She missed her partner. She asked him to leave the work abroad, move to them, and find work near home. She was very disappointed that her partner did not want to come back to her, wants to keep earning more and overall is happy. She found out on Facebook that her partner had a girlfriend and they



often write to each other. Her partner convinced her that she was just a friend, he did not feel anything for her, and if she wanted him to, he would cut their communication. However, Miss T.V. later found out that her partner has deceived her and was still communicating with his friend on Facebook. She tried to solve the problem through a social worker whom she wrote an email. She was interested in specialized social counselling for couples, but the partner did not agree with her proposal for a joint visit. Counselling sessions have been canceled in the past because at that time Miss T.V. an unplanned pregnancy was confirmed, and was hospitalized twice in the hospital for health complications. She gave birth to a healthy girl. The client took care of the baby and convinced her partner to come back home. She, was happy for a while because the partner definitely ended the Facebook relationship and managed to find work near home. Miss T.V. is very fixed to her primary family. She does not have relations with friends, as while she was studying, her girlfriends had moved away from their hometown because of expatriation or job opportunities. The primary family of the clients: Miss T.V. grew up in a full, functional family. Her mother had a nice childhood, she got along well with her parents and three siblings. She and her siblings often visit each other. She was raised to respect modesty, her parents punished children only exceptionally. She wed when she was 20 and also birthed her first daughter at that age. With her husband, she raised three daughters. Miss T.V. is her youngest child, at the time of her birth her mother was 28 years old. The girls were raised with love, led to responsibility and independence. They regularly helped with housework because parents were often busy working. Family communication was open, clear. Parents gave the children enough time to fulfil their school duties and have fun. They often praised their children and had a harmonious relationship with them, with plenty of love and trust. The client does not mention arguments or misunderstandings in the family. The sisters pay each other visits regularly. She loves her parents and sisters. The client's father was 34 years old at the time of her birth. He was able to provide for the family financially, he liked to spend time with the children, introduced them to sports. He has an excellent relationship with his children today. Children often spent holidays with grandparents (mother's) where they meet with the wider family. At present, the large family meets regularly and the client enjoys these family meetings very much. The father's parents died two years before the client's birth. Her father likes to remember them, talking about his parents with love and reverence.

20-year-old young man J.M., single, healthy, graduate of a secondary vocational school, electromechanical profession, father of a 1-year-old daughter, currently working in a private company, is a tradesman. Salary is lower than before. The client does not understand why he does not get along with his partner at the moment. In the past, they never quarrelled. They were very happy together. He tries and does not see the reason for the quarrels. He is still controlled and criticized in his present family. When he worked abroad, he was more satisfied. He often regrets that he did not stay to work in Austria. He is very dissatisfied with the situation that they live with partner parents. He does not feel well there, because they argue every day. He does not know what to do to be good. He would like to stand alone but needs to make money for his own apartment. He loves his daughter and her mother very much and is trying to be a good father. He would like the conflicts to end. He is willing to attend social counselling because his partner has given him an ultimatum that either the situation calms down or they will break up.

Primary client family: Mr. J.M. grew up in an incomplete, dysfunctional and disharmonic family. His mother never talked about her childhood, her parents or siblings. When he was four, his parents divorced. His father found another partner and moved away from the family. Mother raised her children very strictly and punished them disproportionately. In the family, there was often screaming, crying and constant fear. While the family lived with their father, the children experienced an authoritative style of education, frequent physical punishments, and psychologically challenging situations. Father beat the mother, even in front of the children. Communication in the family was unclear, austere, controlling, without praise or recognition and expressions of love. The client and his four siblings suffered greatly. The client has two sisters and two brothers. He



is the third child. All his childhood and adolescence the family was in a bad economic situation, reliant on state welfare. In the period of childhood and adolescence, he liked to escape from home, with his great emotional support being a partner. She has a good relationship with her siblings, sometimes they are visiting. The client's relationship with the mother is disturbed, the mother is not interested in her son (and his siblings), the client does not seek her attention. The client tries to forget his father and his father is not interested in him. The client in the family did not experience a normal, healthy family life.

The secondary family of clients: The couple is living together in a four-bedroom apartment at clients' parents. Their 15-month-old daughter is the source of the greatest happiness in the family. The client's parents are very helpful with childcare, homework, and coping with the difficult financial situation. The couple's problems arose shortly after the client moved in and cohabited in one household with their parents. Miss T.V. is very disappointed that the client has little interest in the family, does not help, has no interest in spending family time together. He likes sitting at the computer, playing games or chatting on Facebook. He spends only a short time with his daughter. He argues that he needs to relax after work. Miss T.V. has different expectations from the way of family life. The partner does not understand the criticism, and he feels sorry (he does not drink alcohol, he does not smoke, he makes money for the family, he does not live with friends, he is home alone, he does not hurt anyone). Both clients are in early adulthood, at the beginning of economic and social autonomy, in the age of life plans, first employment, partnering, planning, and family formation. They do not currently have enough money to buy their own flat and implement more costly plans. Miss T.V. often cries, is anxious, helpless, suppresses sorrow and aggression. She is very dissatisfied with the stereotypical way of life, she wants a change. Mainly she is constantly troubled by family quarrels, a tense atmosphere. Shameless for the failure, she regrets her parents. She feels guilty about this condition, which has caused parents not to have family comfort because she quarrels with her partner almost every day. She feels great uncertainty, dissatisfaction, disappointment. They are afraid their daughter will grow up without a father or have an unhappy childhood. They believe that the pain is only temporary, and they can change this unsatisfactory state. Diagnosis:

Table 1: Selected Problems of Client Issues

Problem Circle	Characteristics
Conflicts	Difficulties in relationships with other people.
Dissatisfaction in social relationships	Internal dissatisfaction between the client and another person. (for example, the client is perceived to be less assertive, aggressive, etc.).
Difficulties in role performance	E.g. role of partner, parent.
Difficulties in social change	Problems passing from one role to another when changing the life situation. The difference between the current role performance and your idea.
Difficulties in behaviour	Addictive behaviour.

Source: Self Processing by Reid and Epstein (1972), Reid (1978)

Table 2: Scale of the weight of problem at a 1st meeting

Type of problems	The intensity of the problem			
Scale 1-4	1 - smallest degree, 4 - the worst intensity of the problem			
	1	2	3	4
Conflicts				both 4
Dissatisfaction in social relationships				both 4
Difficulties in role performance			Miss T.V. 3	Mr. J.M. 4
Difficulties in social change				both: 4
Difficulties in behaviour			Mr. J.M. 3	Miss T.V. 4

Source: adapted by Milner and O'Byrne (1998)

Prognosis: After the first meeting in the community counselling centre, it can be said that if the partners did not solve the problem with the professional help, there is a significant chance that they would break up because of the persistent problems. Objectives: (final points of client and social worker cooperation in quantified parameters). We discussed the final decision about the goals, and the clients named and approved the goals. Goal No. 1: Conflicts - None. Goal No. 2: Dissatisfaction in social relationships - we can always pursue our ideas or relationships. Goal No. 3: Difficulty in behaviour - the clients spend a maximum of 15 minutes per computer per day. The short-term goals included the training of constructive arguing, the creation of a confidential relationship between the clients and the social worker. The long-term goal was to eliminate family conflicts and improve the quality of family life. The clients have decided to solve the problem only with the social worker of the community centre. Their decision was respected.

The process of working with clients

1st – 8th meeting in the community counselling centre:

- Main methods: specialized social counselling, paired social counselling, sociotherapy.
- Theoretical concept: Cognitive-Behavioural Approach, Task-Oriented Approach.

1st – 2nd meeting, main tasks: to create a therapeutic relationship between the social worker and the client, and the conditions for the therapeutic environment, to obtain data for the development of a history, diagnosis, prognosis, to conclude the contract together. Admission, anamnestic, diagnostic, therapeutic interview; unstructured interview with largely open questions.

The socio-therapeutic goal was to 1. Identify the problems of the couple. 2. Activate the social potential of clients (help them eliminate the factors that keep the problem, such as a lack of social skills), with an emphasis on improving the client's relationship to the environment, the environment of clients and clients in the environment, the therapeutic relationship (Šoltésová, Bosá, Balogová, 2016). The purpose of the assessment of the life situation was to find an answer to the question: How is the social functioning of the clients disturbed? What are their needs? The assessment process started with the initial anamnestic survey and the preparation of individual histories of clients.

Interim design of the treatment plan: 8 meetings in the counselling community centre, once a week, the possibility of written contact by email, and telephone contact (in case they cannot get an agreed personal meeting), sociotherapy (therapeutic relationship, therapeutic environment, special social therapy techniques for families with diagnostic and therapeutic goals - Inventory of Joy, Hand, How I Work, Pathways to Improvement, Pathways to Worsening, Personal Inventory), Pair



(Specialized) Social Counselling (various kinds of interviews, training of constructive argument in counselling and its training at home), cooperation of social workers and clients in the fulfillment of domestic tasks (with diagnostic and therapeutic focus).

Contract conclusion: The couple wants to work together to solve problems. They want to change their situation and not have problems that are very worrying to them. From their statement, the application for social worker assistance is obvious. We have agreed on 8 sessions, the frequency of meetings in the interval once a week. The date and time of the meeting will always be a matter of the meeting. Meetings will take place in a community counselling centre with the following structure: reflection on managing conflicts at home, success/failure of conflict resolution through constructive argument training. At each meeting, they will have the task of writing one specific social therapy family therapy technique with a diagnostic, therapeutic purpose. Writing a demonstration of the destructive conflict that has recently happened to them, then a glimpse of the argument appearing on scoring sheets, and discussing differences in evaluating specific items. After the discussion, we will find alternatives to another strategy to solve the problem together. Finding new conflict resolution options and familiarizing clients with the principles and phases of a constructive struggle is followed by an attempt to quarrel under the new rules, and again, the partners get their own, in this case, a more constructive form of quarrel.

3rd meeting, main objective: to activate the social potential of clients. Partial goals: to create a therapeutic environment and a therapeutic relationship, to reflect and evaluate the atmosphere and relationships in the family over the past week, to check the fulfillment of the task, to coach the constructive argument, to make with clients a special technique of “Hand” sociotherapy, the aim of which is to practice providing positive feedback to discover positive qualities on other people, to develop and promote positive family relationships and to contribute to increasing the confidence of clients. To give the client homework (2-fold: practice constructive argument, choose from the list of joy at least 1 reason for the joy that the partners experience together.

Theoretical basis: cognitive-behavioural theory, role-oriented approach, the theoretical concept of sociotherapy. Applied methods: sociotherapy (interview, special social therapy “Hand”, paired social counselling, constructive argument training, interview, observation.

The result of fulfilling the task: the task was done with both partners. They made a card with a list of the joy they had with each other and are looking forward to choosing something and experiencing joy. They both used the technique. They went to the cinema for a comedy together.

The result of the constructive struggle training: first they showed the classic quarrel they had experienced recently and assigned their points and ratings. Result: concrete + 1, 0, 0 and fair play 0. Then we repeated the principles of the constructive argument, its phase. We discussed the differences in the assessment of individual parts. We were looking for alternatives to another strategy, how it could be right and how it really was. We did a constructive argument, which was subsequently evaluated by our partners. Result: concrete: +1, +1, +1, fair play 0.

The result of interview and observation during the special technique of sociotherapy “Hand”. The social worker analysed the technique with clients with the questions “What surprised you? What made you happy?” The result: Both clients positively evaluated the technique “*it was a nice game*” - they were smiling, watching each other and thinking. “*You noticed that?*” - they improved their mood and smiled at each other until the end of the session. Homework: Up to the next encounter, rehearse the constructive argument 2 times, at least once, to choose from the joy of at least one reason for the joy they both experienced.

4th meeting, objective: to create a confidential therapeutic relationship and therapeutic environment, to evaluate the current state of the family in relation to the problems and their management and fulfillment of a domestic task. Do a constructive argument and a special sociotherapy technique “How do I do it”? Clients homework - they will rehearse the constructive argument 2 times, at least once before the next meeting, to choose from a list of joy at least one reason for the joy they both experience.



The technique of Ways to Worsening and Pathways to Improvement. Clients' reflection: *"For the first time in a long time, we did not have reason to quarrel, even our parents were happy. We planned a constructive argument (the client proposed a theme from the past) and we were arguing according to the instructions. We already have more automatic phrases and we better remember the principles and procedure – but not yet complete. I had a longer service at work, so I did not want to help, as last week"*.

The result of fulfilling the task: they did the training once, helping them to better memorize the principles and procedures. The result of the argument is two points out of four. Because of the duties of Mr. J.M., only Miss. T.V. was able to make joy, and they would like to make up for it with a common joy (going to swim). Constructive Struggle Training: they have demonstrated the classic quarrel they have experienced recently and assigned points and ratings. Result: concrete + 1, +1, 0 and fair play 0. Clients with a social worker discussed the differences in the evaluation of individual parts. They repeated the principles of constructive argument, its phases. They were looking for alternatives to another strategy, how it might be right and how it really was. They made a constructive argument, which they subsequently evaluated. Result: concrete: +1, +1, +1, fair play +1. Special Technique of Socioterapy: Technique How I am. Objective: Diagnostic and therapeutic. Clients have considered the quality of their specific core areas of life, their management, whether they want to change or are happy with the current state.

Technique brought a great source of information. In this case, it was especially beneficial because the functioning of the family is impaired. Procedure: Clients were asked to reflect on the different areas of their lives that are presented in the given form. Areas related to housing conditions, family financial security, family members' health, family care, childcare, family relationships, extended family relationships, leisure, and leisure. They could write in the free rows other areas they consider important to add. Then, they expressed in a column for quality evaluation and a column for satisfaction number 1-5, with 1 representing the lowest quality, satisfaction, and 5 the highest quality and satisfaction level. Result: They filled only one form (together). Quality of living: housing conditions 4, family financial security 3, health 5, home care 5, childcare 5, family relationships 3, extended family relationships 3, leisure 3, interests 2. Satisfaction: own household, family financial security 2 (client wants to undergo training and move to a better-paid position in the company), health 5, care for the household 3 (more together), child care 3 (more together), family relationships 3, relationships in the wider family 3, leisure 2 (more to be together), interests 2 (we would be more sporty). Homework: Up to the next encounter, rehearse the constructive argument 2 times, at least once, to choose from the joy of at least one reason for the joy they both experience. Clients have been given a role in the next meeting to think (each themselves) of how they can worsen and improve the problem by using the Ways of Worsening and Pathways to Improve.

The Importance of Technique: We have chosen this technique to encourage clients to understand their own problem-solving issues and to prevent recurrence of difficulties (Zakouřilová, 2014:136). Ways to improve, meaning of technique: the client is aware of the possibility of positively changing the current problematic situation.

5th and 6th meeting did not take place, the clients have an ill child. In the form of an email, they explained and informed the social worker of how they were doing it. Tasks have been partially accomplished. The Technique of Paths to Worsening, Ways to Improve - they realized they *"have the power to avoid conflict"*, *"positively influenced our actions"* - the client wrote in the email. According to Miss T.V. Technique "How I did" showed them where they have reserves.

They have been given the task of continuing constructive struggle training, enjoying the joy, doing more of what improves the situation and avoiding what harms them.

The social worker sent a new role to her by e-mail. The "Personal Inventory" technique (for everyone separately) needs to be developed and brought to the next meeting.

7th and 8th meeting, interpreting the results of the last meeting: they know the principles of phase-constructive arguments and they can use their knowledge in specific situations, understand the



differences and advantages between traditional unconstructive arguments and constructive manner selection. Clients have performed all tasks responsibly. Objectives of specific, special social therapy techniques have been fulfilled.

Table 3: Evaluate the success of the problem solving using the scale (the last meeting)

Type of problems		The intensity of the problem			
Scale 1-4		1 - smallest degree, 4 - the worst intensity of the problem			
		1	2	3	4
Conflicts	Mr. J.M.: 1, Miss T.V.: 1-2				
Dissatisfaction in social relationships	Mr. J.M. 1, Miss T.V.: 1				
Difficulties in role performance	Miss T.V.: 1	Mr. J.M.: 2			
Difficulties in social change		both: 2			
Difficulties in behaviour	both: 1				

Source: Adapted by Milner and O'Byrne (1998)

Catamnesis/Follow up history: After termination of counselling and therapeutic cooperation to solve the problem, the social worker remained in contact with clients by mutual agreement. Client contact with a social worker was made via phone and email. During the first telephone conversation of a social worker with Miss T.V., which was aimed at monitoring the results of cooperation with clients, the social worker learned that clients were not feeling guilty and that they had a good relationship. They are busy because they are working to achieve the goals they set during a counselling meeting. Approximately one year later, a social worker learned from clients that **they had purchased and arranged their own flat to which they had moved. As they planned, they sold the car and the money was invested in their housing and weddings. They are happy together, are not arguing, and work to meet other goals.**

THEORETICAL BASE

The behavioural approach in counselling and sociotherapy

Botek (2017, in Balogová, Žiaková, 2017) states that the behavioural approach is based on behavioural theory, which is perceived as a theory of behaviour. Its founder is John B. Watson, who claimed that will and thought are internal processes that cannot be observed and analysed. The only behaviour is observable and traceable. Other prominent representatives of this theory include Skinner (1976), who is the author of the term operative conditioning. This concept has been explained by the fact that random behaviours tend to be strengthened or diminished by infusing their triggers and consequences. Beck (1967) presented a set of approaches, currently called cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), and perceived as a continuation of a behavioural approach. The premise of CBT is that almost every human behaviour is taught according to the basics of learning. The positive side is that, according to the same principles of learning, it is also possible to change it. CBT focuses primarily on the problem and the factors that help to maintain it. The original sources of this problem are not the primary objective of this theory. CBT assumes that behaviour can be affected by its consequences. Concrete behaviour can be affected by changing the situation before or after a concrete behaviour. CBT analyses the behaviour of Scheme A (trigger) - B (Conviction, Conduct) - C (Consequences). Consequently, behaviour can be changed by changing



the trigger or the consequences (Skinner's operational conditioning). An important condition for achieving the expected change is the rigorous use of strengths, i.e. incentives that can increase or reduce the likelihood of a certain behaviour occurring. Primary (unconditional) strengths are food, water, sleep, sex, air, or the primary needs of a person. Secondary (conditional) boosters are somewhat associated with another boost, and they are gradually becoming the main boosters. In this case, it is a classic conditioning, where social aids often act as a smile, praise, embrace, and others. The boosters may still be positive or negative. It is possible to add a positive element to the environment (reward for appropriate behaviour) or to remove something negative from the environment (if you wash the dishes, you do not have to wash the floor). Another instrument is punishments, which are designed to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour, and are awarded after it is performed. The punishment can be added after inappropriate behaviour or removed after the expected good behaviour. In the context of specialized social counselling, the cognitive-behavioural approach is applied in the case where the goal is to change inappropriate behaviour to what is considered appropriate and desirable. The expected goal can be achieved through a variety of techniques that are either behavioural (e.g. behavioural modification, learning by observation) or cognitive nature (e.g. cognitive restructuring, distraction, etc.).

Behavioural approaches bring several benefits to social workers. Summarizing behavioural approaches are most effective in developing behavioural strategies. Cognitive-behavioural approaches highlight the role of thinking processes, and social workers make it easier to understand the emotional side of behavioural problems (Balogová, 2016).

A task-oriented approach

The task-oriented approach has arisen in the context of social work. This theory is behaviourist and cognitivist. It was based on research into the practice of social work and is addressed specifically to social workers. Balogová (2016) points to the benefits of this approach when assessing the client's life situation. Access can be applied to any psychosocial problem that a user can solve with a concrete help based on their own activity. Tasks are appropriate, with a certain amount of creativity that is customized to clients, so the approach is suitable for almost all clients who can rationally discuss. Clients will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their strengths, needs and, together with the social worker, reach a clear understanding of the problem situation. It's a collaborative style with a focus on action, not on emotions. Tasks attack the problem, not the clients themselves. The use of this approach proved to be particularly effective in solving individual and family problems.

The Task-Oriented Approach is among the Problem-Based Approach categories. It is based on the significant tradition of the psychosocial school developed by Perlman (1957) and Hollis (1964). According to Navrátil and Matoušek (2001, in Matoušek et al., 2013), it has roots in the theory of social learning, general theories of systems, cognitive theories, and models of crisis intervention. The approach could be successful in resolving issues during conflicting social relationships, roles, lack of resources, and governance issues. According to Navrátil (2000, in Matoušek 2007), the role of a social worker is to help the client in deciding what goal he/she wants to accomplish, what he/she wants to do. The client is best able to choose. Ahmad (1990, in Matoušek 2007) argues that this approach is based more on the client's strength than on the analysis of his weaknesses. Success depends on the client's understanding of the help process and the intensity of its participation. Objectives should be specific, meaningful to both the client and the social worker. These are, as Tolson, Reid, and Garvin (1994, in Matoušek 2013:111), "*the final points of cooperation*", which is appropriate to express in quantified parameters. Such formulation contributes to the possibility of verifying at the end of the intervention whether the cooperation objective has been achieved. Payne (1997, in Matoušek 2013) indicates that the tasks are planned and agreed at regular social worker meetings with the client. They should be suitably planned and feasible mainly outside the sessions. At each meeting, an overview of the performance of all previously agreed tasks is performed.



Balogová (2016) states that this approach is predominantly cognitive, although it contains certain behavioural elements. Temporary failures to manage the situation are the target group of the difficulty to which it is predominantly oriented. Problems are defined as unmet needs. Identifies causes of problems as obstacles to decisions (convictions, experimental solutions, emotions, and the social system). Once the obstacles have been removed, the client can make his/her own activity to meet the needs. The approach classifies and clarifies the problem in an original way. By executing the tasks, the objectives can be achieved. A social worker assists the client in choosing a job and preparing it, which empowers the client in an effective way. Timeouts, task analysis (during co-operation) are a source of empowerment, optimistic enthusiasm, and motivation for the client. The analysis of the task and its experimental performance contribute to the quality assessment of the client's life situation. For success, it is important enough time to perform the task.

METHODOLOGICAL BASES

Diagnostic methods and assessment in social counselling and sociotherapy

The cooperation of a social counsellor (social therapist) with the client during the assessment of the life situation is, according to Gabura (2005), a major social work activity. In the context of social work, the term social assessment is more often applied, a social diagnostic is a more common concept of participative diagnostics. The importance of social assessment and participative diagnostics for the client and counsellor (social therapist) is that they help them see the problem formulated in more intimate contexts and can capture the social aspect of the problem. Both activities use different methods, procedures, techniques that are grouped into a dynamic, complex whole.

Observation is a generally applied method of testing and exploring reality. It consists of intentional, planned recording of external (external) expressions, the way it communicates and the level of quality of its personal space. Objects of observation can be motoric expressions, verbal and non-verbal communication, sociability, interpretation of emotions, client environment. Mydlíková, Gabura, Schavel (2002) emphasize that observation in social counselling is effectively used when an adviser verifies his/her observations during a conversation with a client.

The material analysis is another possible source of information about the client. The social counsellor can obtain them from the client's wider environment, from other institutions, or from the client itself (diary, special techniques of sociotherapy). The materials are then analysed by the social counsellor, best in cooperation with the client. The advantage is perhaps the clarification of the wider contexts of the client's problem and the possibility of a more efficient search for optimal solutions.

Non-standardized diagnostics serves to create for clients a picture of their own personality, weak and strong aspects, social roles, and skills. Based on its results, clients and social counsellors (social therapists) discuss with each other about how they can help the client in planning to achieve better performance of specific skills.

Active diagnostics use model situations or real-life situations to help social counsellors and clients learn the necessary information about collaboration, communication; decision-making skills, creativity, solution strategies, etc. The client is given a specific task that can be related to planning or creating a solution to something. This type of diagnosis is most often applied when working with a group, family, and a couple. Clients can gain a more realistic picture of their own skills in practical situations (Balogová, Žiaková, 2017).

Selected methods and techniques in social counselling

The path leading to the goal is called the method (Hartl, Hartl, 2000). The objectives of social counselling can be attained through different counselling methods and divided according to



the goal of social counselling. The technique consists of knowledge-based skills (Barker, 1996). Basically, this is a procedure or a set of procedures that can achieve a specific goal. Basic methods of social counselling include methods of working with information and methods to promote social and personal self-realization through personal growth. Working with information: Information is provided to the client to better target the problem situation, facilitating decision making and finding a solution. It is important that when providing information, the consultant respects the client's ability to receive and process information. Gabura (2005) compares information and consultation. Consultation is more extensive than information, it focuses on the goal and is limited in time. Methods of promoting social and personal self-fulfilment through personal growth include 1. Activation methods (to increase the initiative and intensity of the client's activity) 2. The interview is a meeting of at least two people who communicate with each other because they have a predetermined reason for them. Taking a specific problem is a common reason for social worker and client interviews. Gabura (2005) mentions various kinds of interviews (input, diagnostic, counselling, and therapeutic) to meet this goal. 3. Training - This method is most commonly used in a behavioural approach. The training is based on learning, training, and repetition, and counselling programs use conflicts, effective communication and assertiveness training. The personality of the social counsellor Schavel (2017, in Balogová, Žiaková, 2017) claims that *"the personality of the social counselor is the first, the fundamental and the most important contribution to his own profession"* (Schavel, 2017:126). He further emphasizes that the current social worker is subject to high demands such as non-direct access to the client, emphasis on client initiative and activity, responsibility. The client must be encouraged to be a co-creator of his social and personal growth. The responsibility of the social counsellor to the client is closely related to his responsibility for the development of his/her own personality.

History: Gabura (2013) states that a well-developed social history is a significant source of information and a starting point for a social worker who first assesses the client's current situation, then determines the social diagnosis and contemplates a plan of social measures. There are several types of medical history: 1. Personal history is centred on the client's personality, it contains basic information from the life of the client, in chronological order (identification data, meaningful information for the client about the course of his life, which is the reason for the client's meeting, 2. family history is focused on family members, parenting style, family atmosphere and relationships, the possibilities of privacy and the quality of the housing 3. It is focused on the educational and professional background of the client's educational and professional environment 4. The history of the social environment is a source of information about the client's wider environment (about the school, the workplace, the friends who could be a source of help and support for the client) 5. The history of the problem is the acquisition of the history of the problem, the decisive factors of the emergence and maintenance of the problem situation, judgment seriously 6. health history of the client, in a specific case, from the prenatal period, childbirth, pre-existing childhood illness to the current state of health (Gabura 2013).

Constructive Struggle Training: the technique of constructive quarrel was dealt with by Bach and Wyden (1969, in Gabura 2013). The basis of the constructive argument is that the partners learn to openly dissipate dissatisfaction, negative emotions, critical remarks, but respect the same agreed rules. Consequently, the training focuses on the practice of self-criticism, i.e. the search for own share of the problem. Continuing is a positive partner's award, and finally, the partners reach a certain solution to the problem. Clients initially describe or otherwise demonstrate the destructive conflict that has taken place recently. An example of an argument is scored by each participant in scoring sheets and everyone is discussing differences in the evaluation of specific items. After the discussion, the partners and the consultant are looking for alternatives to another strategy to solve the problem. Once they find new ways to resolve the conflict, they try to re-argue under the new rules. The role of the counsellor is to observe, facilitate, train and motivate clients to change dysfunctional scenarios. Depending on the situation, notify policy partners of the violation.



Encourage them to openly express anger and dissatisfaction, create the conditions for finding new opportunities, and strengthen the tendencies leading to the constructive end of the struggle. Before the beginning of the training itself, the counsellor informs clients of the principles and phases of constructive argument (Kratochvíl, 1980, in Gabura, 2013).

Special techniques of sociotherapy: Zakouřilová (2014) reflects on his own 20-year experience with the use of special techniques during the diagnosis and therapeutic work of a social worker as “very effective and efficient”. She argues for this by providing a better understanding of the client, of creating a socio-therapeutic relationship and of being able to move faster and better to the desired change. It also points to the importance of greater attractiveness and entertainment of the therapeutic process for both the client and the social worker.

Proper use of special techniques is closely linked to good understanding and knowledge of the theory of social therapy. The author thinks and considers it important to emphasize that *“no specific procedure or technique can be effective for every client or family, and not at all in any situation. This is not the only correct and possible approach but a useful offer the social worker can have in his or her tools. The effectiveness of these techniques is related not only to the nature of the difficulties involved but to a number of other contexts but also to the currently ongoing phase of the change process with the client”* (Zakouřilová, 2014:10).

CONCLUSION

The aim of the thesis was to present a socio-therapeutic intervention with a pair of clients who had frequent conflicts. In this context, we can state that we have achieved the goal of the work. We were able to analyze the case in terms of assessing the client's life situation. We focused on identifying key problem areas. We solved problems with clients based on the classification of the problem, we determined the extent of the problem by scaling, and we identified the needs of clients. In the result of the assessment of the client's life situation, the following findings were found: Clients' problems were primarily conflicts, dissatisfaction in social relationships, role-playing problems, social change, and behaviour. In the process of assessing the client's life situation, we chose a Task-Oriented Approach, anamnestic and diagnostic interview methods, diagnostic observations, an analysis of the available documentation for the case, contact with the couple if necessary, and Special Techniques of Social Therapy by Zakouřilová (2014). We have signed a contract with our clients, with a total of eight meetings. To the client, a social worker has created a therapeutic environment where clients, in a partner-confidential relationship environment, were able to define goals according to their needs and problems by common agreement. Then, together with our clients, we designed an effective way to help. We analysed the case from the point of view of the science of social work. Based on the Cognitive-Behavioural Approach, we have focused our clients on the search for irrational elements with a detrimental effect on the survival, behaviour, and behaviour of clients. Consequently, we encouraged clients to find and take a more probable insight into the reality that has brought them and is likely to bring improvements to the situation in the future. Clients were leaders in activity and participation. We analysed the case in terms of social work methods. During eight meetings, we applied social therapy as part of a specialized social counselling with a couple. The first two meetings focused on assessing the client's life situation, setting goals and a helping plan. To achieve the goals, we used the training of a constructive quarrel and special techniques according to Zakouřilová (2014). The purpose of the diagnostic and therapeutic methods was to meet the therapeutic goal. 1. Identify the pairing problem. 2. Activate the social potential of clients: by practicing social and communication skills, by changing the perspective, by finding resources to solve the problem, by replacing the childhood experiences of the client with new experiences. We have tried to extend their competencies and support their active approach to change. We focused on the communication and relationship area, on the



behaviour and social functioning of clients. We can say that we succeeded in meeting the goals we had chosen in cooperation with our clients. Clients have many other goals we've discovered with social therapy techniques. Their performance is long and time-consuming. Achieving these goals could not have been done during the agreed meetings. However, clients have learned the technique of constructive quarrel, improved their communication skills, they manage to prevent crisis situations and rely on resources and their strengths. We expect the risk of problems in the future to be lower. However, given the complexity of the goals set by clients for the future, it continues to persist. For this reason, clients stayed in written contact with the social worker in case they needed the assistance and support again.

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Analysis and Description of Availability and Sources of Social Support in Selected Difficult Situations for Seniors by Type of Their Household in the Czech Republic¹

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The objective of the article is to analyze and describe the availability and sources of social support in selected difficult situations of seniors according to the type of their household. **THEORETICAL BASE:** The theoretical basis of the article is the theory of social support based on the sociological paradigm. **METHODS:** The method of secondary analysis was based on data from the Czech Social Sciences Data Archive called Sociální síť (ISSP, 2001). In our analysis, we answered the research question: “What is the availability and what are the sources of the social support in the selected difficult situations of seniors, according to the type of their household?” **OUTCOMES:** The overall result of our research is that regardless of the type of households, seniors in general do not have sufficient availability of social support from informal sources in selected difficult situations. Another finding is that the closest family members should be the source of the social support for home assistance, financial assistance, and emotional support. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** We assume that in order to ensure adequate availability of social support in difficult situations of seniors, it is necessary to involve social work as one of the possible sources of the social support for them.

Keywords

one-person households, multi-person households, seniors, social support

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INTRODUCTION

In the international literature, some researchers have studied the social support of one-person households of seniors or compare the social support of seniors, depending on the type of their households (Yeh, Lo, 2004; Sok, Yun, 2011; Chen, Hicks, While, 2014; Lorca, Ponce, 2015; Chung, Lee, Kim, 2016; Evans et al., 2017). In the Czech Republic, this type of research is missing. Research on social support of seniors exists, but does not examine whether the type of seniors households affects selected dimensions of social support (Stoller, Earl, 1983; Seeman, Berkman, 1988; Šýkorová, 1996; Jeřábek, 2013; Li, Ji, Chen, 2014; Rittirong, Prasartkul, Rindfuss, 2014; Villegas, Zavala, Guillén, 2014; Mühlpachr, 2017).

According to the Czech Statistical Office (2016b), the population of seniors (from 65 years) has seen the most significant increase in all age groups over the last decades. From 2000 to 2018, the population of seniors has been increased by 5.7% (from 13.8% to current 19.5%). On the other hand, the population of children (under 15 years) experienced a slight decrease of 1.2%. In 2000, the population of children was 16.6% and in 2018 only 15.4%. The population of the people in productive age (16–64 years) has decreased significantly, from 69.6% in 2000 to 65.1% in 2018, a decrease of 4.5%. In terms of demographic prognosis, there will be a higher increase in the population of seniors and decline of the population of children can be expected in the coming decades. In 2030, we could expect the increase in the population of seniors to be 23.9%, in 2050 32.2%, while the population of children will continue to decline. Within the increasing number of seniors in the population, the number of one-person households of seniors is increasing, while the number of seniors living in multi-person households is decreasing.

The purpose of the research was to find out if there is a dependency between the type of households of seniors, and selected dimensions of social support. For the analysis and description of the social support, we chose the sociological paradigm of the social support, where we examined the availability and sources of the social support. In the analysis, the researchers used secondary data from the research Social networks (ISSP, 2001). The research set out to find the answer to the question: “What is the availability and what are the sources of social support in the selected difficult situations of seniors, according to the type of their household?”

SOCIAL SUPPORT

There is no unambiguous definition of social support in the literature. Several authors and their definitions can usefully be mentioned, representing key paradigms in their definition of social support.

In social support studies, the most common paradigms used by authors usually are the sociological paradigm (Šolcová, Kebza, 1999), psychological-medical paradigm (Mareš, 2002; Šolcová, Kebza 1999), and communication-interaction paradigm (Mareš, 2001). The sociological paradigm is based on the study of social exchange theory. Within social exchange theory, social support can be defined as an ongoing resource transfer between social network members (Šolcová, Kebza, 1999). In the psychological-medical paradigm, social support is perceived as one of the factors that moderates the influences of unfavourable life events on the psychological well-being and human health (Šolcová, Kebza, 1999). According to the communication-interaction paradigm, the study of social support is devoted to the process of providing, receiving and using social support, as well as to the peculiarities of the provider and the recipient, which influence social support processes (Mareš, 2001).

We understand social support as a phenomenon that contains the selected dimensions as is described in Table 1.



Table 1: Dimensions of social support

Level of social support	Macro-level
	Mezzo-level
	Micro-level
Availability of social support	Anticipated
	Received
Direction of social support	Provider
	Recipient
Content of social support	Emotional
	Esteem
	Network
	Information
	Tangible
Source of social support	Personal
	Institutional

Source: Šolcová, Kebza, 1999; Mareš, 2001; Mareš, 2002; Mattson, Hall, 2011; edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

According to Šolcová and Kebza (1999), social support is provided in different levels – macro, mezzo and micro. Macro is the level of participation of an individual in the activities of the nearest community. Mezzo level is determined by the range and quality of the structure of the individual's social network. The micro level is defined by the quality of intimate relationships of an individual. Furthermore, Šolcová and Kebza (1999) show the distinction of social support according to what seniors might anticipate, and what they actually receive. Anticipated social support is perceived within a conviction that if it is necessary, help from close relatives will be provided. On the other hand, the received social support represents the actual social support that individuals receive. Anticipated social support reflects the general expectation of an individual, while the received social support is based on the person's experience in a specific situation. The social support direction determines whether social support is provided or received. Mattson, Hall (2011) distinguished five types of social support regarding its content.

1. Emotional support does not solve problems directly but includes the emotional and affective needs of the individual.
2. Esteem support promotes the person's self-confidence and encourages them to act to solve the problem.
3. Network support affirms that individuals are part of a network of social relationships.
4. Information support provides individuals with the necessary information in the decision-making process.
5. Tangible support is the physical support that an individual received, for example in the form of a physician.

Sources of social support can include family, close friends, neighbours, professionals, but also various institutions such as hospitals, insurance companies etc. Authors Šolcová and Kebza (1999) distinguish between personal and institutional social support, depending on whether the person or institution is the source of the social support.

As we already reported research on social support of the seniors exists, but they do not examine whether the type of senior households affects selected dimensions of social support.



Sýkorová (2007) says that ageing is accompanied by the changes that can affect the sources and availability of the help, as it is the modification of informal social networks. In the Czech research, has been found that seniors rely on their family for helping them if necessary (Sýkorová, 2007) and that the family represents a basic supporting institution for the senior (Mühlpachr, 2017).

Research about the sources of the social support usually examine who provides help for the seniors, and then to whom seniors would turn when they need the help, and from whom would they expected the help. Social support is affordable, but seniors are dissatisfied with the help of providers, which can negatively affect their mental and physical health (Rittirong, Prasartkul, Rindfuss, 2014).

The examination of the relationship between the types of the households of the seniors and the availability of social support was the subject of the selected Korean, Chinese and Japanese research (Yeh, Lo, 2004; Sok, Yun, 2011; Chen, Hicks, While, 2014; Chung Lee, Kim, 2016; Evans et al., 2017), and research by authors from Chile (Lorca, Ponce, 2015). The authors Sok, Yun (2011) compared the availability of social support for seniors by type of their household. They found out that the availability of social support from the family is higher for seniors living in multi-person households. Also, research by Chen, Hicks, While (2014) found that seniors in one-person households reported a lower level of social support than seniors living in multi-person households. This research has found that the main source of the social support of seniors in one-person households is their children. The significance of the shared household and geographical closeness was in the study published by Chilean authors Lorca and Ponce (2015), according to which the social support of seniors depends on the geographical closeness of seniors and their children. Children, as the most common source of social support, provide social support at a higher level if they share a household with the senior or are in frequent contact. Korean authors who are involved in the developing of the system of social services for seniors living in one-person households have found that seniors living in one-person households are struggling with a lack of the social support (Chung, Lee, Kim, 2016) compared to other types of households of seniors. Yeh, Lo (2004) says that one-person households of seniors are receiving less social support, both from formal and informal sources of the social support. They say that social support of seniors is the result of the size of their social network and access to individual sources of the social support. Evans et al. (2017) examined the social support of seniors living in one-person households. They examined the social support of the seniors living in one-person households. They found out that the level of social support was associated with geographical closeness and for the seniors living in one-person households the social support was low.

From the findings above, about the availability and sources of social support, we formulated the hypothesis whether the type of household of seniors affects the availability and sources of social support. In our research, we will analyze and describe two dimensions of social support, specifically the anticipated availability of social support in difficult situations from the view of seniors and sources of social support in selected difficult situations (home assistance, financial assistance and emotional support).

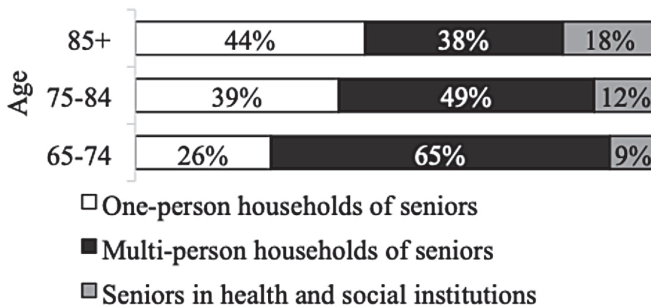
TYPES OF HOUSEHOLDS OF SENIORS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: ONE-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS OF SENIORS AND MULTI-PERSON HOUSEHOLDS OF SENIORS

In this section, we will give a brief description of types of households of seniors in the Czech Republic. A household is defined here as a residence that is shared by one person or more who permanently live together, and who cover the cost of housing together (Czech Statistical Office, 2015). A senior is defined here as a person who has the socio-economic status of being in receipt of old-age pension. According to Czech Statistical Office (2014b) data, there were 1,1 million households of seniors in the Czech Republic in 2011, in which approximately 1,8 million people lived. The vast majority were households of non-working old-age retirees, especially widowed women.



In terms of the typology of the seniors' households, we define the one-person household of seniors and the multi-person household of seniors. These two types of senior households have been selected for further analysis because in terms of selected dimensions in the social support differences may arise, Yeh, Lo (2004).

Graph 1: The proportions of the types of households in age categories



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2014a), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

Graph 1 shows the proportions of the households of seniors in age categories in the Czech Republic. Seniors in the lower age category are more often in multi-person households, meaning that they live in a married or unmarried relationship. With increasing mortality rates in old age, the type of households of seniors is changing. The number of one-person households of seniors is increasing, and the proportion of multi-person households of seniors, especially those living as a couple, is also decreasing (Czech Statistical Office, 2014a).

Similarly to graph 1, which shows the typology of senior households in age categories in the Czech Republic, and also other European countries, display increasing proportions of one-person households of seniors, especially in the age group over 75 (Zueras, Gamundi, 2013). According to Eurostat (2015), the one-person households of seniors in the European Union Member States, are approximately 13%, and almost half of them are women age 85 and higher.

The situation in Asian countries is similar to European countries where the numbers of one-person households of seniors, especially women, are increasing. For example, in Korea, the number of one-person households of seniors increased 30% in six years (from 2006 to 2012), where 87% were women (Sok, Yun, 2011). The numbers of seniors who create one-person household are similarly increasing in China and other Asian countries (Yeh, Lo, 2004; Chen, Hicks, While, 2014; Chung, Lee, Kim, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

In our quantitative research, we chose a secondary analysis method, which uses secondary data for research (Hendl, 2014). For the secondary analysis, we chose the research report called Social networks (ISSP, 2001), which was produced by the Czech Social Sciences Data Archive of the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic. This research was carried out in the Czech Republic between 2001–2003, and included data from 1200 respondents, based upon a three-stage random stratified sample of the population older than 18 years. The technique of data collection was a standardised questionnaire.

In our analysis, we retained the original wording of questions in the Social networks (ISSP, 2001). In the secondary analysis, only those respondents who belong to the old-age pensioner category



were selected. From the total number of 1,200 respondents, we therefore chose 258 respondents for secondary analysis, 21.5% of the total number of 1,200 respondents.

Our selected subset of 258 (100%) respondents was analysed in the SPSS programme. The one-dimensional analysis led to the determination of the basic characteristics of seniors, and frequencies of the responses from seniors, to questions about availability and sources of social support. The subsequent two-dimensional analysis led to the determination of the relationship between the two variables. We were searching for relationships between the types of households of seniors (one-person and multi-person households) and selected dimensions of social support (availability and source) that the seniors, according to their opinion, have available and should be provided in selected difficult situations. Four hypotheses have been established, based in particular on the results of international research from authors who have researched relevant issues to the current research questions concerning the social support of seniors, depending on the type of their households (Yeh, Lo, 2004; Sok, Yun, 2011; Chen, Hicks, While, 2014; Lorca, Ponce, 2015; Chung, Lee, Kim, 2016; Evans et al., 2017). To test these hypotheses, we have chosen the statistical test of Pearson's Chi-squared test at significance level $\alpha = 0,05$ (Hendl, 2014). These are the following hypotheses.

H1	The type of households of seniors affects the anticipated availability of the social support for seniors
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The type of households of seniors was surveyed by modifying two questions of a standardised questionnaire of research undertaken by Social networks (ISSP, 2001) aimed at identifying the socio-economic status and the number of members in the household. We created two categories: "One-person households of seniors" and "Multi-person households of seniors". Respondents who stated that they are old-age pensioners and where the number of household members consists only of one person were included in the one-person households of seniors. Respondents who stated that they are old-age pensioners and where the number of household members consists of more than one person were included in the category of multi-person households of seniors.

The anticipated availability of social support has been identified by the question "Do you feel that there are people who you can ask for help in difficult situations?", based on a standardised questionnaire used in the research undertaken by Social networks (ISSP, 2001). From the responses of seniors, two categories were created: "Exist" and "Not exist". From the responses of the seniors (quite a lot, a lot) was created the category Exist. From the responses of the seniors (no one, very little) was created the category Not exist.

H2	The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of tangible support (home assistance)
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We surveyed the type of households of seniors as in H1.

The source of the social support, in terms of tangible support (home assistance), was identified by the question "Who would you turn to for home assistance?", based on a standardised questionnaire in the research study carried out by Social networks (ISSP, 2001).

H3	The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of tangible support (financial assistance)
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We surveyed the type of households of seniors as in H1.

The source of the social support, in terms of tangible support (financial assistance), was identified by the question "Who would you ask if you needed to borrow a large amount of money from?", again based on a standardised questionnaire of the research of Social networks (ISSP, 2001).



H4	The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of emotional support
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We surveyed the type of households of seniors as in H1.

The source of the social support, in terms of emotional support, was identified by the question “Who would you turn to if you feel mentally ill or depressed?”, based on the standardised questionnaire used in the research of Social networks (ISSP, 2001).

RESULTS OF SECONDARY ANALYSIS

Table 2: Characteristics of the respondents by type of their household

	One-person households of seniors (n=90, 34.9%)		Multi-person households of seniors (n=168, 65.1%)		Total (n=258, 100%)	
	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Gender						
Man	24	9.3%	58	22.5%	82	31.8%
Woman	66	25.6%	110	42.6%	176	68.2%
Age						
55–60	15	5.8%	48	18.6%	63	24.4%
61–75	75	29.1%	120	46.5%	195	75.6%
Marital status						
Married	4	1.6%	125	48.4%	129	50.0%
Widower/Widow	66	25.6%	31	12.0%	97	37.6%
Divorced	17	6.5%	11	4.3%	28	10.8%
Single	3	1.2%	1	0.4%	4	1.6%
Education						
Elementary school	26	10.1%	50	19.4%	76	29.5%
High school	57	22.1%	105	40.7%	162	62.8%
University	7	2.7%	13	5.0%	20	7.7%
Social class						
Lower	41	15.9%	62	24.0%	103	39.9%
Middle	33	12.8%	93	36.0%	126	48.8%
Higher	3	1.2%	6	2.3%	9	3.5%
Did not answer	13	5.0%	7	2.8%	20	7.8%



Type of housing						
Family house	33	12.8%	94	36.4%	127	49.2%
Apartment building	57	22.1%	74	28.7%	131	50.8%
Size of the village						
to 999	15	5.8%	32	12.4%	47	18.2%
1 000 – 9 999	21	8.1%	40	15.5%	61	23.6%
10 – 49 999	26	10.1%	49	19.0%	75	29.1%
50 000 and more	17	6.6%	36	14.0%	53	20.5%
Prague	11	4.3%	11	4.2%	22	8.6%

Source: Social networks (ISSP, 2001), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

A total number of the 258 respondents (100%) were included in the analysis. In terms of the gender selection of respondents, we can affirm that the higher number of women in the population of seniors was also shown in this research (68.2% of women and 31.8% of men). The higher proportion of women in the population of seniors is due to their higher life expectancy. According to the data from the Czech Statistical Office (2016), the expected life expectancy is currently 82 years for women and 76 years for men.

In our research, we understand that a senior is a person who has put themselves in the old-age pensioner category on the basis of socio-economic status. In terms of the age selection, seniors in the age category of 55–60 represent 24.4% of our group, and 75.6% are in the age category of 61–75. The average age of the seniors is in our set 65 years. We can consider our group of respondents as persons of the “third age”, meaning seniors from 60–80 years (Baltes 2009), according to him, the “fourth age”, seniors from 81–100 years old. The same categorization is also used by Stuart-Hamilton (1999), which defines seniors in the third age and fourth age category according to their autonomy. The third age is characterized by active and independent seniors who are completely self-sufficient. The fourth age is characterized by the loss of strength and assistance from another person.

From the analysis, we also found out that 50.0% of the seniors in our set are married, from that is 48.4% from multi-person households. 37.6% of seniors are widowed, from that 25.6% are in one-person households. 10.8% of our set are divorced and 1.6% is single.

In the terms of education, seniors stated high school education in 62.8% of cases, and 29.5% elementary education. University education was stated by 7.7% of the seniors. The seniors most frequently placed themselves in the middle class (48.8%), from this 36.0% of seniors in the category of the multi-person household. In the lower social class, we can find 39.9% of seniors, and from this 15.9% of seniors from the one-person households. From this, we can assume that seniors may be in this category because of the fact that they have only one income. Only 3.5% of the seniors can be found in the higher social class. These findings may be related to research of the economic situation of seniors in the Czech Republic, which shows that 65% of the seniors' households with inadequate income are the average age of 71 year, highest education is elementary, and their income is up to CZK 10,000 (Antošová, 2015).

The type of seniors' housing and the size of the village where seniors live does not show distinct differences in our set. Of the total number of respondents, 50.8% said they live in an apartment building. 49.2% of respondents live in a family house.



H1	The type of households of seniors affects the anticipated availability of the social support for seniors
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First, we were interested in the anticipated availability of social support depending on the type of households of seniors. We have tested H1 statistically. We were investigating whether seniors had someone who could ask for help if they were in need.

Table 3: Do you feel that there are people who you can ask for help in difficult situations?

	One-person households of seniors (n=90)		Multi-person households of seniors (n=168)		Total (n=258)	
	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Exist	18	7.0%	44	17.0%	62	24.0%
Not exist	72	27.9%	124	48.1%	196	76.0%
Total	90	34.9%	168	65.1%	258	100%

Source: Social networks (ISSP, 2001), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

Table 3 shows the absolute and relative frequency of the responses of seniors to the question: “Do you feel that there are people who you can ask for help in difficult situations?” This question has been answered by 258 (100%) respondents, 90 (34.9%) respondents were from the category of one-person households of seniors, and 168 (65.1%) were respondents from the category of multi-person households of seniors. In H1 we performed a statistical test – Pearson’s Chi-squared test. The value of Significance was higher (0.267) than the established significance level (0.05) for this hypothesis and therefore we cannot reject the zero hypothesis. We can however state that there is no statistically significant dependence between the type of households of seniors and their anticipated availability of social support.

From the total number of 258 (100%) seniors, only 62 (24.0%) of them said that they had someone who could ask for help in difficult situations. For the category of one-person households of seniors, only 7.0% of them said that they can turn to someone in difficult situations. This could be seen as a worrying finding. As mentioned above, in our analysis, we preserved the original wording questions of the research carried out by Social networks (ISSP, 2001). We are aware that in relation to this question the interpretation of responses is complicated, given that we do not know what kind of difficult situations the seniors were talking about. This problem could explain why the element of anticipated availability of social support is low.

H2	The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of tangible support (home assistance)
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We also analysed the source of social support for home assistance depending on the type of the households of seniors. Hypothesis H2 it was not possible to test statistically due to the low frequency of variables.



Table 4: Who would you turn to for home assistance?

	One-person households of seniors (n=90)		Multi-person households of seniors (n=168)		Total (n=258)	
	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Anybody	4	1.6%	1	0.3%	5	1.9%
Social services	2	0.7%	3	1.2%	5	1.9%
Close friend	11	4.3%	0	0%	11	4.3%
Neighbour	5	1.9%	0	0%	5	1.9%
Another relative	12	4.7%	8	3.1%	20	7.8%
Children	50	19.4%	33	12.8%	83	32.2%
Spouses	6	2.3%	123	47.7%	129	50.0%
Total	90	34.9%	168	65.1%	258	100%

Source: Social networks (ISSP, 2001), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

The findings did illustrate who the seniors would turn to help when they needed home assistance. Table 4 shows the absolute and relative frequency of the responses of seniors to the question: “Who would you turn to for home assistance?” From a total number of 258 (100%) respondents, 90 (34.9%) respondents were from the one-person households of seniors, and 168 (65.1%) respondents were from the category of multi-person households of seniors. Seniors from both types of households responded that they would turn to their children when they need home assistance (32.2%). However, seniors who have multi-person households most often would turn to husband or wife in home assistance (47.7%). According to the views of seniors from both types of households, home assistance should be provided by family members (90.0%), with only 26.4% of seniors in one-person households assuming that the home assistance would be provided by their children or other relatives. As far as the findings regarding home assistance for multi-person households of seniors are concerned, they correspond to the definition of a family support network (Sýkorová, 1996). According to Sýkorová, the social support sources are available in the family system in the descending order of spouse, children and then other relatives. Similar results from the research on providing the source of the social support for the seniors in case of need of the home assistance are described by Stoller, Earl (1983), which according to them is the husband/wife as main source of help for married seniors. Adult daughters are replacing social support where husband/wife is not available or their assistance is inadequate. These authors add that the amount of the provided social support depends mainly on the functional capacity of the seniors.

H3

The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of tangible support (financial assistance)

In relation to hypothesis H3, it was not possible to test statistically due to the low frequency of the variables.



Table 5: Who would you ask if you needed to borrow a large amount of money?

	One-person households of seniors (n=90)		Multi-person households of seniors (n=168)		Total (n=258)	
	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Anybody	22	8.5%	43	16.7%	65	25.2%
Financial institution	7	2.7%	23	8.9%	30	11.6%
Close friend	3	1.2%	8	3.1%	11	4.3%
Neighbour	1	0.4%	1	0.4%	2	0.8%
Another relative	13	5.0%	18	7.0%	31	12.0%
Children	40	15.5%	45	17.4%	85	32.9%
Spouses	4	1.6%	30	11.6%	34	13.2%
Total	90	34.9%	168	65.1%	258	100%

Source: Social networks (ISSP, 2001), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

The research investigated who the seniors would turn to if they needed to borrow a large amount of money. Table 5 shows the absolute and relative frequency of the senior's responses to the question: "Who would you ask if you needed to borrow a large amount of money from?" From a total number of 258 (100%) respondents, 90 (34.9%) respondents were from one-person households of seniors, and 168 (65.1%) respondents were from the category of multi-person households of seniors. In the dimension of the tangible support related to financial assistance, it can be stated that according to the seniors' views, financial assistance should be provided again for both types of households mainly by personal source of social support from their family members (58.1%). For both types of households, the personal source for financial assistance should most often be provided by the children of seniors (32.9%). However, there are only 1/3 of the seniors from both types of households who suggest that they can turn to ask for financial assistance from their children. This finding is in line with Sýkorová's findings, who states that "*most seniors could not and did not want to ask for financial assistance from their children (they are ashamed of it, didn't want to be the burden for them, had a conflicted or interrupted relationship with their children, or their children have died)*" (Sýkorová, 2014, 49). The answer: "I would not turn to anyone", which was the second most frequent response (25.2%), regardless of the type of their households, could be related to the previously stated Sýkorová (2014) finding, that the seniors are ashamed to ask for financial assistance.

H4	The type of households of seniors affects the source of social support for seniors, in terms of emotional support
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Hypothesis H4 it was not possible to test statistically due to the low frequency of the variables.



Table 6: Who would you turn to if you feel mentally ill or depressed?

	One-person households of seniors (n=90)		Multi-person households of seniors (n=168)		Total (n=258)	
	absolute	relative	absolute	relative	absolute	relative
Anybody	8	3.1%	4	1.5%	12	4.6%
Another person	8	3.1%	10	3.9%	18	7.0%
Close friend	20	7.8%	19	7.3%	39	15.1%
Neighbour	2	0.8%	2	0.8%	4	1.6%
Another relative	13	5.0%	12	4.7%	25	9.7%
Children	36	14.0%	30	11.6%	66	25.6%
Spouses	3	1.1%	91	35.3%	94	36.4%
Total	90	34.9%	168	65.1%	258	100%

Source: Social networks (ISSP, 2001), edited by Kowaliková, Chytil

The research examined the emotional support of seniors, depending on the type of households, and the findings identified who the seniors would most likely turn to if they felt mentally ill or depressed. Table 6 shows the absolute and relative frequency of the senior's responses to the question: "Who would you turn to if you feel mentally ill or depressed?" From a total number 258 (100%) respondents, 90 (34.9%) respondents were from the one-person households of seniors and 168 (65.1%) respondents were from the category of multi-person households of seniors. The seniors who are in the group of multi-person households most often said that if they felt mentally ill or depressed, they would seek help from their wife or husband (35.3%). All seniors, regardless of the type of households, also responded in relation to who they would seek help from if they felt mentally ill or depressed; their children (25.6%); a close friend (15.1%); or other relatives (9.7%). We can state that, according to the seniors' opinion, emotional support should be provided by their family members (71.7%), and by their closest friend (15.1%). The results of our research are in line with the findings of Sýkorová (1996), who states that solving individual emotional problems remains with family members between generations, despite the fact that the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation have significantly changed the scheme of the family system in providing social support.

Our findings are partly consistent with the research by Seeman and Berkman (1988), which showed that if the emotional support of seniors is needed, neither spouse nor children of the seniors are the primary sources of the social support.

In this research, relationship with close friends proved to be important for assuring the emotional support of the seniors. In our research, 14.0% of the seniors from a one-person household state that they would turn for help to their children. 7.8% of the seniors from one-person households reported that if they felt mentally ill or depressed, they will turn for help to their close friend. In multi-person households, 35.3% of seniors would turn for help to husband/wife and 11.6% of the seniors would turn to their children. 7.3% of the seniors reported that if they felt mentally ill or depressed, they would turn for help to a close friend. Also, authors Li, Ji, Chen (2014) say that compared to the family, friends are considered as a suitable source of emotional support. From the seniors' point of view, friends are a spontaneous and reciprocal choice in the case of emotional



support, that positively affects their mental well-being by reducing the feeling of loneliness and depressive moods.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the article is to describe and analyse the availability and sources of the social support of seniors by the type of their households from the secondary analysis, and to answer the research question: "What is the availability and what are the sources of the social support in the selected difficult situations of the seniors, according to the type of their household?"

As a result of our research, we find that seniors, in their opinion, do not have sufficient access to social support from informal sources. Regardless of the type of households, seniors said that they usually do not have anyone who they might be able to turn to when they are in difficult situations. It is not clear what kind of difficult situations the seniors have in mind, but according to their opinion, they do not have anybody to turn for social support in the case of difficult situations. The lack of social support can be seen as a form of social exclusion in the field of social relations as described by Walsh, Scharf, Keating (2016). According to these authors, among seniors, there is an exclusion of social relations due to a lack or unavailability of them.

In the effort to compare research results with those of other researchers in Central and Eastern Europe, we found that research of our type does not exist in Europe. There are only studies about the social support of the seniors without the context of examining the influence of the types of their households (Stoller, Earl, 1983; Seeman, Berkman, 1988; Sýkorová, 1996; Jeřábek, 2013; Li, Ji, Chen, 2014; Rittirong, Prasartkul, Rindfuss, 2014; Villegas, Zavala, Guillén, 2014).

Based on the results of our research, we can say that social support should be provided to seniors, regardless of the type of households, from within the close family. The results of our research coincide with the findings of Mexican research in this area (Villegas, Zavala, Guillén, 2014), according to which the family is the most important element in providing material, financial and personal care in older age. Their study confirmed that the family is the central source of support for seniors, especially in dealing with everyday situations. Moreover, their study found that sharing a senior household with children or with other family members allows reduced housing costs, including the cost of food. Sharing of the household facilitates the provision of social support to seniors, hence enabling the seniors to be prevented from experiencing social exclusion, not only in the social relationship described by Walsh, Scharf, Keating (2016), but also in material and financial matters.

Respondents from the one-person households of seniors most often said they would ask their children for help. As in the research findings of Chen, Hicks, While (2014), we also found in our research that the seniors of one-person households reported their children as the main source of social support. This can be related to the fact that social support for seniors depends on the geographical closeness of their children (Lorca, Ponce, 2015).

Respondents from the multi-person households of seniors most often said they would ask their husband or wife for help. The second most frequent answer in this category was that they would ask their children for help. Only with tangible support related to financial assistance was it found that seniors, regardless of the type of households they live in, would not ask for help from anyone. In our research, in all selected dimensions of social support, the categories of the neighbour and other person as a source of social support were represented in the lowest frequency.

The Hierarchical compensatory model, the Convoy model, and the Task specificity model can be used to explain to whom seniors would turn to in difficult situations (home assistance, financial assistance and emotional support) according to the authors Li, Ji, Chen (2014). According to the Hierarchical compensatory model, seniors are looking for sources of social support based on their personal preference to another person rather than the type of assistance currently required. If the



preferred sources of support are missing or inadequate, they are replaced by the preferred sources of support below. According to the Convoy model, the availability of social support is ensured when people are in more stable bonds and relationship with loved ones (spouse, children). The lack of social support occurs when the seniors don't have a stable relationship (friends, neighbours). In contrast to the Hierarchical compensatory model and the Convoy model, according to the Task Specificity model it is impossible to provide social support for seniors in difficult situations from surrogate sources and if possible then only partially.

Also, in relation to the formal assistance system, social services and financial institutions, were not often chosen by seniors regardless of the type of households, as a usual source of social support. Our research shows that according to the seniors, are social services not considered as a suitable source of social support for home assistance, financial assistance and emotional support. If the seniors in the Czech Republic need help, they will turn for help from their families. This finding is in line with the previous studies conducted in the Czech Republic (Vidovičová, Rabušic, 2003; Jeřábek, 2013; Mühlpachr, 2017). Where family is completely absent, unable or unwilling to provide support for seniors, then it is the moment for social services to step in (Mühlpachr, 2017). Authors Ribeiro, Araújo, Teixeira et al. (2016) found out that the main reasons that lead seniors to the need for social services are the deterioration of health conditions and the fact that the seniors live alone. As another frequent reason, these researchers have stated the problems of the family carers arising as a result of long-term care for the seniors. Among the problems of family carers are the distance between family members and the seniors, the inability of family carers to perform the assistance that is needed, the conflicting relationships between family carers and the seniors, and the psychological and emotional effort of family carers. Villegas, Zavala, Guillén (2014) writes that both formal and informal sources of social support are the most important mechanisms in easing the financial and health problems of seniors.

In the Czech Republic, there are ambulance and field social services for the target group of the seniors who live in their home environment (Act, 2006), regardless of whether they are one-person or multiple-person households. Research conducted in the Czech Republic found that the use of ambulance and field services is not preferred by both family carers and seniors (Vidovičová, Rabušic, 2003). Small interest in the use of ambulance and field services may be related to the fact that these types of social services are not yet used for solving the problems of seniors (Malíková, 2011) or are financially unavailable for the seniors (Mošová, Pulkertová, Chytil, 2018). According to Kubalčíková and Havlíková (2016), the availability of care for the seniors in the home environment decreases despite the increasing number of seniors in the population and the political preference of deinstitutionalization. In addition, social services that should provide care for the seniors in a home environment are not responding to the growing needs of the seniors or the needs of their informal carers. Furthermore, Kubalčíková and Havlíková (2016) state that the process of deinstitutionalization is replaced by the concept of marketization meaning that seniors are excluded from the public sector of social services, and their needs are provided by profitable providers. Kubalčíková et al. (2017) draw attention to the negative consequences of the process of marketization care for the seniors, which is closely connected to deinstitutionalization. One of the possible negative consequences of marketization care for seniors is the emergence of social services without registration with low quality of care, poor working conditions of carers, and lack of control quality in social services. (Kubalčíková, Havlíková, 2016).

In the Czech Republic, there are no social services that would essentially provide any kind of assistance to seniors who live in a one-person household. The results of some foreign researchers react to the growing number of one-person households of seniors and provide for these seniors' preventive programs and support systems to improve the quality of their lives (Kwon, 2013; Chung, Lee, Kim, 2016). Some preventive programs and support systems may become an inspiration for the Czech social work with the seniors.

Despite the fact that it was not possible statistically test the dependence on the source of the social support in relation to the type of the household of seniors, it appears that the source of



social support in the case of home assistance, financial assistance, and emotional support should be provided by the closest members of their families.⁴ Li, Ji, Chen (2014) state that intimate relationships are often created in the family, and therefore family members are the first choice of seniors to seek help in difficult situations.

In the case of home assistance, 26.4% ($n = 34.9\%$) of seniors living in the one-person households expect help from the closest family members. Seniors in multi-person households expect to be able to turn to help from the closest family members at 63.6% ($n = 65.1\%$).

In the case of financial assistance, 22.1% ($n = 34.9\%$) of seniors living in one-person households expect to receive help from their closest family members. 36% ($n = 65.1\%$) of seniors living in multi-person households assumed that they could contact the closest family members in case of financial difficulties.

In the case of emotional support, only 20.1% ($n = 34.9\%$) of seniors living in one-person households expect to be able to turn to the closest family members, whereas 51.6% ($n = 65.1\%$) of seniors living in the multi-person households expect to turn to their closest members of family in the case of emotional support.

Seniors in one-person households think that in case of difficult situations they have less availability to sources of social support. For seniors in one-person households, it has also been shown that in tangible support (home assistance, financial assistance), and emotional support, their personal sources are limited because social support is not available from a spouse or a partner. This finding may be related to the explanation given by Yeh, Lo (2004), according to which type of the household influences the perceived social support of seniors. Yeh, Lo (2004) found that the level of social support available to seniors in one-person households is low in their opinion. The authors Sok and Yun (2011), who compared the social support of seniors by type of household, found that seniors in one-person households reported a lower level of available social support. This finding is consistent with the results of this article's currently reported research findings about the lower availability of anticipated social support for seniors in one-person households. According to García-Faroldi (2015), intimate relationships (family and friends) are the main source of social support, while spouse or partner play an important role in providing various kinds of assistance.

From the results of our research, it is clear that seniors, regardless of the type of households, anticipate social support in selected difficult situations from sources based within their close family. This finding can be interpreted with obligation theory. According to obligation theory, the provision of care and social support to the seniors by their children is based on the cultural and moral values of their society. For further understanding of this finding, it is also possible to apply elements of attachment theory. According to the attachment theory, the children feel strong emotional bonds to their parents, and these bonds provide social support. To then interpret this finding further, it is also possible to apply equity theory, according to which the parents take care of their children until they need the help, and if the parents need the help in the old age, the children will provide it in return (Dudová, 2015).

Dudová (2015) states that the Czech Republic is among few European countries with the highest percentage of informal care for the seniors. Providing care for seniors in the Czech Republic as one of the dimensions of social support is exclusively understood as the responsibility of the family. In today's society is a belief that formal care for the seniors should be used only when family members are missing or unable to provide care for the seniors. According to Plasová and Kubalčíková (2017), family members want to take care of their closest ones, but they have limited sources and ability to guarantee care. The institutional system of assistance is inadequate and most seniors in the Czech Republic live in a one-person household or share a household with other family members (see graph 1). As a result of the liberalization of the lifestyles of young people, there are currently unconventional forms of families who in many aspects cannot fulfil

⁴ The closest family members in this analysis are: spouses, children and another relative.



the functional care in relation to the seniors (Mühlpachr, 2017). As stated by Krhutová (2013), the possibility of seniors to stay at home does not depend only on the possibilities of the family but also on the possibilities of other sources of social support. At the same time, Nešporová, Svobodová, Vidovičová (2008) point out that there are still insufficiently developed adequate field social services, and there is also a shortage of short-term institutional social services. Kubalčíková and Havlíková (2015) have the critical view of the available care for the seniors in their home environment. According to these authors, domiciliary service cannot be considered as one of the most widespread field social services for seniors in the Czech Republic as a full-fledged alternative to institutional social services.

The demographic changes and changes in the structure of society may have implications for the anticipated availability of social support for seniors within their close family. The availability of social support for seniors has changed in the roles of and expectations on families during the development of society (Keller, 1990). In traditional societies, families were the primary source of social support in old age. Support in difficult situations was traditionally provided for seniors within the immediate family and community. During the changes from the traditional society to a modern society, there was a structural change, which also affected the family's ability to ensure the availability of social support to seniors. One of the principal functions of the traditional family, involving providing social support to the seniors, was gradually replaced by artificially created and specialised formal organizations. The post-industrial society brought the change of structure of the family again. *"The family often crumbles and turns from a solid point of generation cohabitation to a relatively unstable space"* (Keller, 2011:127). According to Beck (2004), the family is taken out of traditional values and networks of family cohabitation, and hence the availability of social support from personal sources becomes unrealistic. The findings of the author's research presented in this article support those of Dudová (2015), who sees the problem of the availability of social support for seniors in the context of demographic changes in Czech Republic, in which the availability of social support for seniors provided by family members is slowly reducing. Dudová (2015) is aware that in the context of the changes of the structure of society, and the family as a source of personal social support cannot take over the commitment of providing support for the seniors.

Finally, we outline the limitations of our research. One limit was the limited number of respondents who were included in the secondary analysis by the criterion of being an old-age pensioner. Due to the low frequencies of variables, it was not possible to do statistical tests in all hypotheses, which we consider to be the second limitation of this analysis. In our research, four hypotheses were determined, one which was statistically tested by Pearson's Chi-squared test and could not be reject. The other three hypotheses could not be statistically tested due to the low-frequency of variables. It should be taken into consideration that the data collection was conducted between years 2001 and 2003 and the results of this research are not up to date; however these are the only available data. In our opinion, it would be valuable to repeat the 2001–2003 research to compare the development of the phenomenon of availability and the source of social support for seniors over time. The resulting conclusions, based on the secondary analysis of the research Social networks (ISSP, 2001), may be the impulse for further research in this area.

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Attitudes of the Czech Public Towards International Adoption of Minors

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The authors focused on the attitudes of the Czech public towards the international adoption of minors from and into the Czech Republic. **THEORETICAL BASE:** 500 children aged from 1 to 9 were adopted internationally since 2000 according to the Czech Office for International Legal Protection of Children. **METHODS:** The research was based on a quantitative methodological approach using explorational methods of questioning. The representative research sample involved the Czech adult population ($N = 1.050$). Quota selection was realized according to sex, age, education, and place of residence. **OUTCOMES:** The results suggest that respondents largely do not support the international adoption of minors from the Czech Republic ($M = 6.7$, $SD = 2.89$) and into the Czech Republic ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 2.84$). A strong positive correlation was found between support of international adoption from and into the Czech Republic ($r_{rho} = .70$, $p < .001$, $r^2 = 49\%$). The level of support for international adoption varied by region of the Czech Republic and type of household. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** Many indications imply the absence of greater awareness among the Czech public about the system of adoption, by which the presumption of the authors concerning so-called white space which should be covered.

Keywords

protection of children, adoption, international adoption, Czech Republic

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INTRODUCTION

Adoption constitutes the so-called highest form of custody of a minor when married partners or individuals take over parental responsibility, in its entirety, of a child who is, so to speak, currently free. By adoption, all previous custodies of a child towards his/her biological family expire, with rights and obligations included. Adoptive parents are listed on the birth certificate of a given child, by which a bond identical with the one in a biological family is created between them and the child. Adoption is the most crucial intervention into a minor's life, mainly regarding his/her future development. In most cases, adoption is an irreversible act which determines the future life path of an individual. Other forms of replacement care are foster care, including guardianship for a limited period of time, guardianship, and custody of a child to a person other than his/her parent. The choice of each of the forms is influenced by many factors (see Chrenková, Cilečková, Hašková, 2015). Compared to the other forms, adoption is the most invasive intervention into a minor's rights. On the other hand, it is important to mention that because adoption creates the same bond between adoptive parents and a child as between a biological family and a child, it is the best in terms of fulfilling the principles of family care, i.e. a life in a natural social environment crucial for the healthy development of a child.

Besides replacement family care, there is also residential care which is realized in orphanages and pedagogical institutions in the Czech Republic. In the scope of transformation of replacement custody, there is more and more emphasis put on replacement family care supporting children's growing up in a natural social environment identical with the one in which their peers grow up. So, we can state that replacement family custody is always preferred over collective custody, or institutional care; however, it is subsidiary in relation to one's original family (see Hrušáková, Králíčková, Westphalová, 2014). In relation to the above, institutional care is being transformed with a focus on its deinstitutionalization. However, opinions on the ongoing reform differ in accordance with individual social participants in the scope of the current process. Standpoints differ among the public (see Vávrová, Vaculíková, Kalenda, 2016), students of helping professions (see Vávrová, Musilová, Polepilová, 2014), and headmasters (see Vávrová, Kroutilová Nováková, 2015) and pedagogues in centres of institutional education (see Hrbáčková, Petr Šafránková, 2016). However, everyone agrees with the fact that the changes being realized are needed. An analogous process of transformation of replacement care for children at risk is taking place in the Slovak Republic, which constituted one unit with the Czech Republic until the end of 2012. In spite of this, the changes in the system in both states face similar problems (see Škoviera, 2015). Regarding the negative impact of institutional education of minors associated with emotional deprivation that has been shown over the long term (see Langmeier, Matějček, 1963; Bowlby, 1969), and also current research reflecting impacts on the future lives of "institutional" children, mainly in the area of autoregulation (see Hrbáčková, Vávrová, 2015; Kroutilová Nováková, Vávrová, 2015), we would expect that the Czech public would support replacement family care in all its forms, including adoption. More controversial standpoints could be expected in the field of international adoption, in which children become citizens of another country. However, the presented topic is not paid enough attention in Czech scientific literature, unlike other forms of replacement care. The issue of adoption tends to be utilized in relation to its legal foundations (see Krístek, 2016) or as a constitutive part of publications focused on replacement family care (see Zezulová, 2012), unlike in other countries where they pay attention directly to the legislative measures related to international adoption (see Shannon et al., 2013), or its history (Conn, 2013). International research (based on data from 23 recipient countries) addressing international adoption trends all over the world was compiled by Selman (2012) who focused on the period from 2004 to 2010, when the estimated global numbers fell from 45,000 to 29,000. Selman points out, for example, the decline in adoptions from China, Russia and Guatemala, or the increase in adoptions from Haiti (after the 2010 earthquake). Trends in international adoption are also pointed out in the



United Nations (2009:xvii) Child Adoption report *Trends and Policies* according to which *Asian and East European countries are the major sources of children adopted through an intercountry procedure. The countries of origin accounting for most international adoptions are China, Guatemala, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. More than half of the children adopted abroad originate in those five countries.* In the context of international adoption, other authors from abroad focus on the social adaptation of the children thus adopted and the related emotional and behavioral problems (see, for example, Barcons-Castel, Fornieles-Deu, Costas-Moragas, 2011) and their functioning in the new family – getting along with parents, interpersonal relationships, and social stress (see, for example, Barcons, Abrines, Brun et al., 2012, 2014). In conclusion, the research mentioned above is important for social work with the target group. International adoption is also dealt with by demographers who see it as a particular type of migration. In connection with this, anthropologists begin to think about a new way of kinship (see, for example, Leinaweaver, 2014). As can be seen from the presented material, international adoption is being studied by a wide range of social scientists.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

On 15th December 1989, the Czech Republic ratified the European Convention on the Adoption of Children admitted in Strasbourg on 24th April 1967, with the exception of article 7 paragraph 1 (*A child may be adopted only if the adopter has attained the minimum age prescribed for the purpose, this age being neither less than 21 nor more than 35 years*). The instrument of ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union on 8th September 2000, and simultaneously, in accordance with article 26, he announced the address of the body which applications can be sent to. Adoption in relation to foreign countries can be, in accordance with the Act on Social and Legal Protection of Children (Section 22 (9) of the Act No. 359/1999 Coll.) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, realized only if the respective regional authority will not manage to facilitate an adoption or foster care for a child within 6 calendar months from his/her registration in the evidence of the homeland territory. In the case of an applicant registered in the evidence, the deadline is 3 years. In such cases, the respective regional authority will make the data from the evidence of a child or the data of an applicant from the Office for Legal International Protection of Children in Brno accessible. The latter mediates adoption in relation to foreign countries. After the transition of the data, the relevant regional authority will make further efforts to assure replacement family care in the child's homeland. The original country is always given priority.

The available information implies that the Office for International Legal Protection *since the implementation of the Convention, i.e. since 2000, has facilitated more than 500 adoptions of children aged from 1 up to 9 years to 11, mostly European, countries. The most common destinations are Denmark, Germany, Sweden, and Italy* (Intercountry adoptions, 2017). The presented data imply that around 30 international adoptions were mediated in the Czech Republic on average per year. According to the Office for International Legal Protection *the second part of the Office's agenda (arranging adoptions from abroad) currently remains behind. The reason for this mainly lies in the facts that establishing cooperation with other states is complicated and other states frequently lack interest. As a consequence, the number of states from which it is possible to adopt is minimal. Another factor comprises the high cost of the process, which often discourages potential applicants. Despite these facts, the Office has recently made substantial efforts to strengthen activities in this area. Currently, it is thus possible to apply for adoption of a child from the Philippines and Bulgaria* (Intercountry adoptions, 2017).

On the other hand, Scandinavian countries, such as Finland, show in their statistics the number of adopted children born abroad, i.e. adoption from abroad. According to the statistics (OSF, 2017), in 2011, 212 children born abroad found new parents in Finland (about 5.5 million inhabitants).



However, it is a fact that the number of adoptions (even the international ones) in Finland has gradually been decreasing since 2013 (there were only 73 adoptions in 2016). *The largest group in the adoptions from abroad to Finland were children born in South Africa (16 children) and the next most adoptions were made from Thailand (14 children) and China (12 children)* (OSF, 2017).

Given the fact that the issue of international adoption, in comparison with other forms of replacement care, is less reflected by the Czech public, we decided to cover the so-called white space and find out how this form of adoption is perceived. The gained results could be interesting for other international cooperation in the field of social legislation of child protection, when according to article 3 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the interest of a child must be a primary aspect in any activity in which involves them. Thus, mediating the adoption as well.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In relation to the discussed issue, we look for an answer to the main research question: *How does the Czech public perceive and support the international adoption of minors?* The presented question is specified by three constitutive research questions (Q1 to Q3), which build on the set research goals. In the following text, we elaborate on these.

To summarize, the aim of the study is to find out the level of public support for the international adoption of minors from and into the Czech Republic. Therefore, three main objectives are being investigated. First, to find out to what extent the international adoption of minors is supported by the Czech population, and what characterizes those who are strongly against it (Q1). Second, to find out the unique contribution of selected variables on the level of public support for the international adoption of minors (Q2). Lastly, to find out the best predictor of public support for the international adoption of minors from and into the Czech Republic (Q3).

The presented survey, including selected items developed by the author, was part of a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) with random data collection implemented in Autumn 2016. The survey included socio-demographic variables (see Table 1), as well as specific research items of the interval nature. More specifically, respondents answered the question concerning the support for international adoption of minors from and into the Czech Republic (CR) on an eleven-point Likert's scale ranging from 0 (*strongly support*) to 10 (*strongly do not support*), whereby achieving higher levels represents a higher level of non-supportive attitudes.

Participants

The research sample represents a representative sample of the Czech population ($N = 1.040$). A random selection based on quota for gender, age, education, and region of residence (CZSO, 2014) was used. 46.2 years ($SD = 16.83$) is the mean age of the sample ranging from 18 to 89 years. 497 (47.8%) males with an average age of 46.9 years (age ranged from 18 to 85 years, $SD = 17$) and 543 (52.2%) females with an average age of 46 years (age ranged from 18 to 89 years, $SD = 16.72$) were part of the study.

Secondary education either without or with a leaving examination was reached by almost three-quarters (70.5%) of respondents, followed by elementary school (15.5%) and university graduates (14%). 37.4% of respondents lived in a place of residence with up to 4,999 inhabitants, with the most frequent region being South East (15.9%). More than half of respondents (58.7%) lived in an apartment, in a city (62%), and in a household with two or more adults without children (41.2%) followed by 33.6% of respondents living as a family (1 or 2 adults) with children (i.e. up to 18 years of age or students over the age of 18).



Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequency		Socio-demographic characteristics		Frequency	
		N	%			N	%
Gender	Male	497	48	Size of place of residence	up to 4,999	389	37
	Female	543	52		5,000–19,999	190	18
Age	18–29 years	205	20		20,000–99,999	223	21
	30–45 years	319	31		100,000 and up	238	23
	46–60 years	259	25	Housing	Apartment	610	59
	60 and up	257	25		Family house	428	41
Education	Elementary	161	15	Place of residence	City	640	62
	Secondary without leaving examination	370	36		Suburbs	133	13
	Secondary with leaving examination	363	35		Village	267	26
	University	146	14	Household	Single-person household	167	16
	Self-employed	76	7		Two or more adults without children		
Socio economic activity	Employed	574	55		Family (1–2 adults)	349	34
	Unemployed	45	4		with children		
	Pensioned	256	25		3-generation households	19	2
	Maternity leave	30	3		Another type	56	5
	Student	59	6				

Data preparation and statistical analysis

Data cleaning was conducted indicating missing values and multivariate outliers. The Mahalanobis distance measure was used to check influential multivariate outliers in the data set. All outliers were removed for further investigation (Field, 2009). Missing values were handled by the Expectation Maximization technique, the employment of which was justified by a non-significant Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test. The Levene's test results indicated that the variances of the groups were not equal. Moreover, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (K–S test) and the Shapiro–Wilk test were used to verify the normal distribution.

To get a general overview of the variables, descriptive statistics were calculated (Q1). The statistical techniques to compare groups (M–W U test, K–W ANOVA) were applied, followed by the calculation of the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients (Q2). In addition, the significant contribution of the measured variables of the correlation analysis was examined by having them as independent variables in the separate linear regression model (Q3). The Bonferroni correction was used in case of multiple categories. SPSS v. 22 was used for all presented analysis.

FINDINGS

500 children aged from 1 to 9 were adopted internationally since 2000 according to the Czech Office for International Legal Protection of Children (Intercountry adoptions, 2017). Nevertheless, attention has not been paid to the opinion of the Czech adult population on their support for the international adoption of minors from and into the Czech Republic. Therefore, the aim of the present study has been set at the descriptive and relational level.

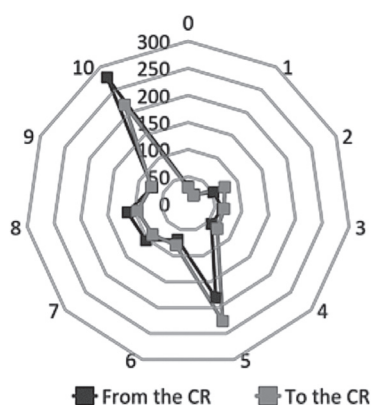


To what extent is international adoption of minors supported by the Czech population, and what characterizes those who are strongly against it (Q1)?

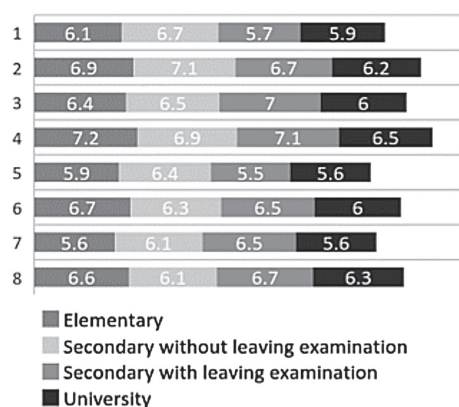
The results suggest that respondents largely do not support international adoption of minors from the Czech Republic ($M = 6.7$, $SD = 2.89$) and into the Czech Republic ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 2.84$). The descriptive statistics showing the frequency of selected individual points on the eleven-point scale of adoption support show that the majority of respondents (27%) strongly do not support international adoption of children from the Czech Republic to foreign countries, while on the other hand, 3% of them strongly support it. Moreover, similar findings were identified in the topic of international adoption from foreign countries to the Czech Republic.

Two main groups of respondents (see Graph 1) stood out compared to others on the eleven-point scale ranging from strongly support (point 0) to strongly do not support (point 10). They represent (1) those who selected the middle point of the seven-point scale, and (2) those who were strongly against both types of adoption. Apart from these two middle and extreme-point trends, respondents on average support international adoption ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 2.57$, $N = 685$). However, this result would not be objective without the two groups mentioned. Average values of international adoption support by age and education can be seen in Table 2.

Graph 1: Absolute values of adoption support on eleven-point scale ($N = 1,040$)



Graph 2: Average values of support of adoption by age and education ($N = 1,040$)



If comparing the frequency of **respondents who are strongly against both types of adoption (those who selected point 10)** then we can find out that respondents significantly more often do not support adoption from the Czech Republic to abroad and vice versa. In other words, there may be a fear on the part of the respondents of what happens to minors outside the republic. This group of respondents represents 144 (52%) employed females with a mean age of 48.2 years ($SD = 17.1$) that reached secondary school without leaving examination education (37%) and who were living as a family (1-2 adults) with their children (51%). Surprisingly, this group was not most often represented by the oldest respondents, but by the age category of 30 to 45 years (31%).

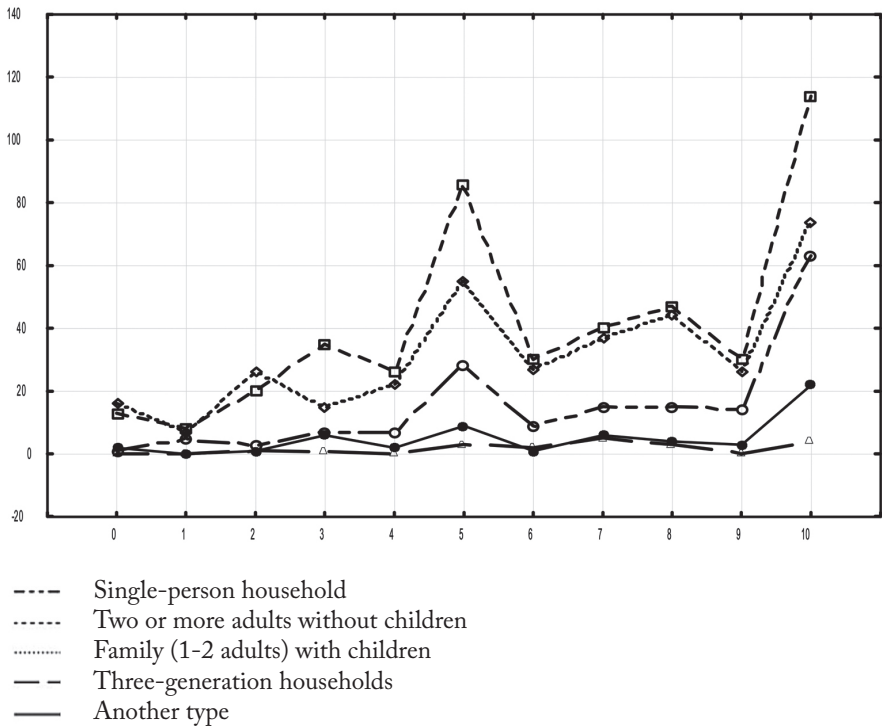
What is the influence of the selected variables on the support for the international adoption of minors (Q2)?

Possible influential variables (age, gender, education, place of residence, region, and type of housing) were tested for whether they make a significant influence on the respondents' decision to support adoption from and to the Czech Republic. **Region of residence** was associated with a difference in support of adoption from the Czech Republic, $\chi^2(7, n = 1,040) = 21.37$, $p < .006$, $\eta^2 = .02$ (see Graph 3). However,



residence in a region helped explain only 2% of the variance in support of international adoption. The **type of household** reached significance, however, with only 2% of the variance explained, $\chi^2(4, n = 1,040) = 18.21, p < .01, \eta^2 = .02$. The remaining tested correlations did not reach statistical significance.

Graph 3: Adoption support from the CR by household



We also wondered whether the support for adoptions was associated with gender and age in a correlation model (see Table 2). The findings showed a strong positive correlation between the two types of support for adoption ($r_{rbo} = .70, p < .001, r^2 = 49\%$). High levels of support for adoption from the Czech Republic were associated with high levels of support for the adoption of minors to the Czech Republic and vice versa. As was expected, respondents scored very similarly on both scales showing similar opinions towards both adoption directions. A very weak positive correlation was found between age and public support of international adoption of minors from the Czech Republic ($r_{rbo} = .08, p < .001, r^2 = .06\%$). However, the relationship between the two variables was too low for meaningful interpretation.

Table 2: Intercorrelations between selected variables

Variable	Values	Gender	Age	From the CR
Gender	1 (male), 2 (female)	1.000		
Age	Age in years	-.029	1.000	
Adaptation from the CR	Mean on 11-point scale	.007	.081**	1.000
Adaptation to the CR	Mean on 11-point scale	-.051	.040	.702**

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).



Linear regression results for support for adoption of minors (Q3)

First, the assumptions of multiple linear regression were checked. The minimum range corresponding to the sample size while considering the number of independent variables reached a satisfactory sample size (Tabachnick, Fidell, 2007:123). Following assumptions such as multicollinearity, singularity, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, independence of residuals and outliers showed no serious violation. Since there was no or very weak correlation between the type of support for adoption, age, and gender, these variables were excluded from the model. The remaining conditions did not support further multiple linear regression analysis.

CONCLUSION

The results of the realized representative research in the Czech adult population ($N = 1.050$) imply that the respondents largely do not support the adoption of minors from foreign countries and to foreign countries. This corresponds with both the Czech legislative system and The Convention on the Rights of the Child, where it is anchored that international adoption is the ultimate solution for a case in which an adoption or foster care is not assured for a child in his/her homeland. It is probable that if the respondents were informed enough about the conditions of international adoption, i.e. they were aware of the fact that it is the ultimate solution after all the other options in the homeland of a child were exhausted, the approval rate would be higher. The presented data implies insufficient awareness of the Czech public concerning the conditions of international adoption.

On a scale of 11 points, the respondents reached an average rate ($M = 6.7$, $SD = 2.89$) of approval of the adoption of children from the Czech Republic to foreign countries, with the reaching of higher values meaning disapproval of the adoption of Czech children to foreign countries and vice versa. The shape of the Gaussian curve of distribution of frequency on the scale (0 to 10) is slightly bevelled in the direction of the right edge of the scale, which implies growing disapproval of adopting children from the Czech Republic to foreign countries. That implies that the Czech population is more cautious in their standpoints in relation to Czech citizens, or minors who could be adopted to foreign countries. However, the presented information does not necessarily mean that the Czech population would be more open towards adoption of children from foreign countries to the Czech Republic, which is proved by results capturing the approval of adoption of children from foreign countries to the Czech Republic ($M = 6.2$, $SD = 2.84$). Even though it is situated one point lower in comparison with the reverse direction (adopting Czech children to foreign countries), it is still soundly in the area of disapproval.

The gained results further imply that most of the respondents (27%) do not support the adoption of Czech children to foreign countries (the extreme value 10), and, conversely, 3% strongly support adoption (the extreme value 0). The mid point value staying out of the decision (the value 5) was used by the second biggest group of the respondents, constituting 17%. As might be expected, there is a mutual correlation of high rate of approval for the adoption of minors from the Czech Republic to foreign countries and vice versa. Research on an identical sample of the Czech population showed that the form of adoption is in third place among preferences of replacement care (see Vávřová, Vaculíková, Kalenda, 2016). From the results of the presented research, we can create a ranking of preferences of the Czech population for replacement care:

1. foster care, with adoption for a limited period of time included - 38%, 402 respondents;
2. entrusting the child to another natural person (other than parents) - 25%, 264 respondents;
3. adoption without specifying whether it is an adoption in the territory of the Czech Republic or an international adoption - 24%. 254 respondents;
4. guardianship with personal care - 5%, 50 respondents;
5. institutional care - 8%, 80 respondents.



The presented ranking implies that the Czech society prefers replacement foster family care over institutional care, which was selected by 8% of the respondents. Adoption (without division into the domestic and the international types) is preferred as a suitable form by almost one fourth of the Czech population. The question that still remains is the awareness of specificities of international adoption, which does not tend to be researched individually. Many indications imply the absence of greater awareness among the Czech public about the system of adoption and related processes of its functioning, by which the presumption of the authors concerning the so-called white space, which should be covered in the future, proved to be true. This is a challenge for Czech social workers. The presented international research shows that international adoption has its place in the globalized world and its trends are changing in time and space. Therefore, it is possible to expect that in the Czech Republic the number of children for whom this country will become a new home will gradually increase. In connection with the Report on Family (Kuchařová, 2017: 23), which includes in «endangered» families also the families with orphans, adopted children and foster families, it will be necessary for social workers to prepare themselves for supporting families receiving children within international adoption, and provide them with adequate support for coping with the social inclusion of children. There is a correlation between an open and prepared society and a safe environment created then for the children adopted in new families. On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that if the system of alternative family care in the Czech Republic is well-working, a decrease of children adopted abroad may be expected. It is a fact that *in the Czech Republic the number of foster carers and children entrusted to foster care more than doubled in the last decade, but long-term foster carers are still lacking* (Kuchařová, 2017:9). The reform of care for children at risk in the Czech Republic, aimed at deinstitutionalisation of institutional care and support for alternative family care, will also intervene in the system of international adoption which is an integral part of it, although often neglected. Therefore, social workers should be trained also in this field, within their education.

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The Mainstreaming of Integration Governance and Social Work in the Local Integration of Immigrants¹

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The aim of the presented paper is to answer the question “How can social work promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants?” **THEORETICAL BASE:** The relevant theoretical concepts of the research questions are conceptualized so that they connect two occasionally linked knowledge bases of migration studies and social work in the final discussion. **METHODS:** The presented paper is a theoretical analysis that emphasizes logical argumentation based on Kuhn’s conception of cumulative science. **OUTCOMES:** Supporting individuals, optimising interactions and influencing power structures are presented as the possibilities of how social work can promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** The mainstreaming of integration governance offers a conceptual framework that is useful for 1) releasing social work practice from the target group perspective and 2) understanding how power structures (e.g. integration policy or social work practice itself) could produce negative phenomena such as institutional or state racism.

Keywords

social work, migration studies, immigrants, local integration, mainstreaming of integration governance

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of immigration and integration of societies obtaining their new members is gradually gaining importance due to the widely spreading and strengthening of globalisation. In the ageing and economically developing Europe, migration is considered one of the answers to undesirable demographic changes and a lacking work force. European countries have started to open up their borders to both highly and low qualified work migrants, which has triggered even more migration through family reunion (i.e. chain migration). Furthermore, geopolitical factors have recently led several countries to wars that have resulted in the need for people to seek asylum in Europe, where they are often coming unprepared to completely different environments and life conditions from what they were accustomed to in their home countries.

In addition to the issue of integrating new members of society, the national states' attitudes to migration have been becoming an important issue. The European Union, national states and political parties have been shattering their views on the nature of the problem of immigration, the definition of immigrants, and appropriate solutions and their practical implementation. The existing system and its professionals who support and control immigrants are under enormous pressure, and their almost every even minor step is under the constant surveillance of disparate media. The immigration and integration of migrants is no longer just a technical problem, as was the case in previous years. Today, it has become a political issue and, as such, has become very confusing. Like almost every political issue, various political interests of different groups (sometimes apparent and sometimes hidden interests of political parties, state and self-governing organisations, non-profit organisations, civic initiatives, etc.) shape the integration of immigrants. Among other things, these groups have divided members of society and their responses to immigration and have destabilized the integration strategies that were institutionalised in the past.

Migration flows and political or civic responses to them, however, mean and require changes in societies to react to the dynamic transformation of composition of the societies. Whether we are considering the migration connected to the global movement of capital or the war conflicts, in either case, measures need to be forged towards integrating the societies to prevent social exclusion, inequality and conflicts. The term integration has become a mantra of policy-makers. The word itself, however, is highly ambiguous, can be adapted by different paradigms and cannot be politically neutral.

In this article, we draw on the current trends identified among academics, practitioners and international and European institutions. We strive to find and use a theoretical concept that would support the building of bridges between the divided actors in the process of immigrant integration. This concept is referred to as the "mainstreaming of integration governance".

Firstly, we draw on the scholarship that identifies the changes in the nature of migration in the age of globalisation that has had a great impact on the complex composition of immigrant populations. Secondly, we acknowledge the paradigm interculturalism as the starting point for the contemporary migration policies. Thirdly, we would like to point out the importance of critical reflection on the identification and reification of the "target groups" in social policy. All three of these crucial aspects of integration policy are reflected in the concept of the mainstreaming of integration governance, a concept that we believe would be useful for many cities and states to adapt. We argue that this concept is especially useful for promoting structural integration, as well as integration into the formal organisations of the social institutions. We presume that equal access to these formal organisations serves as the core of social integration.

As discussed below, besides mainstreaming of integration governance, we also understand social work as an important tool for "bridging" members of society. It is no coincidence that we are considering how social work could promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants.

In short, the aim of this paper is to answer the question "How can social work promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants?" To answer



this question, we will 1) describe how we understand the integration of migrants and associated terms such as superdiversity, interculturalism and local integration, 2) introduce the concept of the mainstreaming of integration governance, 3) and describe social work with immigrants. The discussion then focuses on answering the research question.

From the methodological point-of-view, this article is a theoretical analysis that summarizes the possible links between migration studies and social work. The article draws from relevant Anglo-Saxon literature, peer-reviewed journals, reviewed monographs, encyclopaedias and dictionaries. The main concepts of the research question are conceptualized in the individual chapters. In the creation of this conceptualization, we draw on Kuhn's theory of cumulative science (Kuhn, 1963, and his followers). That is, the created and presented knowledge of this article uses a convention that was reasoned by certain prerequisites from relevant theories. From this point of view, we consider it necessary to define our assumptions, and the ideas that result from them.

MIGRANT INTEGRATION

The word integration at the most general level means the process or state of integration of particular parts into a functional unit. In relation to immigration, we refer to social integration, which Lockwood (1964) defines as "the inclusion of individuals in the system, the creation of relationships between them and their attitudes towards society. It is the result of conscious and motivated interaction and cooperation between individuals and groups."

Integration in relation to migration has become a major issue in recent years not only in social policy, but also in general and political discourse on migration. Although the concept of "integration" is widely used, there is no generally accepted definition. Integration can be considered a "target state" and a "process" that leads to achieving this target state (Castles et al., 2002; Bosswick, Heckmann, 2006; Ager, Strang, 2008). In this paper, we focus on the process of integrating immigrants as a set of targeted and intertwined measures of national and supranational institutions, organisations, programs and projects.

It is not the aim of this text to provide an exhaustive definition of integration. Instead, the text focuses on what Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) call structural integration, that is, the acquisition of civil rights and access to the main institutions of society.

A possible comprehensive view of social structures offers an institutional analysis anchored in structural functionalism and social ecological theory. Sociologists (Berger, Luckmann, 1991 and their followers) assume that societies have created routinely expected ways of meeting the needs or solving the problems of the members of the society through what we refer to as "institutions". These may be named according to the areas of need or the problems to be addressed. The society of people in the Czech Republic thus has institutions of health, safety, work, education, leisure, etc. Within these institutions, we can expect the activities of informal subjects (e.g. friends, various social groups, colleagues and working groups, neighbours), formal organisations (e.g. hospitals, schools, nurseries, police, army, firefighters, employers, various authorities, service providers) and formal entities, whose activities are not necessarily tied to organisations (e.g. the privileged positions of fully-fledged professions such as doctors, notaries, executives, psychotherapists, various consultants). In this paper, we focus only on the structure of formal institutions (i.e. organisations and professional experts independent of organisations), leaving the informal bodies of institutions aside.

We presume that equal access to the formal organisations of social institutions is an essential foundation for structural integration, which is linked to other dimensions of integration (e.g. interaction, culture and identification) (Bosswick, Heckmann, 2006).

We also assume that the concept of the mainstreaming of integration governance can be an effective tool for supporting the structural integration of immigrants. In the following part, we define the theoretical backgrounds that are crucial to the mainstreaming of integration governance.



Who, how and where to integrate?

In the past decades, the thinking about approaches to immigrant integration has changed considerably. Major changes have occurred in three areas: 1) the perception of the population of immigrants as a highly heterogeneous group; 2) understanding the importance of the relationships among various groups in society; and 3) understanding the importance of local governances in the process of setting up integration measures. All these shifts are key starting points for the mainstreaming of integration governance; hence, we will be discussing them in this chapter in more detail.

Superdiversity as a characteristic of contemporary migration

In this text, we use the word immigrant as a composite category that refers to every person who lives for some time in the country to which he or she has immigrated. Division into different categories of immigrants can be seen in the vocabulary used by governance that distinguishes, for example, EU citizens and third-country nationals, different types of residence permits (e.g. work, family reunification, international protection), and qualified (expatriate) and unskilled labour migrants.

The usage of different categories in connection with integration (or the excessive emphasis on their importance) has been questioned considerably over recent decades (e.g. Castles, 2002). The nature of transnational migration has dramatically changed due to factors such as the emergence of supranational entities like the European Union, the globalized market, the discourse of internationalization in various business areas, and the academia that greatly facilitates labour migration. If the period between the 1960s and 1990s was characterized by the immigration of members of large, organised and relatively homogeneous national and ethnic communities for specific purposes (e.g. Germany recruited workers from Turkey; Britain was opened up to the inhabitants of their former colonies; or the Vietnamese trainees coming to no-longer existing Czechoslovakia on the basis of international agreements, etc.), the current migration can be characterized by the movement of extremely heterogeneous populations in terms of country of origin, residence status, social class, language, religion, etc. (Vertovec, 2010). In the Czech Republic, for instance, there are immigrants from about 190 countries (MICR, 2017) with about 160 types of residence permits (MICR, 2018). They come as students, professors, skilled workers in multinational companies, low-skilled workers, family members, and so on. These and other factors, according to Vertovec (2010), constitute the current nature of superdiversity migration. Superdiversity is defined by a dynamic combination of variables such as the country of origin (including many other characteristics – ethnicity, language(s), religion, regional and local identities, cultural values and practices), reasons for migration (labour migration, family reunion, international protection, asylum) and residency status (Vertovec, 2010). These variables, together with the factors related to human and social capital, location (material conditions, presence of other migrants and ethnic minorities) and the access to local authorities, service providers and local residents (Vertovec, 2010), determine the outcomes of integration. For this reason, simply dividing immigrants into categories lacks purpose, especially when designing social policy measures.

The substantial question, therefore, is how to integrate the societies so that social policy measures can respond to a broad spectrum of needs for a possibly large diversity of the population. Because traditional integration paradigms have not taken into account the superdiversity factor, it is now necessary to look for new theoretical frameworks that could encompass the diversifying societies.

Interculturalism as an integration paradigm

Historically (until the 1990s), three approaches to the integration of immigrants existed in Europe, according to Baršová and Barša (2005). Firstly, the *ethnically-exclusive model* (adapted in Germany) did not deal with immigrant rights or cultural differences, and counted on the fact that, based on “non-integration”, the labour migrants would move back sooner or later. Secondly, the *assimilation*



model, which applied in France, provided equal rights for all who assimilated into the existing society. Thirdly, the *pluralistic (multicultural)* model adapted, for instance, in the UK was based on the premise of the existence of ethno-cultural communities that were respected and perceived as a legitimate part of a wider political entity.

Since the 1990s, these different approaches have begun to converge as the disadvantages of each of them have emerged. On the one hand, the emphasis on non-discrimination and respect for human rights, and the internally differentiating societies have eliminated the legitimacy of the assimilation requirement (as assimilation is seen as symbolic violence and there is a loss of a clear answer to the question “assimilation into what?”) (Baršová, Barša, 2005). On the other hand, the communitarian multiculturalism that originally aimed to promote equality in society was rather suspected of dividing it by promoting various national-ethnic and religious identities. At the same time, when taking into account the superdiversity of the population, according to Vertovec (2010), it is no longer possible to divide immigrants into several homogeneous groups (communities) and create specific measures for them. Hence, today we speak about “post-multiculturalism” as the contemporary era of integration approaches (e.g. Vertovec, 2010; Kymlicka, 2010; Bradley, 2013). Post-multiculturalist measures are often referred to as *diversity policies* that deliberately work with the assumption of a high degree of social diversity. They do not try to reduce the diversity, but rather to adapt so they can benefit from it. New approaches should, on the one hand, respect diversity and, on the other, promote the common identity of members of civil society (Baršová, Barša, 2005).

Scholten, Collett, Petrovic (2017) suggest *interculturalism* as a new paradigm suitable for adaptation as a framework for social policies. Interculturalism meets the requirement of respecting both intercultural and inter-individual differences, while supporting the interactions of different groups and creating unity in society as a functional heterogeneous whole. Zapata-Barrero (2015) talks about the intercultural turnover at the level of the European institutions. There are several approaches to interculturalism (e.g. Cattle, 2005; Kymlicka, 2010; Bouchard, 2011; Zapata-Barrero, 2015). According to Zapata-Barrero (2015), however, all of these share a fundamental emphasis on the importance of interactions among people with different backgrounds and the belief that this fact was neglected in previous diversity policies, which mainly focused on safeguarding the cultural rights of immigrant groups. According to Zapata-Barrero (2015), three basic principles of interculturalism can be considered:

- Exchange and promotion of positive interactions – not only at the level of interpersonal contact, but also at the level of fighting stereotypes and discrimination. Developing intercultural competences should serve to transform conflict into meaningful interaction.
- Equality and access to civil rights to ensure respect for and understanding of this group of residents as equal and equally important. This would also serve to reproduce interculturalism.
- The perception of diversity as an asset – redesigning institutions to deliberately incorporate and benefit from diversity, which would promote equal opportunities in sectors such as education, employment, entrepreneurship and public administration (Zapata-Barrero, 2015).

Interculturalism appears to be a paradigm responding to the challenges of a diversifying society that needs a certain level of interconnection. These links are important, on the one hand, at the level of common identities and social cohesion, and, on the other, at the level of interactions taking place in particular physical spaces. For this reason, emphasis has been placed on the local levels of integration governance in recent decades.

Local integration and intercultural cities

Despite the fact that cities have for a long time been considered entities only implementing integration policies created by central governance (Schiller 2015), in the last decades, the idea of



city autonomy in the formulation and implementation of integration policies has been spreading profoundly (Sassen, 1991). As immigration tends to concentrate mainly in medium and large cities where job opportunities are created (Penninx et al., 2004), the interaction space between the host society and immigrants can be found in the very specific contexts of streets, neighbourhoods, schools, jobs, public spaces and local organisations (Penninx, 2009). While immigration as such is still a question of the territorial sovereignty of nation states, the issue of integration is more about the social boundaries (Caponio, Borkert, 2010) and the identities that are being encountered, created and changed within these interacting spaces (Uitermark, Rossi, Van Houtum, 2005). Gebhardt (2015) states that cities are *de facto* guarantors of migrant rights, while national governance remains the domain of “gatekeepers” of policy-making and controlling subsidies. Caglar and Glick-Schiller (2009) criticize methodological nationalism, that is, the idea of “national society” being the main referential frame of integration. This in their view creates a false impression that a nation-state acts as a homogeneous society and space. On the contrary, they draw attention to the uniqueness of the local contexts, which, due to the current and past unequal influence of global capital (neoliberal restructuring), display completely different social and economic conditions for the integration of immigrants, often quite different from the rest of the “national society”.

At the same time, the local governments have the greatest interest in successful integration because they profit from it in that they are in the front line being negatively affected by globalization and its possible negative consequences. Additionally, immediate proximity and hence the potential ability to identify and respond to problems faster, more flexibly and more efficiently than other levels of governance make cities the ideal administrators of integration issues (Penninx et al., 2004).

Therefore, in recent decades, local integration, that is, integration at the urban level has been an important topic. The Milan Declaration and many conferences show a high level of attention of the European institutions towards the processes, practices and policies of local integration. Local solutions and strategies are considered crucial to identifying, developing and spreading new integration models across Europe (Caponio, Borkert, 2010).

Local policies may have varying levels of (in)dependence on national policies. For example, in Spain, the status of “*padrón*” (received by all the inhabitants of the city) made it possible for citizens to be part of health care irrespective of their legal status. In other cities, the “city card” works as an official legal identity that opens access to both public and private services such as housing and a bank account (Gebhardt, 2015). On the other hand, some research (e.g. Emilsson et al., 2015) in recent years has shown a turn to the subordination of local policies to the national governance, in connection with the securitization discourse.

Despite the securitization discourses, an increasing number of cities are concerned with interculturalism as a new approach to integration policies. Platforms such as Eurocities and Intercultural cities are being developed at European and global levels to promote cities in successful intercultural policies. According to Zapata-Barrero (2015), interculturalism appears to be “the most pragmatic answer to the specific interests of cities and plans for the future.”

Intercultural cities are, according to White (2018), cities that intentionally use diversity and anti-discrimination paradigms to facilitate long-term constructive interactions among citizens of different origins. The basis is the recognition of diversity as the characteristic of the urban population, without putting too much emphasis on differences (e.g. through specific policies). On the other hand, the movement of intercultural cities believes that solely celebrating different cultural traditions is not enough. There has to be a deliberate attempt to overcome discrimination and inequality.



MAINSTREAMING OF INTEGRATION GOVERNANCE

The above-mentioned assumptions (i.e. superdiversity, paradigm of interculturalism and local integration) are the basis for the concept of mainstreaming of integration governance. *Mainstreaming* can be seen as a set of measures or a set of rules to coordinate measures of social policy. Initially it has been developing in the context of gender equality, the inclusion of people with disabilities and the protection of the environment (Scholten, Breugel, 2018). In general, mainstreaming means spreading the responsibility and control over a certain area of social policy to various institutions, sectors and levels of governance, contrary to governing the area only through one institution. The concept includes two dimensions: 1) changing social policies from specific to general; and 2) changing the level of governance from centralized to polycentric (Scholten, Collett, Petrovic, 2017).

Specific vs. general measures

Embeddedness of the integration policies in general measures is central to mainstreaming of integration governance. The formulation of specific policies is based on the assumption that the more precisely the measure focuses on the target group, the more reduced the wastage is and the cheaper the achievement of the desired results will be (Sen, 1995). Specific social policies, however, require group identification, labelling and specific treatment, which are fundamentally problematic in relation to social cohesion (De Zwart, 2005). Measures that were originally designed to promote equality in society in fact can promote differences between groups and reify defined groups, thus isolating these groups and reproducing social inequality, which in principle prevents integration. The second problem is the conflict that these measures may cause – the awareness that a certain group is supported can induce the discontent of the rest of the population and reduce public support for redistribution policies.

De Zwart (2005) identifies this phenomenon, which social policy makers face as *the dilemma of recognition*. According to De Zwart (2005), the approaches to (not) target the groups based on nationality, ethnicity and race can be distinguished to three (pure) types: accommodation, denial and replacement.

- *Accommodation* is essentially a multicultural recognition policy that recognizes certain (ethnic) groups and redistribution is based on membership in these groups.
- The strategy of *denial* puts the greatest emphasis on individual rights and does not recognize the existing structure of society. It does not distinguish ethnic communities, nor the barriers their members experience in attempting to integrate, and thus does not forge measures to eliminate them.
- *Replacement* is a compromise between denial and accommodation – membership in certain groups is recognized along with the specific needs and barriers associated with it, but the aim is to construct more inclusive categories. The intention is to avoid social division on the one hand, but to enable support for disadvantaged groups on the other. This can involve policies targeting residents of certain locations, or people with a certain type of need, not pre-defined groups based on race, ethnicity, and so on.

The replacement strategy suits well the objectives of interculturalism; – it allows policies to address issues that may be specific to certain groups, but these groups do not define categories that ultimately divide society or prevent integration. It allows a focus on common values, but sensitizes itself to the perception of social problems, not as based on race or ethnicity but social inequalities. De Zwart's recognition dilemma is an important mechanism for understanding the power of social policies to divide or integrate society. If the aim of social policies is to reconcile society in values, rights, responsibilities and identities, effective measures to achieve this aim should be those that ensure equal access to meeting life needs with regard to diversity. The mainstreaming



of integration governance considers diversity as a matter of the whole society and not just that of a specific group of inhabitants, thus following the paradigm of interculturalism. It promotes equality, inter-ethnic contact, a shared feeling of belonging to a diversified society, and an attempt to avoid the reification of ethical and cultural borders as multiculturalism policies do (Scholten, Collett, Petrovic, 2017).

Polycentric governance

Another aspect of mainstreaming of integration governance is the decentralization of power and responsibility for integration policies and polycentric governance, which include two dimensions: 1) the vertical dimension of distribution to multiple levels – national, regional and local; referred to as multi-level governance; and 2) decentralization on a horizontal level – the division of responsibility among several responsible departments and unions (Scholten, Collett, Petrovic, 2017). In this way, power and responsibility over integration is spread across many stakeholders, levels and individuals.

For the purpose of our text, there is a crucial shift from specific measures for particular groups towards understanding the integration of immigrants as an agenda of formal organisation of social institutions that address the problems and needs of the entire population, thus shifting the level of governance integration to the local level.

This means that routinely expected ways of solving problems are accessible to immigrants in particular locations (such as preparing for future employment, curing a disease, obtaining a safe home); the formal organisations administering social institutions (such as labour offices, schools, hospitals, and municipal housing stock management) are able to deal with immigrants as their clients. The mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants is the process whereby formal organisations in a particular locality of the crystallized social institutions gradually acquire the willingness and ability to independently or routinely provide their services not only to the citizens of the given locality but also to the settled immigrants. This change can occur with the gradual opening of labour offices, schools, social housing, hospitals, etc., whose staff would be able and willing to solve problems in their location of settled immigrants directly with the immigrants, without needing mediators or agents.

However, the specific implementation of this concept involves a number of challenges, many of which deal with the micro level of interaction between immigrants and formal organisations of social institutions. We believe that social work can be an important tool in supporting the implementation of mainstreaming integration governance and can be a useful support for organisations in intercultural contact and alignment with the new agenda.

SOCIAL WORK AS A TOOL OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Before we describe social work as one of the possible tools for the integration of immigrants, it is important to realize that, in this particular text, we use the knowledge of two broad and rarely interconnected theoretical bases: migration studies and social work. The first and second chapter are based on the theoretical and empirical findings of migration studies. The third chapter is based on the theoretical and empirical findings of social work. We believe that our final entwinement in the discussion can bring interesting insights and inspiration that can significantly enhance the approaches of frontline professionals, policy-makers and institutional administrators of integration policies. As we will see in this chapter, social work seeks to establish mutually acceptable relationships among people in society, working with people as human beings regardless of age, gender, race, religion, etc. In the identity of social work, which is encoded with the non-discrimination of individuals and groups, and a basic interest in establishing mutually acceptable relations among people in society, these basic characteristics help create a bridge between social



work and contemporary migration studies. As we will see in the discussion below, social work can be more than just an appropriate tool for promoting the implementation of the mainstreaming of integration governance. Now let us focus on social work.

Social work

In the presented paper, we avoid the concept of social work as a profession, – an exclusive job with high social prestige, power, state protection and income (e.g. Greenwood, 1957; Rossides, 1998; Hodson, Sullivan, 2011). Neither do we follow the concept of social work as a specific profession with specific training and subsequent state protection in the labour market (Weber, 2009; Saks, 2010). We consistently hold the functionalist view of social work as a specific activity of helping professionals (Barber, 1963; Parsons, 1968). More specifically, we follow the socio-ecological perspective (Bartlett, 1970; Washington, Paylor, 1998; Baláz, 2017, 2018), in which social work is a specific supportive or controlling activity of helping professionals (social workers, intercultural workers, mediators, counsellors, etc.) who are trying to solve people's problems or problems with people. The central organising and unifying concept of such social work universally is the concept of person-in-environment (Hare, 2004).

From a socio-ecological perspective, a person and his/her problem are perceived in the context of the social environment in which they live, work, learn or spend leisure time. In this context, it could involve a problem in the social functioning of a particular person (Bartlett, 1970 and her followers). The problem in social functioning can be seen as 1) the inability of a person to meet the expectations of social environment subjects, 2) the disproportionality of the claims of social environment subjects to the person, and 3) the contradictory interactions between the person and the subjects of his/her social environment.

According to Washington and Paylor (1998), the problem of the person in the environment can be seen at three interconnected levels: on the level of problem interactions between an individual or a group and a community; between a citizen and the state; and between subjects in the processes of solidarity and marginalisation. The level of problem relationships between the individual and the community can have the character of (non-)functional relationships of a human being with neighbours, community, co-workers, etc. The level of problem relations between the citizen and the state can be expressed by (non-)fulfilling the statutory obligations to the state, self-governing organisations, or other organisations established by them (organisational units of the state or contributory organisations of regions, towns and municipalities). The level of problem relationships between subjects in processes of solidarity and marginalization refers to a group of problematic interactions among people in society, which is connected with the management of society, the formation of national, collective or individual identity and the fulfilment or suppression of human rights, etc.

With help and support, or under the control of social workers, the functional relationships of individuals or groups with subjects of their social environment are formed at all levels of problem interaction. After the social work assessment of a particular problem, social workers strive for 1) increasing the ability of the individual (group) to meet the expectations of the social environment subjects, 2) negotiating or promoting the adequacy of the expectations of the social environment subjects towards the individual (group), 3) optimising interaction between the individual (group) and the subjects of his/her (its) social environment.

According to the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2014), this social work performance is realized in the context of seeking social development, social cohesion or empowerment. Social workers build on the basic principles of social justice, promotion of human rights, collective responsibility (apparently in the sense of solidarity) and respect for diversity among people. We consider the use of the global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014) to be of great importance because it enables us to apply the socially ecological concept of social work in a wider social framework. Social work as a specific activity of social workers and other helping



professionals should, in terms of the IFSW definition, lead to the social development of societies and the daily fulfilment of human rights for everybody.

Social work and the integration of immigrants

In the first and second chapters, we conceptualised essential concepts related to the integration of immigrants. In short, they are based on the ideas that: some localities and their societies can acquire the nature of superdiversity; the main areas of integration are large and medium-sized cities; the mainstreaming of integration governance could be a suitable instrument of migrant integration. How can the above be linked to social work?

As was written in part 3.1, we understand social work as specific help, support or control of helping professionals (social workers, intercultural workers, mediators, counsellors, etc.) who seek to solve people's problems or problems with people in some of the above-mentioned manners. Such social work is intended to lead to the social development of societies in a given territory, to cohesion among diverse people and to the daily fulfilment of human rights.

The following social work interventions, derived from Payne's social work paradigms (Payne, 2015), are used by social workers for fulfilling their ambitious mission:

- Counselling interventions – assistance, transfer of relevant information, mediation and making resources available to actors of the problem situation, etc.
- Therapeutic interventions – care, therapy and training to secure the psychosocial well-being of a person with a problem, etc.
- Reformatory/activist intervention – empowerment, promoting people's participation with problems, activism and social change, advocacy, etc.

By applying the above-mentioned perspectives of the three interconnected levels of social work, the following forms of counselling, therapeutic, and reform interventions can be implemented and realized in problematic relations between immigrants and social environment subjects. In summary, we can say that these specific social work interventions could contribute to the fulfilment of the ideal process of the local integration of immigrants. Social work interventions targeted at immigrants, subjects in their environment, and relations between immigrants and subjects can harmonize mutual interactions among the institutional actors of immigrant integration in particular locations.

DISCUSSION

In the following section, we answer the main research question: "How can social work promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants?" Before we answer the research question, it is necessary to recall how we understand the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants. It is the process whereby formal organisations in a particular locality of the crystallized social institutions gradually acquire the willingness and ability to independently and routinely provide their services not only to the citizens of the given locality but also to the settled immigrants. The above-described can be seen as a process where, for example, in Brno, Prague or Plzen, the labour offices, schools, hospitals, municipal housing administration, etc. will gradually open up. Their workers (street level administrators – see Lipsky, 2010) will be able and willing to solve the problems of settled immigrants directly with the immigrants. However, they will not be treated as foreigners – people who were defined through their different nationality, race or religion – but as people who need to solve a specific human problem, for instance, with employment, education of children, illness or housing.

Our research question can be paraphrased as a search for ways in which social work can increase the ability and willingness of formal organisations to support the solving of immigrants' problems



(or problems with immigrants) as people's problems (or problems with people). As social workers, we realize this is an issue concerning not only professionals from formal organisations but also the immigrants themselves. Table 1 gives an overview of how social work can promote the mainstreaming of integration governance in the local integration of immigrants. From the point of view of the focus of social work on 1) people with problems (immigrants), 2) subjects of the social environment (professionals of formal organisations) and 3) their mutual interaction, the following counselling, therapeutic and reformatory interventions of social work can be considered.

Table 1: Possibilities how social work can promote the mainstreaming of integration governance

	Counselling interventions	Therapeutic interventions	Reformatory/activist intervention
Increasing the ability of immigrants to meet the expectations of the social environment subjects	Mediating information about the problem; mediating interaction with the partner in interaction (Tatar, 1998; Valtonen, 2008; Allan, 2014; Chang-Muy, Congress, 2015)	Psychological well-being (Espin, 1987; Bhugra et al., 2013; Allan, 2014; Papadopoulos, 2002) Skills training, socio-cultural courses, training of mutually acceptable interactions (Schouler-Ocak et al., 2015)	Influencing self-awareness of immigrants, supporting immigrant participation, activating potentials of immigrants to engage in problem-solving (Papa et al., 2000; Tomlinson, Egan, 2002; Allan, 2014; Steimel, 2017)
Negotiating or promoting the adequacy of the expectations of the social environment subjects towards immigrants	Mediating information about the problem; mediating interaction with the partner in interaction (Truong et al., 2014; Kowal et al., 2013; Maiter, 2009)	Training for civil servants and frontline professionals; training of mutually acceptable interactions (Truong et al., 2014; Kowal et al., 2013; Maiter, 2009)	Influencing power structures; social, political and media actions to promote social change in relation to immigrants (Valtonen, 2008; Chang-Muy, Congress, 2015; Steimel, 2017)
Optimising interaction between immigrants and the subjects of their social environment	Mediation of understanding (interpreting and intercultural communication, etc.) (Valtonen, 2008; Chang-Muy, Congress, 2015)	Intercultural conflict mediation (Gutenbrunner, Wagner, 2016; Pugh, Sulewski, Moreno, 2017)	Choice / change of actors, subjects, ways, spaces and terms of interaction between immigrants and the environment (Valtonen, 2008; Chang-Muy, Congress, 2015)

During the social counselling interventions, social work particularly contributes through the provision of relevant information that helps both immigrants and formal organisation professionals to address the problem. When focusing on interaction, social work seeks for understanding between immigrants and professionals of formal organisations. Social work counselling enables mutual understanding by explaining possible intercultural misunderstandings. An example may be, on the one hand, the support of the immigrant by mediating information on the system of the functioning of formal institutions addressing particular life situations, such as where to obtain a driver's license, apply for maternity leave, register with the Office of Labour, etc. On the other hand, there could be support for formal organisations in understanding the specific situations of immigration, or the support system associated with them (e.g. specifics of residence questions, the possibility of using an interpreter, assistant pedagogue, etc.). Interactions may lead to misunderstandings due to different socio-cultural assumptions. In this case, a social or intercultural worker plays a mediating role, identifies possible misunderstandings and clarifies the facts on the basis of which the misunderstanding occurred.



During therapeutic interventions, social work seeks the psychosocial well-being of the actors of interaction. It offers care, training and preparation for future interactions for both immigrants and professionals. Care for immigrants and professionals consists of specific help that could support their well-being (addressing loss, grief, post-traumatic or burnout syndrome, etc.), and that we understand as important for trouble-free interaction. Immigrants are taught how our support and control systems work; professionals are taught about the cultural specifics of people from other regions of the world; and both are trained in proven ways of interacting with each other. Thus, immigrants and professionals are satisfied, educated and trained. When focusing on interaction, the social work can then offer mediation in conflict situations. Besides the above mentioned case of psychological care, other examples of therapeutic interventions include comprehensive socio-cultural training for immigrants, cultural competence training for professionals, and intercultural conflict mediations.

Finally, **during reformative/activist interventions,** social work influences the power flow between immigrants and the professionals of formal organisations. On the one hand, it supports immigrants in self-awareness, engagement and participation in solving problems (e.g. promoting the knowledge of their rights, elucidating opportunities for political participation, supporting participation in action lobby groups aimed at changing legislation or local practice). On the other hand, social work can use the tactics of its radical branch and design social, political or media actions that prompt workers, organisations, superiors, or politicians to change existing and often discriminatory practices. When focusing on interaction, social work can then use its radical tactics to change actors, subjects, ways, spaces or terms of interaction between immigrants and the professionals of formal organisations. Examples of reformative/activist interventions include influencing existing equity instruments (legal and civic mechanisms facilitating immigrant integration) and advocacy for social change that focuses on the transformation of the local structure of power.

CONCLUSION

Immigration and the subsequent integration of diversified societies are gradually becoming one of the most important subjects of social policy in Europe. Changes in migration related to a globalizing market and geopolitical factors pose a challenge to social policy in responding to an increasingly heterogeneous society and the increasingly complex relationships within it. This article focuses on structural integration, that is, integration into the formal organisations of social institutions (e.g. housing, education, work and health). We think that the mainstreaming of integration governance, supported by social work, can be an appropriate instrument for promoting structural integration, because it is based on the essence of ensuring equal access to these institutions and the empowerment of immigrants in their autonomy. Contrary to shadow support systems or parallel structures (Pohjola, 1991; Gledhill, 1999; Mitchell, 2001; Sweeney, 2014 and others), one of the objectives of the mainstreaming of integration governance is to integrate immigrants into formal organisations of social institutions created for the majority population, and to gradually re-establish these organisations and immigrants in their mutual negotiations.

If we change the research question and ask ourselves how the mainstreaming of integration governance is useful for social work, the following questions will open a vast space for gaining new knowledge in social work: Why is it so hard to change current immigration policies, programs and approaches? Why are integration policies so concentrated and centralized? Why is there a gap between national interests and local intentions? Why is it so complicated to establish satisfactory mutual relations among actors of migrant integration? Answers to these and related questions can provide helping professionals (social workers, intercultural workers, mediators, counsellors, etc.) with fruitful insights on, for example, the following:



- Racial discrimination and other forms of racism (Fekete, 2004; Fekete, Sivanandan, 2009; Fekete, 2018);
- The growth of distrust in race relations (Pantazis, Pemberton, 2009; Ragazzi, 2016; McKendrick, Finch, 2017 and others);
- The absence of collaboration among actors at different levels and sectors of migrant integration (Penninx, 2009; Caglar, Glick-Schiller, 2009; Caponio, Borkert, 2010; Gebhardt, 2015; Zapata-Barrero, 2015 and others).

Each of these possible insights helps us understand the daily performance of social work with immigrants. It may be an understanding of the problem of institutional or state racism, in which social workers, intercultural workers and other helping professionals may inadvertently participate. It may be an understanding of the emergence of social tensions among ethnic groups that social workers, intercultural workers and other helping professionals can incite unintentionally. Alternatively, it may be an understanding of why it is so difficult to establish cooperation among social workers, intercultural workers and other helping professionals, or street-level administrators from different sectors of public administration. We believe that this will become a part of our future discussions – perhaps on the pages of this particular journal.

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Exploring Social Work in Area of Social Services in Slovakia – a Qualitative Study

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: This paper is focused on professional roles that social workers play in the area of social services, with special regards to current developments in Slovakia. **THEORETICAL BASE:** The research builds upon the systems theory assuming that legal or other external conditions for applying distinct roles of social work in the area of social services determine current practice. **METHODS:** Analysis of relevant documents in combination with data obtained from qualitative questionnaires is conducted to explore how the independent experts describe the roles of social work in selected types of social services in Slovakia. **OUTCOMES:** Experts associate social work with enforcement of professionalism and quality in social services. There is a triangle of the most prevalent roles social workers play (should play) in social services, namely social diagnostics, social counselling, and coordination of the actors/mediation of interactions/networking. However, roles of social workers in social services are, for the involved actors, not always clear. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** The research contributes to the discussion of what are the system-based conditions for institutionalization of the social work in area of social services with special emphasis on a need for systematic methodological support of social service providers and their professional staff.

Keywords

social work, social services, roles, domiciliary care, residential care, crisis intervention

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, importance of social public services has been recognised at both national and European levels, due to their role in creating employment, combating social exclusion and contributing to social protection (Pillinger, 2001). The category of social public services (Pillinger, 2001), alternatively referred to as social services of general interest (European Commission,

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2006), covers a wide range of welfare services within a welfare mix of health care, housing services, employment services, social security and social protection, education, and social services. The latter mentioned, social services, covers personal social services and social care. The social services are provided “directly to person” - to individuals, families or communities according to their specific needs, circumstances and authentic sources, contrary to the universal social public services provided to people as to members of the categories. Munday (2007a; 2007b) marks them as personal social services. They are provided by public, non-public and private providers with an aim to facilitate social inclusion and safeguard peoples’ fundamental rights and freedoms. The personal social services comprise assistance for persons facing personal challenges or risks; and/or activities supporting reintegration into society, including support of informal carers; and/or activities to integrate persons with long-term health or disability problems; and/or housing services for disadvantaged citizens or socially less advantaged groups (European Commission, 2006). The personal social services play key role in ensuring people’s access to their social rights, as has been constituted by the framework of the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2017).

Although the personal social services are staffed by personnel of various professional backgrounds (e.g. care workers, social workers, care managers, case managers, home-helpers, therapists, teachers), they are mainly associated with the work of the growing numbers of social workers (Munday, 2007b). Thus, social services are considered to be a traditional area for their professional engagement. This can possibly be due to the common value principles of social work theory (Payne, 2014), core characteristics of the social work profession in accordance with the global definition of social work (IFSW, 2014), and the mission of personal social services in contributing to social protection and social inclusion of individuals, families and/or communities in different types of social risks (European Commission, 2006, 2017). Recognition of the importance of social work in area of social services is increasing in proportion to how the social services are changing their nature from “warm – fed – and – clean – care” towards a comprehensive system to support people in need and improve quality of their lives (Leichsenring, Scoppetta, 2016). More holistic view on the individually shaped users’ wellbeing, as well as their preferences regarding planned and provided care and support, becomes central to the design of social services (Schulmann et al., 2017). This influences expectations addressed to the pivotal professional roles the social workers fulfil in the field of social services that are becoming more and more diversified. In addition to therapeutic interventions focused to promote changes on an individual basis, roles of the social work in social services are increasingly linked to coordination, integration, care management, quality management and networking (Pillinger, 2001; Lloyd, Wait, 2006; Leichsenring, Nies, van der Veen, 2013; Payne, 2014), and also to mediation of interactions between involved actors (Musil, 2017). Green, Ellis (2017) highlight a pivotal position of social work in proactive case management when social workers are expected above all to engage, educate, network, advocate, broker and facilitate the professional and organisational linkages beneficial for the individuals or families. These activities of social work have a potential to contribute substantially to achieving goals of social service organisations addressing long-term stability, development and improvement of the users’ quality of life. And therefore, they should be considered as a legitimate component of the frontline work that social workers do in organisations of social services (Benjamin, Campbell, 2014; Musil, 2017). Role-diversity is a professional way how to interlink changes achieved through the social work interventions on an individual level with its other functions in social services, namely with promoting problem solving in human relationships, supporting social harmony and social development, and promoting social change (IFSW, 2014). Just the diversity of social work functions and roles, in combination with organisational and professional readiness to implement them into micro, mezzo and macro practice becomes, what is a central and on-going challenge for social workers operating in the area of social services (Ashley et al., 2017).



OBJECTIVE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Despite the professional recognition of the diversified functions and roles which social work has in the area of social services, there are some indications that activities of coordination, collaboration, networking or case management can be sometimes undervalued or can be considered as peripheral (Mensing, 2017; Musil, 2017). It may be caused not only by such factors as time, staff or resources (Bishop, Scott, Lee, 2017), but as well as by the professional identity with which social work still struggles (Ashley et al., 2017; Musil, 2017). And, such a situation is unfavourable for all relevant actors of social services – users, providers and their professional staff, including social workers, as well as funders. Therefore, it is important to explore what are roles social workers really fulfil in social services, and how these roles are constructed within respective political, organisational, and professional contexts (Payne, 2014). Knowledge based on such research may be crucial for political and professional debate leading to policy actions which guide purposes and practice of social service agencies in which the social work interventions play (should play) a key role.

The overall objective of the study is to present some selected aspects for profiling the social work in the area of social services in Slovakia with reference to the above mentioned wider international (mainly European) challenges the social work being provided in this interventional system is facing, on one side, and the specific national context on another side.

RESEARCH

For the purpose of the study, it is useful to start with a summary of the national legislative and professional framework that provided the basis for methodological design of the research, interpreting its results. Subsequently, the text will be supplemented by discussion addressed to selected research findings and some social-political implications.

Legislative and professional context of the research

There are some key interconnected pillars on which the social work in area of social services builds upon in Slovakia. *First*, Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, which regulates conditions for provision, funding and evaluation of social services. Comparably to Pillinger's concept of social services (2001) or Munday's personal social services (2007a, 2007b), social services are defined as individualised services delivered to individuals, families and communities during various unfavourable living and social conditions in order to restore or maintain their abilities to effectively deal with their social problems and to get integrated into society. Unfavourable living conditions and social situations refer e.g. to dependency on a care of another person, homelessness, insufficient access to basic living conditions, drug addiction, domestic violence, a need to reconcile work and family/care, or any other reasons leading to a risk of social exclusion of individuals, families and/or communities. Social services are provided by public or non-public providers and their planning, delivering and funding is mainly under the competency of the local and regional self-governments. The national government adopts the national priorities focused on enhancing development of social services, sets up legal rules for applying the quality system, and provides subsidies for selected types of social services.

Second, the valid Act on Social Services stipulates that “social services are provided mainly through the social work, by procedures that correspond to the knowledge of social sciences, and in accordance with progress in the provision of social services” (Section 2 of the Act), regardless of type and form of a provided social service and its target group. This formula enables, at least declaratory, interlinking of legislative and professional backgrounds for performing the social work in the area of social services.

Third, with an aim to enable social workers to take over professional responsibilities in the area of social services (as mentioned above), in 2015 came into effect the Act No. 219/2014 Coll.



on Social Work and Conditions for Performing some Professional Activities in the Area of Social Affairs and Family. The Act sets out the qualification requirements for performing the social work profession in various sectors of social public services, including the sector of personal social services. The mentioned Act, as well as the related Ethical Code of Social Worker and Social Work Assistant of the Slovak Republic (Slovak Chamber of Social Workers and Social Work Assistants, 2015) builds upon the Global definition of the social work (IFSW, 2014) and incentivises professional efforts to fulfil the defined mission of the social work in practice.

Lastly, the national quality initiative started in this decade to harmonise social services in Slovakia with a wider European movement focused on the transformation of social services and their transition from institutional to community-based care (European Experts Group, 2012); as well as on provision of social services of an adequate quality in accordance with the key principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission, 2017).

Despite relatively well-established legislative framework for application of the social work in the area of social services, the situation in Slovakia points to some problematic aspects and contradictory developments. First of all, there is still a lack of common understanding what it really means in the legal formula that social services are provided mainly through the social work. The position of social work in performing social services still remains unclear and vague. Social services and social work are often considered as to be two interchangeable things, and all professional activities performed in social services are regarded as to be “social work”. Employers and professionals of other disciplines operating in social services often do not have any clearer idea about specific roles the social workers play in this intervention area, and they do not know what could expect of them (Musil reported about a comparable situation in Czech Republic, 2017). Professionals employed in social services are often considered to be “social workers”, regardless of their professional backgrounds and tasks they perform in this field (Repková, 2018). In fact, according the valid law only a few professional activities performed in the social services area are explicitly bound to qualification in social work discipline under rules of the professional legislation according to which social work is a professional activity provided by a person with a completed second degree in the social work discipline. According the Act on Social services such qualification is mandatory required “only” for a provision of comprehensive social needs assessment, for specialised social counselling, and for early intervention for a disabled child aged up to seven and to his/her family. Therefore, a majority of professional activities carried out in various types of social services according the law can be provided by staff with other professional backgrounds or degree of education (e.g. care workers, health care professionals, home-helpers, therapists, teachers). As a result, although the share of social workers in social services has been gradually increased over the years, by 2016 it did not exceeded 9% of the total number of employees in residential social care services (Repková, 2018). Majority of staff was represented rather by care workers, health care professionals and health care assistants, or by craft and handling personnel.

The observed discrepancies between the political statements and declarative recognition of a high importance of the social work profession in addressing new challenges in social services, contrasting with its still unclear real position in the respective interventional field, led in 2017 to conducting of a qualitative research focused on examining roles the social workers play in selected types of social services in Slovakia.

Research methodology

The main objective of the qualitative research was to examine roles of the social work profession in selected types of social services, namely in the domiciliary care (mainly for older persons living alone), in the residential care facilities for care-dependent older or disabled persons, as well as in the crisis intervention (e.g. for homeless people, people with insufficient access to basic living conditions, the drug addicted, victims of domestic violence, and people or families in any other risks of social exclusion). The examined types of social services are the most prevalent and refer to the absolute majority of users, as well as providers in Slovakia.



The research was dealt with the issue of exploring roles of social work in area of social services from the perspective of independent experts, and theoretically was grounded in systems theory (Payne, 2014). Social services were considered as an institutionalised system consisting of some interconnected and interdependent elements (legislation, providers, professional staff, users, resources, other actors, and conditions), where the social work/social workers are only one professional element of such system. Mission, roles, and practical tasks of social workers are significantly shaped by other elements of this system (particularly by national legislation) which predetermine what is expected of the social work (expected roles of the social work). And, vice versa, social work interventions (performed roles of the social work) enables fulfilment of a mission, purposes and outcomes of the social services and/or can incentivize their re-shaping in a situation when it is necessary.

The following *research questions* were addressed: How to interpret the legislative formula that social services are predominantly carried out through social work? What do social workers do in the social services (what are their roles)? And, what is the experts' opinion on clarity of the roles the social workers play in social services? And finally, how do, according the experts, social workers contribute to quality of social services?

For the qualitative research purposes different *data sources* were used (Shaw, Holland, 2014). With an aim to examine general conditions for implementing the social work in the studied types of social services, an analysis was carried out with a focus on relevant national legislation, mainly the Act on Social services. Moreover, key strategic documents on social services were studied, above all, the document "National priorities of the development of social services for years 2015-2020" (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (MPSVR SR, 2014)). Finally, documentation of some terminated or running national projects in social services (mainly focusing on domiciliary care, deinstitutionalisation, as well as for supporting of crisis intervention schemes) and related methodical materials focused on quality issues, was under study.

A questionnaire was used to obtain research data aimed at detailed description of roles the social workers play in the examined types of social services. It contained five quite general questions that corresponded with the questions being set up for the whole research. The questionnaire was administered electronically and sent to independent experts for the selected types of social services. A total of 36 experts took part, all outside direct provision of social services, out of which were 27 women and nine men. 17 experts who reported on social work in the domiciliary care held the position of regional coordinators in the national project designed for supporting provision of the domiciliary care service (IA MPSVR SR, 2016a²). A further nine participating experts, regional coordinators involved in the national crisis intervention project (IA MPSVR SR, 2016b³), expressed their professional insight into the social work in the field of crisis intervention. Finally, 10 independent experts from university setting, consulting organisations and think-tanks, as well as of experts from regional and local administration, looked at their views on the social work in the area of residential care services for care-dependent people. The involved experts represented all regions of Slovakia. More than half of them graduated in social work discipline, while the rest of them had a related professional background, especially in pedagogy, human resource management, public administration, sociology, or psychology. Based on the professional backgrounds in combination with their much diversified experience in the area of social services the involved experts were regarded as "other relevant bodies" (Musil, Bareš, Havlíková, 2017), as having the aim to study the roles which the social work plays in the area of social services. Relevant data was collected from June to October 2017.

² The national project "Support of domiciliary care service".

³ The national project "Support of selected types of the crisis intervention social services at community level".



Limitations of the research

According to Payne (2014) there are three interconnected arenas for social construction of the social work in any interventional field, namely the political-social-ideological arena, the agency-professional arena, and the client-social worker arena. With an aim to capture all three named perspectives as a basis for the creation of a comprehensive picture on roles the social work plays in area of social services in Slovakia, a variety of actors should be engaged in the research, predominantly the representatives of policy-makers at different levels (national, regional, local), providers, service users, and/or independent experts. Each type of the expertise that actors bring into the professional debate and knowledge creation may be crucial for building up the theory and identity of social work and for social work practice performed in the interventional field of social services.

The presented qualitative research was built exclusively upon one type of the involved respondents, the independent experts whose views may be considered as only a part of the “overall” definition of the social work in this field. In addition, there have not been, as yet, any other systematic research work focused on the roles of social work in area of social services in Slovakia, what significantly restricted possibilities to compare research findings with other national research data. All these limiting factors predetermined approach to the results interpretation and discussion to them.

Research results

The main research results are organised and presented by the logistics of the addressed research questions. The following text uses a combination of the research data based on the analysis of relevant documents with those originating from the questionnaire, although more detailed attention is paid to the later mentioned data source. Moreover, findings common to all studied types of social services are combined with findings that are specific to each of them. For purposes of an authenticity, some illustrations of the experts’ responses are placed.

How to interpret the legislative formula that social services are predominantly carried out through social work?

With an aim to answer the question, first we studied a legal position of the social work in area of social services in general, and subsequently in the examined types of social services; moreover, we were interested whether public support of the examined types of social services is defined as a national priority and how it is reflected and implemented in the project initiatives aimed at supporting further development of the studied types of social services.

In accordance with the Act on Social services (2008), the above mentioned general legislative formula in which social services are carried out predominantly through social work is applied to all types of social services at equal principle. Moreover, based on analysis of the document focused on actual national priorities in the field of social services (MPSVR SR, 2016), it is possible to derive that the long-term care services (organised both domiciliary and residentially), as well as the services of crisis intervention have gained a status of the national priority for provision of their wider public support (although the crisis intervention acquires such status only gradually as an emerging sector within the social services system). As the analysis further indicated, what makes real difference between the long-term care services and the crisis intervention services from the social work’s point of view, it is rather a scope of additional methodological support provided for organisations of the examined types of social services, and to their staff. During the national project focused on supporting, for the crisis, intervention services (IA MPSVR SR, 2016b), several methodological guidelines, materials on quality issues and other supportive documents, have been elaborated with an aim, among others, to capture status and specificities of the social work in this helping sector. Such intensive methodological support has been not yet developed in the sector of long-term care services, despite more projects initiatives implemented in this field up until now



(IA MPSVR SR, 2013; 2016a⁴). This fact influenced all other research aspects, as will be shown below.

Interpretation of the formula that the social services are predominantly carried out through the social work was subsequently studied on a basis of the introductory question addressed to the experts. They conceived such question as a matter of a general importance of the social work in social services as such. Their various responses, regardless of a type of social service, were integrated by the idea that social work is a way to ensure professionalism and quality in the area of social services. Some illustrations of this integrating thread: *"There is a tendency to narrow residential social services to meet only basic needs of older or disabled persons (e.g. housing, hygiene or nutrition) ... To overcome such a limited approach, it should be a prime task of the social work interventions. Just through the social work, social services can be targeted on social change, adherence of peoples' human rights, respect to their uniqueness, diversity and dignity". "Recipients in crisis interventions don't need help. He/she needs support and respect. This is the basis of social work"*.

In addition, the experts referred to the mission of social services to stipulate the importance of social work in this sector. In this point, some differences depending on type of social service were observed. In terms of the domiciliary care they emphasized its mission to maintain intergenerational solidarity based on a broader societal contract, the following illustrates the opinion: *"When we invest public money, time and human resources for residential care services, there is no reason why it is not possible in a case when families have decided to stay together in difficult times and want to provide care for their dependent members"*.

According to the experts, all stakeholders should be committed to ensuring conditions for elderly people to stay as long as possible in their home environment, as well as the conditions for their dignified life. The social work should be a professional way how to make it possible by supporting all relevant actors, as cared-for persons, their families or other trusted persons, as well as professional care-givers.

In terms of the residential care for care-dependent persons, as an integrated idea, a central focus on active protection of users' human rights, freedoms and dignity, was accentuated. Informants pointed out higher vulnerability of the residential care users to a practice based on institutional culture which is still prevailing in this sector. Therefore, the human-rights approach and deinstitutionalisation should become a new perspective for both users as well as providers, and the social work should contribute principally to make it possible. Illustration of such opinion: *"In social work, the fact that 'older persons are dependent on social service' does not have any impact on their human rights, and on an older person's social status in the society. This is a basis that predetermines all approaches, methods and techniques of how to provide social care"*.

Application of the human-rights approach should be not only a professional commitment of the social workers in long-term care services, but rather the commitment of entire staff of the organisations. With an aim to fulfil such commitment social work provides professionals engaged in long-term care services with an appropriate value framework. As one expert said: *"Every employee should contribute to a social service user's feeling that he/she is a social service's customer and 'that he/she is primarily a human being'. And this is not possible without cooperation of all employees"*.

Finally, the social work in the crisis intervention was integrally understood as a complex – based performance. Informants derived their considerations of the complex-based actions from a complexity of social needs that users of the crisis intervention have, such as what requires engaging of the social workers in all users' living areas (e. g. housing, employment, education and trainings, health care, social protection, support of inclusion into family or community). More precisely, their engagement in revealing and mobilising users' authentic individual, family and community-based sources, and their cooperation with a wide range of various actors. One illustrating opinion:

⁴ The national project "Support of the process of deinstitutionalisation and transformation of the social services' system" as well as the already mentioned national project "Support of domiciliary care service".



“Social work as a practical instrument is looking for solution of a client’s social problem ... Social workers perform a very complex agenda – and it is, what makes the social work just irreplaceable ... They do not send people from door to door, and if a distribution is necessary, then they ensure the client is accepted, or ensure his/her accompaniment”.

These introductory views of the experts on the overall importance of social work in the area of social services, including some nuances referring to the examined types of social services, offered the basis for deeper exploring the distinct (specific) roles the social work plays in this interventional field.

What do social workers do in social services (what are their roles)?

The Act on Social services (2008) does not explicitly formulate what the social workers must do in social services. It rather specifies what professional activities are carried out within single types of social services and, subsequently, what qualification requirements are to be met by those who carry them out. All registered organisations of social services are bound by provision of a basic social counselling, including preliminary assessment of the clients’ social problems, needs and authentic sources to looking for proper solutions, as well as mediation of other professional help where necessary. Performing social work is irreplaceable for a person’s needs assessment for purposes of provision of any type of long-term care service for care-dependent persons; when a specialised social counselling is provided and some tailor-made solutions are planned and carried out; and, when an early intervention and complex-based developmental stimulation of a child with disability up to the age of seven as well as support of his family is provided within activities of the early intervention’s multidisciplinary team. In doing so, providers are called for cooperation with other relevant actors, whereby that are predominantly the social workers who should coordinate such cooperation as a part of social rehabilitation provided in social services. However, a majority of professional activities that are prescribed by law to be carried out in single types of social services can be performed even by the staff not fitting professional requirements for performing the social work profession (e.g. care workers, health care staff, social work assistants).

Due only to the framework-based nature of the legislative rules with regards to the special tasks of the social work in the area of social services, a pivotal topic of the applied questionnaire was focused on a question of what social workers do in the studied types of social services, what are their professional roles. Various role descriptions obtained from the questionnaire were studied, analysed, and based on their inherent similarities they were arranged into arbitrarily set up role categories. Across all studied types of social services, activities of social workers performed within the ‘triangle of roles’ – social diagnostics, social counselling, and coordination/mediation of interactions between actors/networking – have been reported.

Certain differences in the role descriptions observed in the experts’ opinions reflected the specificities in the single types of social services set up by the law, as well as the specificities in the experts’ own interpretations. Combination of social counselling with prevention and advocacy of the rights and protected interests of the clients (in contact with any other third party), has been accentuated as a core position of social work in crisis intervention. Experts emphasized a very broad and comprehensive concept of social work in area of crisis intervention, as: *“Each contact with a person is justifiable ... All activities performed in the sector of crises interventions are related to social work”.*

In domiciliary care the role focused on coordination and mediation of interactions between involved actors has been highlighted. It is not only because of a need to coordinate work of professional care staff and to assign care workers ‘properly’ to persons in care needs. According to the experts, the social workers should be, first of all, as mediators of interactions between all parties of the domiciliary care (cared-for persons, care workers, as well as family members, and other trusted persons) with an aim to harmonise their ideas and preferences about providing a care. One illustrating opinion: *“Social workers know how to assign ‘proper’ care workers to individual persons to*



make home service beneficial for them, and, at the same time, to make it manageable for care workers ... They communicate with clients and their relatives. They respond to clients' and families' requests, develop efforts to find the most appropriate solution for how to provide care in the client's home setting ... A skilled social worker is prepared to work with care professionals and to support them in providing home care service of a high quality".

Emphasis on the importance of the coordination and mediation of interactions between actors, social contact-based work, as an inherent role of the social work profession, has been accentuated by experts in the residential care services for care-dependent persons too. Nevertheless, an administrative role in both domiciliary as well as residential care settings was reported as to be dominant. It comprises all administrative tasks with regards to preparation, duration and termination of the contract-based-relations between users and providers, not exceptionally, tasks related to the employer's operational issues, as illustrated by the opinion: *"Position of a social worker in domiciliary care = an administrative and bureaucratic worker. He/she deals with all administrative issues and related problems... Administrative tasks are very often a barrier in dealing with other tasks based on his/her personal contact with a client in residential care. Only 1-2 social workers out of ten in residential care facilities apply such approaches, methods and techniques which correspond to social work. 80% out of their work time is spent on the administrative tasks, while only 20% is spent on social interventions (in fact, it should be vice versa)".*

Due to the prevailing administrative concept of social work in long-term care services organised either domiciliary or residentially, the experts spontaneously presented their role descriptions as a mix of their both observed (performed) as well as desired (expected) versions. The prevailing practice of social work has been confronted with the desired possibilities for meaningful support of care-dependent people. One illustration: *"In practice, it is common that the social worker is also treated as an administrative worker who deals with the agenda of a client's payment for a service, who keeps evidence of claims, or is responsible for contracting procedures between clients and an agency. When talking about finances, the interventions should be, in cooperation with clients, oriented rather on money management or enhancing their financial literacy".*

The spontaneous emerging of the descriptions mixing both the performed and desired roles of the social work, which especially occurred in opinions of the experts for domiciliary as well as residential long-term care services, has moved research attention towards an issue on clarity of roles social work gain in the area of social services.

According to experts, are the roles of social work in social services clear?

With regards to the issue of clarity, between experts of the studied types of social services some significant differences have been found. All experts of crisis intervention reported that the roles of social work are clear in this sector, although very broad. Clarity of roles is a product of national legislation, rules, and methodological guidelines set up during relevant national projects; from quality standards and other supportive materials elaborated to capture specificities of the crisis intervention services and the position of social work in this sector.

Answers of the experts who reported about the situation in the domiciliary care services were not uniform. A majority of them did not express their explicit opinion on the clarity issue. But, according to one third of the experts, the roles of social work in the domiciliary care are not clear at all, due to uncertainties rooted in the legislation, or due to opinions of some employers in the social work profession: *"Social workers know what their tasks are in domiciliary care. However, their tasks are not clear to most employers. For them, social work is something unknown. Employers do not consider the roles that social workers have as an important factor in providing the domiciliary care services of an appropriate quality".*

Untapped potential of social work in domiciliary care services from the user's perspective described one expert, as follows: *"A care-dependent person does not have any other expectation of the service provider than to choose a care-giver and send to his/her home. But for this reason, a person did not know*



how much he/she would understand, how much he/she would not be afraid of, and more laughs if someone talked to him/her and provided another perspective from the other side”.

Also the experts for residential long-term care services mentioned a weak clarity of the roles that social workers play in this field. Eight out of ten were specifying reasons why it is so: e.g. due to uncertainties coming out of the law, which leads to a practice largely dependent on a discretionary power of management. The experts reported on an intuitive rather than professionally-based approach to arranging position and roles the social workers play in residential care. This is due to the unclear expectations of both managers as well as other professionals regarding the tasks that social workers perform (should perform) in this area. Some employers delegate to the social workers tasks that are, according to some experts, not social work in the true sense of the profession (e.g. a lot of administrative work, not exclusively beyond the sphere of social services). Other employers, especially the public providers who operate in very small municipalities or those that are non-public, do not employ social workers on a regular basis, at all. As a result the social work's potential to support quality of people's lives in long-term care services is tapped only insufficiently. That is why, according to some experts, many residential services are still preserving the character of rather nursing and caring institutions than organisations of social services. As one expert mentioned: *“Out of a total care provided in residential setting 10–15% is covered by social work, the remainder is nursing and hands-on care. Therefore, in reality, it is not about social services facilities, but about nursing care facilities ... Only 30% of social services facilities meet professional requirements of the social work discipline”.*

How do social workers contribute to quality of social services?

Finally, particular attention was paid to a question focused on a contribution of social workers to the quality of provided social services. Inclusion of this topic into the research project was underpinned by the fact that in the last decade in Slovakia the new quality system has started to be introduced into the practice of social service providers. Moreover, conditions for launching the quality evaluation from 2019 are under preparation. However, systematic research work in this field had still been lacking.

Responses of the experts across all studied types of social services have been integrated by the opinion that quality assurance in the provision of social services should be considered as the shared responsibility of all involved actors. In line with this statement, some informants criticized the practice of some employers who transfer major responsibilities in the quality field towards employees, especially social workers, without ensuring all necessary conditions (e.g. in the personal and/or operational area, in opportunities for education focused on the quality issues). On the other hand, experts recognized the exceptional position of social workers in implementing the organisation's policy on quality, as social work is a carrier of quality from its own nature. One illustrating opinion: *“Social workers should be responsible for improving the quality of social services, in particular in terms of interconnecting the individual's needs with opportunities in his/her natural setting. Individual planning, if properly understood and implemented, is the best way to improve the quality and should be given greater importance within the comprehensive provision of the service”.*

According to experts, social workers should be co-founders and co-implementers of a policy on quality at the organisational level from a variety of integrated aspects: (a) as employees who perform their ordinary duties of proper quality; (b) as disseminators and guarantors for application of the approach based on the human rights, which is a basis for the organisational practice of high-quality; c) as experts for the quality issues at the organisational level from both an administrative as well as cognitive aspects. One illustrating opinion on the comprehensive tasks the social workers play in ensuring the quality of social services at the organisational level: *“Social workers should coordinate and manage performing tasks in the quality field ... It is inconceivable to fulfil quality standards with regards to the clients' human rights and freedoms as well as other procedural requirements, without an intensive and active involvement of the social workers. In practise, it is mainly social workers who are charged with those tasks”.*



DISCUSSION

The qualitative research was focused on the initial exploration of roles the social workers play in the three most prevalent types of social services in Slovakia, namely in domiciliary care, residential facilities for care-dependent older or disabled persons, and in crisis intervention. The research was built upon the systems theory, meaning there was an assumption that legal or other external conditions for applying the distinct roles of the social work in the area of social services determine current practice.

The conducted analysis of relevant legislation and other related documents focused on the area of social services showed that the framework conditions for gradual institutionalisation of social work in the interventional field of social services can be, in Slovakia, considered as generally friendly, at least declaratorily. But, there are some factors which strongly influence the current situation which, as indicated by the involved experts, is in general not so favourable. In the discussion, we will focus on some research findings which help for better understanding of those being preliminary obtained from the documents analysis.

The research indicated a common integral idea which passed through all the questionnaire findings – the strong belief of the experts of all examined types of social services that it is predominantly social work that should be a guarantor for the application of a human rights approach in social services, and to take over the position of the bearer of their transformation towards a higher quality. And, it is not exclusively a matter of a presence of the social workers in organisations of social services and of their in situ professional activities that makes it possible. According to the experts, all other professionals operating in such organisations (e.g. health care staff, care workers, teachers, therapists) should work in line with the values and principles of social work. Social work should be attributed to be a certain basic normative and value framework for all professional activities provided in the organisations of social services. That was the experts' interpretation of the legal formula, that social services are mainly carried out through social work, although actually social workers cover only about one tenth of total employees of social service providers.

This finding begs the question: could, for certain reasons, such high expectations from social work, which were expressed in the experts' views, in some way be perceived as being at risk for actors engaged in social services? Hypothetically, rather than on the basis of an extensive research evidence, it could be assumed that enforcement of such universal importance of social work for organising and delivering social services lead to the loss of the specificities of this discipline towards other helping disciplines in the area of social services. There may be a hypothetical risk of "dissolution" of the social work in "overall helping practice" provided in social services, and of wiping out boundaries between social work as a particular professional discipline, and the social services which are the multi-professional and institutionalised system for provision of the complex help and support to people in social needs. Based on long-term research in the Czech context, some authors were critically pointing out that social work and social services are considered as two interchangeable things, that it is unclear what is the specific (distinctive) contribution of social work in different kinds of social services. Traditional expectations are still remaining, that social work in social services means predominantly hands-on help to meet the unmet needs of people in various adverse social situations. Instead, it should be primarily focused on mediation of interactions between actors of social services and coordination their professional inputs addressed to solve social problems of individuals, families and communities (cf. Janebová, Celá, 2016; Musil, 2017; Repková, 2018). However, it is possible to admit that efforts strongly aimed at finding the specificities of social work in the area of social services is a distinctive characteristic mainly for those social services systems (e.g. in the Czech or the Slovak contexts) in which the social work is not yet fully institutionalized (cf. Musil, 2017), and where the normative, professional, as well as practical aspects are not fully harmonized. In addition, such efforts may reflect the still problematic development of a professional identity of social work that does not cease to be a subject of discussion (cf. Ashley et al., 2017).



Three broad role categories of social work were set-out on the basis of the most prevalent experts' descriptions, namely: comprehensive social diagnostics, social counselling, and coordination of actors, alternatively the mediation of interactions between actors and/or networking. These role categories were emerging in all examined types of social services, although with minor specificities with regards to their content or marking, with an aim to be in line with national legislation (e.g. what the long-term care experts described as the application of the human-rights approach, it has been referred to as advocacy and legal protection of people in crisis intervention). In line with the other relevant literature (cf. Pillinger, 2001; Lloyd, Wait, 2006; Leichenring, Nies, van der Veen, 2013; Payne, 2014; Musil, 2017) activities of the coordination, mediation of interactions between actors, and networking were highlighted by the experts. However, if the experts of crisis intervention communicated these roles as being actually performed in social workers' practice (performed roles), experts on long-term care service mentioned such roles more often as something only being desired (desired roles, "should-be-roles"), as in this sector the traditional administrative model of social work still prevails (cf. Kubalčíková, Havlíková, 2015).

Proximity or gaps between the desired and performed roles of social work can be interpreted also in context of the clarity of roles social workers play in social services. On the issue of clarity, some significant differences in opinions of the experts of the respective examined types of social services were found. Although scope of the legal conditions for implementation of social work in different types of social services is currently comparable, the clarity of tasks performed within them was rated as varied. The crisis intervention experts have assessed current roles of the social work as clear, while most experts on the long-term care services organised both at home and residentially have perceived them as unclear. While experts on crisis intervention reported that the existing legislation is a proper anchor for social work in this field, experts on long-term care services considered the existing law as a source of uncertainty for understanding the roles of social work in this sector. This finding is paradoxical as the social services for care-dependent older and/or persons with disabilities have a long-term history in Slovakia and are traditionally treated as a national priority to support their development, while the crisis intervention schemes are only an emerging sector of the social services' system, and only gradually they acquire status of the national priority for supporting them (cf. Repková, 2018).

As the research indicated, the current problem for effective implementation of social work into the area of social services in Slovakia lies not primarily in insufficient or poorly set up legislation. It is shown that it is rather a question of providing an additional systematic methodological support of the organisations and their staff. It can be considered as a way to enforce harmonising of the normative with professional aspects of social work in the area of social services. It can provide help to the involved actors – social workers, their employers (social service organisations), and other professionals operating in the area of social services – to understand the spirit of the existing legal conditions and their potential to enable implementation of social work's roles in the area of social services. Moreover, the systematic methodological support can serve as a "mediator" of various perspectives the involved actors bring into the planning, provision, and evaluation of social services.

CONCLUSIONS AND SOCIAL-POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

If the research indicated on the key importance of the systematic methodological support for social service providers and their professional staff, then that opens the question, how to ensure availability of the provision of such support for all providers of different types of social services on an equal basis. In the Slovakia, mainly external (European) resources have been used for this purpose to date, but this has led to unequal opportunities for providers to obtain such support, as implicitly indicated by the research. Therefore, the strategy of relying predominantly on external



project-based resources and management can be risky for the future. It is important, however, to appreciate that currently it is through European sources that the qualitative aspects of social services at the national level have become gradually aligned with broader European ideas and priorities in this area. On the other hand, in order to ensure professional stability and conditions for further improvements in the area of social services, creating the appropriate conditions for implementation of social work in the area of social services should become a primary matter at the national, regional and local levels.

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Breathing the Hierarchy of Needs Away

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: Needs are at basis of the long-term care response, nevertheless usually used primarily as a technical term, taken for granted. **THEORETICAL BASE:** Needs are a paramount, omnipresent, and key concept in social policy, social work and in health care, containing layers of historical contradictory dispositions, simultaneously establishing 'needs' as a lack, a right, a norm, and a desire. In long-term care the primacy of 'basic', bodily needs is often asserted on the account of 'social' needs, basing this reduction on Maslow's notion of a hierarchy of needs. **METHODS:** We deconstruct the hierarchy by using the example of breathing. **OUTCOMES:** We demonstrate a need for terminological clarity in distinguishing between the vital functions, the activities of daily living, and the needs. The needs being not only descriptive, indicative terms, but also imperative and deontic, and therefore must always be deconstructed and based on personal goals, priorities and desires. **SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS:** Since the life (bodily) functions and activities of living are only instrumental to the person's priorities, 'needs' should be always seen as hierarchy of personal priorities – setting thus an important contribution of social work perspective to the emerging systems of long-term care.

Keywords

needs, Maslow, breathing, long-term care, assessment

INTRODUCTION – NEEDS ARE A MULTI-LAYERED CONCEPT

The needs are the key issue in the introduction of the long-term care.² The intention of the long-term care is to respond to the (long-term) needs of people. For this, they must be assessed in order to determine whether the intensity of needs warrants the entry into the system, to identify what are the needs one has, and finally to find an appropriate response to those needs and to organise provision of such response.

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² This article was conceived in the preparation of long-term care system in Slovenia. For more details on the entitlement and procedures issues cf. the task group report (Lebar et al., 2017).



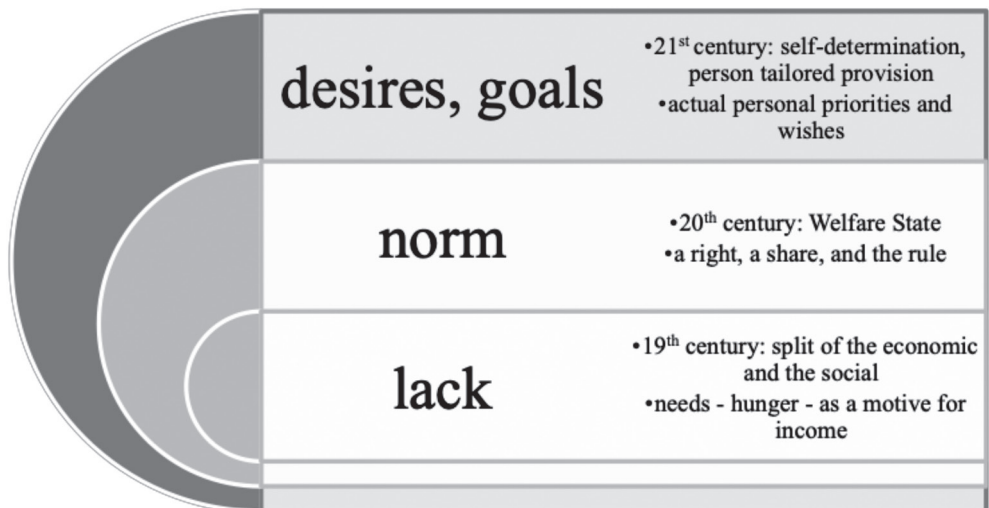
In this context, needs are usually considered as a technical term. As this simple manoeuvre of treating needs as a technical term may be productive in every day practice, it is not sufficient in trying to devise something as important as an entitlement procedure. In this, the concept of 'needs' has to be critically evaluated. Above all, we need to nurture a critical approach to the concept of needs as a 'lack', a personal deficit, characteristic of the classical conception of needs, including the Maslow's hierarchy of needs model. It, in part, transcends such a conception, but in its essence still embraces the notion of lack and scarcity.

Genealogically, needs appear as a key concept and establish the *lack and scarcity* as a basis of the emerging liberal economy in the end of the eighteenth and in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Through the separation of the economic from the social, the scarcity, lack, or deficit becomes a driving force of liberal economics (Polanyi, 1957). In the middle of the twentieth century, with emergence of the Welfare State, the needs become, in fact, the key concept of the social policy agenda (Illich, 1992).

When enthroned in social policy, 'needs' have acquired a pronounced *normative* property. On one hand, they code and form the expectations about people's behaviour and their conditions. On the other hand, they introduce into social policy discourse the notion that we, as citizens, are entitled to have our (basic?!) needs met and that the socially regulated State has to enable their satisfaction. Thus, the 'needs' acquire a property of rights. In the concept of needs three normative axes intertwine: the norm of *determining the social redistribution*, the norm of *coding the behaviour and life-style* and the norm of the *rights to statutory provision*.

In the recent decades, the concept of needs acquired yet an additional meaning. Namely, the duty of the authorities is, in a post-fordian manner, to take into account what the people really need; to investigate and identify what needs people have in order to respond to them in the most adequate way – at the individual, community and the State level. This is, at least, a conceptual or a principled shift towards empirical recognisance of the needs and empowerment of the provision recipients. It is also a shift, triggered by new ways of actually getting to know the needs, which is contrary to the conventional aprioristic prescription of standards for the individual sets of needs. Now it is therefore necessary to assess, identify, or find out what are the actual 'needs', which, in turn, dictate a different gnostic strategy and introduces auto-nomy – a self-regulating, self-defining needs, as a possible foundation of social policy response.

Diagram 1: Layer of the needs conceptualisation





The concept of needs has, in its 200 years of existence, arched a trajectory from needs as a lack, scarcity, deficit, to norms and rights to arrive to the desires, priorities, and goals. Needs are therefore a multi-layered, complex and contradictory concept. It contains multiple layers of understanding the 'need' as well as a contradiction between the needs as 'objective facts' and subjective reality of an individual; between a motive, a right and the desire. They are a grip as for economics as social policy as well as for the exercise of the rights and humanity.

Introduction of long-term care presents many challenges to social work. The objective of long-term care is, inter alia, to integrate social and health responses to long-term distress. This integration is much warranted from the users' perspective – providing a 'whole life' approach and a chance that the services will not fragment people's lives into chunks of governability. If, however, we truly strive towards long-term care being a provision based on the 'social model', the role and the duty of social work, in such an integration, is to assert the social dimensions of long-term distress, the enabling approaches in handling it and the community oriented organisation of response to it. This paradigm shift is not easily achieved. Not only since the marriage of social and health care brings together unequal partners in a troubled unison, and one brings along a heavy medical dowry, but also because the concept of needs also in social work itself remains often not reflected critically and retains a reductive quality. Such points of resistance are crucial for the continuation of social work as a science and profession in the face of this major change, which can bring it yet to another level or drown it in the flood of healthism.

PROBLEM OF THE HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Almost the archetypal model of needs is Maslow's classification of needs, ranging from basic needs (physical, physiological) to more personality and existential needs (safety, belonging, self-esteem, self-actualisation). The basic axiom of this model is that someone must first of all meet the needs of the 'lower-level' to be able to exercise the 'higher' needs.

In its time, this model was a breakthrough from until then dominating biological and mechanistic view to a more humanistic, man-oriented view. Its fundamental contribution to a different view of needs was to demonstrate that there are, beside the organismic, other needs – psychological and social, and last but not least, also existential human needs (self-realisation). It was a shift away from the purely homeostatic perspective on needs. Maslow was talking about the needs arising from the deficit (D needs) and existential (B needs – the need 'to be'). The first means insisting on the principle of homeostasis (also in some psychological needs), while others are the realisation of being human, of existing in this world (Maslow, 1943, 1970).

Maslow's model of the hierarchy of needs is, of course, theoretical, at best heuristic. Empirical research has partly confirmed and partly refuted it. Such a hierarchy is not universal and it can transform with an overall social change (such as war; Tang, West, 1997). It is also an individualistic model and it does not correspond to the priorities, characteristic of a society with strong collective values (Hofstede, 1984; Cianci, Gambrel, 2003). It was also demonstrated that the hierarchy of needs in the different stages of life is different (Goebel, Brown, 1981).³ Priority or a necessity to meet the 'lower' needs also suggests that the people, who live in poverty, are unable to reach higher levels of achievement of 'needs'. As a model, it is therefore a biased one and discriminatory on cultural, class and individualistic counts.

In the discussion on the assessment of needs and on the introduction of long-term care in general, we need to be particularly critical about the *hierarchy of needs* in Maslow's model. There are two reasons for this. The first, that it is a paradigmatic model, it persisted for more than half a century and is probably the most quoted and most often repeated notion on the issue of needs. The other

³ For long-term care, it is important that the need for security becomes more important in old age.



is that, in the long-term care discussion, this model introduces an axiomatic notion and a postulate that the primary task of long-term care is to provide for the ‘basic needs’ (physiological) and only then for other needs, of a supposedly higher and secondary level.⁴

Paradigmatically, the hierarchy of needs model combines some elements of the old paradigm (lack as a substance of basic needs) with elements of an emerging new paradigm (human existence and actualisation as the source of needs). This combination is less a synthesis of paradigms and more a compromise. Existential understanding of needs seems to be just an add-on, an icing on a cake, while the old homeostatic approach is still in its fundament, as it was before. It is more an extension of the old paradigm, a partial humanisation of the deficit paradigm, which in fact was constituent of liberal capitalism in its inception. By this, it is also consistent with the ‘common sense’ concept of needs, also based on such an axiom – as it appears totally ‘logical’ that we must first eat, sleep, get dressed; and only then be secure, love other people, respect ourselves and become a person. That this is not true we will demonstrate below using the example of breathing as a ‘basic need’. We will show that the different ‘levels of needs’ are inter-related, that breathing is not only the basic physiological need and that needs of ‘higher order’ determine how much and how we breathe, and also that we, because of the ‘higher’ levels of needs, constrain or hold back our breath. We will show, of what Maslow was aware too, that presumably hierarchical levels intertwine, and will add up a conclusion that the hierarchy of needs does not really exist, but it is only an ideological construct.

BREATHING

Why breathing?

Breathing is convenient for critical analysis of the ‘hierarchy of needs’, as it is among ‘physiological’ needs and is therefore seemingly least clamped in social and economic relations. Perhaps also, because air is free, because it is a public good, for the time being there is enough of it for everybody and, it is difficult to own it, appropriate it as a good.

In long-term care, breathing is not the central topic. Of the bodily functions, in long-term care, the focus is on feeding, excreting, mobility, etc. We will briefly examine the place of breathing in long-term care at the end of this essay, after we will have overviewed the meaning and function of breathing on different levels of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

By demonstrating an autonomous existence of breathing on each of Maslow’s levels of needs we will not only refute the hierarchic model of needs but also contribute to deconstruction – (terminological, semantic and syntactic) of the very concept of needs. In doing we will point out that needs are not only about lack but also about the abundance that they refer to conserving, maintaining and

⁴ The second reason is, of course, important for this essay. Although Maslow’s theory of needs has been surpassed on many counts, we still have to deal with the postulate of hierarchy of needs, which has become a part of the everyday, common sense understanding of needs, as well as, what is important in the long-term care discussion, even in some professional approaches – particularly in health care. Classic nursing theory Virginia Henderson (e.g. *Current nursing*, 2012) is explicitly founded on the Maslow tradition. The theory of everyday activities in the Roper, Logan, Tierney (2001) is not. Most important, however, it is to voice a critique of the hierarchy of needs because the distinction of ‘basic’ daily activities (ADL) and instrumental everyday activities (IADL). This notion, by an indirect reference to Maslow, re-establishes the hierarchy, criticized here, and repeat and recreate the ideology of the primacy of human physiological existence. In doing this, it is narrowing the view of the human being and long-term distress, and, what is especially alarming, is constructing an appearance that the services that enable more social involvement, sociability, inclusion and human dignity, are only of secondary importance.



producing rather than just acquiring or consuming. However, such a deconstruction⁵ should not be an end in itself, but a place where a new machine can be constructed. On the basis of this treatise of breathing, we will try to generalise the guidelines how to approach identifying, assessing the needs and the entitlement to provision.

In our investigation we shall not remain solely on the Maslow's track, but will shortly visit economic and social aspects of breathing to add to this seemingly biological phenomenon social dimensions. However, for purely analytical purposes we shall focus on the deconstruction of the concept in itself and hinder the investigation of its structural and discursive determinants. This should by no means imply that these aspects of needs construction should be disregarded or omitted. On the contrary, the full analysis and comprehension of the problem should be placed just in such a frame.

Physiological needs

Oxford dictionary defines breathing as "*The process of taking air into and expelling it from the lungs*". This is a usual narrow, literal understanding of breathing as the intake of oxygen and the elimination of carbon dioxide. This is also the basic homeostatic function of breathing.⁶

Breathing is one of the basic life functions. In contrast with some other bodily functions, which can be postponed, the breath can be held only for a short time. The rhythm of breathing is almost as steady as a heartbeat. It is the vital function, which indicates whether someone is alive. If we want to check whether someone is alive, we feel the pulse and check the breathing. On the metaphorical level, breathing means life and when someone dies, we say that he or she 'expired'. Respiration, mainly performed by respiratory organs – lungs, trachea, mouth, nose, etc. is actually a function involving the whole body. In addition to the 'external' breathing, there is also internal – the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in blood circulation, anaemia, for example, also causing difficulty in (external) breathing. The same applies to performance of other organs and bodily functions. It also applies vice versa, that by breathing we also perform other bodily 'needs', for example, regulation of body temperature.

We need to emphasise that we breathe with the whole body. In the breathing the entire sensor-motor apparatus is involved (if we pay attention, we can feel the breathing even in the toes), as well as all the other organs. Therefore, already at the level of the organism and life functions, there is an interconnection, an impact of other organs and processes on breathing, and also that other vital physiological processes can restrict breathing.

⁵ In social work the deconstruction should be an antithesis to 'constructivism', since there is a need to deconstruct the frames (Goffman, 1974), dispositives (Foucault, 1978), ideas (Illich, 1981) or total institutions – deinstitutionalisation in order to stage the changing, improving life action. A deconstruction of prevailing assemblages is needed in order to construct new, productive (desiring) machines (Deleuze, Guattari, 1972). Deconstruction in this paper should be understood in a general, broad meaning and not narrowly in the sense of Derrida's method.

⁶ Theories of needs stemming from homeostasis as the basic pattern of needs, emphasise the *intake* into the organism, although homeostasis is about bi-directional transfer of substances, the exchange between the organism and the environment. In this omission of expelling the excess, we can see a conjunction with the *axiom of the lack* as the major motive in the classic political economic formula of needs. It emphasises intake, which denotes the lack. For the political economy, the intake is significantly more important in comparison to the other side of homeostasis, which is about abundance and excess of something in the body and about elimination of the substance. The Victorian moral taboo on excretion can be probably understood also as an economic imperative. Political economics, except for the work-force output (at physiological levels of muscle movement in the classical manual labour), is not interested in the other side of the coin and the secretion is something that is actually socially (economically) disqualifying. At the level of personal interaction, secretion means stepping out of character. However, as we will demonstrate, the exhalation is in fact more important than the inhalation in some 'higher' activities or needs. For instance, in speech and voice inhalation has only an instrumental function – we breathe in only in order to say something, sing etc. This we do with exhalation.



The vital processes that take place in the body and not on the interface between the body and the environment are rarely epitomised as needs. For instance, heart beat and circulation of the blood are definitely a vital function *par excellence*, however we do not refer to them as 'needs of the heart and blood' (except of course as a metaphor for 'higher' processes, such as love, courage, family and kin – which, incidentally, are also of vital importance but not 'vital body functions'). In addition, there are some physiological functions that take place at the intersection of the body and the environment, but we do not see them as needs. For example, we do not talk about the need for perspiration, although sweating is one of the 'needs' of elimination, secretion.

Safety

Breathing is as basic life function, an autonomous one. We cannot but breathe. We breathe spontaneously and involuntarily, which is regulated by the autonomous nervous system. Nevertheless, we can also breathe voluntarily, deliberately. We can willingly inhale or exhale, accelerate or hold our breath as we wish or on a command of the other. In situations related to safety or danger, both systems – voluntary and involuntary – are in function. In stressful situations, we can speed up the breathing, but it can also become shallower. In the woods at night, we would increase our attention by holding the breath. Once the danger is over, we will unwind – with a sigh. Breathing can be used to regulate one's sense of safety and readiness to confront danger and threat. The sensation of fear and anxiety are reduced, if we constrain our breath; by accelerated breathing, we get ready to fight (or flee) the peril. After a threat has passed, we will get some comfort by a soothing breath and emphasised exhalation (sighing). Constraining breath may be an instantaneous reaction to the situation at hand – or, it can be a habitual posture – a result of a traumatic experience or prolonged exposure to danger or stress – not 'breathing with full lungs'.⁷

Love and belonging

The significance of breathing for relationships, belonging and love are well expressed in the saying "we breathe as one". Of course, it is a metaphor, but not just that. The actual synchronisation of breathing in the group allows a greater cohesion. We can relate to another's emotional experience by imitating the manner of breathing. In sexual experience, breathing is one of the main ways of connecting with the partner and, by intensification of breathing, reaching the culmination of uniting in love with the other. In the work that requires coordinated action of a group, a common breathing rhythm is of paramount importance (hey-how!). Similarly, the ceremonies, which unite a community, are based on dancing and singing and, consequently, also with the common breathing. The opposite is also true, a breath of may be a repulsive, destructive moment in establishing a contact and maintaining relationships. "Someone breathing down my neck" is disagreeable and puts us in a subordinate position. When someone, who is aggravating or is otherwise unpleasant, leaves the room, we can respire (sigh) with a relief (not just figuratively). Sometimes we have to take a deep breath before we answer to a delicate question. Someone, visually attractive, can repel us with his or her breath. ... Finally yet importantly, breathing is the key motor of speech, which is a fundamental means of intercourse with others.⁸

⁷ W. Reich and his successors maintain that the combination of involuntary and voluntary breathing is one of the major regulators of emotional expression and experience. Habitual muscular spasms restrict breathing and, consequentially, the feeling of fear and anxiety. However, these contractions also limit the pleasant feelings of relaxation, sex and love, which full breathing induces, mainly in the expiratory phase of respiration (Kelley, 1972; Reich, 1973).

⁸ Speech organs are identical to breathing organs. The vocal cords are not necessary for breathing, however, the voice on its own, outside the signifying connections, is not a primary function of the sign (for the other), but, like other manifestations of breathing (deep, shallow breathing), living expression that, much like a fart, gets the meaning only in reading of others.



Esteem

We derive our esteem and self-esteem out of self-confidence, our achievements and out of respect from others. Often we need to take a deep breath, before we say something important, or when speaking to an important person or on an important occasion. Before we get down to something, we have to take a breath and breathing is generally important in work (and other non-adrenaline activities), even if there is no physical effort.

Breathing is of crucial importance in areas that are essential for self-esteem. The most noticeable is the importance of breathing in sports – we need to breathe fully and technically flawlessly. Retention of breath can be a children's game, in which the winner is last one to inhale, however, is also an essential skill in breath-hold diving. Breathing is even more important in music. The singing is, so to speak, breathing⁹; we need to master breathing to play wind and brass instruments (and other instruments too).

Coughing, sneezing, groaning, sighing, even spitting are manifestations of respiration (which we usually do not even ascribe to breathing, but conceive them as autonomous bodily manifestations). In everyday interactions with others, we consider them indecent, disruptive, falling out of one's character and not paying a due attention to the personalities present in an encounter (Goffman, 1971). Mostly we apologise for such *faux pas*, or the audience will find its own apologies so that interaction can, despite falling out, continue smoothly. As with all interaction offences, catastrophes can occur and can cause long-term consequences for our reputation, status and respect.

Self-actualisation

Metaphorically, self-actualisation is best expressed in the idiom of “breathing freely”, “breathing with full lungs”. Again, it is not just a metaphor but also a material process. Breathing actually gives a sense of freedom, completion, actualisation. Singing and speech, based on breathing, are powerful tools of self-actualisation; predominantly on an aesthetic level. Even just breathing has an aesthetic dimension. Peaceful, tranquil and satisfying breath is a small but fulfilling pleasure and enjoyment. We savour it similarly as we do with other natural events – a sunset, a strong storm, ocean waves ...

Better yet, self-actualisation is exemplified in an expressive idiom “to fight to my last breath.” Breath in this idiom is still a metaphor for life. Someone who says it, wants to express his or her readiness to endure in an effort incessantly until she or he dies or accomplishes the deed. It is a way of saying that something is of utmost importance. In its most radical meaning, it is an expression of someone being ready to sacrifice him or herself, even his or her life, in order to achieve something deemed of the utmost importance. The actual death is the end of metaphor, since the last breath, really is the last one. With the fight to the last breath the person actualises self, but also transcends the self – there is something more important than her or himself.

Self-transcendence

Maslow eventually added the peak of the pyramid in the hierarchy of needs, something higher than self-actualisation. Going beyond the ego, the self. Something that is furthest apart from the basic physiological level in the alleged hierarchy of needs, becomes (or remains), in fact, the same. Breath equals the spirit. Again not just as a metaphor, much of the esoteric spiritual practices (yoga, Dervishes) are based exactly on the breathing exercises and techniques, and higher mental states are achieved with actual, not metaphorical, respiration.

Sceptics of spirituality, not believing in spirits and the eternal existence of the soul, can turn to more mundane good spirits, to the humour. Laughter is simultaneously a manifestation of

⁹ Singing could be defined as cultivated loud breathing. Of course, the music is of a completely different register that has its own existence (e.g. musical notation). Similarly, the speech consists of voice and language. Phonetics and semantics are distinct, but connected.



respiration and an expression of humour. It is acknowledgement, a reading of a paradox, which allows an identification with something, and at the same time even more so a distance, detachment from it. It allows accepting something and passing it, letting it be. We laugh and move on. If spirituality is going beyond self, transcending the ego, wit, humour is transcending the situation (and, of course, the self in it). Laughter, for some, is the distinction of human from other animals, but it is also among the most sublime (and concurrently animalistic) expressions of humanity.

The respiration of the society and economy

This solitary perambulation across the Maslowian levels of needs must be supplemented by social, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of breathing. These can be found in air pollution, in devices for ventilation and breathing, architecture and social aspects of respiratory diseases, and in smoking.

The air is a public good (Samuelson, 1954), available to everyone, without having to pay for it. Breathing and air are therefore, not originally economic categories, but become such with pollution. In other words, the need for (clean) air is not becoming a crucial issue or need due to its consumption or intake into the human organism (as needs are usually described), but because of the human discharge into it by the industrial production of goods. Precariousness of the air caused by the industrial pollution, however, results in a dialectical inversion, in which we begin to perceive the air and breathing as a 'need', a lack, not an abundance.

Even more, the private discharges into the public good are consequently privatising the use of air. Because public air is being increasingly polluted, 'fresh' air industry is starting to thrive. For now, they still do not sell it bottled, like plain water. However, we could not conceive the modern architecture without complex ventilation systems, or, even ordinary residences without air-conditions, air-moisture devices. Tourist agencies invite us to spend our holiday to enjoy the sun, water, *air* and freedom. What used to be a dubious privilege of pulmonary patients is now holidays for everyone. A share in the privatisation of air is also visible in an increasing number of medical devices (inhalers, respirators ...), being sold either through the health system, or on the open market.

The massive air pollution causes respiratory and other diseases. Respiratory diseases are still mostly social diseases, as consumption was previously. The proletariat is the most exposed to the intense pollution of the environment, and has the least of the possibility of avoiding it, or for regeneration after exposure. The working class respires with much greater difficulty than everyone else in this decreasingly-living environment. However, it is true that special facilities for respiratory diseases have been deinstitutionalised. Davos has acquired another sinister meaning, the Magic Mountain remains the only literary memory of Thomas Mann.

Since we cannot but breathe, we can only avoid the harmful substances in the air. This creates new needs, while limiting the meeting of other needs – e.g. needing to restrict outdoor movement due to over-concentrations of particulate matter in the atmosphere.

Smoking

Smoking is closely related to breathing. Its connection to the tobacco industry, the desire for profit is quite clear, however it is usually seen as a problem of public health. The difference between smoking and breathing polluted air is that, in the pollution, we are exposed to harmful substances resulting from the operations of the industry, while smoking is seemingly of our own will and the voluntary inhalation (of impure air) is the main feature of such breathing.

Smoking, intake of nicotine, is not vital on the physiological level. The human organism functions and survives without it. It is only when it becomes a habit (addiction), an organism starts to need nicotine for its normal function. This is why some refer to it, (as to any other addiction) as an 'artificial need'; define addiction as a disease. It is a 'deviation' from of the 'normal', 'natural', therefore, from the healthy functioning of the organism.



However, smoking is actually also a way to actualise the 'higher needs', as articulated by Maslow. Nicotine helps to calm down in dangerous situations, smoking helps us to preserve composure in such situations, in fact also by regulating the breathing. 'Fags' are a way of initiating contacts and trust, smoking creates *ad hoc* communities and fraternities. In cigarettes, we can find refuge, when we are rejected or, when we want to be on our own or independent, emancipated. Smoking is for some a decisive step in the transition to adulthood. A cigar points to someone's reputation and status. Smoking is also self-actualisation, since we serve mainly ourselves, it is something that we do primarily for aesthetic reasons, as an end in itself, it is also a way of self-transcendence by introducing the aesthetic of the sublime (Klein, 1995). For American natives, who were the first to cultivate tobacco, smoking is also a ceremonial drug, allowing transcendence and hallucinations (mind-boggling to us, industrial tobacco smokers; cf. Goodman, 1994).

Smoking is a means of self-actualisation, more or less acceptable by the ethical and aesthetic judgment on the one hand, on the other, the issue of adverse consequences on the physiological level. For our discussion, however, it is crucial that in smoking 'higher' breathing needs are superordinate to the physiological, 'lower' or 'basic' needs, it is a reverse hierarchy, determining the lower strata of needs. In reversing perspective into the opposite direction — that such a reversal of the hierarchy is a disease, pathological, since the physiological, the health should come before all other needs. Health becomes a criterion of eligibility of needs. Such reversal of inversion of hierarchy of need is obviously moralistic, since in wanting to change reality it simply is not real.¹⁰ On the socio-economic level, the smokers are in between the hammer and the anvil of the tobacco industry and the public health antismoking campaigns. For the former, we are the source of income (including the jobs and the economy in general), for the latter we are the cost of the Welfare (Health) State. One side is wooing us, and attributes a value to our smoking-breathing; the other side is persecuting us, segregates and transforms us into the scapegoats of the day. Commercialisation and stigma.

LONG-TERM CARE RESPIRATION

Finally, we will look at breathing as the phenomenon of long-term care. We will investigate the role of breathing in it, and then appraise what we can learn from 'breathing needs' about all needs and their assessment in long-term care.

As noted, in long-term care, even at the level of physical functioning, breathing is not of a central importance. What brings the attention of long-term care to breathing are usually consequences of pulmonary diseases (e.g. cancer, consumption) or allergies related to breathing, such as asthma. Minor long-term breathing problems, such as chronic bronchitis, pharyngitis, etc. usually do not require special care and are dealt with ease. Breathing devices intended for respiration (oxygen, respirators, inhalers) can be considered as breathing-related long-term care provision. Also assisted ventilation, as well as the ventilation of living spaces (opening a window, etc.).

Some long-term care activities are also breathing related, such as satisfying the desire "to go and get some fresh air". This may be a long-term care issue in association with substantial mobility problems, or it can only reflect the values and life style (e.g. someone has a habit of taking a walk "to breathe fresh air") in the past, however, in some period he or she cannot perform this without support. On the other hand, we have situations in which people, because of their vulnerability or increased risk, cannot go for a walk, in the days of air pollution, or simply because it is too cold or hot.

¹⁰ From the history of tobacco, for instance, we can learn that the introduction of wider tobacco consumption in seventeenth century Europe was based on the theory and purpose to eradicate the hunger, which was then, because of long wars and other disasters, one of the major social problems. Tobacco should have limited the sensation of hunger in the starving populace (Klein, 1995). Inhaling nicotine could partly compensate for food intake.



Quite often, smoking is the topic of long-term care. Sometimes in conjunction with health problems (respiratory or other), often not. People want to limit, stop smoking, change the style of smoking (into a less harmful or more suitable for new situations). Sometimes they want to do it in order to save money, sometimes because of a new environment (residential care), often due to changes in lifestyle or values.

The peripherality of breathing in long-term care can be explained in several ways. Firstly, breathing is undoubtedly one of the basic physiological activities; it is a body need and vital function. However, most of us breathe spontaneously and for most people it is not a pressing need. Also, when it comes to environmental disturbances in breathing or air pollution, we are all exposed to these impacts. On the other hand, the respiratory diseases, from an epidemiological point of view, are very common, but, because the breathing is vital, they are more dramatic and extraordinarily acute. Then, the breathing difficulties are a subject of cure, medicine, rather than long-term care. Severe respiratory diseases, also, compared to other long-term difficulties and distress, progress faster, and unfortunately, there is less need for long-term care. The reasons for marginality of respiration topic in long-term care can be summarised by breathing being generally a basic need, an activity, a function taken for granted and invisible. When it becomes a pressing issue, it is the object of treatment, the difficulties last shorter periods than the other long-term distress.¹¹

CONCLUSIONS – THE IMPLICATIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF NEEDS IN LONG-TERM CARE

Based on the traverse of the presumed 'levels of needs' we formulate conclusions regarding the terminology, nature of the relationships between the diverse 'levels' and the nature of the 'hierarchy of needs'.

Terminology

In discussing the breathing, in light of criticism of the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we had a problem with which term to use for breathing as a process. In some instances, we termed it as a *need*, sometimes as a *life activity* and in some places as a *life or vital function*. Respiration is undoubtedly all of these. These three concepts are, of course, in everyday colloquial parlance synonymous and interchangeable, in the conceptual debate, however, we need to make distinctions. The term 'vital function' is defined as "any function of the body that is essential for life" (Random House Webster Dictionary). 'Life activity' (or better everyday life activity) is something that we do, perform in our life, sometimes also as something that merely happens to us (as in breathing). Needs, as we have repeatedly noted, are harder to define. For a start we will use the dictionary definitions: a) Circumstances in which something is necessary; *necessity*; b) A thing that is *wanted or required*; c) The state of requiring *help*, or of *lacking* basic necessities such as food (Oxford online dictionary, emphasis author's).¹²

Breathing is clearly a life function, fundamental, basic. Without breathing, we cannot live and, it is marked as a 'vital' function. With this denotation breathing acquires a sense of a fundamental function, an unconditional life function (next to the heart and brain functions), which has to be working, cannot be delayed or too restrained.

¹¹ This argument becomes even more evident in relation to the heart and vascular system. What is a parade discipline of medicine, in the long-term care it virtually does not exist. The need for blood is enormous, but it is dealt with in blood donation and transfusion and not the long-term care system. The need for blood is usually acute (accidents, operations). The blood supply system is anonymised and abstract as a system, distant from the everyday exchanges (Titmuss, 1997). The long-term need for blood is an issue only in conjunction with haemophilia (since we do not believe in vampires).

¹² Slovene dictionary provides a very interesting definition (as translated); "something that exists, or appears because the absence of → a) what is necessary for life, work; → b) what is required, or desired" or "what one should have or obtain to work, to live."



As a life or vital function breathing is cardinal, yet as a life activity it is almost unnoticed. Not because it would not be important for living, but because it mostly takes place automatically, autonomously of the willing process. In everyday life, it becomes important only when we have problems with it; problems of either respiratory organs or respiratory bodily functions, or when we happen to be in an environment that makes breathing difficult. It becomes important also in activities that require – either technically sophisticated (e.g. singing) or accelerated breathing (sport).

Breathing is to be considered therefore a basic life function, but, paradoxically, not a basic life activity, since the significance of respiration in the lived world keeps changing from inconspicuous up to very important. In contrast to the basic life functions, referring to the life activities as basic would be misleading, since the significance of an activity is determined either a particular activity at a given moment being a pressing one, or, by its personal significance because of personal and social values, priorities or desires.

It is precisely the significance of breathing in our life-world that induces breathing also as a need (a need for more oxygen in the blood due to increased activity or lack of oxygen in the atmosphere, a need for larger air volume intake to articulate voice). The first two terms – the ‘life function’ and the ‘life activity’ have primarily an indicative, descriptive character, while the third, the ‘needs’, has an imperative property, it requires changes (of either behaviour or environment), and is deontic, purposeful and finalistic.

The terminological difficulty we are facing is not only in the fact that the terms describe something very similar and can be mixed up and fused (when we think about function, we are talking about needs, etc.). The difficulty is also that the first two terms (functions and activities) have a physical, material reference, we know what process or event they refer to, while in the case of ‘needs’ the reference is imperfect, as the dictionary definition itself suggests, it is based on the absence of something. We do know that we do not have something that we need, often we know quite precisely what is absent and what is needed, but the ‘need’ does not refer (only) to this thing or action, but to its absence and to our will to get or to do it. The absence of a direct reference and imperative characteristic of the concept of the needs present a series of conceptual quandaries when we try to define the concept of needs, as well as when we want actually, let alone objectively, assess or identify them.

The practical importance of the ‘needs’ in long-term care is, at the end, to identify what kind of care someone needs, i.e. services, support, accessories, actions and other provision, in order to live a dignified life – to be active, included and able to make decisions about one’s life. It is, therefore, about very tangible ‘needs’, which can easily be described. However, these needs are instrumental in relation to the authentic personal needs of service users, which in turn, are determined by their personal necessities and goals. ‘The needs for long-term care’ are primarily a *response* to the needs that someone has in his or her life-world. Real needs are expressed by the goals, aspirations, desires or priorities. They can be defined as an excess of a certain life situation or a will to change it. The needs for long-term care are therefore an operationalisation of how to do it. Either, in terms of support performing some activities of achieving the life goals, or as a support in attaining the rights or undoing of the wrongs on an entirely personal level. Both the activities and the rights have to be understood as instruments of actualisation of what is important to us.¹³

Even if our main interest lies in the response to the needs, or in ‘the needs for long-term care’, the shortcuts should not be taken and the response should not be confused with needs that someone really has. It is not only a conceptual problem, nor just the respect for humanity, it is also about the effectiveness of the response – the closer we get to the real needs the more appropriate response

¹³ Even if activities are sometimes an end in themselves or do not have any expected consequences beyond the activity itself (for example, running for the joy of it, playing, etc.), their (un)purpose is the aesthetic effect of the activities in their own right.



will be and thus also of a higher quality and greater effectiveness of care. An even bigger and more commonly made mistake of this kind is the use of 'fridge logic', i.e. equating the needs with the existing and available response. In reality there no such thing as 'a need for a placement in a care home' or, for home care, nor of escort. With such an approach we metonymise the needs and narrow the effectiveness and adequacy of the response (we discount the person's perception of her of his life situation).

Interlocking of the levels

An overview of how breathing functions on diverse levels, taken from Maslow's theory of needs, has demonstrated that the breathing, not only as an activity, but also an important function is associated with all levels of human life. The connections between the various levels are not only indirect, such as breathing being instrumental, as life function, necessary to perform any other activities, nor are they only metaphorical, as metaphor of life on the 'higher levels' of needs. Breathing is also a direct part of happenings that are not merely life functions (singing, laughing, smoking, etc.). Breathing, which of course, remains the life (physiological) function, leaps onto other levels, and in addition to its basic function acquires its own actual function in creating security, relationships and love, self-esteem and self-actualisation, and also self-transcendence. Just as breathing is an autonomous life function as a physiological process, breathing is an autonomous function of a 'higher' level. It is autonomous in the way that it takes into account the laws specific to a certain level of existence and functions according to those. Happenings on other levels can accelerate or constrain respiration, but above all, breathing gets on other levels their own meaning and function.

On each level, we found breathing as a metaphor or metonymy describing the events proper to a specific level. The breathing metaphors, of course, do not establish connections between breathing and other levels of human existence *per se*; they are just divertimentos and useful indicators leading to the real, material 'respiratory events' specific of a certain level. Saying "to breathe as one", is really a metaphor, and it can remain as such – not meaning anything other than the similarity between the two processes, but it can also mean real process of coordination of breathing and movement in the case of a group task. Similarly is the expression "fight until the last breath" primarily metonymy, but also an expression of the real intention of someone willing to *actually* sacrifice life and fight until the last breath. Precisely the paradox of metaphors that are not merely a metaphor can assist us in a better conceptualisation of needs. In the case of a "fight to the last breath," a metaphor dies when it is actualised; in the case of "breathing as one," it comes to its life. In this, the concept of needs is similar – some needs with their satisfaction wither and some only get delivered to their life. An activity, resulting from a need, can satisfy or entice it. In respiration, which is, *inter alia*, a basic life function, we can observe such a process. With sneezing, coughing or yawning we can alleviate some discomfort, with singing, speech and laughter, we stimulate and accelerate breathing, we are reinforcing the need for it. In the first case, the need for breathing is a *necessity*, in the second it is a *desire*.

It should be obvious, however, that it is not only about the division on homeostatic needs, those that arise from imbalances of intake and elimination, and existential needs, arising from bolstering of our presence in the world of existence. Their course of attainment in either entropic or syntrophic way depends on the register of activities, that are being performed in the framework of meeting the needs or wishes. Laughter is not following the principles of homeostasis but those of wit and humour. Therefore, it is about how different levels or, better said, the areas of our existence that connect with each other and intertwine. For this reason, we have to consider them in their entirety and in a wholesome manner.



Hierarchy of priorities and not of needs

Hierarchy of needs, as formulated by Maslow, is neither absolute nor universal. It is being created, on the one hand social, and on another personal or situational priorities.

Franc was one of the participants of the direct funding pilot project in Slovenia. He has had a trouble with breathing and was compelled to live in an institution. For him, the free life outside the institution was more important than breathing, even though it was clear to him that it is about a basic life function, the freedom was of essential importance for him (Flaker et al., 2011:38–40). In accordance with this, his goals or priorities were to get his own flat, to have income, to socialise with friends and do what was in his heart (go concerts, etc.). To deal with respiratory problems, was for him a marginal, perhaps an instrumental objective (ibid.:75–92). His own, personal hierarchy of objectives (or needs) was clear. In it, the goals of self-actualisation (to use Maslow's term) prevailed.

Therefore, if there is a hierarchy, it is a two-way one. As physiological 'needs' – or should we say functions – determine or lay down the basis of the activities that are relatively autonomous. The contrary is also true, that desires and goals also determine the course of the first. If we look at the needs from the perspective of human existence – self-actualisation, actualisation of our humanity, then the basic life functions are of the instrumental nature. We breathe (eat, drink, sleep, excrete, etc.) in order to be able to do something in life, something that we deem important (or that brings us just pleasure and joy) and not to the contrary, that we are doing everything in life just in order to live (survive).

This is also, why we cannot refer to basic life functions as basic life activities; on the contrary, they are instrumental activities of living (except when they acquire their own aesthetic meaning). The ideology expressed in the division on the basic (ADL) and instrumental activities of living (IADL), namely fetishizes these activities, placing them on a pedestal. It is true that we live in the body; nevertheless, we actualise ourselves mainly outside of the body, usually in the contact and cooperation with others. Fetishism of bodily functions is likely to be a compensation for the impossibility of in-corporeal self-actualisation.

At the same time, however, physicality, the body is tangible, not only as a warrant of our existence, but also as something that is objectively easier to know. Body, bodily, vital functions are sufficiently material, visible and obvious – when it comes to identifying and assessing needs also even more appealing and convenient. In situations of long-term care, they are, as needs, also usually more frequent and often more pressing. Therefore, we must pay due attention to them and take care that the needs or necessities that stem from them will be adequately and qualitatively met. However, not at the expense of neglecting the existential questions, avoiding to ask why someone lives and what he or she wants to do or achieve in life.

We have seen that breathing, although it can be considered as basic life function, exists as a significant part of the activities also on 'higher levels'. Not only that the 'higher' levels are also basic to human existence, but also that they contain the 'lower' levels. The concept of hierarchy of needs can be used only conditionally, only in terms of the growing complexity and greater discursive abstraction. Such a hierarchy is just gnostic, not deontic. Physical activities are more specific, while the personal, social and existential, when conceptualised, are more abstract and less corporeal when performed. The same can be maintained about the very notion of needs as well; they exist mainly as a concept, which only then requires our own activity.

Needs can refer to physical activities, or have, what we have called elsewhere, a *natural frame existence*. Besides that they always have, moreover, a *social normative* or *functional* register, often also a *conservatory* or *recovery* register, which is important in situations of deprivation (of the utmost importance in long-term care) and *innovative* register, which creates new solutions or response to the needs (and in turn also new needs). These last three registers also apply to the needs that do not have natural existence frame, those needs that are the result of our human, social existence



and not merely physical existence (Flaker et al., 2008:387–388) and are thus the real registers of needs, since the first register is more of a frame of their perception and satisfaction.

The needs can be divided into met and unmet on the one hand, and on the perceived and disregarded on the other side. From these two dimensions, a custom 2 x 2 table can be constructed, creating combinations of these categories of needs. We can therefore identify *realised* needs (perceived and met), *taken for granted* (met, but not perceived – as it is mostly the case with breathing), *pressing* needs (perceived, but unmet) and *hidden* (unmet and not perceived) (Flaker et al., 2008:394–396). In the long-term care, it is not just about meeting the pressing needs, but also about conservation of the realised needs and those taken for granted, and above all about discovering the hidden needs. Just as ecologists on the societal level, long-term care workers must, on a personal level, look for hidden needs, together with service users discover what they need to lead a truly better and fuller life. In fact, this is not about creating new needs, but about creating new activities that enable the person to actualise him or herself, often right on the physical level – to breathe fully and freely.

Conclusion – The main implications for the long-term care

Finally, we derive from the general discussion on needs and specific trial the concepts as applied to breathing some guidelines for action in constructing the long-term care system based on the concept of needs and enacted on their assessment.

1. Needs are a multifaceted concept, which in its kernel also contains, already surpassed, conceptions of needs as a lack, a deficit, as social and political norms and rights, and, in the last generation, also as empirically identifiable personal autonomy in setting priorities. In the long-term care, we need to, because of the inconsistency and contradictory meanings inherent in the term, treat 'need' as primarily a *technical term*, while, however, emphasising the latter meaning of the term – the empirical autonomy of the needs of a person.
2. Maslow's model of needs has, in his time, meant a significant shift from homeostatic conception of needs. Nevertheless, it was surpassed a long time ago (as too psychological and ontological). For a conceptual discussion of needs, more appropriate are multi-dimensional models (Max-Neef et al., 1991), for a practical application of monitoring the cartographic indexing ones (Flaker et al., 2008).
3. Hierarchy of needs does not exist. There are no basic nor higher needs. Just as there is no basic nor higher activities. It is therefore necessary to abandon the terms and conceptions of 'basic' and 'instrumental' of daily living activities (ADL vs. IADL), especially in the legal definitions and taxonomies. These can be replaced by the semantically more relevant terms of the activities of *personal care or nursing* and *everyday (household) activities*.
4. There are various registers of reading needs. There are certain hierarchical relationships among them in relation to the degree of abstraction of the level readings. For (personal and community) planning of long-term care, it is important to register the pressing needs, to ensure the preservation of met (realised and taken for granted) needs, as well as to detect the hidden needs.
5. It is necessary to distinguish between: (*basic*) *life functions*, *life activities* and *needs*. While life functions are the focal interest of medicine, they are not so important in long-term care – for everyday life these are primarily of an instrumental importance. In long-term care life activities and needs are at the forefront.
6. Life activities are an indicative, descriptive concept with a clear reference. Needs in turn are, on the contrary also an imperative and deontic concept, related to the purpose and norm. They have an undetermined referent, are a metaphor or metonymy for the necessary or desired change. Therefore, it is necessary, in the practical procedures of implementation and provision of the long-term care, to always deconstruct the 'needs', to decipher the metaphor, what does they really mean in terms of action.



7. In doing so, we must especially take care not to construct needs as metonymies of response or to deduce the responses from the needs as a metaphor for action or change. Needs assessment is the basis for a holistic response to what a user formulates as his or her needs.
8. In refuting the hierarchy of needs or activities, we do not deny a stratification of human existence. We need to be aware that same activities, functions, or needs have diverse registers of the readings and, in the practical procedures, they need to be so understood, dealt with and response planned according to the consistency of a stratum. In doing so, we need to avoid fetishism, the hegemony of one registry or a framework over the other – the body (health), experiential (psychological), interaction (social), structural (social policy or political economy).

This last practical conclusion points to the overarching issue of how the dominant discourses form the points of governability through the construction of concept of needs, which was not addressed in this piece to the merit it would require. One observation needs to be made – the more abstract the concepts of needs are more amenable to the exploitation of the human need for the gain of the profit or power over people in distress; it is easier to attribute dominant, hegemonic priorities to the abstract values devoid of content. However, as much as this paper provides some ground for a critique of how the abstract scheme ridden by political and financial power mould our needs, it is more of a plea for the personal resistance through voicing the concrete desires, setting one's own priorities and a plea for professional practice of social and health work, which will support such an emancipatory praxis and use the ambiguous grips of the emerging system to foster greater control of people over their life-worlds.

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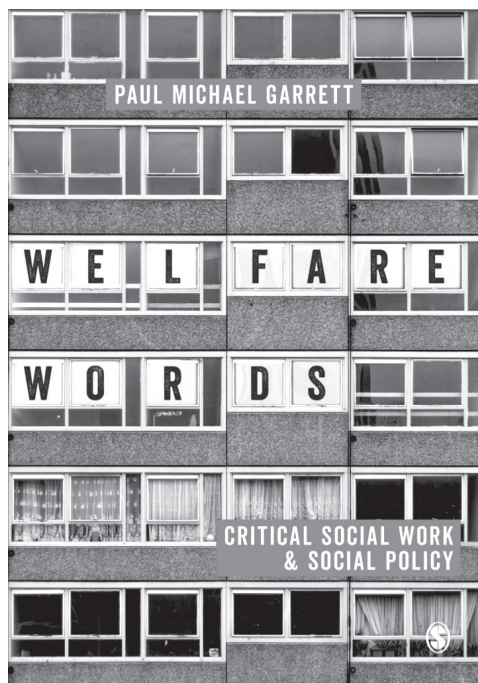
Paul Michael Garrett: **Welfare Words: Critical Social Work and Social Policy.** London: Sage, 2018

Paul Michael Garrett's *Welfare Words* takes a new look at the language of welfare in the social work and social policy area. The author was inspired by Raymond Williams's *A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976) and calls upon the reader to (re)visit the impact of language.

The aim of his book is to answer the following question: *Why is it important for social workers and social work educators to think more critically about the words used in practice?* He seeks the answer to this question by analysing the words and phrases used in social work and social policy during a period of faltering neoliberalism. The author examines how power relations work in language and culture. Based on this, his book documents the central place of language in the (re)production of social order.

Garrett provides an analysis of key concepts that are commonly mentioned within the current welfare system and political discourse and seeks to understand why and how they are important in today's social work and social policy. He examines in detail individual concepts and their origins, meanings and contradictions. Welfare words are perceived by the author in the way they are used and abused within today's political and social system.

The book has a clear structure. After the introductory and conceptual chapter, there are seven chapters, each of which deals with one of the selected welfare words. The author chooses for his book seven of these crucial keywords: Welfare Dependency; Underclass; Social In/Exclusion; Early Intervention; Resilience; Care; Adoption. This particular choice is, in his words, "...largely driven by my own interests and those of my students. My own mode of selection is subjective..." (p. 17).



In the Introduction, the author emphasises the role of language and how the use of words forms the way of communication within the profession. "*Through language, social work is able to construct and maintain the domain with words serving as the 'glue' helping it to stick to place*" (p. 2). Words such as 'assessment', 'risk' and 'supervision' are an integral part of the education of social workers, "*who learn to think within the conceptual parameters of the profession and to talk the talk*" (p. 2). Language is understood in this context as one of the key mediums through which ideology is generated and potentially transformed. Therefore, according to the author, "*there's a need to analyse keywords in the social conditions in which they arise, circulate and are then apt to alter or have their meaning culturally and politically re-calibrated*" (p.5). Welfare



words promote hegemony, are circulated and promoted by figures located within the state and/or particular fields of expertise.

In the Conceptual chapter, Gerrett refers to the perspectives of Foucault, Bourdieu, Brown, Gramsci, Rancière, Wacquant and others. He focuses, for example, on hegemony. He writes that “(c)ompliant academics are often significant in helping to sustain hegemony” (p. 22). Gerrett notes that the neoliberal economy has found key supporters within universities. By confirming market values, the academic institutions are able to imitate private sector practices based on ideas of performance, customers, enterprise, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, he criticises the concept of common sense, which is uncritically absorbed and fragmentary, and through which ruling elites that are to ‘manufacture ignorance’, in order to justify the way society is hierarchised and regulated. The author also emphasises the implications of symbolic violence. He notes that symbolic violence is a form of ideological violence that is stigmatising and degrading individuals or groups, while being often considered legitimate by those to whom it relates, because of previous patterns of socialisation. That leads individuals to participate in their own oppression.

The beginning of each following chapter contains the welfare word definition by the Oxford English Dictionary which is considered a starting point of the analysis. Each chapter has its own Introduction and at the end of the chapter there is a Conclusion, Reflection and Talk Box in which the author asks the reader questions to stimulate a debate and critical thinking.

In the chapter on Welfare Dependency, the author points to a number of myths associated with welfare politics, often rhetorically framed by activation policies that pathologise the poor by perceiving them as those who abuse the welfare system and are dependent on social benefits.

In the chapter devoted to the word underclass, the author points out that this concept is based on a fictional group, produced on paper, and it is an artificial administrative definition imputing to the “anti-social” conduct of the most disadvantaged responsibility for their own dispossession, and its promulgation are

components of a wider hegemonic class project. In the chapter on Social Exclusion, the author also focused on Ireland and the situation of the Roma community in this country. He notes that “(t)his minority ethnic population can, perhaps, be perceived – if the phrase is used warily – as a paradigmatic socially excluded community” (p. 107). The author states that many Roma face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives, many Roma are precarious and characterised by persistent poverty and hardship and criticises specific examples of the removal of the Roma children from their families. Social exclusion is understood to be a constitutional ingredient of the Capitalist system, while the current use of the term leads to camouflage of poverty and related issues of distribution of income and wealth. “That is to say, the Capitalist system generates, sustains and materially benefits from their exclusion” (p. 112).

In the next chapter, the author draws attention to the fact that early intervention supports the “cultural deficit model”, which guarantees that it is the impoverished that are perceived in terms of “risk”. The author states that early intervention “may not be welcomed by some intended recipients and could lead to labelling and stigmatisation” (p. 118). At the same time, the author emphasises that the political defence of early intervention was supported by the supposed and seemingly unambiguous scientific authority of neuroscience.

The chapter entitled Resilience notes the transformation of the role of professionals who become just one of the empowering mechanisms when trying to coach people to manage their own risks. This is illustrated on the example of popular self-help books that advise people of how not only to achieve their dreams, but they also emphasise that people are entirely responsible for their current situation. “This leading narrative depoliticises and diverts responsibility away from those in power and from more structural considerations” (p. 145). Gerrett also reveals a gendered subtext to resilience talk since the ‘cost’ of resilience within families is often carried by women.

The penultimate analysed welfare word is care. This word has many meanings and it is very



difficult to define it. The author shows how the care concept is gendered and closely related to neoliberal ideology, while focusing on feminist ethics of care.

The last word analysed is adoption. The chapter suggests an extensive issue involving domestic and inter-country adoption. According to the author, this issue is situated in the context of neoliberal economic and cultural practices, since *"adoption continues to lie at the intersection of a range of converging issues rooted in social divisions and cleavages associated with social class, 'race' and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender roles, age, (dis)ability and, in the case of ICA, neo-colonialism"* (p. 201).

In the Conclusion, the author brings together the many issues which emerged in the respective chapters.

Gerrett offers a comprehensive approach to studying social policy in social work and encourages readers to think critically about keywords in their broader historical, political, and cultural context. His politically engaged linguistic interventions help us think about

how to take steps towards less oppressive and more positive forms of service provision.

The book is also beneficial in showing that *"(m)any of the welfare words and phrases to be examined in Welfare Words are imbued with very specific ideas about gender, 'race', and ethnicity"* (p. 72).

This book is a fundamental read for those who want to understand what is hidden behind the concepts that are ubiquitous and have entered the professional discourse of social work. The book can be recommended to readers because it is an original book, which seeks to understand the ideology underlying welfare words, and by doing so, exposes the power and oppression operating through them. The book highlights the power of language when it comes to social welfare and it will prompt new thinking.

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Research Note

The Global Self-Care Initiative: Exploring the Self-Care Practices of Social Workers in Slovakia

Being a helping professional can be challenging. Self-care of helping professionals, including social workers, is an important part of psycho-hygiene and is also inseparable component of individuality. Self-care can also be an integral tool in preventing negative employment consequences, such as professional stress, burnout, and so forth.

The Global Self-Care Initiative is an international research project designed to examine the professional and personal self-care of social workers in different countries. The initiative started as a national project in United States of America and quickly expanded to include a number of countries around world.

A national examination of the self-care practices of social workers in Slovakia launched in May 2017. Data collection concluded in December 2017. The inquiry was guided by four distinct, yet interconnected research queries:

1. *How often do social workers engage in self-care practices?*
2. *Are there differences in self-care practices by general demographic (e.g., age, etc.) and professional characteristics, respectively?*
3. *What variables predict self-care among social workers?*
4. *What are main barriers in professional and personal self-care among social workers (and therefore identify ways of overcoming the barriers)?*

To answer these queries, researchers utilized the Self-Care Practices Scale (SCPS; Lee, Bride and Miller, 2016). SCPS is an 18-item measure designed to have respondents designate the frequency with which they partake in professional and personal self-care practices, respectively. The instrument employs a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored at 0 = “Never” and 4 = “Always.” The researchers also collected demographic information based on adjustments made to the version of the instrument used in the USA (e.g., brutto vs. netto, monthly vs. yearly income; ethnicity; number of inhabitants of village; NGO as an option for employer; main focus of respondents’ practice). These adjustments were based on a pre-research pilot phase related to assessing the protocol for data collection.

Using the SCPS, the research team collected primary data from 200 social workers currently practicing in Slovakia. Participants typically identified as Female and Slovak and were employed full-time as social workers. All data were managed and analysed via IBM SPSS version 24.0 (SPSS, Inc., Chicago IL).

The complete results have been accepted for publication in Sage Journal: International Social Work, currently available online through OnlineFirst. Additionally, partial results have been published as a part of contributions on several conferences, most recently including the 2018 Social Work and Social Development conference held in Dublin, Ireland.

To summarize the main research findings, analyses revealed that participants reported only engaging in moderate levels of self-care. Findings also indicated significant differences in self-care by health status, and number of weekly hours worked as a significant predictor of self-care. The key barriers in personal and professional self-care were identified: lack of time, lack of financial resources (more than 84% of respondents had lower income than the average gross wage in the national economy of the Slovak Republic; but no differences between the level of self-care between different levels of income), fatigue and overworking.

Despite quantitative design of research, in the Slovak version we also add the open question about willingness of participation on the qualitative part of research. Almost one fifth of respondents declared their openness for further research participation.

Perceiving self-care as part of lifelong personal setting and life-style, we consider it extraordinarily important in the everyday life of social workers. Engaging in self-care practices is one way to deal with a demanding profession and avoid burnout. The national part of the Global Self-Care Initiative as an exploratory study identified key aspects of self-care for social workers in Slovakia. This study also examined the personal and professional self-care practices of social workers in Slovakia with direct implication not only for research but also for the practice and education (lifelong and primary) of social workers, accepting the necessity of creating conditions for individual self-care, as an essential tool, in personal and professional life.

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The mission of the journal “Czech and Slovak Social Work“ is:

- to support the ability of Czech and Slovak societies to cope with life problems of people through social work,
- to promote the quality of social work and professionalism of social work practice,
- to contribute to the development of social work as a scientific discipline and to the improvement of the quality of education in social work,
- to promote the interests of social service providers and users.

In the interest of achieving these objectives, the Journal will, across the community of social workers and with co-operating and helping workers from other disciplines, promote:

- attitudes which regard professionalism and humanity as equal criteria of social work quality;
- attitudes which place emphasis on linking theoretical justification of social work practice with its practical orientation on clients' problems and realistic possibilities;
- coherence among all who are committed to addressing clients' problems through social work;
- open, diversity-understanding, informed and relevant discussion within the community of social workers;
- social workers' willingness and interest in looking at themselves through the eyes of others.

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The academic text intended for publishing in the journal should be a research or overview essay (theoretical, historical, etc.). For the article to be accepted to the review procedure, the author of the text must work systematically with the relevant sources, explain the research methodology and present a conclusion with regard to the research goal. Because the journal has a specific professional nature, texts are preferred which also contain application aspects where the author explains the relevance of their conclusions in the context of social work.

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Authors are informed about the result of the review process within six months from the date of receipt of the text/manuscript.

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The text must be written in accordance with applicable language standards. The text letters should be written in Times New Roman, size 12, font style Normal. Pages are not numbered. Footnotes should be placed strictly at the end of the article.

- I. **Front page** contains a descriptive and brief title of the article in English; the names of all authors, biographical characteristics (up to 100 words) and also contact details for correspondence in the footnote.
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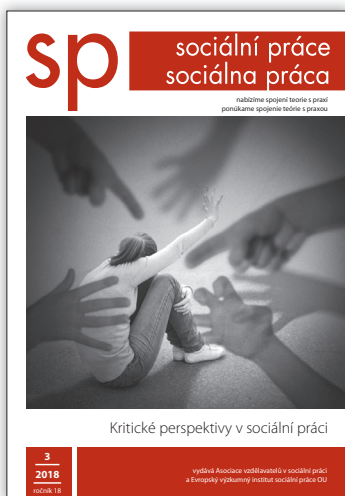
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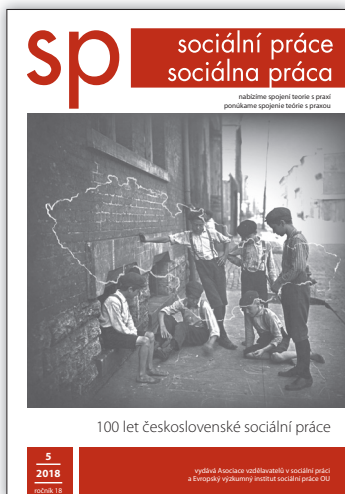
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