SW

Czech and Slovak Social Work

Connecting theory and practice

ERIS Journal - Summer 2017

Sociální práce / Sociálna práca
Czech and Slovak Social Work
reviewed scientific journal for fields of social work

Editorial

Articles

Book Reviews

Research Notes

Editorial

I would like to invite you to read the texts, the common denominator of which set out the purposefulness and specificity of our multi-year ERIS network, rather than the subject matter of their authors. The European Research Institute of Social Work (ERIS) is an organization that, for over a dozen years, has been doing research for, and training candidates for, social professions. Its origins, and the heart of the organization, are tied to University of Ostrava (Czech Republic), and especially to organization President, Prof. Oldřich Chytil and a team of his close associates from universities and colleges of applied sciences from several European countries. All of them are united in a common goal: the creation of an interdisciplinary space and international exchange for the advancement of the theory and practice of social work in Europe. ERIS web-journals, and recently international editions of the Czech and Slovak Social Work, together with ERIS Spring Schools for European Master and PhD students, represent three key elements of this space that complement each other. The edition you are presented with proves that this space truly impacts and serves the purpose of ERIS. The common denominator of most of these texts is the connection of the scientific development of an author with one of the ERIS subspaces. For example, the reflection on happiness as an inspiring concept for social work research, was presented on one of the ERIS conferences, and today I invite you to deep theoretical reflection on the role of 'positive concepts' (including 'happiness') in the research and practice of social work. In three other texts, I find the effects of the inspirational power of subsequent Spring School debates. I remember their authors participating in one of the editions of this school as young researchers at an earlier stage of their scientific development. The remaining, no less intriguing texts, reflect on the subjects of our ongoing debates, where the social work identity or social work professionalization are among those most often and spontaneously nourished and reincarnated. And so, in this issue, the first two contributions, by Victor Otieno Okech (Slovakia) and Christian Spatscheck (Germany), are referring to the advancement of the theory of social work building

as one of the key ERIS goals of our network. The first of the authors shares with the readers the results of his literary review of the role of social factors in the aetiology of antisocial behaviours in children and adolescents. He attempts to approximate selected concepts that he finds useful in defining and explaining the symptoms and causes of social disorders for social work practice. Given the diminishing popularity of deficit-based models in social work explorations, an in-depth and up-to-date overview of the concepts that search for the sources of social problems in individuals, family or environmental shortcomings, may add to the debate on the relationship between explanations of social problems and the role of social work, and thus as such, overarching discourse on the social work identity. The second of the theoretical debates in this issue also directly refers to the problem of social work identity. Its author, Christian Spatscheck, rather contradicts and then strengthens interest in social work's deficit-based approvals. In the article he presents the results of his own research on the 'quality of life' and related concepts, and in this context, the ability to consider possible ways of integrating previously mentioned concepts into the social work knowledge grid and practice frameworks. Because the significant dynamics of the social work identity discourse is a disagreement over the dominance of approaches in which service users are defined as those 'in need' of therapy, compensation, etc., the issue that is debated in this discourse presents a rather unique approach. According to the author, he promoted the concepts that 'formulate a genuinely positive approach that directs the perspective of social problems towards the vision and the aims of a better society for all individuals and communities. In this article, the reader will find not only a solid review of literature focused on these concepts, but above all, convincing arguments for strengthening the 'positive turn' in social work development and promoting it as a profession focused on happiness and not on misery.

In the following two contributions, we see findings from two qualitative insights into the issue of professionalization of social work. Regardless of

the fact that social work has been developing and continually changing its role in developed societies for more than a century, in each of our local contexts, the question of whether it is professional or not is a subject of heated debate. The results of the research by Lenka Divoká (Czech Republic) and Anna Jarkiewicz (Poland) enrich this debate, although each research does it in a different way. Lenka Divoká, in the article titled 'The Professionalization of Child Protection in the Czech Republic', presents us with answers to the research questions about how social workers describe the current state of their profession and how they describe the pathways to the enhancement of the professionalization of their work. Her point of view on professionalism is embedded in the sociological theories of professionalization. In her article, we find a thorough review which will undoubtedly be useful in the conceptualization phase of many empirical works focused on that issue. As a result of the qualitative approach to the analysis of the interviews with social workers employed at the department of child protection, the author presents a complex picture of the Czech social work profession as a 'not fully fledged profession', but a profession that not only strengthened its position on the labour market, but started to flourish and assimilate well within the current economic and political changes. On the other hand, the insight of Anna Jarkiewicz into the daily practice of one of the municipal social welfare centres in Łódź gives an interesting description of the interactional organization of social workers who support mentally disturbed social service users. Following the perspective presented in the article, professionalism is socially co-constructed in the process of 'spontaneous, often casual division of work, defining and transforming professional roles and their mutual relations. All these processes overlap with the formal organization of work, but are rarely identical' (Granosik, 2006:9). Such an understanding of professionalism, accepted for analyzing and interpreting data during the participant observation, has prompted the author to reconstruct both components of a socially constructed category of a 'mentally disturbed client', as well as the tactics and actions being employed as a result of diagnoses. In the article of Tomáš Waloszek (Czech Republic), the controversial issues of research

methodology can be taken as the auto-ethno-graphic statement of a young researcher who, in the presented speech, as if in the mirror, reflects the elements of the lived world of young researchers. Being involved in the methodological discourse of their local scientific community, they seek to find their own way to enrich their local research and international scientific debate. In selecting the issues considered by the author as 'controversial', and in the way of carrying a discussion, the readers are given an opportunity to read the representation and reflections of the author's internal dialogue in the process of conceptualizing his research work. This article is interesting for at least two reasons. Firstly, it documents the questions and the intellectual struggles we observe in many researchers who are in the process of crystallizing their identity framework as researchers of social work issues during their Spring School participation. The approach presented in the article can be both an inspiration and a support. Secondly, the article's rich tapestry of references to the Czech literature introduces international readers to locally conducted debates, which seems to be the undisputed additional value of this work. In another article, we are presented with considerations about links between structurally founded changes and incremental voluntary community initiatives. Shelley Briggs and Mark Foord (United Kingdom) explore these links using the example of the food bank movement. This is an insight into the phenomenon of self-organization of social forces responding to changes in the system of social services in the age of austerity (Farnsworth, Irving, 2011). Given the current state of the anti-state ideology and reductions in social spending, which together drive the substitution of state services by voluntary provision, the deliberations presented are beyond the confines of the Anglo-Saxon debate. The article introduces the reader to the issue of the emergence and the role of voluntarism in the neo-liberal social welfare system as well as the development of such a spectacular example of a voluntary organization that can be successfully appreciated and used in academic debate, practice, and in social work training conducted in other European countries. The deepening of the process of development of this movement in the context of socio-political changes shows an

example of the analysis of changes in the social services system, which carefully and in multiple stages reconstructs the matrix of conditions leading to it. Interestingly, while movements such as the food bank are commonly seen as a form of crisis intervention for individuals and communities, the authors consider the potential of this movement to develop much further, even into emancipatory directions. In this edition, we also present two book reviews. Monika Bosá (Slovakia) encourages you to familiarize yourself with the work of Eva Hvizdová and Beát Balogová, 'Creative Industry of Selected Handicrafts in Eastern Slovakia'. It is a monograph presenting the ways of using selected handicrafts in the practice of social work, since 'creativity is the key to innovative and interdisciplinary responses to global or local challenges' (p. 8). The reviewer emphasizes the importance of careful analysis of the socio-economic specifics of the Eastern Slovakia region, and the uniqueness of the empirical study of the mechanism of the renaissance of crafts in this region. Doris Böhler (Austria), in the review of Patricia Hill's Collins and Sirma Bilge book 'Intersectionality', focuses on a biographically meaningful meeting of two researchers, the result of which is presented in the book. The reviewer sees in the book not only 'a good overview and discussion on the theory, perspectives and practice/research examples of the widely used concept of intersectionality as an analytical tool', but also an infinite source of inspiration in the process of analyzing human conduct and understanding it in the context of the complex matrix of conditions used for social work research and practice.

Finally, under Research Notes, we have an insight into the actual research activities performed at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov as well as the presentation of one of the PhD research which has just been completed at the Department of Social Pedagogy of Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Łódź.

Beáta Balogová (Slovakia) presents the study into the social therapy status and status within Slovakian social work. Izabela Kamińska - Jatczak (Poland) informs us about her PhD study of the professional identity in the narratives of family assistants, undertaken at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Łódź. The research, regulated by the constructivist grounded theory method (Charmaz, 2006), in the course of the process of narrative interview collection and interpretation, reconstructs the elements of family assistants' activities and identifies the process of singling out various characteristics, as the family assistants perceive them. The results of her research are arousing the appetite for more detailed insight into this section of Polish social work, especially since its other images have been, in the past, systematically presented in the ERIS publications (more in Gulczyńska, Marynowicz-Hetka, 2014, Jarkiewicz in this volume). Knowing the power of attachment to ERIS, we will soon hear more about these results either at the ERIS conference in Lille later this year (dedicated to 'Social Work and Minorities'), or in Ostrava at the next Spring School in 17–20 of April, 2018.

Enjoy the read.

Anita Gulczyńska
University of Łódź, Poland

References
CHARMAZ, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
FARNSWORTH, K., IRVING, Z. (Eds.). 2011. Varieties of Crisis. In: FARNSWORTH, K., IRVING, Z. (Eds.). *Social Policy and Challenging Times: Economic Crisis and Welfare Systems*. Bristol: Policy Press.
GRANOSIK, M. 2006. *Profesjonalny wymiar pracy socjalnej*. Katowice: Biblioteka Pracownika Socjalnego.
GULCZYŃSKA, A., MARYNOWICZ-HETKA, E. 2014. Participative Inquiry in the Field of Social Work. Socio-Pedagogical Perspective. In: HÄMÄLÄINEN, J., LITTLECHILD, B., ŠPILÁČKOVÁ, M. (Eds.). *Research in Social Work in Europe Part I*. Ostrava: University of Ostrava.

A Literature Review on the Roles of Social Factors in the Etiology of Dissocial/Antisocial Behaviours in Children and Adolescents

Victor Otieno Okech

Victor Otieno Okech[1] is an internal doctoral student researching behavioural problems in children and adolescents at the Institute of Social Studies and Therapeutic Education, Comenius University in Bratislava.

Abstract

Etiology of dissocial/antisocial behaviours in children and adolescents has been of concern since time immemorial. Various attempts have been made to classify and establish factors that causes them. They are widely classified as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and Conduct disorders (CD). The aim of this article is to offer an overview of the present understanding of ODD and CD, examine symptomatic differences between the two disorders as well as social factors that cause them. A narrative approach is used in reviewing and describing current literature on these social factors based on three thematic areas: Child deficit factors, Family factors and Environmental factors. We found social factors that cause these behavioural problems to be family composition, mental health status of their parents, marital conflicts, nature of the relationship between parents and their children, parenting styles, peer influence, and problematic neighbourhoods. We conclude that social factors contribute to the development of dissocial/antisocial behavioural problems in children and adolescents.

Keywords
antisocial behaviour, dissocial behaviour, conduct disorder, oppositional defiant, etiology

Introduction

Dissocial/Antisocial behaviours in children and adolescents have been of great concern since time immemorial, especially among religious personalities, policy makers and scientists. Though each of these groups have had divergent views on their etiologies, they all conclude that some of these behaviours are socially appropriate while others are not. Socially appropriate behaviours are those behaviours that conform to societal norms, while the inappropriate fail to conform to the societal norms and expectation to the extent of disrupting the normal child to child or child to parent relationships. Throughout developmental stages, all children and adolescents experience or display socially inappropriate behaviours occasionally. They become of concern to scientists,

---

[1] Contact: Victor Otieno Okech, Comenius University in Bratislava, Institute of Social Studies and Therapeutic Education, Šoltésovej 4, 811 08 Bratislava, Slovakia; okech1@uniba.sk

parents and practitioners when they fail to occur within a socially accepted threshold in terms of their frequency, intensity and duration. For instance, when a child fails to even slightly respond with anger to provocations that are directed to him/her over a long period of time, or the child frequently responds with anger to the slightest provocation that aimed to last for a short period of time, may indicate a behavioural problem of concern. There are three forms of socially inappropriate behaviours, namely: *i) Oppositional behaviours* where children and adolescents intentionally refuse to take or comply with instructions issued to them by figures of authority such as parents or teachers, *ii) Aggressive behaviours*, characterized by use of threats to harm self, others or animals. In this type of behaviour weapons or offensive words may be used to cause harm or intimidation. Aggressive behaviours may be committed with a premediated intent to achieve a given objective or they may be displayed as a reactive impulse to perceived threats, frustrations or provocations. *iii) Dissocial/Antisocial behaviour* are behaviours displayed by children and adolescents that violates social norms, ethical standards, rules, laws and rights of others. These behaviours are considered as delinquent when they go against laws set by the state, and sinful when they go against religious code of conduct (Matthys, Lochman, 2010; Labáth, 2016).

Symptoms of these socially inappropriate behaviours in children and adolescents occur in clusters that have been used in classifying them into diagnostic categories. The widely used diagnostic classification systems for these behaviours are: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder Fifth Edition (DSM-5) developed by American Psychiatric Association (APA) and International Classification of Diseases Tenth Revision (ICD-10) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to these classification systems, diagnostic categories for these behaviours are: Oppositional Defiant Disorders and Conduct Disorder/Dissocial behaviour. The conduct disorder is a terminology used in the DSM-5, while dissocial behaviour is used in ICD-10. Both conduct disorder and dissocial behaviour refer to the same thing.

The aim of this article is to offer an overview of the present understanding of Oppositional Defiant Disorders (ODD) and Conduct Disorders (CD), examine symptomatic difference between the two disorders as well as the social factors that cause them. In this article, we will employ a narrative type of literature review to examine social factors that may cause the development of dissocial/antisocial behaviours among children and adolescents. We shall summarize literature on the current trends in the past decade in understanding the concept of dissocial/antisocial behaviour in children and adolescents.

In the process, we will look into how these behavioural problems are categorised by the International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision (ICD-10) and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition (DSM-5). We will conclude by reviewing social factors that cause these behavioural problems around three thematic areas that appear most frequently in literature

1. Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a type of externalizing disruptive disorder that affects both children and adolescents. In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fifth edition (DSM-5), it is defined as a recurrent pattern of negativistic, defiant disobedient and hostile behaviors towards authority figures such as parents and teachers. In the International Classification of Diseases 10th Revision (ICD-10), it is defined by the presence of markedly defiant, disobedient, provocative behavior and by the absence of more severe dissocial or aggressive acts that violates the law or rights of others (WHO, 1992). Typically, symptoms of ODD start to manifest in early ages of children and can be observed occurring frequently across general areas of feeding, sleeping, manageability, and bowel and bladder control. Premature babies also present with similar symptoms across these general areas, but their symptoms resolve with time unlike those for ODD that are persistent (O'Reilly, 2005).

1.1 Diagnostic criteria of ODD

The DSM-5 pegs its diagnosis on the presence of at least four symptoms of ODD from a list of 8. It further specifies that these four symptoms must have been present on more days for a period not less than six months in children below five years, and at least once a week in those older than five years. In addition, at least one person who is not a sibling must have had these symptoms directed at them (O'Reilly, 2005; Schneider, 2014). The 8 Symptoms of ODD are broadly classified into three main groups namely: i) *Angry/irritable moods* such as ease in losing temper, ease in being annoyed/touchy, resentful/angry, ii) *Argumentative/defiant behaviors* such as frequent arguments with figures of authority, defying rules set by figures of authority, deliberately behaving in manners that annoy others, blaming others for their own mistakes or wrong doing, iii) *Vindictiveness* such as being spiteful i.e. desire to harm or hurt others so as to get even. The presence of these symptoms is further sub-classified as *Mild* if they are only displayed in one setting such as at home, at school, at work or when interacting with peers, *Moderate* when they are always displayed in at least two of these settings, or *severe* when they are displayed in three or more settings. Diagnosis is not made when these symptoms are displayed due to influence of psychosis, substance use, depression or bipolar disorder.

According to ICD-10, ODD is a subtype of Conduct Disorder characteristically seen in children below 9 or 10 years. It is seen not as a qualitatively distinct disorder but a lesser severe form of Conduct Disorder. Its diagnostic symptoms are similar to those provided in the DSM-5 (WHO, 1992)

1.2 Co-morbidity of ODD

Untreated or poorly managed ODD can co-occur or be replaced with other disorders such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or may progress to Conduct Disorder, which we will discuss in the next subtopic. When two or more disorders are diagnosed in an individual within the same period, then we say the diagnosed disorders are co-occurring and use a medical term-*comorbidity*. Externalizing disorders such ODD can co-exist with other Internalizing disorders such as anxiety and depression. This existence of comorbidity of internalizing disorders and ODD depicts existence of a link between these disorders. In order to explain this consistent pattern of comorbidity, Scientists have studied these symptoms and grouped them into three categories or dimensions namely: *Irritable* (include loss of temper, anger and touchy), *Stubbornness* (argues, defies, annoys, blames) and *Hurtful* (spiteful-vindictive).When these groups are keenly looked at they show distinct psychopathological associations where Irritability is associated with emotional disorders, Stubbornness is associated with ADHD and Hurtful is associated with conduct disorders. In addition, anxiety and depression may be explained to result from the association of negative effective and the Irritability group (Boylan et al., 2007; Ezpeleta et al., 2016). Another theoretical dimension was developed to explain Comorbidity of ODD by Burke et al where they obtained three factors; i) *Negative affect* containing symptom touchy, angry and spiteful, ii) *Oppositional Behavior* including loss of temper, defies and argues, and iii) *Antagonistic Behavior* including annoys and blames. These ODD dimensions have proved useful in differential prediction of problems and have shown predictive validity. Negative affect is associated with emotional disorder, Oppositional Behavior is associated with disruptive behavioral disorders and antagonistic Behavior is related to disruptive and mood disorder (Ezpeleta, Penelo, 2015).

1.3 Prognosis of ODD

ODD is the most common comorbid condition associated with ADHD occurring in 30%-60% of school children. Children with ADHD and Comorbid ODD often exhibit a greater number of ADHD symptoms which correlates with increased severity of the disease and a poorer prognosis for the successful treatment (Biederman et al., 2007). In addition, presence of callous/unemotional behavioral symptoms in ODD is a stronger predictor of progression of the disorder to Conduct

disorder or later into Antisocial Personality Disorder (Christenson, 2016). Untreated or poorly managed ODD may progress to the development of Conduct Disorder.

2. Conduct disorder (CD)

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth edition (DSM-5) defines Conduct Disorder as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age appropriate societal norms or rules are violated by young people (APA, 2013; Loeber et al., 2009). ICD-10 view it as any behavior characterized by a repetitive and persistent pattern of dissocial, aggressive or defiant conduct that amounts to major violation of age appropriate social expectations that surpasses ordinary childish mischief or adolescent rebelliousness (WHO, 1992). The DSM-5 specifies two subtypes of the conduct disorder and three levels of severity. The two subtypes are based on time of onset i.e. childhood onset and adolescent onset (Finch et al., 2006). Childhood onset is characterized by manifestation of at least a symptom of Conduct Disorder prior to the age of 10 years. Childhood onset is considered to be a severe form of Conduct Disorder that is characterized by neuropsychological impairment. This is evidenced by impairment of verbal, executive functions, high temperaments and difficulties in regulating emotions. Untreated or poorly managed temperaments in children (such as fearlessness, insensitive to punishment, low responsiveness to cues of distress in others) interferes with the development process of conscience. This causes a lack empathy for others. This may explain why children and adolescents diagnosed with childhood onset tend to have more callous, unemotional symptoms than those with adolescent onset. On the other hand, Adolescent onset develops only once a child has entered the adolescence stage and had no prior behavioral difficulties (Silberg et al., 2015; Frick, 2012; Passamonti et al., 2010). Adolescent onset results from attempts by an adolescent to bridge the widening gap between the biological and social maturity. These adolescents normally wish to be treated like adults by members of the society but they only end up being viewed and treated as children. In attempt to achieve the adulthood status, they engage in some misguided and self-destructive activities such as alcoholism or risky sexual behaviors (Buitelaar et al., 2013; Fairchild et al., 2013). Adolescent onset conduct is theorized as to develop as a result of uncontrolled and unregulated rebellion by teenagers. Rebellion in adolescents is a normal developmental process as they strive to acquire social identity. This normal rebellion may worsen when they are exposed to some factors such as association with deviant peer groups, poor supervision by parents, lack of pro social institutions or personality characterized by rejection of traditional status hierarchies (Frick, 2012). Levels of severity vary from mild (when only a few conduct problems are present above the minimum to meet diagnosis, with problems generally involving minor harm to others) to severe (with many problems involved or behavior posing considerable harm to others) (Finch et al., 2006).

The ICD-10 System provides a list of 24 signs of conduct disorders. It further classifies conduct disorders into four main categories namely: *i)* Conduct disorders confined to family context such as stealing, setting fire or destroying family properties as well as severe disturbed parents/caregiver relation or violence directed to a family member, *ii)* Unsocialized conduct disorders signified by strained relations with other peers such as rejection/isolation or lack of reciprocal relationship as well as discord relationship with adults, *iii)* Socialized Conduct disorder where the adolescent is fully integrated into a delinquent social group. Members of the delinquent group fully accepts him/her and approves his/her dissocial behavior. In dissocial behavior such aggression may be directed to the members of the group or other groups. The setting of this conduct disorder is usually outside the family setting such as school or neighborhood. *iv)* Oppositional Defiant disorder, Other Conduct disorder and Unspecified Conduct disorder (Schneider, 2014; WHO, 1993).

2.1 Diagnostic criteria of CD

The DSM-5 pegs its diagnosis on the presence of a minimum of three symptomatic behaviors of conduct disorder that have been present for at least one year in adolescents below 18 years. It further specifies that of the three symptomatic behaviors one of them should have been present within the last 6 months. These symptomatic behaviors include: i) *Aggressive behavior* that threatens physical harm to another person or animals such as physical injury, bullies, threatens or intimidates others or has forced someone into sexual activities, ii) *Destructive behavior* to Property such as deliberately destroying other people's properties by setting them on fire or by other means to achieve the objective, iii) *Engages in deceitful* behavior or theft such as breaking into someone's car or house, frequently lying to obtain favor/goods or to avoid obligations, or stealing items of nontrivial value without confronting the victim through forgery/shoplifting, and/or iv) *Engages in serious violation of rules* such as staying out late into the night against parental prohibition or sneaking out of parent's house at night or being absent from school without permission (APA, 2013; Scheepers et al., 2011). In addition, a diagnosis is made when there are at least two of the four symptoms of the Callous Unemotional Specifier. They include: i) Lack of remorse or sense of guilt after doing something wrong, ii) Lack of empathy i.e. disregards and unconcerned how other people feel about their actions, iii) Lack of concern for poor/problematic performances at school, work or other important activities. Tends to heap the blame for poor performance on others iv) Show shallow or deficient affect i.e. does not express feelings or show emotions to others, except in ways that seem shallow, insincere or superficial or when emotional expressions are used for gain (Buitelaar, 2013; APA 2013).

On the other hand, ICD-10 outlines that at least three or more symptoms from the list of the 24 signs should be present in any of the four categories of Conduct Disorders. It further states that at least one of the symptoms should have been present within the last 6 months (Schneider, 2014).

2.2 Co-Morbidity of CD

Conduct Disorder if left untreated or poor managed can co-occur or be replaced with Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder. In addition, it may co-occur with other mental disorders such as specific learning disorders, Anxiety disorders, depressive or bipolar disorders and substance related disorders (APA, 2013)

2.3 Prognosis of CD

Conduct disorder has profound consequences on the lives of adolescents and can easily dim their bright future though the effects of excessive indulgence in drug abuse, early and unwanted or unplanned pregnancies, expulsion from school, serving jail sentences, experiencing physical illnesses such as liver cirrhosis or even premature death (Schneider, 2014). Untreated conduct disorder or when poorly managed may lead to the development of Antisocial Personality Disorder as defined by DSM classification system or into Dissocial Personality Disorder as per ICD-10 classification System.

3. Comparison of ODD and CD

ODD and CD share two common features at the centre of their diagnosis; poor anger management and failure to acquire sufficient levels of social competency due to poor socialization of children and adolescents. In DSM-5 classification, anger is seen to worsen in severity from ODD to CD. In ODD, anger in children is not directed at a specific object, it gets blurted out at anything that arouses it. For example, children suffering from ODD throw a tantrum that is not premediated at harming someone or destroying something. In CD, as children enter adolescence their anger increases in severity and is seen to be coordinated and directed at achieving a given end or objectives. For instance, they may destroy or set someone's property on fire so as to get even

after experiencing some frustration from that person. From these symptoms, it can be deduced that anger increases in severity and gets transformed into aggression, a behavioural form of anger. For instance, adolescents may simultaneously steal from their victims while confronting them, showing that they have learned to use aggression to achieve a predefined goal. The second feature that ODD and CD share in commonality is failure of children and adolescents in achieving significant levels of social competence due to poor socialization. Socialization is the process through which young members are taught the values and beliefs a society holds with high esteem. On the other hand, social competency refers to the capacity to engage effectively and appropriately in social interactions. Social competence is socially learned, developed and refined over time through a continuous socialization process that begins within and later outside family contexts. According to a model developed by Steve Duck, there are four-level hierarchy types of social competence namely: a) *Social skills* i.e. social behaviours based on motor activities that can be taught and learned, b) *Interpersonal Competence* i.e. ability to sufficiently interact with others, c) *Communication Competence* i.e. ability to understand and effectively apply rules of language in their appropriate contexts, and d) *Relational competence* i.e. ability to form and sustain a reciprocal, a two way direction and interdependent kind of relationship (Lang, 2010). In both ODD and CD, children and adolescents fail to have sufficient levels of social competency. For instance, they may fail to achieve sufficient level of communication competence which may make them to have difficulties in comprehending rules issued to them by figures of authority and thus end up not complying, such as sneaking out at home at night (APA, 2013).

3.1 Difficulties of correct diagnosis between ODD and CD

Semantic difference in the languages used in DSM-5 and ICD-10, culture, and gender are some of the factors that create difficulties in making correct diagnosis of ODD and CD. Both DSM-5 and ICD-10 use a categorical approach in classifying these two disorders. In ICD-10 language, ODD is a subcategory of CD while DSM-5 language sees them as two distinct disorders. This creates confusion among practitioners inclined to each side of the classification systems. For example one can be diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorders using DSM-5, and at the same time be diagnosed with Conduct disorder when ICD-10 classification system is used.

Differences in culture among societies also create difficulties in making a universally acceptable diagnosis, as each society has its own thresholds for appropriate and acceptable behaviours. Thresholds that denote appropriate behaviour change from one society to another, from high in some to low in others. For example, societies that have experienced prolonged violence may have a high tolerance level for aggression compared to those that have not. Adolescents raised in such societies may be perceived as weak or cowardly when they fail to respond aggressively even to the slightest of provocations. Though DSM-5 has a section on culture, more needs to be done in addressing this area.

Gender, the social construction of femininity and masculinity, is another area of concern that requires great attention for practitioners when making diagnosis. This is because a practitioner needs to know when to draw a distinction line between sex, the biological positioning of one as male or female on one hand, and gender on the other hand. Currently, both genders are now at liberty to perform roles that had traditionally been assigned to the opposite gender. Though the lines demarcating these roles are slowly becoming more diffuse and invisible, the role of sex etiology of behavioral problems should not be ignored (Featherstone, Green, 2013). The DSM-5 give more emphasis on gender aspects than on the sex aspect.

Males are more inclined to the usage of direct confrontational approach in solving their difference while females tend to use indirect approaches in solving their issues. Neither DSM-5 nor ICD-10 capture passive forms of aggression in their classifications systems. For instance, a female adolescent may decide to intentionally and selectively withhold their emotion in a conversation by only giving short, non-engaging answers. This is clearly aggression but in a passive form. When

this form of aggression occurs more frequently with prolonged intensity and duration it qualifies as a conduct disorder, but it does not fit into any of the categories provided in the DSM-5 as either ODD nor CD.

4. Etiological social factors

Etiologies of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder can be classified into three main groups, namely: Child Specific Factors (in most literature referred to as biological factors), Family Factors and Environmental Factors (Schneider, 2014; Matthys, Lochman, 2010; Henggeler et al., 2009; Liabo, Richardson, 2007; Finch et al., 2006).

4.1 Child specific deficit factors

Child specific deficient factors refers to deficiencies that interfere with the normal organization of a child's physical, social, cognitive and emotional development at the level of physiological and neurological functioning. These factors are gender, developmental disorders and, deficiencies in cognitive abilities (O'Reilly, 2005).

Sex and Gender is a key risk factor in the etiology of behavioral problems in children and adolescents. Boys are two to four times likely than girls to develop a form of conduct disorder. On the other hand, girls are more likely to develop comorbid conditions than boys (Munkvold et al., 2011). This difference in gender is attributed to the fact that both the DSM-5 and ICD-10 classification systems emphasize diagnosis on the presence of physical aggression over relational aggression. The biological make-up of boys predisposes them more to physical aggression. Their physiological processes and anatomical structures are 'designed' to withstand or inflict aggression. They have a larger skeletal size and bone mass compared to girls (Nieves et al., 2005). They also have higher level of androgen hormones such as testosterone than girls. Testosterone hormone plays a key role in the masculinization of male features which enhances development of skeletal muscles. The testosterone hormone in boys also plays a role in the stress response classically known as 'fight or flight'. Also, testosterone suppresses functions of the left hemisphere of the brain which processes language functions, thus decreasing chances of males using dialogue in resolving disputes (Schneider, 2014). Aggressive behaviors are universal in children but as they grow, and are socialized into better ways of resolving conflicts than resorting to violence. However, some fail to follow this path of socialization and persistently end up showing aggressive and rule breaking behaviors (Buitelaar et al., 2012).

Several developmental disorders due to defective genes have also been linked to the etiologies of behavioral difficulties in children and adolescents. One of these gene linked developmental disorders is language and speech disorder. Deficits in language and speech influences how children and adolescent relate with their peers or figures of authority. Language and speech is the medium through which children express their internal feelings to others. Impairment in any part of the language affects how they communicate their feelings to others. These impairments can occur either at the levels of: *i) Phonetics* i.e. making speech sounds, *ii) Morphology* i.e. following rules involved in words construction from their roots, prefixes etc., *iii) Syntax* i.e. following rules involved in sentence construction, *iv) Semantics* i.e. understanding meanings of words and sufficiency of vocabularies and *v) Pragmatics* i.e. knowing how to match word usage in their correct social settings. Deficiency in language and speech can negatively affect behaviors of children and adolescents. For instance, children with deficiencies in pragmatism may disrupt others, blurt out answers or socially withdraw because they cannot speak well (Murdoch, 2011; Cohen, 2002). Language deficit in children and adolescents limits their abilities to enter and maintain a social discourse with their peers. This in turn causes them to be ignored, rebuffed or excluded from interacting with their peers. To address this deficit in language, they may develop various compensatory strategies that range from being easily angered on flimsy grounds to giving short answers in their communications, which may make their peers feel that they are not available for communication (Rice, 1993).

Cognitive disorders such as those on the autism spectrum, Asperger, also influence how children behave. Children suffering from these disorders have difficulties in forming, understanding, maintaining friendships and personal relationships as well as less being able to 'read' unspoken social rules than others. In addition, they are not flexible to changes and see life only from two perspectives i.e. an all or nothing approach to life with difficulties in perceiving other options or degrees (Hendrickx, 2010).

4.2 Family factors
Family is the first social institution that provides children with a suitable platform for behavioural development. According to Liabo and Richardson (2007), family accounts for 30–40% of the variation in children's antisocial behaviour. The family socializes children into adopting suitable and socially acceptable behaviours and discarding those that are not. Though the family plays this important role, there are some social factors that may interfere with its ability to execute this function effectively. These social factors can be characterized as general family disturbances or specific disturbances in parenting practices. General family disturbances include: family composition and structure, mental health status of the parents, a family history of antisocial behaviour, marital conflict, limited financial and emotional resources, family instability and disturbances in family values. The specific family disturbances include: parenting practices such as harsh and excessive punishment, lack of parental supervision and/or support, and inconsistent parental discipline (Finch et al., 2006).

Typically, a complete family is comprised of both parents who live with their children. Though this is the ideal composition of a family, it is not attainable in some situations. Such situations include cases of divorce/separation, parental death(s) or when a child is born out of wedlock. The composition and structure of a family has a strong bearing on the nature of a behaviour children will have, for instance children raised by single mothers are more likely to develop socially inappropriate behaviours (Ondrušková et al., 2016; Matthys, Lochman, 2010; Carlson, 2006). In addition, a growing body of literature suggest that the number of children in a family and instability of family structure signified by frequent reconstitution of family through re-marriage also influences the kind of behaviours children and adolescents will have (Fomby, Cherlin, 2007). In the former the parents are not able to provide sufficient supervision and meet individual needs of each child, while in the latter some children tend to reject new marriage partner(s), introduced to them as a father or a mother in cases of reconstituted marriages. In such situations, children are always hostile, defiant and in opposition to anything the 'new parent' wants them to do.

Mental health status of or drug abuse by parents have also been linked to development of behavioural problems in children and adolescents. For instance, maternal depression has been found to interfere with the quality of mother-infant interaction. Depression causes mothers to be withdrawn and flat in their affective display, or become hostile and intrusive when handling their children (Matthys, Lochman, 2010; Mantymaa et al., 2004). Liabo and Richardson (2007) draws a conclusion that mothers who smoke more than half a packet of cigarettes per day during pregnancy are at greater risk of having children with conduct problems than those who do not smoke during pregnancy. Current research has taken an intergenerational dimension in trying to understand the link between antisocial behaviours in children and their parents. Though findings of these studies are still inconclusive, some have made great strides in this line of research. In Pittsburgh Youth Study done by Farrington et al. (2001) to investigate the inter-relationship of offending boys by their three generations of relatives, found out that among the boys who had been arrested, there was a strong relationship (77%, N=1395) between their father and grandfather being arrested.

Parenting style or courses of actions parents/caregivers take over their children and adolescents greatly determines the behavioral outcomes they will have. There are three dimensions to parenting identified by Baumrind et al., and Maccoby and Martin that shape the quality and effectiveness of parenting. They are responsiveness (amount of warmth), degree of autonomy parents grant to

their children, and demandingness i.e. amount of supervision and control they exercise over their children. Based on these dimensions on how parents apply them, there are four types of parenting styles: *i) Authoritarian,* this parenting style is associated with parents who are highly demanding, restrict autonomy and are not responsive to their children, *ii) Authoritative,* a parenting style that is characterized by parents who are demanding, who grant supervised autonomy and are responsive to their children *iii) Permissive,* a parenting style identified with parents who don't restrict autonomy, are not demanding but are responsive to their children only on need basis such as when they are sick. *iv) Unengaged/Neglecting,* a parenting style associated with parents who are not demanding, not responsive, and don't restrict their children's autonomy. In other words, they are never available for their children. Unengaged/Neglecting parenting style is more common with absentee parents. Authoritative is the best parenting style because it provides a secure base for psychosocial development of children and adolescents. The other three parenting styles are associated with behavioral problems in children and adolescents (Ishak et al., 2011; Domenech Rodriguez, 2009; Liabo, Richardson, 2007; Wissow, 2004). Methods of discipline have also been implicated in the development of antisocial behaviors in children and adolescents, especially when they are harsh and inconsistent, physical and emotionally abusive. For instance, Grogan-Kaylor (2004) postulates that infants, toddlers and children may learn aggression from parents when exposed to harsh and inconsistent disciplinary measures such as use of corporal punishment.

4.3 Environmental factors

In this article, we will use the term "environmental factors" to refer to factors outside the family context that influence behaviors of children and adolescents. According to Matthys and Lochman (2010), behavioral problems are shown to be influenced in unusually substantial ways by the social context around the child, and the manifestations of behavioral problems affects them in their social context. These social contexts may range from those proximal to them (Microsystem) where they spend most of their time such as in school, to a broader environment that indirectly impacts their behaviors (exosystem) such as neighborhood, health facilities, social agencies and recreational facilities available in the community. The exosystem may erode all the efforts made by parents in shaping their behaviors. For instance, a recreational facility may put pressure on children to buy certain sporting gear that may be out of their parents' purchasing power. Thus, these children may opt to aggression or stealing whenever they are teased by their peers. When this happens repeatedly, a child may learn that responding reactively or stealing is the best approach to addressing such kinds of problems (Matthys, Lochman, 2010).

Other social factors that influence children and adolescent's behaviors include: friendship, associations with deviant peer groups, culture, media and unavailability of self-improvement facilities such as school. Friendship is a concept that goes deeper than being liked or accepted by peers. It may develop between a child and caregiver or with peers. A child may be accepted by peers without having friendship or have friendship without being accepted. Therefore, friendship is a close relationship between two individuals that is mutual and reciprocal. To form this close relationship, children and adolescents often choose friends who are like them demographically, physically, psychologically and socially. Since friends do influence each other, children and adolescents who choose friends with behavioral problems are likely to learn those behaviors. The element of reciprocity in friendship if poorly managed can act as seeds for bad behaviors. For instance, when a father asks a teenager to do the dishes, and instead of washing the dishes the teenager argues and complains. The father decides it is less hassle and just cleans the dishes himself, and the teenager stops arguing and complaining. The teenager learns that arguing and complaining may help relieving her of performing domestic chores, and the father learns that giving in to his daughter's 'reasons' for not doing the domestics chores helps avoid immediate headaches. This kind of reciprocity reinforces dissocial/antisocial behaviors (Soucisse et al., 2015; Mikami, 2010; Henggeler et al., 2009). As children enter adolescent stage, they spend more time

away from their families with their peers (including the delinquents) where they may be exposed to negative referent models, reinforcement of negative attitudes and behaviors such drug abuse, and peer pressure to engage in increasingly antisocial behaviors. The effect of a deviant peer group on an individual's behavior is also evident in social contextual research on gang involvement. Youth rates of violent delinquent behaviors have been found to sharply increase when they become involved in gangs, and to decline when they leave the gangs. In addition, problems found in neighborhood children may also have a bearing on the behavioral outcomes of these children. For instance, children raised in deprived neighborhoods are normally exposed to high levels of violence, which may predispose them to the use of aggression in solving their problems or meeting their needs (Matthys, Lochman, 2010).

Culture as the people's way of life provides a 'manuscript' through which children learn their behaviors. Culture exists in two perspectives i.e. tangible/material culture such as mode of dressing, modes of cooking, tools, housing designs, etc. The other perspective of culture is non-material culture, i.e. intangible aspects like belief systems, social norms. The non-material culture shapes the worldviews of children and adolescents. In poor neighborhoods, children and adolescents are normally exposed to worldviews that in themselves lead them to developing problematic behaviors such early marriage, obtaining early independence from parental control, and early parenthood as the best paths to take in life. Some get married as early as 16 years, which denies them schooling opportunities and literally confines them to poverty (Dahl, 2010). It can be argued that, since they don't have enough resources to finance their marital obligations they may resort to dissocial/antisocial behaviors such as robbery and other deviant behaviors. In addition, self-improvement institutions such as schools are always prominently unavailable in these neighborhoods, and where they exist they are normally poorly equipped and understaffed. The chances of finding highly skilled professionals working in these institutions are also low. The result of this is that these institutions, more so schools, are unable to fully socialize these children and adolescents with the right values, norms, social competencies and beliefs that the society needs.

5. Social work with children and adolescents diagnosed with ODD and CD

Understanding both classification systems and the pathways by which these disorders take in their development can be very important for Social workers working with children, especially those in residential setups such as Mental health facilities, Schools, Prisons/penitentiary centres and Rehabilitation centres. Gerten (2000) developed a robust guideline for social workers working with children who have been diagnosed with conduct disorders. Further Vojtová (2013) developed a strategy for screening children with behavioural problem in systems of education, while Labáth (2013) expounded on the potentials and limits of using psychotherapy in treating children with conduct disorders. In the context of prisons/penitentiary centres, Kleskeň (2016) provides a guide on how social workers can address behavioural problems of these children and adolescents before and after their release from correctional/penitentiary facilities. For instance, she emphasizes the importance of socialization and resocialization of offenders after incarceration.

Family and in particular parents play key roles in the acquisition of appropriate behaviours by children and adolescents. Unfortunately, not all children are able to develop secure attachments for various reasons including: some parents lack parenting skills, parents are unavailable for their children due to marital problems, death of a parent(s), or job-related assignments such as in the case of military that keep them away from their children for extended periods of time.

Social workers are helpful in these situations, through provision of residential care, advocacy and policy making, training parents on appropriate skills for raising children and youth, etc. Social workers do face myriad challenges that range from striking the correct balance between child safety and family autonomy (Leathers, 2006; Schmidt, 2013). Extensive research is being carried out to elucidate all the risk factors associated with behavioural difficulties among children and

adolescents, and to develop reliable and pragmatic tools for predicting these risk factors with the sole intention of developing effective intervention strategies for addressing their needs (Labáth, 2016; Vojtová 2012; Červenka, Vojtová 2012; Presová 2012). Thus, it will be prudent for a social worker to be familiar with the symptoms and trajectory patterns of development of these inappropriate behaviours.

Conclusion

We conclude that symptoms of ODD and CD are slightly different from each other, though they take a developmental approach, and as well that that some of the social factors that causes dissocial/antisocial problems in children and adolescents include: family composition, mental health status of their parents, marital conflicts, nature of the relationship between parents and their children, parenting styles, association with deviant peer groups, and problematic neighbourhoods.[2]

References

APA. 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition*. London: American Psychiatric Publishers.

BIEDERMAN, J. et al. 2007. Are Girls with ADHD at Risk for Eating Disorders? Results from a Controlled, Five Years Prospective Study. *Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics* [online]. 28(4), 302–307 [22. 6. 2017]. Available at: doi:10.1097/DBP.0b013e3180327917

BOYLAN, K. 2007. Comorbidity of Internalizing Disorders in Children with Oppositional Defiant Disorders. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* [online]. 16(8), 484–494 [4. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s00787-007-0624-1

BUITELAAR, J. et al. 2013. Conduct Disorders. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* [online]. 22(1), 49–54 [14. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s00787-012-0361-y

CARLSON, M. 2006. Family Structure, Father Involvement and Adolescent Behavior Outcome. *Journal of Marriage and Family* [online]. 68(1), 137–154 [12. 4. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2006.00239.x

ČERVENKA, K., VOJTOVÁ, V. 2012. Individual Need as a Basis of Educational Strategies of Children with Behavioral Difficulties or Conduct Disorders. In: VOJTOVÁ, V. ČERVENKA, K. (Eds.). *Educational Needs of Children at Risk and with Behavioural Disorders*. Brno: Muni Press, 27–34.

CHRISTENSON, J. et al. 2016. The Cost of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Disruptive Behavior: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* [online]. 25(9), 2649–2658 [7. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s10826-016-0430-9

COHEN, J. 2002. Developmental Language Disorder. In: HOWLIN, P., UDWIN, O. (Eds.). *Outcomes in Neurodevelopmental and Genetic Disorders*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 26–55.

DAHL, G. 2010. Early Teen Marriage and Future Poverty. *Demography* [online]. 47(3), 689–718 [10. 3. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1353/dem.0.0120

DOMENECH RODRIGUEZ, M. 2009. Parenting Styles in a Cultural Context: Observation of 'Protective Parenting' in First Generation Latinos. *Family Process* [online]. 48(2), 195–210 [22. 2. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2009.01277.x

EZPELETA, L. et al. 2016. Trajectories of Oppositional Defiant Disorder Irritability Symptoms in Preschool Children. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* [online]. 44(1), 115–128 [5. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi:10.1007/s10802-015-9972-3

EZPELETA, L., PENELO, E. 2015. Measurement Invariance of Oppositional Defiant Disorder Dimensions in 3-Year Old Preschoolers. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* [online]. 31(1), 45–53 [5. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi:10.1027/1015-5759/a000205

FAIRCHILD, G. et al. 2013. Research Review: Evaluating and Reformulating the Developmental Taxonomic Theory of Antisocial Behavior. *The Journal of child psychology and psychiatry* [online]. 54(9), 924–940 [10. 12. 2016]. Available at: doi:10.1111/jcpp.12102

FARRINGTON, D. et al. 2001. Concentration of Offenders in Families, and Family Criminality in the Prediction of Boy's Delinquency. *Journal of Adolescence* [online]. 24(5), 579–596 [23. 5. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1006/jado.2001.0424

FEATHERSTONE, B., GREEN, L. 2013. Judith Butler. In: GRAY, M., WEBB, S (Eds.). *Social Work Theories and Methods*. 2nd edition. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 63–72.

FINCH, A. et al. 2006. Conduct Disorders. In: NELSON, W. et al. (Eds.). *Conduct Disorders: A Practitioner's Guide to Comparative Treatment*. New York: Springers Publishing Company, 1–13.

FOMBY, P., CHERLIN, A. 2007. Family Instability and Child Wellbeing. *American Sociological Review* [online]. 72(2), 181–204 [23. 5. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1177/000312240707200203

FRICK, P. 2012. Developmental Pathways to Conduct Disorder: Implications for Future Directions in Research, Assessment and Treatment. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* [online]. 41(3), 378–389 [16. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1080/15374416.2012.664815

GERTEN, A. 2000. Guidelines for Intervention with Children and Adolescents Diagnosed with Conduct Disorder. *Children and Schools* [online]. 22(3), 132–144 [11. 4. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1093/cs/22.3.132

GROGAN-KAYLOR, A. 2004. The Effect of Corporal Punishment on Antisocial Behaviour in Children. *Social Work Research* [online]. 28(3), 153–162 [24. 5. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1093/swr/28.3.153

HENDRICKX, S. 2010. *The Adolescent and Adult Neuro-Diversity Handbook: Asperger Syndrome, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Related Conditions*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

HENGGELER, S. et al. 2009. *Multisystem Therapy for Antisocial Behavior in Children and Adolescent*. 2nd edition. New York: The Guilford Press.

ISHAK, Z. et al. 2011. Parenting Styles as a Moderator for Children's Academic Achievement. *Journal of Science Education and Technology* [online]. 21(4), 487–493 [21. 2. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s10956-001-9340-1

KLESKEŇ, L. 2016. *Sociálna práca s obvinenými a prepustenými*. Bratislava: IRIS.

LABÁTH, V. 2016. Delikvencia v kontexte rizikového správania. In: LULEI, M., LABÁTH, V. (Eds.). Delikvencia v kontexte rizikového vývinu ISRD3. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského.

LABÁTH, V. 2013. Potentials and Limits of Psychotherapy Application to Conduct Disorders. In: ČERVENKA, K., VOJTOVÁ, V. *Resources for Special Educational Intervention*. Brno: Muni Press, 53–64.

LANG, N. 2010. *Group Work Practice to Advance Social Competence: A specialized Methodology for Social Work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

LEATHERS, S. 2006. Placement Disruption and Negative Placement Outcome among Adolescents in Long Term Foster Care: The Role of Behavioural Problem. *Child Abuse and Neglect* [online]. 30(3), 307–324 [12. 4. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.09.03

LIABO, K., RICHARDSON, J. 2007. *Conduct Disorder and Offending Behaviour in Young People: Findings from Research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

LOEBER, R. et al. 2009. Perspectives on Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder and Psychopathic Features. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* [online]. 50(1–2), 133–142 [4. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02011.x

MANTYMAA, M. et al. 2004. Early Mother Infant Interaction, Parental Mental Health and Symptoms of Behavioural and Emotional Problems in Toddlers. *Infant Behavior and Development* [online]. 27(2), 134–149 [12. 4. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1016/j.infbeh.2003.09.006

MATTHYS, W., LOCHMAN, J. 2010. *Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder in Childhood*. West Sussex: John Wiley and Son ltd.

MIKAMI, A. 2010. The Importance of Friendship for Youths with Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* [online]. 13(2), 181–198 [4. 3. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s10567-010-0067-y

MUNKVOLD, L. et al. 2011. Oppositional Defiant Disorders-Gender Difference in Co-Occurring Symptoms of Mental Health Problems in General Population of Children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* [online]. 39(4), 577–587 [12. 4. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1007/s10802-011-9486-6

MURDOCH, B. 2011. *Handbook of Acquired Communication Disorders in Children*. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing, Inc.

NIEVES J. W. et al. 2005. Males Have Larger Skeletal Size and Bone Mass than Females, Despite Comparable Body Size. *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* [online]. 20(3), 529–535 [8. 3. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1359/JBMR.041005

O'REILLY, D. 2005. *Conduct Disorder and Behavioral Parent Training: Research and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

ONDRUŠKOVÁ, E. et al. 2016. *Rodina, voľný čas, psychoaktívne látky, delikvencia, ISRD3*. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského.

PASSAMONTI, L. et al. 2010. Neural Abnormalities in Early Onset and Adolescence Onset Conduct Disorders. *Archive of General Psychiatry (Now JAMA Psychiatry)* [online]. 67(7), 729–738 [22. 3. 2017]. Available at: doi: 10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2010.75

PRESOVÁ, J. 2012. Resilience Theory as a Source of Educational Approach to at Risk Children. In: VOJTOVÁ, V., ČERVENKA, K. (Eds.). *Educational Needs of Children at Risk and with Behavioural Disorders*. Brno: Muni Press, 61–70.

RICE, M. 1993. Social Consequences of Specific Language Impairment. In: GRIMM, H., SKOWRONEK, H. (Eds.). *Language Acquisition Problems and Reading Disorders: Aspects of Diagnosis and Intervention*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 111–128.

SCHEEPERS, F. et al. 2011. Conduct Disorder and the Specifier Callous and Unemotional Traits in the DSM-5. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* [online]. 20(2), 89–93 [14. 1. 2017]. Available at: doi:10.1007/s00787-010-0149-x

SCHMIDT, V. 2013. Foster Caregivers in Procrustean Bed of the Czech Protection, In: VOJTOVÁ, V., ČERVENKA, K. (Eds.). *Intervention for Inclusion*. Brno: Muni Press, 210–225.

SCHNEIDER, B. 2014. *Child Psychopathology: From Infancy to Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

SILBERG, J. et al. 2015. Age of Onset and the Sub Classification of Conduct/Dissocial Disorder. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* [online]. 56(7), 826–833 [10. 12. 2016]. Available at: doi:10.1111/jcpp.12353

SOUCISSE, M. et al. 2015. Friendship Problems in with ADHD: What Do We Know and What Can We Do? *Perspectives on Language and Literacy* [online]. 41(1), 27–32 [4. 3. 2017]. Available at: https://app.box.com/s/xozzhvom3273gi57qutv0db22gcoc6wq

VOJTOVÁ, V. 2013. Screening for Challenging Children as the 3P Intervention Strategy. In: ČERVENKA, K., VOJTOVÁ, V. *Resources for Special Educational Intervention*. Brno: Muni Press, 21–28.

VOJTOVÁ, V. 2012. Conduct Disorder in Childhood as a Basis of the Need for Support and Intervention. In: VOJTOVÁ, V., ČERVENKA, K. (Eds.). Educational Needs of Children at Risk and with Behavioural Disorders. Brno: Muni Press, 15–26.

WHO. 1992. *The ICD-10 Classification of Mental and Behavioural Disorders: Clinical Description and Diagnostic Guidelines*. Geneva: WHO.

WISSOW, L. 2004. Child Discipline in the First Three Years of Life. In: HALFON, N. et al. (Eds.). *Child Rearing in America: Challenges Facing Parents with Young Children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 146–177.

Quality of Life and Well-Being – Tasks for Social Work?

Christian Spatscheck

Prof. Dr. Christian Spatscheck[1], Professor for Theories and Methods of Social Work at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Hochschule Bremen, City University of Applied Sciences. Visiting Scholar at Lund University, Visiting Professor at Pisa University. Main research interests: theories and methods of social work and social pedagogy, especially spatial and systemic approaches, youth work, social development and international social work.

Abstract
Social work refers to the concept of well-being in its Global Definition. Yet social work as discipline and profession has yet to fully discover the existing concepts and empirical research on quality of life and well-being. This article aims to reflect and systematize the main developments and approaches to define quality of life and well-being. Finally, it provides first considerations of what this new knowledge base could offer to social work theory and practice.

1. Quality of life and well-being: A theme in popular and academic discourses

Currently the search for 'the good life' has become a popular topic in many societies. For individuals the quest for gaining a good balance of regular activities and their search for sense, purpose and contentment has become a frequently debated theme. And on a collective level, magazines on the virtues of 'country life' and 'happiness' are some of the most popular print titles, movements of downshifting and downgrading rediscover the idea of 'small is beautiful', work life meets 'Generation Y' asking for more sense and fulfilment in occupation, groups of slow food or slow cities (città slow) try to de-accelerate life, and an ongoing interest in the diverse forms of inner search, counselling and spiritual approaches can be realised. These developments also find their manifestation in a variety of new initiatives, be they for urban gardening, networks of the sharing economy, transition towns, groups for upcycling, repair cafés, and makers' activities.

But 'the good life' has also become a relevant topic for the social sciences. In psychology, philosophy and health studies, whole research groups are working in the fields of happiness research, positive

[1] Contact: Prof. Dr. Christian Spatscheck, Dr. phil., Dipl.Paed, Dipl.Soz.Arb., Hochschule Bremen, City University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, Neustadtswall 30, D-28199 Bremen, Germany; christian.spatscheck@hs-bremen.de, www.christian-spatscheck.de

psychology, subjective well-being and mindfulness. Also sociology, economics and poverty studies direct their research activities on well-being, quality of life, social development and social cohesion. And developmental studies and community development are trying to design and implement concrete interventions for a higher quality of life for larger groups of people.

These developments are happening in a certain societal and historical context. Some reasons for the growing interest for 'the good life' might be the increasing global realisation of ecological and social limits to growth, an increase of crises in political and economic systems, and capitalism itself. But also personal experiences of an accelerated lifestyle, the increase of stress and related diseases, burnout and depression invite questioning of the current strategies of economic and political development. Against this background, an increasing group of informed and critical citizens are demanding more participation, democracy and are searching for alternative approaches. They are taking a look beyond the GDP as single indicator for 'good development' and are drawn toward the ideas of post-materialism. Many of them are searching for at least small utopias in post-modern times of de-ideologisation and the end of the great utopias. And, last but not least, this development is also owed to general scientific progress. Concepts and empirical measurement of quality of life found interest in many academic disciplines, and was promoted in influential disciplines like economics.

Interestingly, the academic social work discourse thus far only rarely (e.g. Jordan, 2007, 2008) or rather indirectly (e.g. Dominelli, 2012; Payne, 2011) connects to the academic discussion on quality of life and well-being. This is even more remarkable as the IFSW's and IASSW's Global Definition of Social Work explicitly states in its first passage "*Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing*" (IFSW, 2014:online). This direct reference to well-being seems, so far, not to be fully recognised in the social work debate. Academic social work seems yet to have discovered the huge amount of research on quality of life and well-being from other disciplines in the social sciences. Against this background, it could be helpful to reflect and systematize main developments and different academic approaches in the field and to start looking what this base of knowledge could mean and offer to social work in theory and practice.

2. Quality of life and well-being in the social sciences

Different disciplines in the social sciences already have been active in research and theory development on quality of life and well-being. Over the last 50 years a bigger amount of studies and publications has been produced (Rapley, 2001:3; Phillips, 2006). Despite being carried out in different fields, be it sociology, psychology, economics, health studies, development studies or other fields, all of the studies have a common attribute: They take a look beyond the traditional indicator for well-being, per capita GDP, and are identifying new criteria and definitions for leading and measuring 'a good life'.

Implicitly they all connect to the main argumentation of the 'Easterlin Paradox'. Referring to a study by Richard Easterlin in 1974, and confirmed by several later studies, the Easterlin Paradox describes the notable situation, that, despite ongoing economic growth in Western societies, surveys on the individual overall life satisfaction no longer show an increase of individual contentment or life satisfaction along with the increase of economic growth (Jordan, 2008:13).

Research activities in the field mostly started in the early 1960's when a lack of data and concepts on well-being led to the foundation of a 'social indicators movement' that developed concepts for the measurement of quality of life (Noll, 2002). Over the following decades, the amount of research steadily rose and different indicators for identifying objective and subjective well-being and the quality of life have been created, tested and implemented (Rapley, 2001:11).

It is quite difficult to oversee the whole landscape of activities in the related disciplines. A popular common denominator is the formula from the sociologist Jan Delhey. He sums up his longer

research activities with the following equation: "*Happiness = Having (a certain amount of wealth) + Loving (strong relationships) + Being (development of individual aspirations)*" (Bormans, 2012:224). But beyond such individual attempts for summaries, there is still no overarching definition for quality of life (Rapley, 2001:63).

What can be used as a first conceptual basis instead is a review of the leading textbooks on quality of life research. For this purpose, I refer in the following chapters especially to David Phillips (2006) and Mark Rapley (2001) and enhance their argumentation with field specific studies and additional textbooks. On the basis of these sources, the following seven general approaches to quality of life and well-being can be identified in the social sciences and are finding, at least partly, also their resonance in social work. These approaches are to be described in the following passages.

2.1 Subjective well-being, happiness and positive psychology

Some groups of quality of life researchers focus on the empirical measurement and operationalisation of subjective well-being (SWB) and individually perceived happiness (for an overview: Phillips, 2006:15; Rapley, 2001:190). Over the last decades, stronger empirical research activities have led to a grounded knowledge base in the field. In most of these studies, subjective well-being and happiness are treated as synonymous terms and are measured on individual levels along subjective perceptions. Here, happiness is often defined along operationalisations similar to: "*the experience of joy, contentment, or positive well-being, combined with a sense that one's life is good, meaningful, and worthwhile*" (Lyubomirsky, 2007:14).

Research in the field could identify certain factors, activities or character attributes that help in gaining a subjective feeling of happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2007:88; Seligman, 2011; Compton, Hoffman, 2012; Steinebach et al., 2012). Some of the most important features are the individual's experiences of:

- connection, affiliation and attachment to reliable and present contact persons or family members,
- kindness and compassion in social relations and in contact with other people,
- cooperation and reconciliation in social relations,
- activities of mindfulness or contemplative focus,
- experiences of self-compassion, flow, optimism, gratitude, awe, wonder or beauty.

The last decades have seen a 'positive turn' for the discipline of psychology (Compton, Hoffman, 2012; Steinebach et al., 2012). Psychological research gradually moved from a problem-oriented 'negative' psychology, focused on psychiatric illnesses and problems, towards a 'positive psychology' trying to identify the main factors of well-being, and leading a good life.

In research on positive psychology, the concept of 'flourishing' became quite central. Felicia Huppert and Jeremy So have defined flourishing as follows (Huppert, So in Seligman, 2011:22). To flourish an individual must own all of the following 'core features', and three of the six 'additional features'. Core features are (a) positive emotions, (b) engagement, (c) interest, (d) meaning and purpose. Additional features are: (a) self-esteem, (b) optimism, (c) resilience, (d) vitality, (e) self-determination and (f) positive relationships.

A basic difference is drawn between hedonic and eudaimonic[2] concepts of happiness (Phillips, 2006:31). While hedonic approaches are focussing on outstanding moments of happiness, intensity, perceived joy and hedonism, eudaimonic approaches focus on general factors of contentment along criteria of competence, autonomy, meaning and purpose in life.

---

[2] The term eudaimonia derives from Greek philosophy and refers to the terms eu – the good – and daimon – spirit; especially Aristotle was using the term eudaimonia to describe the highest aim for leading of a good life along the virtues derived from ethics.

While many studies in the field take a clear focus on individual well-being and happiness, some of the happiness studies also integrate social and collective factors. Surveys like the UN World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2013) focus on context factors and structural aspects of well-being and happiness. This tendency is also reflected in many articles of the Journal of Happiness Studies, the leading journal in the field. They often connect social factors and aspects of individual agency in their analyses.

In social work, approaches of positive psychology have led to the development of strengths-based and solution-focused practice methods (Payne, 2014:243). Here, many concrete examples for a positive turn in thinking and acting can already be found in social work theory and practice.

2.2 Health-related approaches

Health studies have been strongly influenced by the definition of health by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Along this definition, which has been formulated for the WHO Constitution and came into force in 1948, health is more than the absence of illness. Instead, health is regarded as a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well-being' (WHO, 1948 in Phillips, 2006:40). This broad and ambitious vision enhanced the aims of health studies and health-related interventions to areas that had predominantly been covered by other social sciences and now became relevant for studies on health as well. This new field experienced quite an increase in activities around the measurement of health and its societal dimensions (Rapley, 2001:139).

On individual levels, studies often are carried out along the concepts of Health Related Quality of Life (HRQOL), focused on the individual and experiential level. A leading definition from Anne Bowling describes the field as "*Health-related quality of life is defined here as optimum levels of physical role (e.g. work, carer, parent, etc.) and social functioning, including relationships and perceptions of health, fitness, life satisfaction and well-being*" (Bowling, 1995 in Phillips, 2006:41). Another common unit of measurement became the 'healthy years approach'. For an assessment of the utility and effectiveness of health interventions the concept of 'quality adjusted life years' (QALYs), or, for the field of disability the 'disability adjusted life years' (DALYs), became the acknowledged references (Rapley, 2001:143; Phillips, 2006:46). A QALY or DALY of 1.0 represents one year of good health in a client's life.

Mark Rapley (2001:255) also points out the ambivalences of QALY and DALY measurements: What if a person does not perceive a healthy life over longer times? Would such a person still deserve health support or would it be more 'effective' to treat other people who are more likely to experience an increase in their well-being? This leads to further ethical problems. As a general conclusion it needs to be drawn that single utilitarian considerations are not sufficient with regard to health interventions. Instead, a critical reflection of health contexts and a reference to factors of human rights and human dignity needs to be included in moral and ethical reasoning.

Here social work and healthcare share a common challenge. Social workers face similar ethical demands when they try to reach needs for social justice and economic needs for effectiveness. Social work still follows a stronger social and societal approach than healthcare. However, as health definitions are integrating social perspectives, and social work approaches are integrating health issues, these two fields find more and more common ground. These developments are reflected in health-oriented approaches to social work (Jost, 2013) or clinical social work (Cooper, Granucci Lesser, 2014), as well as developments towards a community-oriented healthcare (Mpofu, 2014). Beyond the individual level, many health-related studies on quality of life also integrate the social and community level (Phillips, 2006:54). These approaches often follow ecological concepts that regard the individual health and well-being as embedded in family and kinship networks, affiliations to community, nation and society as well as global influences. Such approaches refer to the interdependence of all levels as key factors for an understanding of health in a social and community-related approach.

Further activities in health-related quality of life research can be characterised with the term 'critical public health research' (Phillips, 2006:191). Following a vision of 'healthy societies' these

approaches measure the impact of policy and planning on health and are formulating analyses and implications. Famous studies in the field include the public health studies by the epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (Wilkinson, Pickett, 2010). They could identify social equality and social coherence as key factors for a positive individual development of citizens. Their studies show that social and economic inequality and a lack of social cohesion are the corresponding factors for all forms of health related or social problems. Increased inequality correlates with lower physical and mental health and with increases in addictions, teenage pregnancies, child maltreatment, violence, higher crime rates, social immobility, lower trust and less community life in the regarded nations and societies.

2.3 Well-being, needs and capabilities

Many approaches for the measurement of quality of life are created along concepts on values and needs to find minimum standards for 'a good life' (Phillips, 2006:62). These approaches try to formulate concepts of human utilities or needs and are based around collections and lists of indicators for resources that human beings need for their positive individual and social development. Not all of the approaches can be described here, but the five following concepts should find further consideration.

Len Doyal and Ian Gough (1991) have formulated a rather complex 'theory of human need'. Their approach is primarily oriented along the two human *primary needs* of 'physical health' and 'autonomy of agency'. To satisfy these objective primary needs they identify eleven *intermediary needs* to be met: (a) nutritional food and clean water, (b) protective housing, (c) non-hazardous work environment, (d) non-hazardous physical environment, (e) safe birth control and child bearing, (f) appropriate health care, (g) secure childhood, (h) significant primary relationships, (i) physical security, (j) economic security, and (k) appropriate education.

The economist and Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen (1993) formulated his quite famous Capability Approach. This approach is oriented around the ideas of freedom and development. It follows the main concept of gaining 'functionings' – states of well-being and active 'doing' and 'being'. The functionings are gained from certain resources, the 'capabilities'. Main functionings that define the individual's well-being are: (a) avoiding mortality and finding of health, (b) being nourished, (c) having mobility, (d) being happy, (e) finding self-respect, (f) taking part in community life, (g) appearing in public without shame.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum (2000) built on Sen's Capability Approach enhanced it along philosophical concepts and clarified what capabilities could be. While Sen still avoids formulating a list of capabilities, Nussbaum elaborated such a list which consists, here in an abbreviated form, of: (a) *physical capabilities* (living a normal long live, bodily health, bodily integrity, material control over the world), (b) *mental capabilities* (senses, imagination, thought; emotion, care, love, practical reason), and (c) *social capabilities* (affiliation, political control, living alongside others, social bases of self-respect, appreciation of other species, play).

Robert Skidelsky and Edward Skidelsky (2012) have formulated a theoretical concept of 'basic goods' that are the 'good life itself' and not just goods that can be used to lead a good life. Their list of basic goods consists of: (a) being able to develop a personality, (b) to find and keep health, and to be able to experience (c) leisure, (d) friendship, (e) respect, (f) security, and (g) harmony with nature.

However, also the theory of social work can offer concepts and 'lists' of what humans need. The theoretical approach from Silvia Staub-Bernasconi, which regards social work as 'a human rights profession', identifies the following relevant resources for the human conduct of life (Staub-Bernasconi, 2007:183): (a) physical resources (health, abilities), (b) socio-economic resources (money, goods), (c) socio-cultural resources (cultural affiliations), (d) socio-ecological resources (nature, healthy environment), (e) competences of gaining knowledge, (f) symbolic resources (adequate inner pictures and mental models), (g) competences to act, (h) social positions (formal

and informal roles in social systems) and (i) memberships in social systems (solidarity and support). Beyond identifying these resources, she also reflects conditions of social justice, mutuality and relations of power in her analyses. The approach is rooted in a 'theory of human needs' that she herself predominantly developed, Werner Obrecht and Kaspar Geiser (see Obrecht, 1999). As a human rights concept, it aims to connect human needs and human rights in the analyses and interventions of social work (Staub-Bernasconi, 2007).

2.4 Poverty studies
Some approaches to quality of life are situated in the context of developmental studies and their interventions and analyses for the prevention of global and local poverty (for an overview see White, 2014). In regard to quality of life and well-being most of these studies formulate the conclusion that poverty is more than just a lack of material resources but also includes different factors of exclusion. On this background they differ between *absolute* and *relative* poverty (Phillips, 2006:108). Relative poverty needs to be regarded as social exclusion that is based on structural, lifeworld-related and individual factors (ibid.:116).
Developmental practice and interventions take their focus on challenging social exclusion and try to create and support conditions of well-being, justice, empowerment and fairer economic and trade relations along the initiatives and participation of affected citizens (White, 2014). Insofar, they connect to individual and collective approaches of quality of life research that are mentioned in this article.
In social work, parallels to poverty and development studies can be found in theory models of anti-oppressive practice (Dominelli, 2002) or international social work (Cox, Pawar, 2013). Both these concepts try to respond to social exclusion as well at a macro level and aim to change societal structures.

2.5 Communities, social capital and social cohesion
Other approaches in quality of life research are grouped around concepts of strong communities. Following the reflections of the early sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, who differed between the more identification-related membership in a 'community' (*Gemeinschaft*) and the more instrumentally-related membership in a 'society' (*Gesellschaft*), activities of identification with a community are regarded as a counter-model, a safe haven and place of security against the demanding influences of modern society itself. Quite similar, Emile Durkheim differed between a 'given' *mechanistic* solidarity of pre-industrial societies and the 'organised' *organic* solidarity in modern societies that must be created through community-building, shared moral experiences and active interdependence. Communitarian philosophers like Michael Walzer, Robert Putnam and Charles Taylor began in the 1990's to rediscover communities as counterbalance to the increasingly individualistic Western societies.
Some approaches of quality of life research are directly connected to the community orientation of these general concepts. Here, especially two directions can be identified. On the one hand, there are approaches that analyse communities on the ground of the *social capital* they generate and on the other hand, there are approaches that try to measure the *social cohesion* of communities and societies. Conceptional models on *social capital* (Phillips, 2006:135) regard community building as useful for creating the capital and potential of a society as well as a form of 'social glue' that keeps the otherwise individualistic and competitive societies together. Social networks, neighbourhoods and their activities of solidarity and mutuality are regarded as important factors for gaining resources and keeping societies and communities together. Famous studies from Robert Putnam (2000) and Pierre Bourdieu (1979) are connected to concepts of social capital. In social work the studies from Bill Jordan (2008) are strongly connected to the concept of social capital as well.
The model of *social cohesion* is a newer model in social sciences. It integrates the *horizontal* levels of mutually produced and shared social capital with the *vertical* levels of integration, trust and civic

institutions (Phillips, 2006:141). One example is a model that has been applied in studies of the Bertelsmann Foundation, like the 'Radar of Social Cohesion' (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2014) or the international comparison study 'Social Cohesion and Well-being in the EU' (Bertelsmann Stiftung and Eurofound, 2014). In these studies, social cohesion is modelled along the three domains of:

- social relations (consisting of the measured indicators in the dimensions of social networks, trust in people and acceptance of diversity),
- social connectedness (consisting of the measured indicators in the dimensions of identification, trust in social institutions and perceived fairness),
- focus on the common good (consisting of the measured indicators in the dimensions of society and helpfulness, respect for social rules and civic participation).

These studies enable a systematic overview on trends and developments of social cohesion and a comparison in an international perspective.

In social work, parallels to community-oriented concepts of well-being can be found in approaches for community development and community work. Here, activities of fostering citizen engagement, building social capital and enhancing social cohesion are strategic aims and guide different forms of intervention as well (Gilchrist, Taylor, 2016).

2.6 Society and social quality of life: liberty, equality, solidarity

The concept of 'social quality' was developed as a critique and counterbalance to the so far economically dominated models of quality of life (Phillips, 2006:175). Directed to policy makers and academics it aims to measure the extent to which citizens are able to participate in their communities and if they find suitable and supporting conditions for developing well-being and individual potentials in these communities.

As a model, social quality is built on the following four *conditional factors* that societies should provide and develop (Beck et al., 2001):

- *Socio-economic security*, defined by the extent to which citizens find enough resources for their life. It consists of the *domains*: financial resources, housing and environment, health and care, work and education.
- *Social inclusion*, defined by the extent to which citizens have access to institutions and social relations. It consists of the *domains*: citizenship rights, labour market, public and private services and social networks.
- *Social cohesion*, defined by the quality of social relations based on shared identities, values and norms. It consists of the *domains*: trust, other integrative norms and values, social networks and identity.
- *Social empowerment*, defined the extent to which the capabilities of individuals and their abilities to act are supported by social relations. It consists of the *domains*: knowledge base, labour market, openness and supportiveness of institutions and personal relations.

The model follows a normative approach. It stresses societies' duties to support citizen's rights and to create socio-economic security. And it formulates the need to integrate societal developments and biographical dimensions and calls for mediation between systems, institutions, organisations, companies, families, networks and communities. Following this conceptual layout, it carries many similarities to the multi-level 'person in environment' approaches that are also often used as a reference for social work (e.g. Payne, 2011).

For empirical studies, the model of social quality has been operationalised by the group ENIC (European Network of Indicators of Social Quality) as a catalogue with 95 indicators that are aimed to measure and compare social quality in different countries and communities (for full list see Appendix in Phillips, 2006:246). In the beginning many researchers on social quality organised themselves in the EFSQ (European Foundation on Social Quality), meanwhile this organization

has been further internationalized into the IASQ (International Association of Social Quality) and is still active in the field.

In social work, the concept of social quality and its normative approach for good social conditions is clearly met in the emancipatory approaches and methods of empowerment and advocacy (Payne, 2014:294).

2.7 A vision: Post-growth economics and post-growth societies

Two critical events have strongly contributed to the development of models and concepts for post-growth economies or societies. Firstly, the ecological limits of growth represented by the global climate crisis, the emerging 'peak everything' of nearly all natural resources and the social crises and limits of growth (see here also Dominelli, 2012). Secondly, the already mentioned Easterlin paradox that shows that wealth and happiness lose their ongoing correlation to growth above a certain basic level of wealth.

Authors with a post-growth background try to find outlines for new ways to overcome these crises and search for alternative concepts and models of well-being, welfare and life. Tim Jackson (2011) published his ideas for new forms of 'prosperity without growth', Niko Paech (2012) proclaims a good life along the deliberately chosen virtues of sufficiency and subsistence in local and solidary economies, research groups are searching for concepts of sustainable welfare[3] (e.g. Koch, Mont, 2016) and several groups and initiatives are organized around the idea of 'transition towns' (Hopkins, 2011) or the idea of community goods that are shared as 'commons' (Ostrom, 2012).

All of these initiatives share the common aim of searching for concepts and models for more sustainable lifestyles that are also leading to more happiness, well-being and social and ecological justice.

In the theory debate of social work, Lena Dominelli's approach of a 'Green Social Work' (Dominelli, 2012) is formulated with strong parallels to post-growth models. She argues for the need of bridging the demands of the ecological and social question and shows the clear relevance of post-growth approaches for social work theory and practice.

3. Quality of life and well-being – A task and reference model for social work?

David Phillips summarizes the research activities on quality of life and well-being as: "*Quality of life requires that people's basic and social needs are met and that they have the autonomy to choose to enjoy life, to flourish and to participate as citizens in a society with high levels of civic integration, social connectivity, trust and other integrative norms including at least fairness and equity, all within a physically and socially sustainable global environment*" (Phillips, 2006:242).

For the context of social work now remains the question of what could be gained from the broad variety of empirically and conceptually based knowledge on quality of life and well-being. Can the above stated approaches provide further insight and inspiration? From my perspective the following four points should be kept and regarded for a further discussion.

3.1 A shift in thinking

The stated approaches on quality of life and well-being clearly mark a general shift in thinking. They formulate a genuinely positive approach that directs the perspective from social problems towards the vision and the aims of a happier and better life for all individuals and communities. Hereby they enlighten the conditions, potentials and possibilities for positive individual and social development and create a ground for arguments on rights and chances that every human being should be able to gain and to access.

---

[3] An example here is the interdisciplinary project "Sustainable Welfare" at the Pufendorf Institute of Advanced Studies at Lund University.

Insofar they have conceptual similarities and connections to the concepts of social work as a human rights profession (Staub-Bernasconi, 2007; Ife, 2012) as well as approaches that merge the questions of social and ecological justice (Dominelli, 2012) or humanistic approaches to social work (Payne, 2011).

Along this outline, they mark a different approach to social problems. They make clear that happiness and well-being are not just 'middle class luxury problems' but are also aims to be reached and deserved by the poor, the subaltern and other excluded groups and individuals.

3.2 A knowledge base for analyses and interventions

Many concepts and results from research on quality of life and well-being can be used as a source for more grounded knowledge on special areas and fields of intervention in social work. So could positive psychology provide relevant and inspiring orientation for interventions and approaches along the tasks of assessment, counselling, planning and intervention in case work with individuals and families. And research results on social quality, social capital and social cohesion could provide social workers with more orientation for their interventions for support and development of groups, communities, organisations and societies. Interestingly, most of the described approaches already include a multi-level approach that connects the micro, meso and macro level and therefore has similarities to social work theories and concepts.

For a further systematisation, the described approaches could differ between individual and collective approaches. There are four individual approaches, consisting of (a) the research on subjective well-being, (b) the approaches for health related quality of life, (c) the needs and capabilities approaches and (d) the poverty and level of living studies. And there are three collective approaches, including (a) the community studies on social capital and social cohesion, (b) the approaches on societal quality of life, including research on social quality or overarching quality of life, and (c) the critical public health models. From a humanistic perspective, it clearly makes sense to regard the two types of approaches in their connection. And social work could provide a new arena for such an integrating perspective.

3.3 Happiness and quality of life as context-related terms

A terminological and ontological analysis makes it clear that well-being, happiness and a quality of life should not be regarded as absolute and fixed objects. Rather they need to be regarded as context related processes. Quality of life and well-being are developed in interactions among different social and individual actors and their attitudes as well as within social relations and contexts.

Such a relational state could lead to a disillusion and the impression of an overwhelming multiplicity. Mark Rapley (2001:212) even comes to the conclusion to 'hang up the term' of quality of life itself in regard of the plurality of approaches and concepts.

But such a total rejection seems to be going too far. The relational condition of quality of life and well-being should not be mistaken for arbitrariness. Rather it seems necessary to leave the positivist approach behind that tries to identify fixed and finite objects, and instead to establish a dialectic approach that demands to lead discourses on relations, preferences and related values in the field.

3.4 Container terms, responsibilities and power

Through their huge popularity and their manifold definitions, well-being and quality of life are in danger of becoming matters that in discourse analysis are called 'container terms'. Container terms mask their contents and make them rather unclear than clear. Similar to the often unclear use of terms like inclusion, participation or empowerment, also quality of life and well-being could become more and more opaque terms that are rather used for gaining power and influence than for making things more clear and accessible.

The big danger here is the disconnection between the discourses on social justice and those on quality of life and well-being. This could strengthen individualising models of society, make individuals responsible for their quality of life and well-being alone and hide the common social responsibility for reaching them.

A solution for this challenge is the ongoing democratic negotiation of roles between citizens, state and market and a participatory discourse on 'good policies'. This would include a reflection of influences of power, interests and responsibilities and could lead to a shift from 'evidence-based policies' towards 'reflexive and evidence informed policies'.

Again, this would require a dialectic approach and discourses on preferences, values, rights and interests in the field of quality of life and well-being. What this mental shift could mean is quite powerfully characterised by the poetic passage of Eduardo Galeano[4] (in Barsamian, 2004:146): "*I don't believe in charity; I believe in solidarity. Charity is vertical, so it's humiliating. It goes from top to bottom. Solidarity is horizontal. It respects the other and learns from the other. I have a lot to learn from other people*".

4. Conclusion

This article offers an introductory overview on the main concepts and research traditions on quality of life and well-being. Herewith, it aims to provide a first insight into what this existing body of knowledge could offer for social work. The next step would be to establish a systematic integration of this knowledge into the theory, research and practice debates of social work. This could provide inspiring conceptual and empirical references for the further development of social work's theory and practice.

For the theory debate, it seems quite helpful to further discuss whether the stated 'positive turn' would also be a gain for social work and to assess its potentials for the development of concepts, models, and methods. Theories of quality of life and well-being seem to provide grounded concepts and potential criteria on what human subjects need to grow, to develop their potential and to lead a more satisfying life. And the research on social mutuality, social quality of life and the potential of communities and social relations helps identifying which factors should be regarded on community level. On this basis, social work and social policy could find a more grounded theory base to better define its subject matter and its relevance for individuals, families, groups, communities and societies.

Social work research could build on the designs from research projects on quality of life and well-being to develop its own further empirical studies. Here it would be of special interest which items should be measured in which field of social work and to identify if the target groups, settings and institutions of social work need other approaches to quality of life and well-being, or if the existing approaches meet the need. Beyond this, evaluation studies could inform about the impacts and results of interventions that are directed to foster quality of life and well-being in the settings of social work.

Social work practice could use models of quality of life and well-being to enhance its assessment methods to better identify and describe social problems and resources. The presented models provide social workers with many criteria and items that could be sought and identified in assessment processes. And for goal and intervention planning, the models could help name and identify the relevant goals and offers more precisely, to gain a more concrete access on otherwise hidden possibilities, and to develop more suitable interventions that both address the individual and social system level.

---

[4] Here I would like to thank Iain Ferguson for including and sharing this quotation in his Keynote at the EASSW conference in Milan 2015.

This article could only give some hints to new potential, and perhaps they can be discovered and on a broader basis and can help inspire social work on the different stated levels and settings. This could enhance social work in all its forms, whether casework, group work, social work with families, community work, or community development. Insofar, social work theory, research and practice could find inspiration and guidance through this new field of research.

References
BARSAMIAN, D. 2004. *Louder Than Bombs: Interviews from The Progressive Magazine*. Cambridge: South End Press.
BECK, W., VAN DER MAESEN, L., THOMÉSE F. et al. 2001. *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.
BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG. 2014. *Radar gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhalt – messen was verbindet*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann.
BERTELSMANN STIFTUNG AND EUROFOUND. 2014. *Social Cohesion and Well-Being in the EU*. Gütersloh and Dublin: Bertelsmann.
BORMANS, L. (Ed.). 2012. *Glück. The World Book of Happiness*. Köln: Dumont.
BOURDIEU, P. 1979. *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit.
COMPTON, W., HOFFMAN, E. 2012. *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Flourishing*. 2nd edition. Belmont: Wadsworth.
COOPER, M., GRANUCCI LESSER, J. 2014. *Clinical Social Work Practice. An Integrative Approach*. 5th edition. London: Pearson.
COX, D., PAWAR, M. 2013. *International Social Work. Issues, Strategies and Programs*. 2nd edition. London: Sage.
DOMINELLI, L. 2012. *Green Social Work – From Environmental Crises to Environmental Justice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
DOMINELLI, L. 2002. *Anti-Oppressive Social Work. Theory and Practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
DOYAL, L., GOUGH, L. 1991. *A Theory of Human Need*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
GILCHRIST, A., TAYLOR, M. 2016. *The Short Guide to Community Development*. 2nd edition. Bristol: Policy Press.
HELLIWELL, J., LAYARD, R., SACHS, J. 2013. *World Happiness Report*. New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
HOPKINS, R. 2011. *The Transition Companion. Making Your Community More Resilient in Uncertain Times*. Totnes: Transition Books.
IFE, J. 2012. *Human Rights and Social Work. Towards Rights-Based Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
IFSW. 2014. *Global Definition of Social Work* [online]. [9. 5. 2017]. Available at: http://ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work/
JACKSON, T. 2011. *Prosperity without Growth. Economics for a Finite Planet*. Abingdon: Earthscan, Routledge.
JORDAN, B. 2008. *Welfare and Well-Being – Social Value in Public Policy*. Bristol: Policy Press.
JORDAN, B. 2007. *Social Work and Well-Being*. Lyme Regis: Russell House.
JOST, A. 2013. *Gesundheit und Soziale Arbeit*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
KOCH, M., MONT, O. (Eds.). 2016. *Sustainability and the Political Economy of Welfare: Perspectives, Policies and Emerging Practices*. London: Routledge.
LYUBOMIRSKY, S. 2007. *The How of Happiness. A Scientific Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. London: Penguin.
MPOFU, E. (Ed.). 2014. *Community-Oriented Health Services: Practices Across Disciplines*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.

NOLL, H. H. 2002. Social Indicators and Quality of Life Research: Background, Achievements and Current Trends. In: GENOV, N. (Ed.). *Advances in Sociological Knowledge over Half a Century*. Paris: International Social Science Council, 151–181.

NUSSBAUM, M. 2000. *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

OBRECHT, W. 1999. *Umrisse einer biopsychosozialen Theorie menschlicher Bedürfnisse – Geschichte, Probleme, Struktur, Funktion*. Wien: Typoskript, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien.

OSTROM, E. 2012. *The Future of the Commons. Beyond Market Failure and Government Regulations*. London: Institute of Economic Affairs.

PAECH, N. 2012. *Liberation from Excess. The Road to a Post-Growth Economy*. Munich: Oekon.

PAYNE, M. 2014. *Modern Social Work Theory*. 4th edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

PAYNE, M. 2011. *Humanistic Social Work. Core Principles in Practice*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

PHILLIPS, D. 2006. *Quality of Life. Concept, Policy and Practice*. London: Routledge.

PUTNAM, R. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Touchstone.

RAPLEY, M. 2001. *Quality of Life Research. A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage.

SELIGMAN, M. 2011. *Flourish. A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Free Press.

SEN, A. 1993. Capability and Well-Being. In: NUSSBAUM, M., SEN, A. (Eds.). *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 30–53.

SKIDELSKY, R., SKIDELSKY, E. 2012. *How Much is Enough? Money and the Good Life*. New York: Other Press.

STAUB-BERNASCONI, S. 2007. *Soziale Arbeit als Handlungswissenschaft*. Bern: Haupt.

STEINEBACH, C., JUNGO, D., ZIHLMANN, R. (Eds.). 2012. *Positive Psychologie in der Praxis: Anwendung in Psychotherapie, Beratung und Coaching*. Weinheim: Beltz.

WHITE, S. (Ed.). 2014. *Wellbeing and Quality of Life Assessment*. Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.

WILKINSON, R. G., PICKETT, K. 2010. *The Spirit Level. Why Equality is Better for Everyone*. London: Penguin.

Professionalization of Child Protection in the Czech Republic from the Perspective of Sociological Theories

Lenka Divoká

Dr. Lenka Divoká[1] studied Social Research and Social Policy at Bangor University in the United Kingdom and currently lectures at the College of Social Work in Olomouc. Her main teaching and research interests are in the area of social research methods, monitoring and evaluation, and professionalization of social and community work.

Abstract

This article is an excerpt from the author's doctoral thesis *The Social Work Profession in the Czech Republic* completed in 2016. The thesis was based on an empirical research of social work studied from the perspective of the sociology of the professions. Social work has been described as a semi-profession by many authors and social workers often feel they are viewed as second-rate professionals. The research examined such views, using a conceptual framework which combines elements of neo-Weberian, neo-institutional and traits theories. There were two main research questions: how do social workers describe the current state of their profession, and how do they describe the pathways to enhanced professionalisation? The design of the research was a case study focusing on the field of child protection. The results showed that social work in the Czech Republic has not accomplished the autonomy of the established professions. Nevertheless, the profession has acquired some important advantages in the labour market, including a degree of market closure as described in the neo-Weberian theory of professionalisation. Contrary to the general perspective of the authors in the sociology of social work, social work in the Czech Republic was found to be a fast-developing and flexible profession responsive to current conditions.

Keywords

Czech Republic, neo-Weberian theory, neo-institutional theory, professions, social work, traits theory

1. Introduction

The paramount aim of the thesis research counducted from 2010 to 2012 was to observe the current state of development of the social work profession in the Czech Republic. It sought to identify the current achievements and issues facing the profession, and understand the significant strategies that social work professions employ in order to enhance their professional position within the system of child protection.

The research also aimed to draw on the perspectives of social work professionals, and to that end it considers their experience of everyday working life as a valid account of the reality of the

---

[1] Contact: Mgr. Lenka Divoká, Ph.D., CARITAS – College of Social Work Olomouc, Nám. Republiky 3, 779 00 Olomouc, Czech Republic; lenka.divoka@caritas-vos.cz

profession. In order to achieve this, a conceptual framework is developed, combining concepts from the current approaches of the sociology of the professions, namely the neo-Weberian theory, the neo-institutional theory and the traits theory, and from Stone's policy-making concept of causal stories, which allows for interpreting the accounts of social work professionals in relation to the professionalisation of social work. However, in this article the main focus is on the interpretation of data from the perspective of the sociological theories of professions, and the mezzo-analysis based on the concept of causal stories is mentioned only marginally.

The thesis also aimed to challenge the prevailing critical views on social work that refer to the low status of the profession or to the professional failure resulting from the incompetence of social work professionals to fulfil their professional objectives. In fact, the thesis showed that the social work profession has significantly improved its position on the labour market as well as in the social welfare system. It also suggested that the social work profession should be conceived as a coalition of particular inter-professional groups, who each time more or less adeptly respond to the organisational, political and economic conditions of the social welfare system in order to strengthen their professional position.

1.1 Background

It is important to consider the historical development of the social work profession in the Czech Republic within the political, economic and societal context of the country. The major social work professional achievements occurred within the post-communist period, when neo-liberal policies allowed the profession to establish itself in the educational and the legal systems as well as the social welfare structure. Nonetheless, voices of concern and criticism about the credibility of the profession and the 'unprofessionalism' of social workers have arisen, and increasingly so from the state and council authorities, as well as from the media and within social work's own occupational ranks. Previous research on the professional trajectory of social work in the Czech Republic is limited, and only a few authors have studied the strategies of professionalisation from the perspective of the sociology of the professions.

There is now some recognition that the Anglo-American theoretical and empirical tradition in the sociology of the professions has its limitations when applied to processes of professionalisation in other regions. Recently, sociologists from Continental Europe have contributed to the discussion with consideration of the closer relationship between the state and the professions that is historically embedded in European countries. Interestingly, Czech academic debate about the social work profession, although also very limited, takes neither the perspective of neo-Weberian theory nor neo-institutional theory, but of post-modernism or late modernism. This reflects the preoccupation of Czech sociologists with the substantial societal changes that came with the process of democratisation. In light of this, the conceptual framework does not relate to only one theory of the professions but encompasses several main theories, the neo-Weberian, neo-institutional theories and the traits theory, in order to understand the case of complex social work professionalisation in the Czech Republic.

Social workers in the Czech Republic are striving to catch up with their colleagues from other countries with respect to the level of training, growing volume of social work knowledge, and scope of activities performed as social services. They encounter similar issues to their European colleagues resulting from bureaucratisation of work, introduction of market principles into social services, negative media presentation, and Europeanisation of social welfare policy. However, a number of specific factors, such as the Communist heritage, the ambiguous relationship between the Czech majority and the Roma community, traditionally strong positions of council authorities, rapid changes of family behaviour in society, and the emergence of "new" social problems, present particular conditions for the professionalisation of social work in the Czech Republic.

2. Literature review

Firstly, the theories of macro-level analysis are discussed from the three main perspectives prevailing in the sociology of the professions: the traits approach, the neo-Weberian approach and the neo-institutional approach. The structure of the review follows the progressive course of theoretical arguments that have endeavoured to explain the development of the professions, with focus on each theory's strengths and limitations in analysing professions. The second part briefly overviews the key topics in the professionalisation of social work, including professional associations, and marketplace position. From the perspective of the sociology of the professions, these dimensions determine the boundaries of social work professionalisation.

2.1 The traits approach and the definition of the professions

The initial sociological approach defined professions by a number of attributes or traits by which they can be distinguished from general occupations (Hugman, 1996; Popple, 1985). Most of the authors (Durkheim, 1957; Carr-Saunders, Wilson, 1933; Goode, 1957; Greenwood, 1957) also argued for the crucial position of the professions in modern societies and their positive contribution to social systems.

The traits (or attributes) approach to the professions draws on the perspective of functionalism that dominated social theory until the mid-twentieth century. The main focus is on the characteristics of the professions, their position in the social structure, and function in society. Greenwood (1957), as one of the most cited authors of traits theory, defined five substantial attributes of the professions as follows: (1) a systematic body of knowledge, (2) professional authority, (3) community sanction, (4) an ethical code, and (5) a professional culture.

The first attribute suggests that the professions possess a systematic body of knowledge, and that lengthy training is required before becoming a professional. Professions are knowledge-based occupations, and therefore all aspects of knowledge, such as expertise, the socio-cultural evaluation of knowledge, and occupations' strategies for managing knowledge, are significant to them (Macdonald, 1995:160). The inherent idea of professionalism supposes that "certain work is so specialized as to be inaccessible to those lacking the required training and experience" and that it cannot be subject to standardisation or rationalisation (Freidson, 2001:17). It is the particular kind of knowledge possessed by the professions that grants them high economic and social status in society. This correlates with Greenwood's second and third attributes of professionals, where in other words professional authority means that the client has "no choice but to accede to professional judgment" (Greenwood, 1957:48), and the sanction of the professional community is pursued through internal admission to practice, and exclusion in cases of breaching shared standards. This professional control over admission and exclusion was later considered and elaborated on by authors drawing from the Weberian idea of market closure as the key interest of professionals and a substantial element in the professionalisation process. However, it is important to emphasise here the different conceptions of professional knowledge by social theories. While functionalists exalt the positive aspect of expertise, "the professions occupy a position of importance in our society which is, in any comparable degree of development, unique in history" (Parsons, 1968, in Bertilsson, 1990:114), later theorists perceive professional knowledge as a means of power and control (Larson, 1977; Abbott, 1988; Freidson, 2001).

The second assumption of the traits theorists is the intrinsic ethical character of the professions, according to which professionals act for the sake of the public good and humanity. Accordingly, professional codes of ethics not only direct the ethical behaviour of professionals but they are also an expression of their character of work. Parsons (1951, in Křížová, 2006:26–30) describes three principles of the ethical role of physicians: (1) universalism, which requires professionals to provide their knowledge and services to whoever needs it; (2) affective neutrality, which requires professionals to provide their services without emotional involvement and regardless of a client's situation and

background; and (3) functional particularity, which means that professionals should not operate outside their field of competency. The ideal of objectivity and ideal of general public service of the profession, according to Parker (1994:33), are considered as being a part of professional ideology and the duty of an individual professional to the profession itself in terms of fulfilling its wider social role. The functions of the professional codes of ethics can be understood accordingly as the first justification of legitimate professional actions in respect to relations between the professional service and human needs, values and interests, and then as a safeguard against harmful or immoral professional action (Hayry, Hayry, 1994).

Although the traits model of the professions has been surpassed by later social theories, the attributes of the professions are considered to be still important characteristics. This is particularly true for the social work profession in its persistent effort to move from a semi-profession to a fully-fledged profession. Several themes emerged from the literature review as current or ongoing issues relevant to the profession. First, social work has been engaged in a persistent and long-term search for its own expertise, which is interlinked and conditioned by lack of clarity about its professional mission. This is indicative of the lack of power of social workers and their associations to define their own objectives and methods, mainly because of the bureaucratic organisation and state dependency of the profession.

2.2 The neo-Weberain approach to the professions

Leading authors of neo-Weberian theory in the sociology of the professions, Saks (2010) and Macdonald (1995), argue that the Neo-Weberian perspective on the professions remains the most relevant and plausible. Furthermore, their argument suggests that the Weberian concept of social closure in the marketplace constitutes the key to professionalisation of occupations. This approach has been widely utilised in the Anglo-American tradition of the sociology of the professions, as it corresponds with the idea of professional autonomy in market environments, which is characteristic of the political and economic establishment of these regions (Evetts, 2003). The Neo-Weberian approach is based on the concept of competition of political and economic power and self-interest, in which an occupation aspires to reach or maintain the privileged position of a fully-fledged profession (Saks, 2010:887). The character of professional knowledge is abstract, and applicable to empirical work, but most importantly *certified* and *credentialised* (Weber, 1978, in Macdonald, 1995:161), and granting jurisdiction (Abbott, 1988). According to Max Weber (1978), in modern society credentials represent knowledge in the form of degrees and certificates, which are provided by well-recognised organisations of the educational system. Abbott (1988) argues that by specific knowledge professionals are able to obtain control of a jurisdiction in their field, which defends and possibly extends their scope of activities.

Saks (2010) and Macdonald (1995) argue that some theoretical Weberian concepts constitute key elements in most of the approaches to the professions, and therefore they consider the neo-Weberian approach as the most expedient framework. The general thrust of Weber's work is that society consists of more or less collectively conscious groups, who pursue their interests by generating ideas in competition with other groups in the economic and social orders. Weber suggests different types of reward that the groups seek, such as economic, social and power (Macdonald, 1995:27–30). Regarding the professions, the central idea of this approach is legally-based exclusionary closure which enables professions to achieve considerable advantages and positions in markets and simultaneously in the socio-political order (Saks, 2010:892). Social closure refers to a process where a particular social group strives to regulate market conditions within the competitive environment in order to acquire a favourable position. Consequently, the group gains control over access to certain market opportunities (Weber, 1978, in Saks, 2010). With respect to the professions, professional groups develop strategies to regulate the supply of entrants to a profession so as to safeguard its market value (Parkin, 1979, in Saks, 2010). The neo-Weberian approach also intrinsically assumes the involvement of the state in the formation

of the professions by the setting of legal boundaries that distinguish and advance particular professions against others in the market. Saks (2010) describes aspects of a profession according to the neo-Weberian perspective as follows: (1) direct market control of specific services managed by professional associations; (2) privilege of a profession to define the needs of a customer; and (3) independence of professional discretion and work organisation.

Max Weber (1958) also elaborates on the role of "calling" in the concept of *Beruf* (which means occupation or profession), and it reflects the religious meaning of importance of work in the worship of God. However, the Anglo-American tradition of the sociology of the professions rather revolves around Weber's notion of market closure. It suggests that the professions are not an ultimate result of modern labour division, but rather a process of competing interests between an occupational group, the state, other occupational groups, and the public, for social and economic rewards and status. The professional project, Larson explains, utilises the specialised knowledge, professional training and ideology as vehicles for capturing market monopoly and professional autonomy. This is achieved through legal procedures and political influence.

2.3 The neo-institutionalist approach to the professions

According to Evetts (2003:398), the Anglo-American approach focuses on occupational closure and market shelters when professionals seek control over the working conditions, whereas the continental sociologists' approach conceives the professions in much broader perspectives of occupational identity, professional training and expertise, and employment in the public sector (Collins, 1990, in Evetts, 2003). The main distinction lies in the institutional embeddedness of the professions and subsequent strategies of professionalisation, which refer to market self-organisation and 'organisation from within' in the Anglo-American countries, and an elite bureaucratic hierarchy in the public sector dependent on professionalisation 'from above' in European countries (McClelland, 1990, in Evetts, 2003; Burrage, Torstednahl, 1990).

Le Bianic represents the neo-institutional approach to the study of the professions. He (2003:1) describes the conditions of European continental professions as those with '*high degree of stateness*' (Heidenheimer, 1989, in Le Bianic, 2003), meaning that the states act as the creators of the professions and their jurisdictions with the aim of controlling most aspects of social life. The states in European countries "*display an endless ability to create professional work*" (Abbott, 1988, in Le Bianic, 2003) and have a large degree of control over the professions in the process of their institutionalisation. In contrast, the state in Anglo-American countries plays a rather more passive role in the formation of the professions, with limited intervention restricted to legal protection. The state in countries with a low degree of stateness assumes the position of a protector of the professions, whilst the state in countries with a high degree of stateness is the main initiator of the professions (Le Bianic, 2003).

The main contribution of the sociology of the professions from Continental Europe is the revision of the relationship between the state and the professions. Two general conclusions can be drawn from the literature reviewed. First, as suggested by the neo-institutional approach, the state does not represent a single object with obvious political functions and economic aims, but instead is made up of many institutions, organisations, procedures and perspectives of which professions are parts as active authorities. Secondly, the political constitution of the state fundamentally determines the relationship of the professions and market, and that is not only in terms of market shelters. In their studies, Kraus and Buchner-Jeziorska and Evetts (1997) illustrated how political ideology influences the establishment of markets defined by different levels of state control and intervention, and how this essentially affects the sphere of influence and manoeuvre of the professions.

The tradition of Continental Europe does not necessarily conflict with the claims of Anglo-American sociology of the professions. In fact, it may be considered as complementary, as it examines the professionalisation of occupations in countries which are politically and culturally different from the political, economic and social systems of the Anglo-American region.

2.4 Social work in the sociology of the professions

Carr-Saunders (1955, in Abbott, Meerabeau, 1998:3) suggested four types of professions according to their level of knowledge and skills: (1) the established professions such as medicine, which are based on theoretical study and a moral code, (2) the new professions such as engineering and sciences, which are based on fundamental studies, (3) the semi-professions such as nursing, midwifery or social work, which are based on technical skills, and (4) would-be professions such as hospital managers. According to Etzioni (1969) the semi-professions have a shorter period of training, a less specialized body of knowledge, less control over their work, and a lower status. With respect to social work, Etzioni argued that it lacked the necessary scientific knowledge base as practitioners drew more on skills than knowledge, and it had not achieved organisational independence. Social work and the caring professions in general were seen to lack the technical and abstract knowledge as they are based on interpersonal and domestic skills. According to Phillips and Taylor (1980, in Hugman, 1991:16), it is the social status of these skills that are perceived as 'women's work', which causes the devaluation of social work and which underpins the semi-professional concept. Social work was also identified as a bureau-profession by Parry and Parry (1979, in Parry et al., 1980) due to its bureaucratic mode of organisation developed in the departments of state provision. According to the authors, its formation within the bureaucratic apparatus has actually secured a chance to create a unified social work profession. Clarke (1993:13–15) also refers to social work as a special type of bureaucratic profession, which is based on the creation of distinctive knowledge and skills specific to the complex administrative structures of national and local government departments.

Already in 1915 the famous speech "*Is Social Work a Profession?*" (Flexner, 2001), given by Abraham Flexner at a social work conference in the USA, raised doubts about the social work knowledge base and its potential as a profession. He proclaimed that a social worker "*was not a professional agent so much as the mediator invoking this or that professional agency*" (Flexner, 2001, in Morris, 2008:41). Morris (2008) in her analysis of Flexner's speech concluded that it "*took on a myth-like character*" (Austin, 1983, in Morris, 2008:48) as "*if it is the birth of social work's consciousness*" when asking "*whether it has yet become a full-fledged profession*" (Morris, 2008:48). Hugman (2009:1140) argues that Flexner initiated social work's preoccupation with the urgent search for its own knowledge and skill base that would yield social work the status of a "*true*" profession. As a consequence, social work strived to become "*scientific*", as it was believed that scientific commitment can secure a position within the professions (Germain, 1970, in Payne, 2006:146).

2.4.1 Social work and professional associations

The historical form of professional organisation is the "guild-like collegiate" (Johnson, 1972, in Greenwood, Lachman, 1996) which in time adjusted and adapted to changes in the modern age and developed into advanced forms of organising (Johnson, 1972, in Greenwood, Lachman, 1996). Traits theory suggests that the professions are internally organised (Flexner, in Hamilton, 1974), and that their essential work is controlled by fellow professionals (Goode, 1957, in Hamilton, 1974). The latter characteristic implies that no external agent has the possible authority to fully judge the performance of a professional, except a colleague or a peer (Thomas, Pierson, 1995, in Kornbeck, 1998). Healy and Meagher (2004) describe professional associations as institutional vehicles for occupational closure. From this point of view, social work associations represent social work professionals, they are involved in professional training and accreditation, they set the standards of the professional work, and they usually manage professional registers. They also have some degree of sanctioning power (Kornbeck, 1998). Professional associations usually aim to control the accreditation of the profession, and register professionals in order to secure the title and position of social worker only for those who hold an adequate professional qualification. The primary objective of occupational closure is to differentiate certified social workers from unqualified careers and assert monopoly over defined areas of work (Abbott, Meerabeau, 1998:10). A professional

association's function is to develop a coherent professional ideology and promote cohesion among members (Wenocur, Reisch, 1989:119). There is an important relationship between professional associations and universities, in that universities manage and legitimate the professional expertise while professional associations influence the process of training and accreditation (Aldridge, 1996). However, professional associations have limited capacity to influence the recognition of the profession or, for example, the rewards for professionals (Abbott, Meerabeau, 1998). As a response to social service marketisation, increasing fiscal constraints and changing modes of public administration, Healy and Meagher (2004) argue for social work collective action in terms of convergence of professional associations and trade unions, in order to achieve professional recognition in a time of changing conditions. Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008:286–287) observed that national professional associations fulfil different roles and functions according to the national context: some are oriented to professional development through promotion of ethical codes and education, some incline to regulation and promotion of governments' interests, and some take a policy activist role as well, in the interest of service users.

2.4.2 Social Work in the Marketplace

There is a limited volume of literature on the position of social work in the marketplace; one of the few examples is Barth's study (2003) on the social work labour market in the United States. Barth (2003:14) first explains the fundamental distinction between need and demand in the case of social work services, in which the ability to purchase determines the demand. Figure 1 illustrates how need translates into effective demand: many people have a need for social work services but this does not become demand until there is somebody able to pay for the services. The social policy and political ideology definitively determine the availability of funding resources, which come mostly from public but also partly from private sectors.

Figure 1: Generation of demand for social services
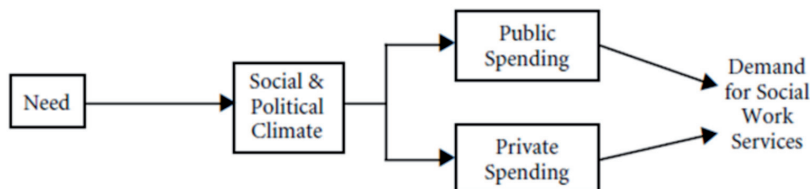
Source: Barth, 2003:14

In this respect, the demand for social workers depends on the demand for the social service product mostly required by organisations such as councils, hospitals and NGOs. In addition, Wenocur and Reisch (1989) argue that the social work market consists primarily of low-income and low-status people who cannot afford to pay for the services, which means that there is no opportunity to establish private services (i.e. fee-paying services). This, the authors claim, decreases the level of professional control and professional status of social work.

Barth also attempts to explain the low-wage issue of social workers, the evidence of a below-average increase in social workers' wages in the United States. This may be due to limited competition between social workers with different degrees (BAs, MAs), the availability of substitutes for social workers with the same educational level, and the unresponsive demand for social work services. It seems that budgets for social work services in the public sector are set regardless of the market for social workers (Barth, 2003:17). Leiby (1979, in Wenocur, Reisch, 1989) similarly comments on the position of social work in the market; he maintains that social work services are generally not purchased by direct users but by the state (or philanthropists), which consequently restricts their professional and collegial control.

In conclusion, the position of the social work profession in the market is delineated by the socio-economic ideology of the welfare system, as it is the government that defines the needs of poor and disadvantage people for whom social work services are provided and purchased. Social work service users have little power to determine the demand for a social work labour force, unlike employing organisations such as the state and non-profit organisations. On the other hand, as some authors from Anglo-American countries suggest, the social work profession develops various strategies as a response to changes and requirements of either the quasi-market of the welfare system or the free market.

3. Methodology

The aim of the research was to describe and understand the current state of the social work profession in the Czech Republic by examination of professional involvement in child protection policy-making. The thesis aimed to define the ways in which social work professionals strive to enhance their profession.

3.1 Research questions
The two main research questions drew on the theoretical concepts in the sociology of the professions, and were separated into sub-questions according to the theoretical approaches to the study of the professions.
The two main research questions were as follows:
How do social worker professionals describe the state of professional development of the social work profession in the Czech Republic?
How do they describe the current pathways of social work professionalisation?

3.2 Research design
The research was designed as a case study of the professionalisation of social work in the Czech Republic focusing on the current field of child protection. The qualitative approach was utilised, in which the social work profession was studied primarily from the perspectives of social workers and other social work professionals involved in the field. The research design followed the single case study approach, allowing the research subject to be approached comprehensively, by providing in-depth examination of a single instance from different angles using various data sources and research methods.

3.3 Interviews
The interview scheme and set of questions were developed according to the outcomes of the pilot project and the theoretical base of the research project. In total, 44 semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted, and they represent the main source of data for this research project. Interviews lasted from 40 minutes to 1.5 hours. All of the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed with the help of Nvivo software. The interviews were conducted and analysed in Czech language, and later selected quotes were translated into English, when the main emphasis was placed on the essential meaning of the narratives, even where this resulted in some paraphrasing of the original words.

3.4 Research sampling
A purposive sampling method was used. The sample included a number of social workers from the child protection department involved in the pilot project, who served as intermediaries for contacts with potential interviewees. The rationale for sampling was based on the principle of saturation, and insights from the literature (Freidson, 2001; Musil, 2008; Horák, Horáková, 2009) on the significance of social work inter-profession groups of administrators/policy-makers, teachers/researchers, and practitioners, and also the organisational division of the profession into

statutory social work, social work in NGOs and semi-governmental residential organisations. Therefore, the only criteria for selection of interviewees corresponded with the vertical division of social work occupations (administrators, lecturers, practitioners), and with the horizontal division of organisations (statutory, NGOs, semi-governmental). The research project narrowed its focus on social work in the child protection field, and thus all of the organisations and professionals in the interview sample held a position related to child protection, although their professional responsibilities varied widely. These responsibilities ranged from adoption, fostering, residential care, assessments, and consulting, to policy-making, and lecturing. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 3 social work lecturers, 3 top-level managers from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 12 middle-level managers, and 26 front-line social workers, drawn from the statutory child protection departments, various NGOs and residential organisations. Otherwise, the sample was not intended to be representative of other criteria such as age, gender or education

3.5 Data analysis
The deductive analytical approach to interview data in this research project's general theory-driven categories is based on the main theories of the sociology of the professions, and on Stone's causal stories (1989, 1997). This theory assumes that different interest groups involved in the policy-making process present their perspective on a public issue by ascribing cause, blame and responsibility for the particular problem to competing groups, in order to get support for their suggested solutions. The thematic framework is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Thematic framework

Theory	Themes
Stone's theory of causal stories	Problem, mechanical/accidental/intentional/inadvertent cause, victim, responsible agents, solution, ways of persuasion
Traits theory	Professional associations, professional knowledge, status
Neo-Weberian theory	Market closure, labour market, social work market
Neo-institutional theory	State authorities

Source: Author's own

A framework-based synthesis is used to organise and analyse data, utilising an *a priori* framework, which is based on themes and codes informed by literature or other background relevant to a particular research subject. The approach employs thematic analysis of primary data and secondary thematic analysis. Using a priori framework themes in conjunction with data analysis, new topics and codes emerge from the data and are incorporated in the framework (Barnett-Page, Thomas, 2009; Carroll et al., 2013). The final framework is therefore completed through primary analysis of data and consideration of additional theoretical concepts relevant to newly-emerged topics (Oliver et al., 2008). A synthesised framework may unify existing approaches to be used as the basis for an individual case study (Casey, 1998). A framework-based synthesis is a method used for data analysis in qualitative research, which is employed to build conceptual frameworks likely to be suitable for research questions and primary qualitative data (Dixon-Woods, 2011).

4. Interview analysis – professionalisation

This part shows the analysis of the causal stories and interview data by looking at the following selected themes of the chosen theories of the professions: professional associations, professional status, market closure and the social work market. It focuses on the aspect of professionalisation in each of the categories.

4.1 Professional associations

Although the social work professionals from each of the inter-professional groups had different experiences with some of the social work representative organisations, each of the inter-professional groups expressed the need for a powerful social work representative authority for very similar reasons. The social workers desired some representative social work organisation to communicate with politicians about the importance of social work services, as well as to independently assess matters of correct practice carried out by social work professionals.

"*And if we take it this way, it was also on the television, wasn't it? The returning of an Italian child. And us two! We were at the committee in V. where it took place and they said it was inadequate! That the Hague convention, we of course can, we must follow the international conventions. It can just meet the decision made in Italy… And us two were taken in front of the committee in the court! You see that it is upside down here! Why two of us? Where is the child protection authority? Where is the social workers' advocate?*" (Child protection social worker 6)

Interestingly, the state social workers viewed the potential of a representative professional authority in being a labour union type of mediator negotiating for better working conditions and especially wages, whereas the non-governmental organisation social workers with more experience with specialised professional associations appreciate activities such as information and practice sharing, opportunities for connections, training provision, and lobbying for recognition of the particular social service provision. On the other hand, the social work lecturers emphasised the supervising function of a representative association with respect to ethical and practice disputes.

Only the social work lecturers mentioned the possibility of establishing an umbrella social work representative association with the perspective of the forthcoming Social Work Professional Act. However, obstacles were identified in the fragmentation of the social work profession, in particular significant differences between state social work and non-governmental social work, and the power struggle between the representatives of the inter-professional groups.

The establishment of an umbrella professional organisation is at this moment being discussed by academics and social work representatives as part of the preparation of the Social Work Professional Act organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA). However, it is obvious that apart from social work lecturers, other social work professionals are not aware of this.

4.2 Market closure

The social work professionals suggested that a clearer definition of their field of influence, competences and responsibilities would assist them in improving their position amongst other professionals. The field social workers, state and non-governmental, mentioned this with respect to cooperation with other professionals, who need the assurance about the function of social workers in multi-disciplinary teams. The social work lecturers and policy-makers agreed that delineation of the profession is imperative. It would prevent employers from overloading social workers with responsibilities inappropriate to their profession and education, usually administrative or social care duties.

Only the social work lecturers were concerned with closing access for people with other than social work training to enter social work jobs, whereas other social work professionals omitted this recommendation. For social work lecturers it was a key goal to amend the version of the Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services that allows other graduates from other courses to enter the profession. However, social work managers did not mention the need to hire exclusively social workers with social work training, and nor did field social workers mention any difference between social workers with social work education or without.

"*It is about qualification requirements that in his perspective, that I share with him, it should be more narrowly focused than it is today. And that it is desirable that social work is carried out by those trained in social work*!" (Social work lecturer 1)

On the other hand, some of the non-governmental managers confirmed that they require specialised training from job applicants or new recruits, such as in emergency intervention, domestic violence or debt counselling.

4.3 Social work market

The social work professionals, state and non-governmental, argued that they deal only with urgent issues of children and families, and that there is a much greater need for various social work services in order to improve the situation of their clients. In other words, according to the social work professionals, the demand and market for social work is present and large, from the clients' side, but not so much from the fund holders. Non-governmental social work professionals are very much aware of the need to pursue politicians about the importance of dealing with social issues and employing their services.

"*Of course, there are financial resources for child protection administration that we get especially for it. Here I see only one problem, which is that the state administration is hidden under the municipal administration and here we sometimes unfortunately encounter certain forms of, let's say, misunderstanding, and we have to justify what we ask for. So I prepare statistical data, analyse the issue; of course when it is supported with such documents then what we want to push through has greater strength, because statistics has of course value of evidence.*" (Child protection department manager 3)

Funding of social work services was the key topic for the interviewed social work professionals, as they are existentially dependent and limited by only a few options from which to draw money. The social workers from state and non-governmental sectors have to deal with different funding issues due to separate funding systems. Child protection social workers and residential care workers depend on the state salary class tables and approval from municipal politicians. They feel frustrated by the low remuneration, which is at the same level as other officers' salaries, and by lack of options to change this.

On the other hand, non-governmental social professionals depend on, and closely monitor, available funding resources operated through the state, municipal and council authorities. Their financial security has stabilised compared with previous years; however, they still need to strive every year to receive funding. Although non-governmental organisations have more options to source their funding, funding resources are still limited and this creates competition between non-governmental organisations. According to the non-governmental social work professionals, methods of securing funds are multiple, from very official, such as community planning, to less official, including slandering other organisations, fixing statistical reports, colluding about service and funding divisions, forming connections with important politicians, and even organising banquets for politicians.

"*I am talking about a case where two providers fight with each other. As one thinks that the other is unqualified or receives an unreasonable amount of money. So, they start a kind of fight with each other and spread poisoned comments about each other. But this is just between them and when the comments get outside, you really don't know what to think about it. I think it results in stretching the credibility of individual providers and it is absolutely incomprehensible for people outside the circle because they are not able to assess the validity of accusations and then it is only 'Oh so they are awful, so then they are ripping us off, hmmm'.*" (NGO manager and social worker 4)

Non-governmental social workers are also dependent on cooperation with child protection social workers in the sense that clients are referred to them, and their services are utilised by child protection departments. In this way, child protection social workers significantly influence the work of non-governmental social workers, who feel under their control. Incorporating a requirement to use complementary services within the transformation of the child protection system was one method suggested for increasing the importance of non-governmental social services.

"*I think that is, kind of, like a hunt for clients, or like winning clients. It means that the non-governmental sector, it seems to me, wants to win the client in order to have clear records and get funds for their service. So they tell people things that are not always feasible. And then the people come across a problem in the public administration telling them it is not possible as they told them. But sometimes it is possible.*" (MLSA official 1)

4.4 State authorities

Although child protection social workers feel constrained by the public and municipal administrations, which they are part of, and they represent rather the agent of control in their relationships with clients, the delegation of the state's obligation to protect children makes them the cornerstone of the child protection system and social work. This is reflected in key responsibilities for children being under the surveillance of the child protection department, and means making decisions about children and parents. Child protection social workers hold the prime position amongst other social workers and are aware of this.

"*We of course cooperate with non-governmental organisations that work with children, I don't know, deprived families, Roma families. So, we cooperate with them really well. I cannot complain. But I can't imagine that they could do our work. They have a different approach, they do free-time activities. They do fieldwork visiting families and checking children whether they go to school. It works like this. But I cannot imagine that they could do our work with respect to arrangement of contacts between children and parents.*" (Child protection department manager 2)

The child protection social workers' position amongst other professionals is planned to be improved and strengthened by a regulation that requires other professionals to share information about clients with child protection social workers, by assigning them further managerial responsibilities and giving funds to contract out and purchase services from other professionals, including non-governmental social workers. Although this is a plan of the policy-makers, and child protection managers have some information about it, field social workers still feel that their position and successful cooperation with others rather depends on personal relationships and connections with others.

From the narratives of the child protection professionals, the ever-present rivalry between the state and non-governmental sectors and social workers is obvious, and represents a significant split in the profession. All of the inter-professional groups agreed that there has been an improvement in cooperating with one another. However, different organisational settings, employers, approaches to work with clients, and funding resources, all make the state and non-governmental social workers establish different kinds of relationships with the state authorities, including municipal authorities and the MLSA.

5. Discussion

Three main arguments are briefly set out on the basis of the research, and futher elaborated discussion on the issue of professional associations is presented.

First, it is argued that the social work profession in the Czech Republic has not reached the status of a fully-fledged profession as defined by the traits theory. However, it has managed to strengthen its position in the labour market through successful pursuit of strategies that respond to the present economical and institutional systems and economic opportunities of the social welfare field.

Secondly, it is argued that the professionalisation of social work cannot be considered as a project of a single coherent occupational group but as a complexity of strategies pursued by different professional groups, which are interlinked through formal and informal relations. It is suggested that the groups are formed according to the type of their employing organisations and related economic opportunities, and that the strategies of the groups aim to secure their positions only in the particular areas of service funding, policy-making, and legal establishment. The neo-Weberian theory considers the free market-oriented economy as a precondition for the professionalisation of occupations. This argument was found to be of limited applicability in the case of the social work profession because of the character of social service market. Nevertheless, the thesis argues that the introduction of quasi-market principles in social services has had a stimulating effect on the expansion of the scope of influence and activities of the non-governmental organisations.

Thirdly, it is maintained that strategies deployed by professional groups are a combination of strategies described by the traits, neo-Weberian, and neo-institutional theoretical concepts. The research suggests that for the professional groups, in their endeavours to enhance their profession's social and economic status, legal protection in the labour market is of the same importance as the establishment of professional activities within institutions of public administration. The results illustrate the flexibility of a profession to respond according to the existing wider political, economic and institutional structures of a country.

The professional groups utilise various strategies to achieve the goal of professionalisation, not only by directly participating in policy-making, but primarily through claiming and acquiring a preferential position in dealing with certain social issues. In actual fact, the demand for new responsibilities and a greater sphere of influence developed organically in the field before representatives of the profession proposed a concrete form or change in relevant legislation. Some of the strategies have already been described, such as academisation, establishing professional associations, and lobbying. The findings show that inter-professional groups rely to a significant extent on formal and informal connections with influential politicians and officials at the council and governmental levels. Field social workers establish and rely on their networks of allied professionals across organisations, and this enables them to secure a field of influence, and circumvent burdensome regulations and responsibilities.

Based on the findings of this research, it is concluded that NGOs successfully employ a variety of ways to secure better economic and social status, including: (1) developing further specialisation of social work activities, (2) supporting the shift of social service provision from the state or councils to the not-for-profit sector, and (3) tailoring their services according to social policies and the preferences of funders and policy-makers.

However, current trends support a multi-disciplinary approach in professional teams and a transfer of state responsibilities to non-governmental organisations, which is forcing child protection departments to revise their own positions. Child protection departments have specific organisational and economic features; first, they are based in council administrations, but fall under the authority of the MLSA; secondly, they are paid by the councils but receive special subsidies from the ministry. In such a constellation of conditions, social work professionals and managers in the child protection departments choose strategies designed to protect or improve their economic and social positions, such as (1) preservation of the key responsibilities within the system, (2) securing the responsibility of contracting services, and (3) reliance on personal networks of professionals.

5.1 Professional association, the missing authority

Most theories of the professions emphasise the primary importance of professional associations for the development of a profession. As described in the literature review, professional associations serve several functions, mainly acting as the cohesive agent for the members of the profession and as a representative in negotiations with other actors. In some cases, professional associations are authorised to deal with registration, certification and inspections. Currently, several professional associations operate in the social work profession in the Czech Republic, but only for a limited number of social workers or in certain specialised areas of social work; none of them have any authority with respect to the representation of the entire profession, the organisation of working conditions of the profession, or accreditation. This corresponds with the findings of Weiss-Gal and Welbourne (2008), confirming that in some other countries there is also a problem of diversity of associations representing social work only in particular settings or practitioners' backgrounds, rather than a single professional body. As Popple (1985) and Musil (2008) concluded, due to the very fragmented character of the social work profession, searching for unity is a difficult task.

According to Kornbeck (1998) social work associations represent social work professionals and their key role should lie in their involvement in professional training and accreditation, standards of professional work, and professional registers. None of the existing social work professional associations holds any of these responsibilities. Also, it is important to note that in the Czech Republic the social work degree is an academic certification issued by the Ministry of Education but it is not a professional qualification accredited by a professional body. The Association of Social Work Educators has influence on the content of social work training. However, the organisation of education is in the hands of the state.

The importance of professional associations is widely discussed in the sociology of social work. Etzioni (1969) and Perry et al. (1980), refer to a semi-profession as an occupation with a lack of organisational independency, which inherently implies external supervision over professionals' performance. Czech social work is organised either in the public administrations or independently in the non-governmental organisations. However, in both cases their performance falls wholly under the supervision of several offices of the state. There is no independent body of professionals that could supervise social workers in the field. This implies that the profession is assessed, and sometimes judged, not according to its own expertise and ethical standards, but by external regulations. As a consequence of the absence of a representative association or another type of professional body with authority for regulating the work of social workers, the profession is more dependent on the policies of the government ministries and council administrations. Similarly, the lack of such a professional authority has a disabling effect in cases of publicly discussed instances of social work failures.

The analysis of the interviews suggests that the lack of a representative professional association has a significant effect on the discretion of social workers. The professionals claim that when making decisions they conform to less innovative and more standardised practices because they do not have the support of any professional institution. This is particularly significant for child protection social workers, who tend to adopt indirect strategies for dealing with organisational pressure and ambiguous policies, rather than searching for proactive solutions and challenging their working conditions, a phenomenon described by Lipsky (1980). An important strategy of this kind, mentioned above, is information sharing and withdrawing. Lipsky (1980) suggests that frontline workers develop strategies to curtail management supervision, and interpret policy and organisational regulations, and this is especially the case with child protection social workers, who work under strict organisational and policy regulations, and who develop social networks of trusted professionals in order to deal with the pressure. Informal social networks of professionals may be viewed as a substitute for a professional association, providing the necessary peer support and practical assistance in everyday work. Influential social networks even significantly impact upon the policy-making process; however, social networks do not represent a wider group of professionals and therefore cannot substitute for a professional association in this respect.

It can be concluded that the absence of a representative social work professional association contributes substantially to the dependency of the profession on other, mostly state, institutions and offices in matters such as professional training, performance supervision and remuneration. The profession has not yet been separated from the state administration, which undermines its professional autonomy and places social work in the category of the semi-professions. Establishing a representative organisation with some authority would enable the profession to have better control over its members and a more favourable position when negotiating with third parties. Nevertheless, certain steps have already been taken towards founding such an organisation, and the chief actors in this endeavour are the professional associations of specific social work activities, who, although they do not hold any of the authority mentioned above, have already established organisational capacity and relationships with government offices. This is a clear illustration of the transition of social work from a semi-profession to a more secure economic and organisational position, where it can enjoy the advantages of a fully-fledged profession.

5.2 Social service market as a limitation

In relation to the discussion above, it is argued that limited control over working conditions is not primarily a consequence of less specialisation of social work expertise or the bureaucratic embeddedness of the profession in the public administration. Rather, it derives from features of the social work market, which does not respond to potential demand but instead depends on state and council budgets and political ideology, as described by Barth (2003). Barth explains that in traditional markets need translates into effective demand; however, in the case of social work many people have a n e e d for social work services, but this does not translate into demand until there is somebody to pay for the services. The research findings confirm that limits to the social work market based on the intermediary role of the state between the profession and their clients restrict the economic opportunities of the social work profession more, compared with other professions that operate in the free market. It is suggested that free-market principles in the social work market in the form of a quasi-market had a stimulating impact on the expansion of social work services in the Czech Republic. At the same time, even this kind of market depends on the purchasing power of the state or on other funds administrated by the state, and therefore it is by its character limiting for social work professionalisation. The findings of the research correspond with Barth's argument that, in contrast with other professions, the social work profession primarily depends on, develops with, and is restricted by, the character of the social service market, in which the state or other governing institutions such as the European Union determine the demand.

6. Conclusion

An important conclusion is that the social work profession, similar to other professions, "thinks" economically in its professional project. The groups of the profession actively strive to accomplish higher social and economic status by developing various strategies, considering their institutional establishment and the resources available to them in the existing economic conditions, together with the conditions of the social welfare system of the country. This aspect of the profession is often overlooked and therefore it should be considered, particularly in discussions that regard ethical standards as the main objective of social work and criticise the profession for failing to adhere to its professional mission.

Members of the social work profession still often feel professionally undervalued, and the literature refers to their occupation as a semi-profession. According to the main theories of sociology, the social work professional project is determined above all by the lack of well-defined professional expertise and by the state bureaucratic system. However, this thesis argues that social work is generally limited by the restrictive character of the social service market and the social welfare system, which do not offer the opportunities of a traditional liberal market open to the other professions.

At the same time, the study claims that the bureaucratic state administration does not limit the autonomy of the profession primarily because of its hierarchical and state character, but because the majority of available funding is located in the hands of the state. Therefore, it is suggested that diversity of funding sources enhances the professionalisation of social work. Nevertheless, at the current time there are limited options for social organisations in the Czech Republic to find alternative ways of funding that would increase professional independence.

The analysis of social work professional development showed the flexibility of a profession to respond to different conditions of the economic and social systems in a country. As illustrated, the profession strives to achieve market closure as proposed by the neo-Weberian theory, as well as utilising the opportunities to establish itself within the institutions of a state, as described by the neo-institutional theory. Moreover, the profession develops various strategies to maintain and improve its status, which can be formal or informal depending on accessibility to policy-making processes.

References

ABBOTT, A. 1988. *The Systems of the Professions*. London: University of Chicago Press.

ABBOTT, P., MEERABEAU, L. 1998. *The Sociology of the Caring Professions*. 2nd edition. London: UCL Press.

ACT No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services.

ALDRIDGE, M. 1996. Dragged to Market: Being a Profession in the Postmodern World. *British Journal of Social Work*, 26(2), 177–194.

AUSTIN, D. 1983. The Flexner Myth and the History of Social Work. *Social Service Review*, 57, 1357–1376.

BARNETT-PAGE, E., THOMAS, J. 2009. *Methods for the Synthesis of Qualitative Research: A Critical Review*. London: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods.

BARTH, M. C. 2003. Social Work Labour Market: A First Look. *Social Work,* 48(1), 9–19.

BERTILSSON, M. 1990. The Welfare State, the Professions and Citizens. In: TORSTENDAHL, R., BURRAGE, M. (Eds.). *The Formation of Professions. Knowledge, State and Strategy.* London: Sage Publication, 114–133.

BUCHNER-JEZIORSKA, A., EVETTS, J. 1997. Regulating Professionals: The Polish Example. *International Sociology*, 12(1), 61–72.

BURRAGE, M., TORSTENDAHL, R. 1990. *Professions in Theory and History: Rethinking the Study of the Professions*. London: Sage Publications.

CARR-SAUNDERS, A. M. 1955. Metropolitan Conditions and Traditional Professional Relationships. In: FISHER, R. M. (Ed.). The Metropolis in Modern Life. New York: Doubleday.

CARR-SAUNDERS, A. M., WILSON, P. A. 1933. The Professions. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

CARROLL, C., BOOTH, A., LEAVISS, J. et al. 2013. "Best Fit" Framework Synthesis: Refining the Method. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13(1), 1–16.

CASEY, J. 1998. Non-Government Organizations as Policy Actors: The Case of Immigration Policies in Spain [online]. Barcelona: Department de Ciencia Politica i de Dret Public, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona. Unpublished doctoral thesis. [12. 8. 2011]. Available at: http://physics.baruch.cuny.edu/spa/facultystaff/facultydirectory/documents/DoctoralThesis Complete_NonGovtOrgsasPolicyActors.pdf

CLARKE, J. 1993. *A Crisis in Care? Challenges to Social Work*. London: SAGE Publications.

COLLINS, R. 1990. Changing Conceptions in the Sociology of the Professions. In: TORSTENDAHL, R., BURRAGE, M. (Eds.). *The Formation of Professions: Knowledge, State and Strategy*. London: Sage Publication, 11–23.

DIXON-WOODS, M. 2011. Using Framework-based Synthesis for Conducting Reviews of Qualitative Studies. *BMC Medicine*, 9(1), 39.

DURKHEIM, E. 1957. *Professional Ethics and Civil Morals*. New York: The Free Press.

ETZIONI, A. 1969. *The Semi-Professions and Their Organizations: Teachers, Nurses and Social Workers.* New York: Free Press.

EVETTS, J. 2003. The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism: Occupational Change in the Modern World. *International Sociology*, 18(2), 395–415.

FLEXNER, A. 2001. Is Social Work a Profession? *Research on Social Work Practice*, 11(2), 152–165.

FREIDSON, E. 2001. *Professionalism, the Third Logic: on the Practice of Knowledge*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

GERMAIN, C. 1970. Casework and Science: A Historical Encounter. In: ROBERTS, R., NEE, R. (Eds.). *Theories of Social Casework.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 5–32.

GOODE, W. J. 1957. Community Within a Community: The Professions. *American Sociological Review*, 22(2), 194–200.

GREENWOOD, E. 1957. Attributes of a Profession. *Social work*, 2(3), 45–55.

GREENWOOD, R., LACHMAN, R. 1996. Change as an Underlying Theme in Professional Service Organizations: An Introduction. *Organization Studies*, 17(4), 563–572.

HAMILTON, R. 1974. Social Work – An Aspiring Profession and its Difficulties. *British Journal of Social Work*, 4(3), 333–342.

HAYRY, H., HAYRY, M. 1994. The Nature and Role of Professional Codes in Modern Society. In: CHADWICK, R. F. (Eds.). *Ethics and the Professions.* Aldershot: Avebury, 136–144.

HEALY, K., MEAGHER, G. 2004. The Reprofessionalization of Social Work: Collaborative Approaches for Achieving Professional Recognition. *British Journal of Social Work*, 34(2), 243–260.

HEIDENHEIMER, A. J. 1989. Professional Knowledge and State Policy in Comparative Historical Perspective – Law and Medicine in Britain, Germany and the United States. *International Social Science Journal*, 41(4), 529–553.

HORÁK, P., HORÁKOVÁ, M. 2009. Role liniových pracovníků ve veřejné politice. *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 45(2), 369–395.

HUGMAN, R. 2009. But Is It Social Work? Some Reflections on Mistaken Identities. *British Journal of Social Work*, 39(6), 1138–1153.

HUGMAN, R. 1996. Professionalization in Social Work: The Challenge of Diversity. *International Social Work,* 39(2), 131–147.

HUGMAN, R. 1991. *Power in Caring Professions*. London: Macmillan.

JOHNSON, T. J. 1972. *Professions and Power*. London: Macmillan.

KORNBECK, J. 1998. Researching Social Work Professionalization in the Context of European Integration. *Social Work in Europe*, 5(3), 37–46.

KŘÍŽOVÁ, E. 2006. *Proměny lékařské profese z pohledu sociologie.* Praha: SLON.

LARSON, M. S. 1977. *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. London: The California University Press.

LE BIANIC, T. 2003. Bringing the State Back in the Study of Professions: Some Peculiarities of the French Model of Professionalization [online]. *6th European Sociological Association Conference (Research Network Sociology of Professions)*. Spain: University of Murcia, 24th–26th September. [10. 1. 2010]. Available at: https://basepub.dauphine.fr/bitstream/handle/123456789/9086/Bringing%20 the%20State%20back%20in%20the%20study%20of%20professions.PDF?sequence=1

LEIBY, J. 1979. *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press.

LIPSKY, M. 1980. *Street-level Bureaucracy: The Dilemmas of Individuals in Public Service*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.

MACDONALD, K. M. 1995. *The Sociology of the Professions*. London: SAGE Publications.

MCCLELLAND, C. E. 1990. Escape from Freedom? Reflections on German Professionalization 1870–1933. In: TORSTENDAHL, R., BURRAGE, M. (Eds.) *The Formation of Professions: Knowledge, State and Strategy*. London: Sage Publication, 97–113.

MORRIS, P. M. 2008. Reinterpreting Abraham Flexner's Speech: "Is Social Work a Profession?" Its Meaning and Influence on the Field's Early Professional Development. *Social Service Review*, 82(1), 29–60.

MUSIL, L. 2008. *Typologie pojetí sociální práce* [online]. Brno: MU. [21. 6. 2010]. Available at: http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2009/SPP101/um/prispevek.pdf

OLIVER S., REES, R. W., CLARKE-JONES, L. et al. 2008. A Multidimensional Conceptual Framework for Analysing Public Involvement in Health Services Research. *Health expectations*, 11(1), 72–84.

PARKER, J. 1994. Moral Philosophy – Another 'Disabling Profession'? In: CHADWICK, R. F. (Ed.). *Ethics and the Professions.* Aldershot: Avebury.

PARKIN, F. 1979. *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*. London: Tavistock.

PARRY, N., PARRY, J. 1979. Social Work, Professionalism and the State. In: PARRY, N., RUSTIN, M., SATYAMURTI, C. (Eds.). *Social Work, Welfare and the State.* London: Edward Arnold.

PARSONS, T. 1968. Professions. In: SILLS, D. (Ed.). *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. New York: Macmillan, 536–547.

PARSONS, T. 1951. *The Social System*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

PAYNE, M. 2006. *What is Professional Social Work?* London: Policy Press.

PHILLIPS, A., TAYLOR, B. 1980. Sex and Skill: Notes towards a Feminist Economics. *Feminist Review*, (6), 79–88.

POPPLE, P. R. 1985. The Social Work Profession: A Reconceptualization. *Social Service Review*, 59(4), 560–577.

SAKS, M. 2010. Analyzing the Professions: The Case for the Neo-Weberian Approach. *Comparative Sociology*, 9(6), 887–915.

STONE, D. A. 1997. *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making*. New York: WW Norton.

STONE, D. A. 1989. Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104(2), 281–300.

THOMAS, M., PIERSON, J. 1995. *Dictionary of Social Work.* London: Collins Educational.

WEBER, M. 1978. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WEBER, M. 1958. *The Protestant Ethic and Spirits of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner.

WEISS-GAL, I., WELBOURNE, P. 2008. The Professionalization of Social Work: A Cross-national Exploration. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 17(4), 281–290.

WENOCUR, S., REISCH, M. 1989. *From Charity to Enterprise: The Development of American Social Work in a Market Economy*. United States: University of Illinois Press.

Professionalization of Social Work with "Mentally Disturbed People" – Analysis from the Interpretative Perspective

Anna Jarkiewicz

Dr. Anna Jarkiewicz[1] is a social pedagogue, researcher and lecturer at the University of Łódź, whose main field of interests include social work with the socially excluded, socio-cultural perspective, interpretive assessment, qualitative research, author of articles on social work with "mentally disturbed" persons, empowerment, pedagogization of social life.

Abstract

The article contains the conclusions from my research which concerns the professionalization of social work with "mentally disturbed clients, and had been done for six months in the Municipal Social Welfare Centre. This time gave me an opportunity to participate, as an observer, in social workers' everyday life, and to get to know them better. In my studies I adopted grounded theory research.

Keywords

professionalization, social work, mentally disturbed clients

Professionalization of social work in Poland

In Poland, professionalism in social work, or the lack thereof is the subject of much debate. The constantly discussed problems concern substantive, methodological, and ethical issues, problems of institutionalization and conditions of educating future practitioners of social work (Trawkowska, 2006; Kromolicka, 2011; Szmagalski, 2012; Niesporek, Trembaczkowski, Warczok, 2013). The debate on this subject has been carried out continuously since the 1990's. Thus far no solutions have been revealed that would bring us any closer to reaching a final resolution (Wódź, 1999; Granosik, 2006; Frysztacki, 2008; Szmagalski, 2011). Positions that have been formed during this time, can be arranged by referring to the division proposed by Thomas P. Wilson (1973) who, in the search for answers to the question fundamental for social sciences about the basis of social order, made a distinction between the normative and interpretative paradigm. As the name suggests, the first paradigm sees the sources of social order in the sphere of norms. The representatives of this approach who participated in the discussion about professionalism of social work include Abraham Flexner (1915) and Ernest Greenwood (1957). Both of these authors, when speaking about profession, emphasize the need to meet certain criteria, such as systematic theory, authority, code of ethics, autonomy, social mandate, etc. These positions are often referred

---

[1] Contact: Anna Jarkiewicz, PhD., Department of Social Pedagogy, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Lodz, 48/46 Pomorska, 91-408 Łódź, Poland; anna_jarkiewicz@poczta.onet.pl

to as indicative (Urbaniak-Zając, 2014), because they indicate the conditions necessary to be fulfilled while "applying" for the status of profession.

In turn, the interpretative paradigm emphasizes the interactive process of negotiation and shared interpretation of meanings as the cause of social order. In the context of professionalization of social work, interpretative approaches have a cautious attitude towards enumerating the criteria which determine its professional dimension (Becker, 1970; Granosik, 2006), stressing that the special feature of profession is the dilemmatic nature of activity and the consequent compulsion to construct a flexible individual support plan (Schütze, 1992; Granosik, 2006). From this perspective "establishing the professional nature of the work involves therefore not only studying documents, but also examining the activity of those who perform it" (Granosik, 2006:11). Professionalism, from the interpretative view, is perceived as the ability to aptly recognize the client's problem, which is often discordant with the declared one and plan appropriate activities. Professionalization of the profession is seen as a process that is conditioned by gaining experience and its theorization, in-depth reflection on the biography of the client, and the effort undertaken to understand his/her current situation.

However, regardless of the criteria of professionalism adopted towards social work or the definition of professionalization, its role cannot be underestimated. It is difficult to imagine a well-functioning state without a developed sector of social assistance. After all, the effects of activity performed by social workers indirectly affect the whole society, and not just those who are the direct recipients of the distributed goods. Herein I refer to the activities in the field of social work oriented at the protective function[2] (Castel, 1998:265–266, in Marynowicz-Hetka, 2006). The protective function "situates social work as a guard and stabilizer of changes in social life and a distributor of goods. The representatives of social professions are treated here as managers of social problems; in other words, normalization function" (Castel, 1998:265–266, in Marynowicz-Hetka, 2006). Through the implementation of tasks focused on ensuring normalization and stabilization in the life of individuals, these individuals are at the same time protected from the degradation of needs as well as excessive emphases and escalation of the quasi-class divisions originating from socio-economic grounds. Thus, social tensions and frustrations are minimized and it becomes possible to achieve social order and governance.

In the following part of this text, I would like to focus on professionalization of social work with mentally disturbed people, perceived from the interpretative perspective, the manifestation of which are professional tactics constructed by social workers. These tactics make the essential and most structured part of activities aimed at this group of clients. However, before I proceed to discuss some of them, I would like to present the way of understanding the phenomenon of mental disorders by social workers, reconstructed based on the research, which also is a part of professionalization of social work in this area. The reconstructed way of defining a 'mental disorder' is a result of the accumulation of experiences in working with such persons and in-depth reflection on the topic.

---

[2] Castel R. mentions, apart from the aforesaid protective function of social work, also the function of contesting, where the representatives of social professions "*present themselves as advocates of individuals excluded from the social life*"; and the function of mediation where the attention of professionals is focused on "developing the project contract together with the subjects and users" (Castel, 1998:265–266 in Marynowicz-Hetka, 2006).

Professionalization of social work with "mentally disturbed people"

In this text, I would like to address the issue of professionalization of social work with "mentally disturbed people[3]". The basis for the conclusions formulated later in the article are studies that were conducted in accordance with the procedures of generating the grounded theory (Glaser, Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Strauss, Corbin, 1998; Konecki, 2000; Gorzko, 2008; Glaser, Strauss, 2009), and the theoretical frame of reference was the interpretative paradigm, including in particular symbolic interactionism in the classical variant coined by Herbert Blumer (Blumer, 2007). Due to the method chosen by me, it was very important for me that the daily routine of the social workers would become also my daily routine. The life of the institution and getting to know it from the side of its participants, as well as the possibility to reconstruct a segment of the practical reality (action towards those "mentally disturbed"), was for me, as a researcher, the primary goal. The empirical base was provided by the data consisting of notes from observations of social workers in the course of conversations with "mentally disturbed clients", interviews conducted by a researcher with social workers, conversations of social workers with their colleagues, etc., and analysis of such documents as client records, letters from clients with complaints regarding social workers, etc. The material was collected during six months of participatory observation performed at a social welfare centre, and a half-year internship in a social welfare institution. The primary objective of the study was the reconstruction of the image of social work concerning persons categorized as "mentally disturbed[4]" on the example of the activities of social workers from the Municipal Social Welfare Center. The main unit of analysis was the social workers' attitude toward "mentally disturbed" people. The selection of the test sample was organized according to the procedure of theoretical saturation. The collected, coded and analyzed material has allowed a redefinition of "mental disorder" in the context of social work and distinction of tactics applied by social workers towards "mentally disturbed clients"

The Municipal Social Welfare Center, in which research was conducted, is subdivided into subsidiaries, and is located in a large city of over 500,000 inhabitants. Each branch, within the scope of its assistance, covers another area (district). The Social Welfare Center office is located in the city centre and employs around 42 local social workers (39 females, 3 males). Social workers were people with different professional experiences (from 1 month to over 30 years) and life experiences. Each of them was informed about my research interests, which was presented as "social work with mentally disturbed people". In the early days of the study, employees told me about people in the so-called "their area," which they say was "the mentally disturbed," and later, knowing that such a person was coming to the centre, invited me to attend the meeting.

---

[3] In the whole text I write the term "mentally disturbed" in quotation marks to emphasize that it is not perceived and defined through the prism of medical categories, but social and cultural ones. The perspective of perception of mental disorder adopted in this study is of a socio-cultural nature, and for that reason I was not trying to follow the most current version of medical terminology within the psychiatric field. Therefore, mental disorder is viewed as a phenomenon that takes place in a specific socio-cultural context. In this research, "mental disorder" does not function as an objective fact, which means that the necessary condition that affects the perception of the client as a person "mentally disturbed" did not have to be a psychiatric diagnosis. By contrast, the starting point to call someone a „mentally disturbed client" was the way he or she was perceived by the social worker ("mental disorder" is a fact attributed to a client by a worker). Such perception was the result of the interpretation of the interactive experience of a worker with a particular person. It was the worker who showed me the clients who had negotiated, throughout an interactive process, the label of a "disturbed" person. Thus, the "disorder" is merely a construct, which gives the individual (client) the identity with certain characteristic features.

[4] I refer to labeling the clients with the identity of "mentally disturbed persons" as the process of categorization, due to which they receive a relatively permanent category that determines further activity undertaken with them. I describe it in greater detail in the proceeding part of this article.

The phenomenon of "mental disorder" in the field of social work

During the study, my attention was focused on elements of professional activity of social workers developing in the daily operation. The goal outlined in such a way naturally approximated me to the interpretative paradigm that has become the optics to perceive and interpret social reality. The choice of direction is not without significance for the definition and understanding of the fundamental concepts for this study. Since my goal was to re-construct a fragment of the reality of social practice from the perspective of people working in this area, the term "mental disorder" has been redefined. The analysis of the empirical material revealed that the medical (psychiatric) perspective, which seems to be obvious upon being confronted with the problem of mental disorder, constitutes only one of the conditions within the area of social work. At the same time, the point of view of people working in this field is closer to the socio-cultural theories. Regarding "mental disorder"[5] I have in mind a certain socio-cultural construct[6] that is created during interaction (in this context, between the social worker and the client of social assistance) and by recognizing and validation of the elements inside, which then are interpreted as characteristic of "disorder". In order to interactively clarify the process of constructing the identity of a "mentally disturbed person" I will refer to two types of categorization (internal and externalized) made by social workers and revealed in the research by Granosik (2006).

Gathering and sorting of information about an individual leads to assignment of a category (in this case, the category of a "mentally disturbed client"). Granosik (2006) showed the existence of two main types of categorization (internal and externalized) in social welfare centres. "The internal categorizations of clients are a product of the environment of social workers and are known only to them; the person receiving assistance is not aware of their existence. These categories are often pejorative. Externalized categorizations function both among the social workers and in their dealing with the client, and they are usually based on positive traits or characteristics, but not evidently stigmatizing" (Granosik, 2006:63). The category is assigned to the client based on the information that the social worker systematically collects, interprets and gives them the appropriate rank (category). In order for the client to be categorized as "mentally disturbed" there must appear, during interactions, behaviours that will be considered by the worker as symptomatic[7].

The following relationships are interesting for this category. Firstly, it can include not only clients who have a psychiatric diagnosis, but also those who have never used the help of psychiatrists. Secondly, medical (psychiatric) epicrisis is not sufficient to recognize a client as "mentally disturbed", and for it to happen there must occur additional elements in the interaction with him/her. In practical terms, this means that a client having a psychiatric diagnosis may function in the structures of the centre under a different internal category. I am going to quote an example from the research, for clarification.

---

[5] In the remainder of the text, the term "mental disorder" will be written in quotes to distinguish it from the medical way of defining this term.

[6] I discuss the socio-cultural perspective in greater detail in another text: Jarkiewicz, A. (2014). Empowerment of Social Work with "Mentally Disturbed" Persons? In: Granosik, M., Gulczyńska A. (Ed.). *Empowerment in Social Work: Practice and Participatory Research*. Warszawa: Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich, 173–187.

[7] It is worth noting that there are sometimes discrepancies among social workers regarding the interpretation of the situation. What some consider to be a "mental disorder", others may see as symptoms of a completely different problem. Differences on how to interpret them are not widespread and, even if they appear, are not subject to conflicts between the workers.

"*Social worker[8]: (…) you know, my lady client X[9]. Apparently she has something diagnosed* (SW refers to a psychiatric diagnosis – AJ), *but she is so normal that it is difficult to think of her as of a mentally ill person, she just is so helpless in life*".

Thirdly, the identity assigned to the client of a "mentally disturbed person" is not permanent and can be transformed. Typically, this happens under the influence of new circumstances that change the previous interpretation and thus alter the category. An empirical example may be a situation that was described to me by a social worker:

"*Social worker: When I started working with X* (client's name – AJ) *I thought that he was some kind of lunatic. He lashed out, he shouted, he literally made a total mess. Many times I was about to call a psychiatrist and ask him to take this man away. Fortunately, later things calmed down a little and I never really realized the plan to include doctors. After some months it appeared that this man was going through a really rough time, his wife left him, took the kids, his company went belly-up, it was a downward spiral. He could not find his way in the new reality, and it led to his nervousness, frustrations, etc. Now he is a different person*".

My research has made it possible to distinguish the features that determine the assignment of individuals to the category of "mentally disturbed clients". They include the following characteristics:

1. distorted format of contact (hindered interpretation/definition of the situation). This is due to the behaviour of the client, which is incompatible with the "natural attitude"[10] of the social worker. The demeanour of the client does not fit within the moral order and the order of functioning, which is connected with the necessity of changing the format of contact and, as a result, of working out practices of establishing a new ritual balance that allows social workers to satisfactorily fulfil their role (e.g. a vivid example of a disturbed format of contact may be a situation when a client coming to the centre does not say a word);

2. problematic direct communication on the verbal level (e.g. talking openly about things that are considered inappropriate) and on the non-verbal level (physical expression, voice, tone, strength of voice, modulation and tempo of speech and facial expressions perceived as unusual, shortening of the distance during a conversation);

3. specific behaviour recognized as strange (e.g. celebrating Christmas Eve in the summer);

4. unusual appearance of a person, often referred to as "standing out in a crowd" (e.g. elderly woman dressing only in pink) and of a dwelling (e.g. very neglected or overly clean).

Concluding this paragraph it should be added that this way of understanding "mental disorder" cannot be found in the official documents drawn up by social workers. It exists only in the internal information flow.

This way of interpreting the existence of "mental disorder" in the space of social welfare centres generates certain difficulties for orienting the activities of social work, which primarily relate to the enforced and dominant medical perspective and thereby degrading the socio-cultural theories and social diagnoses made by social workers. This is a significant obstacle to the development of these theories and granting a professional status to the problems recognized by social workers. Nevertheless, they professionalize their work with the mentally disturbed persons by constructing professional tactics towards this group of clients.

---

[8] Italics indicate fragments of observational records.

[9] The client's name has been deleted.

[10] The term "natural attitude" I use here after Garfinkel (2007).

The broad repertoire of tactics used in working with a "mentally disturbed" client includes the following techniques: normalization and standardization; elimination; pushing aside; colonization; "small steps"; and tactics aimed at developing a new ritual order[11].

Tactics of normalization and standardization[12]

Each social worker develops tactics of performing more systematic and effective activity, which is also an essential element of professionalization of social work in interpretative terms. In case of "mentally disturbed" clients, the selection of tactics is determined by a number of conditions, such as the degree of the disorder; the individual attitude of the social worker towards the problem of "mental disorder"; the client's attitude to a social worker; the kind of relationship being constructed between them; institutional socialization, i.e. what opinion about "mentally disturbed" people is presented by the majority of workers; macro-structural factors (broader social and cultural context, especially the media discourse), etc.

The choice of standardization tactics is useful in many circumstances, first of all, when the client is not well-known to the worker and therefore the worker needs time to get to know him/her; and second of all, when the client is known to the social welfare institutions and has been declared non-threatening despite the behaviour characteristic of a "mental disorder". A suitable example is a client who bought old (black and white) television sets and repaired them. He might spend a large part of his monthly pension on his collection. His hobby would not be surprising, but for the fact that his home had been deprived of electricity due to arrears in payments. Another example concerns a client who was named "*A lady that walks a lot*". The client would go shopping and buy one item at a time, come back home with it and go again to the store (the same one) to buy the next one (e.g. when she bought 5 rolls, she had to go to the store 5 times). In the examples mentioned above, the risk of not taking action with regard to behaviour considered as strange or abnormal was assessed as low. Therefore, no specialist procedure was commenced. It is worth mentioning that none of the clients in question had a formal psychiatric diagnosis.

In the case of a normalization tactic, the starting point is determining what is normal and what is not, and then following the various normality curves, where normalization consists in playing some distributions against others, so that the most undesirable are adjusted to an acceptable level. Thus, the starting point is what is normal and privileged, some of its distributions, considered, so to speak, to be more normal, and more desirable than others. It is these distributions that function as norms. Norm comes from a certain game within different levels of normality (Foucault, 2010:82). In the case of normalization, norm is derived from the analysis of what is normal. The aim of the social worker using the normalization tactic will not be the desire to completely or partially eliminate activities that he/she considers to be as not fitting the norm. Different variants of normality are allowed within it, but an important part of the activity is estimating the risk related to their acceptance.

The situation is different in the case of standardization, which, according to Foucault, consists in "the prior establishment of a certain model, optimal model aimed at achieving a certain result. The point is to make people, their gestures, and actions adapt to that model, recognizing as normal what is fit for the norm, and as abnormal, what does not meet that condition" (Foucault, 2010:75). The actions undertaken in this spirit to emphasize the "original and basic character of the norm" (Foucault, 2010:75) are consistent with postulates and practices that can be defined as disciplining, controlling, or supervising. The standardization tactic consists in the elimination of

---

[11] Due to the limitation of the length of the article I will concentrate on the characteristics of two tactics: normalization and standardization.

[12] Normalization and standardization are concepts proposed by Michel Foucault on the occasion of his analysis of different types of power (2010:71–101).

behaviours and phenomena considered undesirable or escaping the norm. It should be emphasized that the client is assessed and his/her behaviour is qualified by the social worker. The logic of action, which characterizes the standardization tactic, is based on forcing the client, using different means, to perform a particular type of activity (e.g. cleaning the apartment, changing behaviour, and undergoing therapy). The standard use of this tactic is fairly easy to imagine, but it is worth noting two special circumstances that modify this seemingly simple conduct: fear and a more sophisticated strategy of playing with the institution. Clients who evoke fear in social workers, due to the insanity that is attributed to them, have expanded capabilities of acting, meaning that their behaviour, despite being recognized as unacceptable, will not be corrected. When a social worker is afraid of clients and reads them as "able to do anything", he/she will not regulate their actions. An example might be the lack of reaction of a social worker when one of the clients, for some inexplicable reason, threw all his things from his desk. The most common explanation for the lack of response in such situations is the fear of consequences, such as client's revenge or direct physical attack. Another noteworthy variant of social worker's activity is the strategic (professional) use of superficial standardization tactics. The example of it is eliminating the most visible (eye-catching) elements that other people (e.g. neighbours) or institutions would find to be abnormal, and consequently a social claim might be created for the implementation of real standardization tactics. An empirical example may be the situation of two clients whose lifestyle was referred to by the social worker as "deviating from the norm, but not harming anyone".

"*Social worker: these two ladies of mine (…) they are out of this world. Because they are so different, they can arouse fear. But you know, they are really quite harmless, so what, I should bring to them a shrink and close them in a hospital just because they differ from the majority. I told them to take care of their appearance a little (cut "abnormally" long nails) and remove the garbage bags from the windows, so you know, that one does not immediately take them as crazy, and as long as nothing bad happens to them or others, let them live as they like*".

Social workers resorting to these type of professional "tricks" create over their clients a kind of a protective barrier (umbrella), whose mission is to enable them to live in a manner considered by them to be normal and satisfactory. Since such actions are in a way "playing games" with the institution (or in a number of cases several institutions), undertaking them is unfortunately connected with a significant risk of disclosure, e.g. for instance when media start taking interest in the case,[13] which condemns a social worker to work in a sense of danger[14].

Restrictions for professional social work activities in the area of "mental disorder"

Because the term "mental disorder" is associated primarily with biomedical science, also in the minds of many specialists, psychiatry is the main source of knowledge about the specifics of the problem. Therefore, a conviction has been shaped of having to call in a psychiatrist to each case manifesting signs of mental problems. A similar attitude is presented in social welfare centres, despite the fact that in the opinion of many workers, psychiatric intervention should be the last

---

[13] The author has written in greater detail on the media conditioning in the context of orienting the activities of social workers in Jarkiewicz A. 2013. Media i dylematyczność działania w obszarze pracy socjalnej z osobami zaburzonymi psychicznie (Media and the Dilemma of Working in the Field of Social Work with People with Mental Disorders). *Societas/Communitas*, 2(16), 183–203.

[14] It is not always a matter of an individual (social worker) playing against the institution. Very often, these practices are known and informally accepted by the superiors. However, social workers are aware that in the situation of disclosure, they will be accused and stigmatized as those who have not taken the necessary preventive measures or applied the required procedures.

resort[15], when clear evidence is gathered proving the existence of a mental disorder. Unfortunately, the superiority (sometimes even the exclusivity) of the medical perspective prevents or at least limits the extent of activities of social workers. Restricting the use of these methods is to a large extent conditioned by the fact that social workers themselves do not approve of another way of official perception of mental disorders[16]. As demonstrated by my research, social workers can theoretically indicate a number of alternative solutions (to the medical ones), but unfortunately they are lost during the phase of planning and execution of real actions towards mentally disturbed clients. The reasons for this phenomenon can be traced, on the one hand, to the absence of boldness in social workers to mark their position regarding mental health problems, though undoubtedly they have a social impact. On the other hand, we observe the lack of theoretical and methodological achievements in this area of activity, which is reflected in the deficiencies in education. Therefore, persons employed in social welfare institutions are not able to use the knowledge which, as the equivalent of the medical knowledge, would provide an opportunity to contribute to the discourse within the indicated range, enriching it with social perspective. Unfortunately, the formation of knowledge in this field is destructively influenced also by the fact that the interested parties themselves invalidate many valuable conclusions and reflections, which are shared only within the internal circulation of information (in the talks between social workers). A common consequence of the above becomes degrading social work to the role of the distributor of resources; limiting the autonomy of social work and taking up quasi conspiratorial actions by social workers; limiting the usefulness of reflection on social practice and development of social theory of work with mentally disturbed persons.

Conclusion

To conclude the above considerations I would like to try to answer the following question: "What is currently most important for the development of professionalization of social work in the area of working with mentally disturbed people?" Taking into account the results of the analysis of empirical research material, I would say, that the most important aspects include: firstly, legitimization of the activities of social workers based on the social (non-medical) diagnosis, secondly, fighting for the validation of socio-cultural theories in the field of social work, and thirdly, appreciation of social work and primarily of social workers as professionals sufficiently prepared to act in this area, i.e. fighting for the prestige of the profession. For such purpose to be achieved, changes must occur on at least several levels. One of them requiring particular attention is the area of language used to describe "mental disorders". This language is currently soaked with medical terminology. It is therefore necessary to introduce changes in defining and describing the phenomenon of "mental disorder", so that it could be applied to social theories and used to sensitize people to humanistic and social contexts. There is also a need for a change in the approach to educational programs that from the very beginning should orient the thinking of future practitioners of social work towards the above-mentioned directions.

---

[15] In the opinion of many social workers, calling in a psychiatrist based solely on suspicion of a mental disorder is an overly drastic action and may negate the chance of establishing a positive relationship between the worker and the client. While in some situations, at a certain stage of work, limiting the aid to psychiatric help appears to be the only correct solution, in the vast majority of cases, this type of thinking can have harmful consequences for a client who could benefit greatly from non-medical environmental activities.

[16] I mean here the fight for equal appreciation of socio-cultural theories regarding "mental disorders".

References

BECKER, H. S. 1970. *Sociological Work: Method and Substance*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.

BLUMER, H. 2007. *Interakcjonizm symboliczny.* Kraków: NOMOS.

FLEXNER, A. 1915. Is social work a profession? [online]. Social Welfare History Project [1. 5. 2017]. Available at: http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/social-work/is-social-work-a-profession-1915/

FOUCAULT, M. 2010. *Bezpieczeństwo, terytorium, populacja*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

FRYSZTACKI, K. 2008. *Siła i słabość procesów profesjonalizacji pracy socjalnej.* Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej.

GARFINKEL, H. 2007. *Studia z etnometodologii.* Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

GLASER, B. 1978. *Theoretical Sensitivity. Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Mill Valley: The Sociology Press.

GLASER, B., STRAUSS, A. L. 2009. *Odkrywanie teorii ugruntowanej.* Kraków: Wydawnictwo NOMOS.

GLASER, B., STRAUSS, A. L. 1967. *Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.

GORZKO, M. 2008. *Procedury i emergencja. O metodologii klasycznych odmian teorii ugruntowanej*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.

GRANOSIK, M. 2006. *Profesjonalny wymiar pracy socjalnej.* Katowice: Biblioteka Pracownika Socjalnego.

GREENWOOD, E. 1957. Attributes of a profession. *Social Work*, 2(3), 45–55.

JARKIEWICZ, A. 2014. Empowerment pracy socjalnej z osobami „zaburzonymi psychicznie"? In: GRANOSIK, M., GULCZYŃSKA, A. (Eds.) *Empowerment w pracy socjalnej: praktyka i badania partycypacyjne*. Warszawa: Centrum Rozwoju Zasobów Ludzkich, 173–187.

JARKIEWICZ, A. 2013. Media i dylematyczność działania w obszarze pracy socjalnej z osobami zaburzonymi psychicznie. *Societas/Communitas*, 2(16), 183–203.

KONECKI, K. T. 2000. *Studia z metodologii badań jakościowych. Teoria ugruntowana*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

KROMOLICKA, B. 2011. Kształcenie do pracy socjalnej w Polsce – praktyka codzienności. In: KRZYSZTOF, P., SZYMAŃSKA ZYBERTOWICZ, K. (Eds.). *Profesjonalna praca socjalna. Nowy paradygmat czy niedokończone zadania?* Toruń: Akapit, 121–132.

MARYNOWICZ-HETKA, E. 2006. *Pedagogika społeczna*. Warszawa: Wyd. Nauk PWN.

NIESPOREK, A., TREMBACZOWSKI, Ł., WARCZOK, T. 2013. *Granice symboliczne. Studium praktyk kulturowych na przykładzie działań zawodowych pracowników socjalnych*. Katowice: NOMOS.

SCHÜTZE, F. 1992. Sozialarbeit als "bescheidene" Profession. In: DEWE, B., FERCHHOF, W., OLAF-RADTKE, F. (Eds.). *Erziehen als Profession. Zur Logik professionellen Handelns in padagogischen Feldern*. Opladen: Leske+Budrich, 132–170.

STRAUSS, A. 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: University Press.

STRAUSS, A., CORBIN, J. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research. Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

SZMAGALSKI, J. 2012. Kształcenie do pracy socjalnej w Polsce po 1989 roku. In: RYMSZA, M. (Ed.). *Pracownicy socjalni i praca socjalna w Polsce. Między służbą społeczną a* urzędem. Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 279–297.

SZMAGALSKI, J. 2011. Profesje we współczesnej perspektywie teoretycznej a wyzwania profesjonalizacji pracy socjalnej w Polsce. In: PIĄTEK, K., SZYMAŃSKA-ZYBERTOWICZ, K. (Eds.). *Profesjonalna praca socjalna. Nowy paradygmat czy niedokończone zadania?* Toruń: Akapit, 17–35.

TRAWKOWSKA, D. 2006. *Portret współczesnego pracownika socjalnego. Studium socjologiczne*. Katowice: Śląsk.

URBANIAK-ZAJĄC, D. 2014. O profesjonalności pracy socjalnej w relacjach z badań. In: SZPUNAR, M. *Badania w pracy socjalnej*. Gdańsk: ANWI, 246–259.

WILSON, P. T. 1973. Normative and Interpretative Paradigms in Sociology. In: DOUGLAS, J. D. (Ed.). *Understanding Everyday Life. Toward the Reconstruction of Sociological Knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

WÓDŹ, K. 1999. Profesjonalizm jako podstawowy wyznacznik tożsamości zawodowej pracownika socjalnego. In: NIEPOREK, A., WÓDŹ, K. (Eds.). *Praca socjalna w Polsce. Badania, kształcenie, potrzeby praktyk*. Katowice: Śląsk, 135–147.

Controversial Issues of Research Methodology Taking into Account Social Work

Tomáš Waloszek

Tomáš Waloszek[1] is a student of the doctoral study programme of Social Work at the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ostrava. He teaches courses related to Social Policy, and was a main coordinator of the project "Innovation of Social Policy at Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ostrava".

Abstract
This theoretical study deals with the methodology of social sciences in the context of social work. These areas discuss the findings, and the issues of methodology of science are applied to social work. The aim of this paper is to find and to highlight the research limits, barriers and gaps that arise from research in social work. The author presents controversial issues: four broader problems of science methodology that he incorporates into the broader framework of social work.

Keywords
methodology of science, research, social work, social constructivism, induction, efficiency, public sector, alternative theories

Introduction

The presented theoretical study comes from the "*methodology of social sciences*" sphere, from the "*social work*" field. In this work, the methodological findings will be applied to the field of social work. This application itself brings many questions: "*Do we encounter any problems when researching social work? Do we see any limits? What kinds of controversial questions emerge?*" With this treatise, we would like to provide answers.

This is a study that draws attention to the shortcomings of, or controversial questions related to the methodology of research in the social work field. The different authors or methodologists only point towards particular shortcomings, but there is not a lot written on the topic of social work. What is the nature of the barriers and disputable affairs of the conducted or proposed research?

The goal of this theoretical study is to find the problematic aspects of research strategies that can appear during the investigation of several fields of social work. The apparent goal of this study is to answer a question, which is "*Are there any controversial questions and limits that influence results of research in the field of social work?*" Thus, we will try to think about the limits of research and

controversial questions that come with the methodology used in this work. Before we do so, we need to outline both of the discussed fields: methodology and social work.

The methodology of science

Ochrana (2009) wrote that in theory, the term *"methodology of science"* is not used with a singular meaning. He explains that methodology of science is about methods. "*It is a theory of choice of research methods and a manual for using the chosen methods for scientific research. The knowledge of scientific methodology is a basic skill of any scientist. It allows him to understand the system of a scientific work and to understand the interpretation of the research results*" (Ochrana, 2009:12). It is important to add that: "*methodology does not exhaust itself with just a list of methods. Those are described in their respective textbooks. Methodology has a much broader focus*" (Riegel, 2007:203).

Scientific methodology can be divided into the academic and the professional fields. What is the role of science and research in either of those? The scientific research is an inherent part of university life and together with teaching, forms a single whole. In other words, the "*job*" of an academic is to enrich and improve the amount of knowledge that forms the theory and subsequently to share the knowledge with the public, most often by teaching. On the other hand, in the context of practical social policy and social work or the organization of public social services, science and research serves as a tool for solving practical difficulties and tasks. The theory and research are applied in practical professional work (social programmes, interventions in difficult social situations of the client, etc.). In this sense, a social worker or an official "*uses*" scientific knowledge "*created*" by academics and non-academic scientists. In the professional context, the research is subordinated to practical needs, while in academic context, everything is subordinated to research. In the professional context, the problem needs to be solved in a limited time (the solution cannot be postponed) and with limited information and financial backing. The goal is to solve a problem or fulfil a given task. The achieving of said goal must not be endangered by overzealous adherence to a "*clean*" research process. However, that does not imply poor research discipline. Only a knowledgeable user is able to use the research methods meaningfully. Only such a user is able to pick a correct research method or strategy for a specific problem (Žižlavský, 2003).

The role of social work in the society

It would be desirable to define the second field this paper deals with, social work. Immediately, we are faced with a problem. There are many definitions of social work and authors often interpret the discipline differently. Broadly speaking, it can be said that there are as many definitions of social work as there are authors. Therefore, I will list only the most commonly used definitions. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) defines social work as a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (NASW, according to Barker, 2003:408). Musil (2004) adds: "*the common aspect of social work and other supporting fields is providing help for people in difficult situations. The difference is that social work deals with the interaction of an individual and his social environment. It's help is focused on reaching balance between the expectations of social environment people fulfill their needs in and their ability to meet the expectations*" (Musil, 2004:15).

What is the purpose of social work in society? Back in the 60's or 70's only a few people who did not manage to ascend socially during the time of general welfare were threatened by social

exclusion. Social handicap in this time had been considered on par with the physical or mental. In the 80's and 90's of the 20th century, whole strata of low income population, who were previously on the rise, fell into the socially excluded category, mainly because of unstable jobs and also weakened social bonds. These were no longer just individuals forgotten by the progress, they were victims of the new state of affairs. After the year 2000 even some parts of the middle class are unsettled. They are supposed to get used to their position of not having the kind of insurance that keeps away problems as before. The problems of the lower classes, such as occasional unemployment, unstable families, the problems of old age or problems with housing, are no longer distant. At the same time, they are supposed to get used to all this being a part of their autonomy and freedom of choice not to find full employment. Up to this point, the progress of modernity was in the direction of integration of increasingly more groups of the unprivileged. Now it seems society has put itself in reverse mode. Mechanisms that again exclude groups of people that managed to integrate only with a great deal of effort are put into progressively greater use. These groups are mostly the poor, women and people of non-white race (Keller, 2013).

According to Beck (2007), we should realize that these problems have always been present. It is up to the social work to deal with these problems in our day. Chytil (2007) is sceptical, however. He predicts, according to Stoesz (1997) and Lorenz (2005), a possible end to social work, because it was developed in a time of industrialization and has missed the advancement to post-industrial society. It has given up on it's own theoretical development and has mismanaged it's advancement into another phase of modernity (Stoesz, 1997; Lorenz 2005; Chytil, 2007). The theoretical development is possible however, but only with the assistance of research of social work, which brings us back to the aforementioned methodology. The modernization does not have to mean the end of social work. It could mean that "*it stops being a service sui generis and becomes a service in the labour market similar to other services such as waste disposal. It is focused on generating income*" (Chytil, 2007:70).

"*The social work of today's time is recognized as not only a practical form of helping people in need, but it is also a progressively developing discipline with supporting professions. We can recognize it not only as a field of education and individual profession, but also as a scientific discipline*". (Mátel, Sedlárová, Vlček, 2012). However, some research work is tied to the scientific discipline. Next, we will take a look at the problems that can arise during research.

The problems of methodology of research in social work and the ethical aspect

We have already defined both the methodology of the science and the social work. These fields are intertwined and are essential to this theoretical study. Next, we will think about what controversial thoughts stem from the scientific methodology of social work. It is important to mention that many of the presented thoughts will be simplified and some of the related questions will be omitted because not doing so would greatly exceed the scope of this work. We would also like to mention that this study does not attempt to lessen the importance of scientific research and knowledge. It's goal is to draw attention towards methodological barriers and doubts and not to invalidate any findings. There is no doubt that research is tied to science. However "*every group of researchers that considers the methodology of their research project should think about the relation between evidence and data they have available and theories that dictate the usage of methods used for gathering and analysing said data and evidence*" (Harrington, 2006:31).

The research needs varied methods and strategies (simply put, qualitative and quantitative for example). It is important to add that a critical reflection on the state of theories and methods is also crucial (Baum, Gojová, 2014). That is exactly what we will attempt to do in this treatise. Every research can bring several problems and critical questions. Thus, there are many limitations for the application of the scientific approach. It is important to be reminded of them to ensure that research is not considered unerring. Some of these limitations are common to all researchers, some

are more prevalent in social disciplines such as psychology, sociology, even in our own social policy and social work. Kutnohorská (2009) lists the fact that perfectly designed and executed research is rarely achievable and in reality many of them have several mistakes and errors as one of the shared limits of research. Apart from that, it is possible to approach every research work from several different angles, and the researcher needs to decide how to proceed. Many of the better methods are also more expensive and time-consuming (Kutnohorská, 2009).

Macková (2013) describes other signs. According to this author, it often comes to presentation of fictional results that did not come out as a true result of research and tampering with existing results. It is mostly done by changing real results to better fit the anticipated ones, making the results "*prettier*" and avoiding the unexplainable ones (Macková, 2013). Overall it can be called a breach of research ethics. All this can be encountered, but in reality it is often difficult to prove. All of this is actually not anything new or exclusive to our time. McClung Lee described the difficulties of research of social standings of elites in the USA in 1976. The researchers were working on and promoting an idealized version of sociology and social policy. Some of the professional sociologists were building the legitimacy of their sociology on existing scientific symbols and philosophy of methodology in a way that would be acceptable for the reigning politically-academic elite of their time. The worst enemy of a scientist-researcher is the drive to get an approval from higher-up and to claim success (McClung Lee, 1976). This is an example of putting personal ambitions before the objectivity of scientific research, which brings us back to the ethical aspect. Despite their importance, we need to leave such ethical issues aside and focus on the controversial topics of application of methodology of science on the field of social work.

The problems of social constructionism (constructivism)

The first to be taken into consideration is the "*social constructionism*" (constructivism). The important difference between constructionism and constructivism is that constructivism (for example Maturana, Varela, von Glasersfeld, von Foerster) focuses on the interest of an individual as a self-contained, self-organising system that constructs reality by "*colliding*" with the environment, while constructionism (for example Gergen, Hoffmanová, Goolishian) focuses on the social context that the meanings are developed in (Hoffmanová, 1992, in Zatloukal, 2007). In this treatise, the term constructionism should be used, but due to their intertwined nature and with consideration for the different terminology used by the authors, these terms will remain interchangeable and will be used as synonyms.

Some of the variants of social constructivism are closely connected to methodology. One such example is Pierre Bourdieu, who named his research strategy "*methodological constructivism*". Herbert Blumer considers these strategies infertile, because they create abstract terms that are unable to capture the actor's perspective (Kubátová, Znebejánek, 2014). It is not the aim to provide a thorough explanation of social constructivism here. The basis is that social constructivism builds upon the fact that reality is constructed by individual acts of an individual. A community of people together then make up the aspects of a world that surrounds them (Kukla, 2000).

There is a book named "*The Social Construction of What?*", written by Ian Hacking (2003). Keller (2014) says that this question is not phrased very well. The reason is that the object of constructionism can be rather anything, and only dependant upon the limits of fantasy of the one who interprets reality. For unveiling the limits of social constructionism, Keller (2014) proposes a different question. He does not ask *WHAT?* is being constructed, but *WHO?* are the authors of the construction (Keller, 2014). In the case of fiery social problems that social policy (and social work) is supposed to put out, there are many categories of constructors. Keller (2014) uses homelessness as an example. First, the phenomenon of homelessness was constructed by researchers for the sake of their analyses. Apart from that, the term homelessness is constructed by others, this time without any scientific ambitions, such as media, politicians or agencies that try

to help people without a home. And finally, homeless people have their own interpretation. These three categories have wildly varied knowledge and aims, and they find themselves in incomparable life situations and follow different goals. Despite all that, all the images of homelessness that are produced are put on the same shelf named "*social construction*". As a result of this, what we find under the label of "*constructing reality*" is a jumble of incomparable thought processes. According to these rules, some parts of reality are accentuated while others repressed (Keller, 2014).

There is a problematic question. If social work, aided by its methods, is supposed to offer a solution to problems, does it take all the actors into consideration? The same is true for social policy. What about employment policy for example? Does it take the point of view of all the actors, from its workers to the unemployed? What about the family policy, pension policy and all the rest? On the other hand, is there a way to take all the above into consideration, the opinions of all the participating subjects[2] and objects[3] and find a solution that would be the result of the average of all this and is effective?

In defence of social constructivism, it can be said social constructivism very successfully and very legitimately opposes the idea that simple testimonies about the world around us are truthful just because they are observations (Gulová, Šíp, 2013). This thought can be applied even on scientific research of aspects in social work. Kappl (2009) claims that social work is often being connected with a certain stereotypical idea: the people with certain qualifications are able to solve most problems in a certain society, assuming there is a certain level of advancement of scientific and institutionalized social work. This prejudice is somewhat believable when we consider that many of us believe that the existence of social work is in the best interest of each society and we know that there is an influx of finances in exchange for producing certain expertise, specialized knowledge.

The fact is that in certain reflections of professional researchers or layman public, claims of absolute failures caused by social work can be observed now and will be observed in the future. According to the adherents of social constructivism, there is nothing strange in that. Most constructivists will agree that such failure is necessary every time the social workers claim more control and power over the situation when interacting with their clients. There is no single answer to the question of why we encounter such failure. According to constructivists, it could be caused by the reality not being the same as our vision, in which "*things*" can be controlled from a single centre of "*knowledge and power*". According to constructivists, these are just illusions. No society is really controlled with the help of systematically applied rational control. While there are some efforts, the result is usually influenced by a string of coincidences and secondary factors. "*We are mostly acting in certain complicated systems, where, thanks to a "feedbackishness" of sorts, there is no centre of power powerful enough to be able to dictate a singular direction of development for the entire reality. Even though it might look to be so in the eyes of the uninitiated, it is more of an example of skilfully imposed interpretation, rather than a well-planned and successfully executed project*" (Kappl, 2009:17).

The problem with public sector effectivity

This problem is closely tied to social policy. "*In contemporary social work – as a scientific discipline and profession – it is not enough to only help and support the clients in need in improving their social behavior, but at the same time it is important to affect the social environment and influence the conditions for them to not become a barrier but a support in such process*" (Mátel, Sedlárová, Vlček, 2012:231–232). According to Tomeš (2010) the social policy that creates a framework for social work is mostly about developing human potential and solidarity among people and so its success stems from

---

[2] Subjects are those who have an interest, will, skills, prerequisites and means for social activities or behavior and who can initiate and fulfill these activities and behavior (Krebs, 2010:51).

[3] Objects of social policy (social work) are those that are the recipients of these measures (Krebs, 2010:50)

financial aid and generosity of expenditure (Tomeš, 2010). This portrays the expenses part of it all. "*The European model of society is founded on a relatively well developed system of social protection and a universal approach to them, and it is necessarily leaning on relatively high social expenses*" (Krebs, 2010:85). Most often, a state uses taxes, both direct and indirect, as a financial source to fund social activities, but of course, there are other sources, such as other public income sources or even the state property (Tomeš, 2010). Thus we have the costs of implementation of social policy, that forms the framework for executing social work, that are easy to quantify. The same cannot be said about results. Whether we like it or not, quantifying social compromise or quality of life is impossible. It can be said that in this case, the "*inputs*" are studied in a quantitative way and the results are studied in a qualitative way[4]. That means that such studies can never be compared[5] which aids mostly the non-liberal thinkers in promoting opinions that the social state is too expensive, ineffective and it dismisses individual initiatives. The crisis of the social state in the sense of disproportional rise of expenses and loss of effectivity is explained very well by Večeřa (2001) when he says "*The liberal critics in particular point out that huge expenses on the social state are of low effectivity or not effective at all while the complex system of redistributions make the social state mechanism non-transparent and clumsy. The bureaucracy itself does, according to some, consume up to half of the finances available for social purpose*" (Večeřa, 2001:62).

Let us take a look at the effectivity issue. The state has a limited budget and it is important to monitor it's usage, effect or a change of status. This example is best illustrated on employment policy programmes. To be able to judge the effect employment policies have on the labour market situation, or more precisely if and potentially how financially profitable they are, the evaluation of public policies set the so called "*clean effects*". The point is to judge the situation with no programmes present and to compare the findings with the programme results. However, the investigation of how would things be without any programmes is difficult and complicated and it heavily influences the results, and raises heated discussions and doubts. It is also clear that the effects of employment programmes are tied to the current employment rate. It is obvious that high unemployment rate is tied to low employment programme effectiveness. It also seems that the programmes reach a higher level of effectiveness with lower unemployment rate. It is also confirmed that the regions with lower unemployment rate have fewer employment programmes, which improves the quality of results (Kulhavý, Sirovátka, 2008).

This problem illustrates the assessment of effectiveness of social security systems (more in Waloszek, Krausová, 2015). The main reason behind existence and development of social security systems are their social effects. These are notably difficult to express economically - some of them are unable to be and for some it would make no sense. The best approach to assessment of the effectiveness of a social security system is an assessment that focuses on confirming the level of accomplishment of set goals and comparison of expenses needed to accomplish them. The general criteria are legitimacy, effectivity including expense effectivity and the absence of undesired effects (Sirovátka, 1997). But not even this approach is perfect. The drawbacks take us back to social constructivism, which has been discussed above. Somebody had to set those goals. The question is how much do those goals take workers, clients and other parties into consideration. When it comes to consequences for social work, we can agree with Chytil (2007) who says that the model of systematic rationalization that correlates with logic of rising effectivity also applies to the social field. "*The social has a right to exist only if it is profitable. Social aid should be organized according to the principles of a trade economy*" (Chytil, 2007:65). With this methodological problem in mind the main division is between quantitative and qualitative approaches as a methodological problem on

---

[4] Qualitative approach can be characterized by its subjectivity and meaning that is ascribed to the studied topics by people living or working in a certain environment (Loučková, 2014).

[5] Let us leave aside the fact that some qualitative studies use simple quantitative tools for measuring, which proves that the dichotomy of qualitative/quantitative is disputable (Silverman, 2005).

one hand, and inputs (expenses) and results (effectivity) of the public sector and their assessment on the other. What becomes non-profitable is omitted, with no care for the needs of clients.

The problem of generalization

The next discovered methodological problem can be called "*inductive generalization*". Induction is when your thought process goes from an individual fact to the general (Kubátová, 2006; Kutnohorská, 2009; Burian, 2014). We encounter only unique situations and therefore only by induction can we come to a conclusion other than that which we have lived through or shared by showing the unique situations of our life. A description cannot exist without induction. The question asked here is: Is anything like this, in the form of induction, possible in a social science environment?

The problem of inductive generalization is best illustrated by Popper (1997). It is habitual to call inference "*inductive*" if it goes from singular claims based on experiment results to universal claims such as hypotheses or theories. It is not clear, at least from the logical perspective, whether we have the right to infer universal claims from singular ones, however numerous, because every such conclusion can prove to be incorrect. Popper (1997) uses white swans as an example (more in Popper, 1997; Hubík, 2006).

The question of whether the inductive inferences are justified, and under what conditions, is known as the induction problem. The induction problem can be formulated as a question of validity or truthfulness of universal claims based on experience such as hypotheses or theoretical systems of empirical sciences. Many people are convinced that the truthfulness of these universal claims is "*known from experience*", even though it is clear that a record of experience, for example an experiment or observation, is only a singular claim and not universal (Popper, 1997). In the eyes of proponents of inductive logic the inductive principle is of supreme value for science methodology. This principle decides which scientific theory is correct and which is not. We cannot eliminate it from science completely, because it would mean no less than to deprive science of the ability to decide on the truthfulness of its theories. It is important to add that it is not the only reason that induction is indispensable, but it is clear that without this principle, science would have lost its ability to differentiate theories and fantasy long ago (Reichenbach, 1930, in Popper, 1997).

Popper adheres to the idea that the induction principle brings logical inconsistencies. It is therefore necessary to point out that in social work, all the research results are only probabilities and cannot be considered completely universal and correct. We cannot include all the employed people into a survey nor can we ask all the families with children or know the opinion of all senior citizens. This is important to keep in mind when designing provisions to solve social problems.

Let us take poverty into consideration. One thing is how we personally experience poverty, how we talk about it amongst ourselves and how we personally deal with it. At that moment poverty is something unclear, complicated and intimate. A completely different thing is when we conceptualize poverty for the needs of public institutions, at which point it gets a singular meaning and is clearly defined and abstract. It becomes an item of public mass intervention, an object of decision for various public committees, governments and parliaments. Something similar applies to defining the people to whom poverty pertains (Konopásek, 1998). Some researchers frown on generalization in qualitative strategies. Maybe they have a right to, because it begs the question whether understanding something that cannot be fully generalized is even a science. This approach probably fulfils the need for the idiographic approach, and many issues are too complicated for a needlessly simplifying quantitative methodology (Kostroň, 2011).

The problem of admissibility of alternatives

Let us move to another of the methodological problems, one that is a bit more complicated. It could be called a problem with "*admissibility of alternatives*" or "*hypothesis as a methodological problem*". It can be traced to the advancement of science and to Paul Feyerabend (1924–1994), a student of Karl Popper, and one of the most provocative and most controversial of thinkers of the 20th century. It is widely accepted that his book "*Against method*" published in 1975 is one of his best works, his magnum opus. The work was a shock, and caused a division right after publication. His biography shows that after a few negative critiques of this work, Feyerabend fell into a deep depression for many years. Despite that, he has always held firmly to his controversial philosophical beliefs. Feyerabend boldly speaks about methodological anarchism being more humane and contributing to science than the alternatives based on law and order (Feyerabend, 2001). His opinion is that the advancement of science is more easily achieved through counter inductive measures. By using hypotheses that go against confirmed theories and well proven experimental facts, for example (Feyerabend, 2001).

Hubík (2006) is more careful with this idea. We say "*in case of the existence of a theory, a researcher is supposed to take it into account*". But not absolutely, in that discussions on theories and history of science that were happening in the 60's and 70's showed that the respect for any given theory cannot be absolute (in the case of creating a hypothesis) if the science is researching things probably unknown, or if there is a lack of firm consensus from the scientific community. On the other hand, if science functions as the "*normal science*" solving "*puzzles*", the respect for a given theory when creating a hypothesis is proper" (Hubík, 2006:16).

There is a saying "*Anything goes*", which is often ascribed to Paul Feyerabend. This method is built upon a counter inductive approach. If we were to approach science in this manner, it would mean incorporating counter-rules that would oppose regular rules of scientific methods, incorporating and improving hypotheses that go against well-established theories (Kubátová, 2006). The world we want to study is an unknown entity, at least to an extent. We have to leave options open and not limit ourselves by theory in advance (Kubátová, 2006). "*The condition of compatibility that demands new hypotheses to agree with established theories is not wise, because it favors the older theory, not the better one. Hypotheses that go against established theories are evidence that cannot be obtained by any better way. The multiplicity of theories is good for science, whereas uniformity weakens its power. Uniformity also endangers an individual's freedom of development*" (Feyerabend, 2001:40). In our case, it is possible to say it also endangers a researcher's freedom.

Feyerabend has once said that the biggest reason for writing his famous "*Against method*" was humanitarian and not an intellectual one. He said that he wanted to support people, not to push knowledge further. My opinion is that he achieved the exact opposite. The theory of scientific paradigms now stands next to a theory of anarchistic science, which was created by Feyerabend himself. It is important to think about whether a scientist that works in a field of social work can even afford to take the approach Feyerabend proposed. We can hardly expect that in a research project in social work. The reasons are what have already been mentioned in the chapter "*The problems of methodology of research in social work and the ethical aspect*" when discussing authors McClung Lee (1976) and Macková (2013). The same exact problem is present in social work. Thus it is possible that social work as an academic discipline will never come up with miraculous solutions and will only copy the development of society hand in hand with its social problems. That could give rise to a question of legitimacy of social work as a scientific field. The effect might be unavoidable even for social work. An example would be the definition of social work by Úlehla (2005), who says that the aim of social work is to "*have a dialogue on what society wants through its norms, and what a client wants*" (Úlehla, 2005:19). The link to social policy is evident. Social policy as a conscious, purposeful state activity in the social sphere creates a framework for fulfilment of social work (Gulová, 2011:18; Svobodová, 2001).

Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the how much of an effect do the controversial questions in methodology have on practical research. Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence informed knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation (IFSW, 2012) This claim brings many controversial questions, and not only in the methodology of science but in the realization itself. For example, can we stay impartial even if the survey is done in our own organization? How prejudiced are we in the context of a research agency or individual workers and researchers? What is considered "*a success*" in different countries and cultures? Community development? The development of psychodynamic approach? Cognitive behavioural work? In the case of poverty, racism, sexism, discrimination of handicapped people and other problems, it is needed for us to be aware of our own prejudices and to work on making them less impactful, because they can influence methods of choice, role of internal researcher and the researcher's opinion on groups of clients (more in Baum, Gojová, 2014).

It has already been said in the first chapter that it is possible to differentiate the academic and professional environment. In the professional environment, Žáčková (2012) talks about a group of problems that can be encountered during research in community planning. First, it is a (I) **problem of analysis of incoming data** when an agency's employees usually work only with data supplied by the submitter (for example a catalogue of a city's social services) and data freely accessible on the internet (statistics from Czech statistical bureau, data from registry of providers of social services available via MoLSA[6]) They sort through this data and without further work they present it in the final report. The information thus brings no new conclusions. The next one is (II) **problem of terminological inaccuracies**. The agencies that ask for an opportunity to conduct a sociological research in community planning usually lack deeper understanding of the structure of social services. They lack the understanding of terminology which leads them into situations where they try to compare incomparable facts. A typical example here would be the term "*capacity*". Another problem is (III) **problem with data processing**. Employees of various agencies have experience with conducting research, but not necessarily in social work. Often, they only know how to work with hard statistical data, but not sociological data. They speak the language of math and statistics and lack the ability to analyse and interpret the data further. It is not rare to encounter a (IV) **problem with representativeness** of research inquiries because information about methodology used is only sporadically included into the final report. They usually only list the number of respondents, the number of returned questionnaires etc., but lack information on type of choice, or it is apparent that several rules were violated. However, the choice of and number of respondents are, along with the method of gathering and processing data, the key factors in determining the validity of a research. The value of choice without respect is very low, and the same holds true for research surveys. One more problem to add would be (V) **problem with final reports**, because their quality can often be somewhat disputable. The fact that a final report is not done exactly according to rules could be tolerated, as it brought the conclusions that were asked for. It is possible to look critically upon reports that include long introductory parts that include definitions of social services, citations of law, information on forms and types of social service etc. While it is important to include a description of the problem at hand, considering it is usually the city that is the submitter, it is somewhat redundant to do so at length. Only rarely do the final reports include enough information about the procedure and logic of the research which makes the subsequent assessment of quality and validity of conclusions problematic. Quantitative data is sometimes presented with exhausting detail, but often it lacks interpretation. The submitter gets to know the exact number of respondents that had an opinion on the given matter, but it is up to the submitter to make "*heads or tails*" of it. The usability of conclusions in the final reports is

---

[6] Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

limited and the submitters only get partial data. Surveys often have some information value, but they are rarely representative (more in Žáčková, 2012).

Veselý et al. (2007) brings an interesting observation from the academic environment. He says that a new theory usually brings joy to the scientist no matter its usability. It can often be said that to many scientists the main criterion of quality is not usability, but originality of their work.

The common factor in the controversial points mentioned has been social constructivism. Most currents in critical social work presume that knowledge is socially constructed and interpreted. It is not independent, it does not wait to be discovered, but it is produced along with the society. The critical currents consider the "*objective reality*" to be a myth created by those that have power and present their own particular interpretation as the only "*true*" one (Campbell, Baikie, 2012). A postmodernist look on the world usually sees things not as "*social facts*" but "*social constructs*". That makes fighting phenomena such as racism, sexism or capitalism harder to fight. If these are social constructs, they do not really exist, and how can we fight something that does not exist? (Peters, 2012). Postmodernist methods of work in reality often stop at individual methods of work instead of a change of social structures (Janebová, 2014). Navrátil (1998) also adds that from the point of view of pedagogical workers and teaching methodology of research, our point of view applied on social work can draw attention to the need for caution when creating strategies of education at institutions of higher education. It is not sufficient to begin the education by taking up traditional models, or by mechanical application of the offered theoretical concepts. Unquestioned application of research methods means endangering the client and the whole society. This insight, from the point of view of researchers and scientists, can incite interest in empirical research of cultural, social and other contexts through which is the contemporary social work realised. The issues of whether contemporary social work is adequate for these social conditions are of similar nature. This insight is also a challenge for those that would like to take part in creation of new theories and methods in social work to include research limits and controversial aspects of methodology into their thought process.

A discussion about results versus evidence based practice theory

It is without debate that social work as an academic discipline cannot exist without research. The teaching of research methods in social work is, according to Minimal standard of education in social work, a cornerstone of social work studies. The researcher, whether a social worker, scientist or any other person researching social reality (a student for example), is faced with an objective. The objective is to truthfully and accurately describe the phenomena that cannot be described through linear cause-and-effect. Social reality is so varied that an exhaustive description of any given phenomenon will rarely be achieved and every researcher needs to accept it right from the start. However, in that way also lies the beauty of researching social phenomena. There is always something new to discover and every researcher can contribute with his specific point of view and experience. As social workers, to be able to research social situations and problems our clients face, we need theoretical knowledge of research theories, strategies and methods (Žurovcová, 2010). This is related to some aforementioned limits and controversial questions.

Social research not supported by theory will always remain bound by personal opinion on social phenomena. However interesting it may be, it is singular and not transferable. Every social worker should possess at least some research knowledge and skills to be able to propose and do limited-scope research. This research can be focused on a specific social problem in a specific location, and the results of this can serve as a basis for decisions on planning, development or repression of specific forms of social work, activities or projects. This way, social workers do not need to rely on large-scope research, which, though conducted by renowned scientists, rarely fit their needs. However, in this framework we encounter a significant problem. No research theory can work in every situation. The researcher needs to admit that a research technique or strategy does not

work and re-evaluate it accordingly. This is related to some controversial methodological questions mentioned before.

There is, however, a phenomenon that may (or may not) invalidate our results. It is "*evidence based*" practice theory. Evidence based practice theory shows some important links between methods of research and social work. This discussion will be dedicated to connecting the results with this approach.

This treatise already mentioned the "*constructivist*" approach that presumes the reality is created socially, it constantly changes, and is unknowable in its complexity. Thus it is not possible to create a singularly universal "*diagnosis*" that would be a clear lead to the choice of intervention. Constantly thinking in the process of evaluation of a client's individual situation is the way to professionalism. Uncertainty in deciding on the correct intervention is accepted as something positive that encourages social workers to think more about the situations. Client evaluation is considered as an alternative "*diagnosis*", because it does not aim for certainty, truth and permanence. Not even social reality has them and so the client evaluation cannot have them either. Apart from the constructivist discourse, we can also recognize the "*objectivistic*" (sometimes also known as "*positivistic*") one, which is built upon the idea that there is an objective reality, which can be known through client evaluation. The objectivistic discourse looks upon the social worker as someone whose work is based on technical rationality. It presumes that if the interventions are based on scientific evidence, social work will become more professional. The task of a social worker is to instrumentally solve problems on the basis of scientific evidence and theories. The client's problem is recognized as objective and real. Social workers present themselves as experts who use proven methods to gather data and their results lead to verified results. This way, with a direct and proven relation between data coming from a client's life and the choice of intervention, the social workers are not hindered by indecision about the viability of a given intervention. The "*evidence based theory practice*" is representative of this discourse. Even though other approaches in social work exhibit a connection to research, this approach is primarily based on a need for all decision of social workers to be based on scientific evidence (Navrátilová, 2009).

Rubin and Babbie (2010) describe the methodology of evidence based practice in six steps.[7] The third step is called "*critical evaluation of found researches and works*". This brings us back to the need for social workers to be able to recognize potential methodological limits connected to such research. Multiple research works can even fail to fit what we need to find. The research might not be exactly focused on our problem or may not exactly fit the question that we have operationalized. A practitioner that uses this approach may find him or herself lacking any evidence related to his case. Furthermore, much evidence may not always be strong enough. That means a critical evaluation of studies is needed, to help with the choice of those that bear marks of quality (Navrátilová, 2009).

Evidence based practice is a way to legitimize social work. It is scientific and gives social work structure, accuracy, specification and standardization. While social work is not often able to defend the interventions against politicians and the public, evidence based practice has the potential to do so. Politicians like its transparency and focus on efficiency. However, we still find many counter-arguments and we can look at it with a critical eye. Evidence based practice does not reflect the social construction of a client's situation, the complexity of said situation and its variety. The objectivistic approach presumes that it is possible to have a singular diagnosis, on the basis of which we can chose a singular form of intervention. Social workers, thanks to science-based unambiguity, should not be hindered by uncertainty. On the other hand, uncertainty can also be used to allow the consideration of such factors in a client's life that evidence based practice misses.

---

[7] 1. Forming the basic question; 2. finding evidence; 3. critical evaluation of found research and works; 4. choice of correct intervention; 5. application of the chosen intervention; 6. evaluation and feedback (Rubin, Babbie, 2010).

Webb (2001) warned that using this process means ignoring the complexity of thought processes in social work. Monitoring the complexity means taking both context and the environment from which a client comes into account. While working with clients, social workers need to take context into account so that they can understand the wider circumstances related to the task at hand and to understand the motives behind their client's behavior.

This problem is connected to limit number two, the problem with public sector effectivity. If we consider this controversial question in the context of evidence based practice, we find out that the emphasis of effectivity leads to transformation of social work into business. It is only logical that social work then loses its mission and ethical values. The next danger lies in the fact that evidence based practice can be abused to push various policies through. The research can favor the needs of social services, rather than to critically approach from the point of view of clients (more in Navrátilová, 2009).

Evans (2009) also presents very interesting thoughts on evidence based practice. He contemplates the methods and procedures of the proponents of evidence based practice. He emphasizes the importance of working with evidence to build practice upon but at the same time he questions the ideas about what is considered as the "*best evidence*". He does not agree with overblown emphasis on quantitative evidence. He also does not agree with how proponents of evidence based practice focus too much on comparing effectivity and results of various forms of therapy, even though his own research pointed out that the differences between various therapy methods are less important than the therapeutical relation that is key to all approaches.

Conclusion

Below are a few summaries to conclude this treatise. The hunt for methodological perfectionism that seeps into many scientific disciplines (even social work) in these days does often disqualify the strength of the original thoughts (Macková, 2013). The aim of this compilatory theoretical study was to find problematic aspects in research strategies that are applied when researching social work. The first thought was about ethical aspects in the research of social work. Then the four great methodological problems with a relation to social sciences, more precisely social work, were presented. These were: (I) **the problems of social constructionism (constructivism)**; (II) **the problem with public sector effectivity**; (III) **the problem of generalization**; (IV) **the problem of admissibility of alternatives.**

Scientific methodology's purpose is to help researchers to always find truth. A social worker who does not possess the knowledge of research methods could find it difficult to investigate various forms of oppression, their combinations and influences, which could lead to a situation where he or she does not pay attention to the primary one (more in Janebová, 2014). Based on these truths, there are various measures authorized either on a national or local level. However, these researches have their limits and their controversial conclusions. Not all the social sciences, social work and social policy included, are neutral, so we need to pay attention to in which context these "*truths*" are presented (Marková, 2012).

Science should lead people to humility and an understanding of the Socratic "*I know that I know nothing*". Each and every enrichment of knowledge brings us new questions and unearths new problems. It is important to realize that responsible cognition is no "*crusade*", but more like a journey to the horizons beyond our grasp. The reality is too soft and complex to allow any eternal truths or general claims to exist. The ideal here is a simple legal norm of singular meaning, like a law (Urban, 2011). Social policy, as a scientific field, is not like that. The same could be said about social work, which is much more complex and ambiguous. The research of aspects of social policy and social work has only limited options for gathering knowledge. The usage of this knowledge is dependent on the will of political players and subjects of social policy, as well as social work itself. The aim of this treatise was not to trade a set of rules for another, but to point out that all

methodologies and research results have another side to them. It is recommended, in light of the controversial issues in methodology of research, to look critically upon various research results in the field of social work and social policy. It is prudent to think about whether the barrier that does not permit social work to look for answers to challenges that modern society creates in its current developmental phase is not the lack of ability to have a critical discourse on research methodology and its realization.

References

BARKER, R. L. 2003. *The Social Work Dictionary*. Washington: NASW Press.

BAUM, D., GOJOVÁ, A. (Eds.). 2014. *Výzkumné metody v sociální práci*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita.

BECK, U. 2007. *Co je to globalizace? Omyly a odpovědi.* Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury.

BURIAN, P. 2014. *Internet inteligentních aktivit.* Praha: Grada.

ČABANOVÁ, B., MUNKOVÁ, G. 2005. Sociální politika. In: POTŮČEK, M. (Ed.). *Veřejná politika*. Praha: SLON.

CAMPBELL, C. BAIKIE, G. 2012. Beginning at the Beginning: An Exploration of Critical Social Work. *Critical Social Work*, 13(1), 67–81.

CHYTIL, O. 2007. Důsledky modernizace pro sociální práci. *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca*, 7(4), 64–71.

EVANS, K. R. 2009. Praxe založená na důkazech nebo důkazy podložené praxí: Integrativní pohled na výzkum psychoterapie. *Psychoterapie*, 9(2), 95–107.

FEYERABEND, P. K. 2001. *Rozprava proti metodě*. Praha: Aurora.

FEYERABEND, P. K. 1995. *Killing Time: The Autobiography of Paul Feyerabend.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

GULOVÁ, L. 2011. *Sociální práce pro pedagogické obory*. Praha: Grada.

GULOVÁ, L., ŠÍP, R. 2013. *Výzkumné metody v pedagogické praxi*. Praha: Grada.

HACKING, I. 2006. *Sociálna konštrukcia – ale čoho?* Bratislava: Kalligram.

HARRINGTON, A. et al. 2006. *Moderní sociální teorie.* Praha: Portál.

HUBÍK, S. 2006. *Hypotéza*. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích.

IFSW. 2012. *Statement of Ethical Principles* [online]. IFSW. [30. 1. 2017]. Available at: http://ifsw. org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles

JANEBOVÁ, R. 2014. *Kritická sociální práce*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.

KAPPL, M. 2009. *Konstruktivismus v sociální práci s komunitou. Vybrané kapitoly z teorií a metod sociální práce*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.

KELLER, J. 2014. *Exkluze jako sociální problém a jako otázka metodologická*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita.

KELLER, J. 2013. *Posvícení bezdomovců. Úvod do sociologie domova*. Praha: SLON.

KONOPÁSEK, Z. 1998. *Estetika sociálního státu*. Praha: GplusG.

KOSTROŇ, L. 2011. *Psychologie architektury.* Praha: Grada.

KREBS, V. et al. 2010. *Sociální politika*. 5th edition. Praha: Wolters Kluwer ČR.

KUBÁTOVÁ, H. 2006. *Metodologie sociologie.* Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci.

KUBÁTOVÁ, H., ZNEBEJÁNEK, F. 2014. Varianty konstruktivismu. In: BAUM, D., GOJOVÁ, A. (Eds.). *Výzkumné metody v sociální práci*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita.

KUKLA, A. 2000. Social Constructivism and the Philosophy of Science. New York: Routledge.

KULHAVÝ, V., SIROVÁTKA, T. 2008. *Hodnocení efektivity programů APZ a doprovodných nástrojů a projektů politiky zaměstnanosti v roce 2007*. Praha: VÚPSV.

KUTNOHORSKÁ, J. 2009. *Výzkum v ošetřovatelství.* Praha: Grada.

LOUČKOVÁ, I. 2014. Výzkum v sociální práci – problémy a možnosti. In: BAUM, D., GOJOVÁ, A. (Eds.). *Výzkumné metody v sociální práci*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita.

MACKOVÁ, M. 2013. Etika publikování – quo vadis? *Aktuální otázky sociální politiky – teorie a praxe* [online]. 1(7) [12. 3. 2016]. Available at: <https://aosp.upce.cz/article/view/248/181>

MARKOVÁ, D. 2012. *O sexualite, sexuálnej morálke a súčasných partnerských vzťahoch.* Nitra: Garmond.

MÁTEL, A., SEDLÁROVÁ, K., VLČEK. P. 2012. Konvergentné a divergentné prvky sociálnej práce a sociálnej politiky. In: MÁTEL, A., ROMAN, T., JANECHOVÁ, L. (Eds.). *Aplikovaná sociálna politika. Zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*. Bratislava: VŠŽaSP sv. Alžbety.

MCCLUNG LEE, A. 1976. Presidential Adress: Sociology for Whom? *American Sociological Review*, 41(6), 925–936.

MUSIL, L. 2004. *"Ráda bych Vám pomohla, ale…". Dilemata práce s klienty v organizacích*. Brno: Marek Zeman.

NAVRÁTIL, P. 1998. Sociální práce jako sociální konstrukce. *Sociologický časopis*, 34(1), 37–50.

NAVRÁTILOVÁ, J. 2009. *Pojetí praktického vzdělávání sociálních pracovníků.* Brno: Fakulta sociálních studií, Masarykova univerzita. Dissertation thesis.

OCHRANA, F. 2009. *Metodologie vědy. Úvod do problému*. Praha: Karolinum.

PETERS, H. I. 2012. *Exploring the Spaces Between Theory and Practice: A Framework to Integrate a Structural Approach and Social Work Activities*. Vancouver: Faculty of Graduate Studies the University of British Columbia. Dissertation thesis.

POPPER, K. R. 1997. *Logika vědeckého zkoumání*. Praha: Oikoymenh.

POTŮČEK, M. 1995. *Sociální politika*. Praha: SLON.

RIEGEL, K. 2007. *Ekonomická psychologie*. Praha: Grada.

RUBIN, A., BABBIE, E. 2010. *Essentials Research Methods for Social Work*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.

SILVERMAN, D. 2005. *Ako robiť kvalitatívny výskum*. Bratislava: Ikar.

SIROVÁTKA, T. (Ed.). 1997. *Sociální zabezpečení*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

STOESZ, D. 1997. The End of Social Work. In: REISCH, M., GAMBRILL, E. *Social Work in the 21st Century*. California: Pine Forge Press, 368–376.

SVOBODOVÁ, T. 2001. *Úvod do sociální politiky*. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého.

TOMEŠ, I. 2010. *Úvod do teorie a metodologie sociální politiky*. Praha: Portál.

ÚLEHLA, I. 2005. *Umění pomáhat: učebnice metod sociální praxe.* Praha: SLON.

URBAN, L. 2011. *Sociologie trochu jinak*. 2nd edition. Praha: Grada.

VEČEŘA, M. 2001. *Sociální stát: východiska a přístupy*. 2nd edition. Praha: SLON.

VESELÝ, A., DRHOVÁ, Z., NACHTMANNOVÁ, M. 2007. "Vědění o politice": Teoretické poznatky o tvorbě veřejných politik. In: VESELÝ, A., NEKOLA, M. (Eds.). *Analýza a tvorba veřejných politik – přístupy, metody a praxe*. Praha: SLON.

WALOSZEK, T., KRAUSOVÁ, A. 2015. *Sociální politika 1*. Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, Fakulta sociálních studií.

WEBB, S. A. 2001. Some Considerations on the Validity of Evidence-based Practice in Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31(1), 57–79.

ŽÁČKOVÁ, J. 2012. Realizace výzkumů v rámci komunitního plánování rozvoje sociálních služeb. In: TRUHLÁŘOVÁ, Z., LEVICKÁ, K. (Eds.). *Od teorie k praxi od praxe k teorii*. Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.

ZATLOUKAL, L. 2007. Postmoderní myšlení v poradenské praxi. *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca*, 7(3), 75–86.

ŽIŽLAVSKÝ, M. 2003. *Metodologie pro sociální politiku a sociální práci*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

ŽUROVCOVÁ, H. 2010. Sociální realita je velmi pestrá, vždy je co objevovat. *Sociální práce/Sociálna práca*, 10(3), 42–45.

Shelley Briggs, Mark Foord

Shelley Briggs[1] has taught Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Central Lancashire since January 2009, and before that at DeMontfort University. Prior to working in higher education she worked in mental health clinical practice in Canada and criminal justice Social Work in Scotland. She has diverse research interests in Comparative Social Policy; gender issues, community work and mental health.

Mark Foord[2] taught Social Policy at the University of Central Lancashire from 2004 until August 2017. Prior to that, he worked at the Centre for Housing and Urban Studies, University of Salford. He has research interests around Comparative Social Policy; community work; homelessness, and adult social care.

Abstract

Since the mid-1970's, the British social welfare system has undergone a process of radical transformation. There are seminal moments in this journey, most recently the 2015 election of a transformative Conservative administration, driven by a deep anti-state ideology which attempted to cut welfare, diminish the public realm and re-define Britain's relationship with Europe. To fill the hiatus left by spending cuts, the development of voluntary ('Big Society') community initiatives was encouraged. The food bank movement provides an important exemplar of the nexus of state withdrawal, precariousness and voluntarism. In many parts of Britain, food banks have become the defacto welfare safety net, offering emergency assistance and personalised support, delivered by volunteers. As such, food banks provide insights into the future shape of British welfare provision. This paper maps the development, impact and scope of food banks in Britain; it argues support for voluntarism is driven by a desire to enact forms of welfare intervention based on conditionality and mistrust of cash based welfare. It concludes by arguing that whilst the Neo-liberal vision for food banks is embedded in an anti-welfare agenda, food banks have the potential to develop as discursive community spaces offering care, support and social action.

[1] Contact: Shelley Briggs, School of Social Work, Care & Community, Harrington Building, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, PR1 2HE, United Kingdom; sbriggs2@uclan.ac.uk

[2] Contact: Mark Foord, Daxecker Str. 2, 4952, Weng im Innkreis, Austria; markfoord@ymail.com

Introduction and aims

For many people living in Britain today, life can only be described as a near permanent state of radical precariousness. The journey from relative buoyancy, to acute financial distress can be rapid. Early in 2016 this was illustrated by a news item exploring the fate of the estimated 70,000 oil workers who had recently lost their jobs in Aberdeen. Previously one of Britain's most prosperous cities and the centre of the oil industry, unemployed workers were using food banks in ever greater numbers. A spokesperson from the Aberdeen Food Banks Partnership said demand for food had soared, and suggested '*people can be used to earning good money in the oil industry, but when the pay cheques stop the problems start*' (Macalister, 2016:10).

Since the 2007–2008 banking crisis, British workers (particularly those in the lower income quartile) have experienced significant downward pressure on income levels and the comprehensiveness and wage replacement value of welfare benefits. Data suggests that British workers suffered the biggest drop in real wages among G20 countries in the three years to 2013. In 2011 alone salary levels fell by 3.5percent in real terms (ILO, 2014). A recent employment survey suggested that since the crisis workers have felt less secure in their employment, more pressured to 'perform', have experienced tumbling pay, and decreases in job related well-being (Felstead et al., 2012). Commentators have begun to conceptualise Britain as an '*Hour Glass Society*' where the labour market has become polarised into high wage occupations with strong occupational benefits, and insecure, low wage occupations (Holmes, Mayhew, 2012). At the bottom of the hourglass, sit growing numbers of the '*new precariat*' (Standing, 2011), a group habituated to contingent living characterised by '*insecure labour, flitting in and out of jobs, often with incomplete contracts or forced into indirect labour relationships via agencies or brokers*' (Standing, 2014). For occupational winners and the rising financial elite, post-crash Britain has been a very amenable place (Dorling, 2014).

As Aberdeen oil workers have discovered, the pressures of precarious living have driven record numbers of people to use food bank provision. Food bank usage has continued to rise year on year, with the most recent statistics suggesting that in 2016/17 **1,182,954** three day food packs were provided to people in crisis by the Trussell Trust network of 427 food banks (Trussell Trust, 2017). One food bank user illustrated the connectedness of benefit reform and stagnating wages as an engine of precariousness: '*our tax credits have been cut… I know a lot of mothers who have had their benefits cut too, or sanctioned. Some are too proud, but they're making choices like shall I feed the meter or the kids, or shall I go without food myself to make sure they have something*' (Tucker, 2015:8). A South Tyneside food bank argued that the growth in demand was in part '*because of austerity, we have got very high unemployment. Benefits …sanctions… I have worked with charities for 30 years and I have never seen it this bad*' (Gentleman, 2014).

The number of food banks has grown phenomenally. Susanne Moore, a columnist at the liberal/left Guardian Newspaper, suggested 2012 should be called the 'year of the food bank' to mark their extraordinary growth (Moore, 2012). In many British towns and cities it has become the defacto welfare safety net, offering emergency food, advice and support delivered by volunteers, leading the Trussell Trust to warn that reliance on charitable food is in danger of becoming 'the new normal' for low-income families (Butler, 2016). So normalised, that shoppers are now encouraged by supermarkets to buy one for yourself, and put something in the food bank bin. This growth is both an outcome of state encouragement, but also a pragmatic community response to growing levels of poverty and diminishing welfare benefits (MacInnes et al., 2015). The food bank movement is therefore, an exemplar of the nexus of state withdrawal, precariousness and voluntary action.

As Tirado points out, British social welfare has begun to mirror the minimalist and mean American welfare system in which food banks play a central role (Tirado, 2016). State support for voluntarism is in part, an attempt to re-enact pre 20th century forms of welfare intervention based firstly on conditionality (the *something for doing something welfare state*) and secondly, a preference for relationship based case work with welfare subjects, rather than the provision of cash transfers

and benefits. These emerging approaches resonate with the discourse and practice contained within strands of Central European Social Education theory, especially a focus on the integration of people with social problems; forms of re-education and re-socialisation, and procedures to compensate for the impact of negative social phenomena (Knotová, 2014). We briefly return to this theme in our conclusion.

This paper has three key aims:

1. To outline and explore the changing role of voluntarism within a reshaped neo liberal social welfare system.
2. To explore the development and direction of the food bank movement, a key venue of the new volunteerism.
3. The paper concludes by exploring three possible narratives around the future of food banks in the UK: as limited sites of crisis intervention; as places of care supplementing state welfare; and lastly, as places of community development and social action.

Firstly, we situate our arguments with a discussion of the crisis and transformation of the British social welfare system. We argue this has led to growing demands for food bank provision in a precarious society; but also normalised the replacement of state services by voluntary provision.

The transformation of the British social welfare system: creating rhetorical and physical spaces for food banks

To understand the growth of precariousness and its role in the development of food banks, we must first comprehend the transformation of our economy and society that took place from 1975–2008. During this period the economy was gradually disembedded from society as financiers and neo liberals attempted to develop a society based on individualism and competiveness (Mirowski, 2014; Standing, 2013). The election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 set a direction for welfare policy, which over the next 35 years nudged and cajoled Britain towards mean, stigmatised and residual social benefits; active labour market policies for the unemployed; the marketization of health and social care; new boundaries between the deserving and underserving through increasingly pathological explanatory frameworks of poverty. Whilst conversely, there were reduced taxation rates for the wealthy and growing inequality. Seabrook claims the neo-liberal credo created a clear binary divide '*while the rich must be encouraged in their mystical quest to create wealth by heaping more treasures upon them, the poor must be set free by the withdrawal of the meagre resources at their command. Thus, claimed Cameron, the causes of poverty will be treated at source – "debt, family breakdown, educational failure, addiction*' (Seabrook, 2016).

The slow onward integration of neo-liberal ideas into British life has enabled ever more radical free market solutions to become politically possible and acceptable to large parts of the British electorate. As Foucault argued, the neo-liberal project aimed to ontologically reconstruct what it means to possess personhood, each of becomes '*Homo Economicus*' a self-actualising economic player in an internalised and totalised market society. Campagna (2016) describes how *mercantile nihilism* where a person's worth equal's their fiscal value has entered into our collective consciousness. The crises of child poverty, welfare or work are responded to as if they emerged in isolation, rather we should see them as '*catalysed or exacerbated by the same coherent philosophy*' – neoliberalism (Monbiot, 2016:28). The embodied nature of neo liberal policies in British social and political life, suggests as Crouch (2013) argues we live a '*post democratic era*', where despite changes in government, public policy drifts towards an inescapable neo-liberal destination.

The neo liberal form of governance reflects a state attempting to distance itself from shifts in the labour market, whilst implementing welfare reforms that exacerbate and increase inequality and poverty. In the early neo-liberal era of reform, services were largely controlled by welfare professionals (social workers etc.), following case work methods, within state structures. With

a tightening of resources professionals had responsibility for the allocation and distribution of more limited resources. This form of professional case work has been described by Lymbery (2014), as the *bureau pact*, where professionals had control over process, but outputs were state driven. In that control over process, the professional discourse was described by Harris (1998) as *bureau professionalism* whereby state employed welfare professionals utilised a skill set based around risk management and resource allocation. The underlying professional discourse had a strong tradition of assessment focused on the structural causes of disadvantage, rather than individualistic assessments. Bureau professionalism was located in the social democratic welfare state that neo-liberals wished to eradicate. The difficult choices encountered by food bank users, are attributable to the political decisions made by successive British governments since the mid-1970's. Focusing on a radical reconstruction of the 1945 post war welfare settlement, these choices have aimed to move the locus of welfare provision from the state, to a plurality of market based providers and under the rubric of 'localism' or the 'Big Society' small, volunteer led provision.

Post 2010: the institutionalisation of embedded precariousness

The processes of welfare change outlined in the previous section were accelerated by the election of a Conservative-Liberal Coalition in 2010. The coalition focused on reducing the public spending deficit, and aspired to impose harsh reductions in social spending. The coalition programme invoked a re-shaping of public opinion, as the deficit narrative was ideologically reworked, from being an economic problem, *how to save the banks*, to a *political problem, how to allocate responsibility for the crisis of the welfare and the public sector* (Clarke, Newman, 2012). This drew on 30 years of anti-statist/welfare rhetoric, which had softened a receptive public for more stringent cuts. Taylor-Gooby and Stoker (2011:12) noted that the Coalition programme '*takes the country in a new direction, rolling back the state to a level of intervention below that in the United States, something which is unprecedented'*. The most telling aspect of reform was a far-reaching process of state restructuring, transferring responsibility from the state to the private sector and citizens.

We would argue, that despite the devolution in 1999 of powers and responsibilities to newly created parliaments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the social security reforms and growing precariousness we outline impact on the entire United Kingdom. For many, the impact of spending cuts and welfare reform has been devastating. A full account of these changes is beyond the scope of this paper; however, some detail is necessary in order to understand the growing centrality of food banks as a surrogate safety net. Around 2.5 per cent of the workforce are now believed to be on so called Zero Hour Contracts, which equates to between 800,000 and 1.5 million people stuck in hyper-flexible employment. Such contracts offer employment with no guarantee of hours or income. Record numbers of workers have chosen to become self-employed, often at sub minimum wage levels. After inflation is taken into account, pay rates in 2016 for many are lower in real terms than before the financial crash (The Guardian, 2016). There has been a steady squeeze on the incomes of the poorest households. A mix of creeping inflation, eroded wages and endemic job insecurity, have meant wages and benefits grew at a slower pace to housing, food and fuel costs (Padley, Hirsch, 2014). The Commission on Social Mobility suggested that between 2007-2012 food prices increased by 30 per cent and gas by 57 per cent. Households have changed their shopping and eating patterns, eating less or engaging in so called 'trading down' (Save the Children, 2012). The proportion of families in the poorest fifth with no savings now stands at 69 per cent up from 57 per cent in 2000 (Cooper, Dumpleton, 2013). A recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies suggested that one in four children will be living in relative poverty by 2020 (Inman, 2016).

The 2011 Welfare Reform Act brought in a swathe of changes to the social security system. Most critically, *a benefits cap* which resulted in claimants being forced to cover the gap between housing transfer payments and their actual rent; a harsher system of *benefit sanctions* (the suspension

of benefits from four weeks to three years) applied to claimants believed not to be cooperating with job seeking instructions; the development of a combined benefit system entitled *Universal Credit* designed to align wages and in work benefits in real time, which contained a built in delay requiring claimants to wait at least 42 days before receiving payment; a benefit freeze designed to ensure out of work benefits increased below the rate of inflation, a real income cut for claimants; the *social fund* emergency funding system has been shrunk and placed with local authorities. These changes each form triggers to increased food bank use as illustrated by the following quote: '*Our tax credits have been cut... I know a lot of mothers who have had their benefits cut too, or sanctioned. Some are too proud, but they're making choices like shall I feed the meter or the kids, or shall I go without food myself to make sure they have something*' (Tucker, 2015). Collectively these changes have led to embedded precariousness '*...a growing group, a subset of those in poverty, whose circumstances, both in terms of material wellbeing and security, are far worse than five or ten years ago. This group includes those whose benefits have been sanctioned or capped, people in temporary accommodation and people who have been evicted from their homes. It is a group of people whose entitlement to state support in hard times has been restricted, and whose problems frequently manifest themselves in housing crises*' (MacInnes et al., 2015).

The new voluntarism and the 'Big Society'

Whilst there has been a long evolution of the state's withdrawal from welfare provision, the shock of 2008 and the 2010 coalition government marked a defining moment, with its formal instigation of the so called *age of austerity* (Farnsworth, Irving, 2011). Open ended and lacking specificity, 'austerity' has become a rhetorical device to cover the long game of reducing state welfare and encouraging citizens to work and provide for themselves. Hare suggests that when David Cameron won party leadership in 2005, he was aware that a polity based purely on a narrative of economic rationalism, cuts and pain, couldn't garner sufficient support to maintain long term hegemony (Hare, 2016). He chose to elide ideas of virtuous communitarianism and volunterism, to form the abstract notion of the 'Big Society'. In so doing, he distanced himself from the more alienating aspects of Thatcher's denial of the existence of society. Cameron set out his vision in a lecture which contrasted 'Big Society' with 'Big Government': '*...we believe that a strong society will solve our problems more effectively than big government has or ever will, we want the state to act as an instrument for helping to create a strong society...Our alternative to big government is the Big Society.*' (Cameron, 2009)

At the heart of this speech was a discernible anti-statism. He argued government inhibits, rather than advances the aims of poverty reduction and increasing well-being, suggesting paradoxically that the state had reduced personal and social responsibility, whilst increasing selfishness and individualism. He went on to say: '*What is seen in principle as an act of social solidarity has in practice led to the greatest atomisation of society. The once natural bonds that existed between people – of duty and responsibility – have been replaced with the synthetic bonds of the state – regulation and bureaucracy*' (Cameron, 2009). Embedded within this analysis were a number of interrelated themes:

1. The 'crowding out' effect of state welfare which reduces the space for voluntary action.
2. A narrative of 'broken Britain' located within in pathological and individualistic factors such as family breakdown or the 'dependency effect' of welfare benefits.
3. The liberatory potential of formally state run welfare services being taken over and managed/owned by community groups.

A full discussion of the historical development of voluntarism within the UK context is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we would assert that the 'Big Society' does represent a policy change, which more firmly embeds volunteerism into social welfare provision. Rochester (2014) argues that historically there has been a symbiotic relationship between volunteerism

and the welfare state, with each occupying distinct, but interrelated areas of service. The 'Big Society' represents a further change in this symbiotic relation, allowing the state to further withdraw from services. This shift signalled a move from post war bureau professionalism to more direct forms of case work delivered by volunteers, often with a focus on individual pathology. Whilst the term 'Big Society' lacked specificity, it did point to a narrative of individual moral/social responsibility and the interdependence of community members. It also resonated with the small state-small welfare foundations of the American dream of independent, interconnected and neighbourly citizens, where Tirado suggests (2016) 'welfare' has come to mean food banks, food stamps, tiny cash benefits, milk and formula for infants and pregnant women. She observed that debates in the UK have become 'Americanised' with our increasingly harsh binary divide between the deserving and undeserving welfare recipient. The lifestyle choices of food bank users have been questioned by the government and mass media, reinforcing the narrative of deserving/undeserving users, associated with benefit claimants (Garthwaite et al., 2015).

The 'Big Society' has lineage in 'one nation' Conservatism, in particular the ideas set out by Blond (2010) in his book 'Red Tory'. He set out a vision of Conservatism rooted in social relationships and communitarianism, integrating the free market with elements of social solidarity. He argued in the mid-1940s, the 'monolith' that became the welfare state, crushed the mosaic of working class led insurance, health societies and the plethora of other mutual organisations. Cameron elaborated this perspective suggesting '*the truth is we can't throw money at the problems and paper over the cracks. You can give a drug addict more money in benefits, but that is unlikely to help them out of poverty, indeed it could perpetuate their addiction. You can pump more cash into chaotic homes, but if the parents are still neglectful, the kids are still playing truant, they're going to stay poor in the most important senses of the word. So this government is challenging the old narrow view that the key to beating poverty is simply more redistribution*' (Daily Telegraph, 2012). For Red Tories and transitory passengers such as David Cameron, the welfare state *does to and for,* but not enough *with people.* Their ideological preference is for voluntarist welfare delivering direct provision through people '*rolling up their sleeves and turning people's lives around*' (Centre for Social Justice, 2015). This articulation of voluntarism emphasises a shift from the state bureau professional approach to localism and services focused on assisting people in difficult life situations through counselling, re-education and re-socialisation as outlined in a conceptualisation of social education and social pedagogy provided by Knotová (2014). Despite parallels with the European social education tradition, the rhetorical tone of the 'Big Society' has more in common with North American approaches to welfare provision.

A key plank of the 2010 Conservative Party Manifesto (Conservative Party, 2010), the 'Big Society' was presented as the solution to 'Broken Britain'. Two weeks after the 2010 election victory, the 'Big Society' initiative was launched involving three key aims:

- Decentralisation ('community empowerment') with power devolved to neighbourhoods.
- Public service reform ('opening up public services') enabling social enterprises, co-operatives and companies to compete to deliver public services (for example youth services).
- Encourage people to play more of an active role in communities ('social action').

The concept of the 'Big Society' has been heavily criticised as lacking precision and definition, but also as a shield to cover damaging cuts to welfare and the withdrawal of state responsibility for the vulnerable. Standing suggests it's a means of transferring professionally provided public services to cheaper third sector workers on precarious contracts or volunteers (Standing, 2011). While aspects of the 'Big Society' ethos fit well within the social education discourse, there has been no tradition of social education discourse or professionalism in the UK (Boddy, Stratham, 2009) and it is unlikely the neo-liberal drive to cut state spending will embrace a discourse of professional social education.

The 'Big Society' has crystallised debates around the philosophy and meaning of the voluntary sector in an increasingly marketised welfare system. Can it any longer maintain its traditional

role as a buffer or interregnum space between state and market? Francis Maude (a then Cabinet Office Minister) suggested '*building the 'Big Society' is not about pouring taxpayers' money into the voluntary sector. What we are doing is supporting a new culture where everyone gets involved and society stops relying on the state to provide all the answers. I believe too much time is spent asking the taxpayer to prop up traditional organisations*' (Wiggins, 2011). Maude was signalling neo-liberal discontent with the voluntary sector, which many on the right see as grant dependent and incalcitrant in its unwillingness to engineer the type of voluntary sector which *blames* rather than *advocates*. To curtail the advocacy role of the third sector and neuter criticism of government welfare policy, the government recently passed the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 aimed to ensure that organisations in receipt of state grants must not use public money to attempt to influence political parties or legislation. This will have a chilling effect on the voluntary sector advocacy role.

To conclude, the 'Big Society' had a short shelf-life in the political lexicon, but it's lived on in a series of measures which embedded mechanisms for cutting public provision, and deflected responsibility for welfare to individuals and communities. Measures contained in the 2011 Localism Act paved the way for third sector groups to take over public provision, further institutionalising a market ethos into public policy. In the following section, we explore the food bank movement, which provides a key exemplar of how voluntarist welfare has become embedded in a deeply neo-liberal welfare system. We argue whilst this is a negative development, it does offer potentially liberatory space for new forms of community development using new methods of intervention which are rooted in neither state nor market; and offers the space to challenge prevailing models of provision.

The food bank movement: meeting need in precarious Britain

After the creation of the 'Beveridge Welfare State' (1945–1951) the issue of widespread hunger among British households, whether through *food poverty* (a nutritionally inadequate diet) or *food insecurity* (sporadic periods where food is hard to access) has been absent from debates about poverty in the UK. Widespread food insecurity was something that academic commentators believed had been left behind, exiled to history by a welfare safety net and the 'bureau professionalism' of the Personal Social Services. Food banks remained part of the welfare landscape, but only through the provision of emergency food and meals for marginalised groups such as the homeless or asylum seekers who were excluded from mainstream cash benefits. The rise of food bank as a mass movement has been extraordinary. At often well publicised food bank openings, greater press coverage was devoted to the issue of food poverty, which led to new community efforts to open food bank provision in their own neighbourhood. In 2015, a Houses of Parliament Committee asserted 'hunger stalks this country' adding 'thirty plus years ago, perhaps, even fifteen, voters would never have believed this simple but devastating fact' (All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom, 2015) confirmed piecemeal evidence that in the age of austerity, many people found it difficult to eat well. The growth of food banks has provided extraordinary political theatre. In post-crash Britain, it became a public issue symbolising for both left and right uncomfortable 'truths' about the 'state of Britain', 'the broken society' or whether we are 'all in it together'. For the left, the causes lay in the irresponsible nature of Anglo Saxon capitalism, austerity and the precariousness of working lives. For the political right, it illustrated the failure of state welfare and bureau professional approaches to intervening in the lives of the poor. Food banks represented voluntarism at its best: a triumph of local action; the venue for assertive, direct personalised service; value based approaches to care untainted by professionalism or technical-rational knowledge. The values of the new voluntarism often focused upon individual pathology and the re-integration of the outsider into society, and fits well with a social education discourse. What has been lacking in this shift toward individual pathology is any social education tradition in which professionals are trained in the re-education and re-socialization, and there is no desire in the neo liberal welfare agenda to make links with the social education discourse.

Food banks no longer contain the shock of the new. They've become a normalised part of the post-crash landscape. As argued earlier, the reasons for their expansion can be laid at the door of seminal changes in the welfare state and in the precariousness of labour markets. Data from the recent Poverty and Exclusion Survey suggests poverty rates are now worse than at any time in the last 30 years. The report noted '*specifically, one in three people could not afford to adequately heat their homes last winter and 29% had to turn the heating down or off or only heat part of their homes. A third of adults considered themselves to be genuinely poor 'all the time' or 'sometimes'. More than one in four adults (28%) skimped on their own food last year so that others in their households could eat*' (Gordon et al., 2013:2). Food poverty (defined as needing to spending ten per cent or more of household income on food), has reached epidemic proportions affecting an estimated 4.7 million people (Centre for Economic and Business Research, 2013). It's very difficult to innumerate accurately how many people receive aid from food aid providers. Evidence from the Trussell Trust suggested that in 2013/14 its food banks provided food to 913,138 people, up from 128,697 in 2011/12 (The All-party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the UK, 2015). Figures for 2015–16 suggest the Trussell Trust gave sufficient emergency food to feed more than 1.1 million people (Butler, 2016). Doctor's surgeries have raised concerns about patients seeking referrals to food bank, a survey of 522 GPs found that 16 per cent had been asked for referrals (Loopstra et al., 2015). Food banks themselves identify a number of key reasons why demand has risen so dramatically: declining wage rates; the growing cost of living; insecure housing, indebtedness and high-interest pay-day loans. Research commissioned by the Church of England and others, suggests that just under half of referrals to Trussell Trust food banks are because of problems with the welfare system, such as alleged breaches of jobcentre rules, the bedroom tax (which removed benefits from claimants deemed to occupy too much housing space) or the removal of in work tax credits (Perry et al., 2014). This extensive study challenged the government's insistence that there is no link between welfare reform and food bank use. The research combined 40 in-depth interviews from clients at seven food banks and analysis of data collected on a further 1200 clients. The research found benefit delays accounted for 29.54 per cent of all referrals and benefit changes for over 15 per cent of referrals. The report called for urgent changes to the "complicated, remote and at times intimidating" social security system, a less punitive sanctions system and speedier processing of benefits (Perry et al., 2014). The report was dismissed by the government who claimed it was inconclusive and the welfare net remained strong.

Foodbanks: Growing the 'Big Society' or undermining social welfare provision?

The majority of UK food banks have been developed by the Trussell Trust Food bank Network, a non-profit making organisation with strong links to the Evangelical Free Church Movement. It's a franchise organisation which offers advice and direct assistance to local communities wishing to develop local food banks. In return, groups make a donation and annual financial contribution, follow national policy and collate standardised data about who utilises the food bank and their reasons. Food banks operating under the Trussell umbrella retain significant autonomy to meet local needs in ways they feel appropriate and vary significantly in their constitution, management and normative values. Other organisations also provide emergency food: the Salvation Army has longstanding provision, and a plurality of community development agencies have begun to develop food bank services. The Independent Food Aid Network suggests there are least 2,000 food banks operating in the UK (Butler, 2017). The growth in Trussell projects has been impressively rapid; in 2010 there were 54, in 2017 427. This figure is misleading as many food banks have 'food satellites' which distribute food in particular geographical areas or locations, it's estimated there are 1,400 of these. Most food bank users are referred or 'signposted' from specialist agencies, such as churches, schools, doctors' surgeries and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Food banks respond to the immediacy of human need in very different ways; in Trussell projects each person is entitled to 3 vouchers over a six month period, each voucher provides 3 days food. The intention is to prevent short term crisis services promoting 'dependency', a concern which mirrors the neo liberal rhetoric about the welfare state. This is a contentious issue for those food banks

who decided not to utilise a voucher system. Caplan (2016:7) quotes the organizer of an independent food bank who suggested: *'if they come here [to the food bank] and ask for food, I imagine that they must need it'*. They didn't use vouchers because *'it is already humiliating enough for the clients'*.

The reshaping of social security has triggered a systematic and organised charitible effort (Lambie-Mumford, Dowler, 2015). Cooper et al. (2014) note that the demand for food bank provision has been driven by benefit sanctions, low and stagnant wages, insecure and zero-hours contracts and rising food and energy prices; all artefacts of our changing welfare settlement. There is recognition that whilst food banks provide often critical immediate help, in so doing they are disguising a larger political problem. Buchanan (2014) argues *'Foodbanks are papering over the cracks. Now you don't want to see those cracks appearing. You don't want to see people fall off a cliff. But the fact that the job centre refers people to food banks is quite shocking in itself. The state is supposed to make basic provision for someone not to be destitute. But we have created a system in which that is part of the outcome. You are left with nothing, and then the state gets round that by referring you to a foodbank where other people have given food that you can scrape by on'*. The extending scope of the food bank movement is troubling. As the state further withdraws from responsibility for welfare, food banks have become the financial beneficiary of policy change. In April 2013, two established pillars of the social security system were abolished. *Crisis Loans* (which provided cash help in unforeseen emergencies) and *Community Care Grants* (enabling people to be resettled in the community from institutions) became part of so called *Localised Welfare Schemes* delivered by local authorities. They are less well-resourced, and are poorly understood by users, as they are badly advertised and occasionally difficult to access. In 2014, local authorities diverted over £2.9 million from this funding stream to food bank projects (BBC, 2014) either in direct grants or to fund food vouchers. Three key points arise out of this policy: 1. cash benefits are being superseded by American style food vouchers; 2. this indicates a sharp turn from a rights-based system to local discretion; 3. food bank are becoming enmeshed and formalised in our welfare system. Encouraged by the state, food banks have progressively extended the scope of their provision. The influential All Parliamentary Report on UK food banks (2015) looked beyond their crisis role to suggest they should adopt a relationship model in working with service users and extend the range of provision. The report sketched out what later became known as the '*Food Bank Plus'*, provision which holistically addressed the often chaotic financial, debt or social security issues which led to a referral. The Food Bank Plus projects have the potential to become places of care or community development, that provide both support through re-socialisation around issues that impact on individual's inclusion and integration into society, and support with those difficult life situations, as within some of the different concepts of social education. Food bank plus projects now work in partnership with organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau (a national voluntary organisation which offers free advice services) to provide money advice and financial counselling within food bank premises. Other projects deliver cooking and skill classes around food budgeting and gardening. An example of this approach is *'Feeding Lancashire Together'* which has 72 projects under its auspices, used by 61,000 people in 2015 (Feeding Lancashire Together, 2015). They provide basic food bank services, food growing projects, cooking groups and food 'gleaning groups'. Other food banks have food cooperatives, community supermarkets and breakfast/school holiday meal clubs. The Community Shop in West Norwood, London, (which developed out of a food bank) is stocked with surplus produce from food manufacturers, and offers services to around 750 local residents living on social security benefits. Membership lasts between 6 and 12 months during which time members are able buy cheaper food on the condition that they participate in a 'personal development plan' which might include training on interview technique or developing personal confidence. The process of eliding the social security system with food banks is likely to continue. In 2015 the government announced that Job Centre staff would be placed in food banks. The first trial is currently taking place at a Caritas community centre in Manchester, which offers one-to-one advice services and access to a range of support and welfare provisions.

The direction of food banks appears to mirror explanatory frameworks utilised by British governments over the past three decades, which locate values and behaviours as the cause of poverty and

unemployment, especially so called welfare dependency. It's argued that the welfare state promoted the destruction of those values through the promotion of passivity and the creation of a client mentality among welfare recipients. A process described by Dean (1991) as the 'moral problematization' of welfare and welfare recipients. State support for food banks has increasingly been framed around their compliance in providing micro interventions in the lives of the poor, a deficit approach focusing on how people budget, shop and cook. This was exemplified by Conservative Lord who sparked criticism after claiming poor people use food banks because they don't know how to cook. Baroness Jenkin suggested: "*We have lost our cooking skills. Poor people don't know how to cook. I had a large bowl of porridge today, which cost 4p… A large bowl of sugary cereals will cost you 25p*'" (Holehouse, 2014). Whilst a Conservative Party Minister suggested people rely on food banks because they have poor financial management skills (Griffin, 2014).

There is potential for food banks to become places of care and community action, drawing on a range of traditions (such as social education), examining and addressing the factors that both promote and impede individuals moving out of food poverty. However, the danger remains that in a shift to pathological explanations for poverty, this will merely reinforce the neo liberal undercurrents of blame and mistrust of the poor.

Food Banks – the new face of 'Big Society' welfare?

Conservative commentators have been quick to recognise the potential of the food bank movement as an exemplar of the new shape of post bureau professional welfare in the UK. Nelson noted: *'Food banks highlight a solution, rather than a problem. They have helped hundreds of thousands of people who were not being helped before. They show the shape of welfare to come, where government works with communities and volunteer groups to take help to where it's most needed. Mr Cameron may not want to admit it, but they do underline a point he made almost 10 years ago: that there is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state'* (Nelson, 2015).

Food banks are the antithesis of the bureaucratic and indiscriminate welfare characteristic of the post war welfare state which it was argued led to moral hazard and the development of welfare dependency. Food banks can do things differently, they are '…*the epitome of the Big Society. Checks operate to ensure people using the service are in genuine need. It is not a matter of anyone just turning up and helping themselves to free food. But the checks are carried out in a sympathetic, non-bureaucratic way*' (Conservative Home, 2012). They embody a community response to local problems; are volunteer led and provide a very direct, immediate service which as Ed Boyd of the Centre for Social Justice (a free market think-tank) argued cannot be '…*squashed by Government process and bureaucracy*' (Boyd, 2014). Whilst the authors would argue that the neo-liberal vision for foodbanks is inherently embedded in a deficit view of individuals and communities and part of an anti-welfare agenda, food banks have the potential to develop in a different, perhaps even emancipatory directions. We explore this in three narratives set out below.

Narrative 1: Food banks as sites of temporary crisis intervention

The first narrative or development trajectory is that food banks should once more become temporary provision aimed at crisis intervention. The Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty (2015:23) suggested "*those working in food banks are responding to a need from Hungry people. But to accept food banks as part of the solution… is to ignore the reasons why people are hungry. The aim should be a reduction in acute household food insecurity to the extent that food banks should cease to exist. It should be possible to do this by 2020*". The commission recommended that rather than expanding their role, state policy should aim to phase them out, arguing food banks should be a crisis service, not a normalised part of our welfare landscape.

This is a call for food banks to return to their traditional role of providing crisis intervention (soup, sandwiches etc) for often for highly marginalised groups such as the homeless or asylum seekers, and

signposting to longer term services. This aspiration seems unrealistic, the direction of British Social Policy in the past 35 years has been to energetically reduce the role of the state and promote alternative provision in the profit seeking or voluntary sectors. It seems to us more productive to recognise the real-politik that food banks are axiomatically a growing component of our welfare system, and we should strive to ensure they offer interventions based on strength based approaches and politicised community action.

Narrative 2: Food banks as places of care

Food banks exemplify the new shape of social welfare in the UK, and in so doing, are moving away from a traditional social service or 'bureau professional' approach (Harris, 1998) towards highly personalised forms of interaction between volunteers and service users, which are predicated upon many of the underpinning ideas contained in European Social Education. There is the potential for food banks to become places of care that provide personal assistance through re-education and re-socialisation to address exclusion. The focus of these services thus far has been on developing employability and life skills such as budgeting, healthy eating and food production. These spaces also have the potential to provide support and care to tackle the personal issues which impede integration into to society such as mental health, self-esteem and assertiveness, substance misuse etc, through counselling and other forms of support. The food bank plus is evidence of food banks moving in this direction with a more holistic form of care. This view has the potential to align with, and provide a space for the development of social educational approaches to support. However, the authors see both dangers and opportunities in this shift. As food banks deliver an increased palate of services, there is a growing tension between enabling users to build their capacities, develop confidence, promote participation and empowerment; and the implicit assumption of much British welfare policy over the past 35 years, that communities and individuals are in deficit and lack the abilities to fully participate in our neo-liberal economy. There has been little ethnographic or qualitative research exploring how food banks are managed and operate, or the normative values of staff and volunteers. This is a real gap in our understanding, at a time when food bank are becoming so critical to the delivery of welfare services. Caplan (2016:8) provides fascinating observations on the normative values of volunteers. She argues most volunteer in her case study food bank were sympathetic to the plight of clients and emphasized clients should be treated with respect… '*however, it was less common to hear a more politicized explanation from the food bank volunteers, although some did talk about social justice – or the lack. But a discourse of solidarity, even 'hospitality', much less rights and entitlement, was not often heard. Indeed, it was rare to hear volunteers arguing that benefits and/or wages should be higher, and when I ventured to ask whether such remedies might provide a solution to food poverty, I would usually be told that 'the government' or 'employers' couldn't afford to pay more. It was very clear that the messages of austerity had been absorbed*'. As all much formally public provision is reduced to near voluntary activity, the 'Big Society' takes away the potential for the state to ensure more or less equal access to services and provision. As Levitas (2012) reminds us, localism is not always benign. It can mask highly punitive and derogatory views of the poor and service users. The development of the new volunteerism has progressive potential as the shift to localism also decentres government bureaucracy and control. This environment offers opportunities to provide a radical shift from the British approach to case work toward the European social education tradition. However, to date the movement has been swamped by the neo-liberal imperative to cut the state and reduce social spending.

Narrative 3: Food banks as sites of social action and community development

Our last narrative argues that food banks have the potential to become embryonic places of social action and community advocacy, addressing wider issues of poverty and challenge neo-liberal policies. Mahoney et al. (2010) used the interesting phrase the 'emergent public' to describe how new discursive formations can advocate for change and challenge dominant narratives. As Caplan (2016) points out,

during her fieldwork it was rare to hear radical critiques of the reasons why food banks had become so prevalent. Shifts in ideas and normative values occur when people are confronted with the 'other' and their narrative. However, alternative narratives exploring why food banks have been so successful, particularly those which focused on the conditions stoking demand and looked beyond individual culpability, have drawn attack. A number of food banks have resisted being physically and ideologically incorporated into the norms of an increasingly punitive welfare landscape. As knowledge of the underlying causes of growing demand became better known to volunteers, some food banks called for government to address the reasons for the growing precariousness in British life. This was exemplified by the NG7 project in Nottingham which dissolved itself in 2014, as they didn't wish to be a sticking plaster for the deficiencies of our welfare system. They argued that *'despite our intention that we were a service of last resort, we were increasingly seen as a replacement for statutory provision'* (Owen, 2014:5). Government ministers fought back, suggesting the debate had become 'politicised' and accused the charity was 'scaremongering'.

Conclusion

Food banks are being incorporated into the anti-state agenda of neo-liberal policy; an arm of the welfare system rather than an imaginative, community led addendum to state welfare. As such, they paper over the widening cracks in British life and herald the gradual adoption of an American Food Stamp system of services in kind rather than cash, or as in Canada, becoming a second tier of the benefit system. The abolition of crisis funds suggests the British state is turning away from the problems experienced by significant numbers of families, and leaving the third sector and citizen initiatives to take the strain. The growth of food banks illustrates the shifting and permeable boundaries of responsibility between the state and civil society in addressing poverty. Our exploration of British food banks in has examined the shift toward voluntarism in the new state light welfare system. With food banks taking on a more substantive role in the provision of welfare and support, we have argued that there is potential for food bank provision to adopt many of the prerogatives of central European social education. However, there is a danger that individualistic discourses, focused on blame and mistrust will remain the dominant discourse.

International evidence around the life cycle of food banks, suggests volunteers themselves often move from ideological certainty about '*making a difference*' and '*addressing poverty*', to confusion and disillusionment about their role and purpose. In his memoir, the Canadian activist Nick Saul describes his discomfort and distress in realising that food banks never addressed the key causes of poverty. He changed the purpose and direction of his food bank towards community development, food growing and revenue raising (Butler, 2014). We perceive that the ideological terrain of blame and pathology inherent within the 'Big Society' discourse will be challenged as food banks develop greater understanding of the underlying reasons why growing numbers of British citizens are led to their provision. This will lead many in the food bank movement to look beyond providing *places of care*, to becoming nascent *sites of political and social challenge*.

References
ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO HUNGER IN THE UNITED KINGDOM. 2015. *Feeding Britain: A Strategy for Zero Hunger in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.* London: The All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom.
BBC. 2014. *Councils Spending £3m on Food Poverty and Food Banks* [online]. London: BBC. [23. 4. 2016]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26369558
BLOND, P. 2010. *Red Tory: How Left and Right Have Broken Britain and How We Can Fix It.* London: Faber and Faber.

BODDY, J., STATHAM, J. 2009. *European Perspectives on Social Work: Models of education and professional roles.* London: Nuffield Foundation.

BOYD, E. 2014. *Food Banks Are Remarkable, but They Are Not Enough* [online]. London: Centre for Social Justice. [14. 6. 2016]. Available at: http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/blog/foodbanks-are-remarkable-but-they-are-not-enough

BUCHANAN, R. T. 2014. *Almost 50% of Referrals to Food Banks in the UK Are Due to 'Issues with the Welfare System* [online]. London: The Independent. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/almost-50-of-referrals-to-food-banks-in-the-uk-are-due-to-issues-with-the-welfare-system-9910973.html

BUTLER, P. 2017. *Report Reveals Scale of Food Bank Use in the UK* [online]. London: The Guardian. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/may/29/report-reveals-scale-of-food-bank-use-in-the-uk-ifan

BUTLER, P. 2016. *Reliance on Food Banks Must Not Become the Norm, Says Charity.* London: The Guardian.

BUTLER, P. 2014. Food Banks Are 'a Slow Death of the Soul'. London: The Guardian.

CAMERON, D. 2009. *'The Big Society' (The Hugo Young Lecture)* [online]. London: Conservative Party. [23. 7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/11/David_Cameron_The_Big_Society.aspx

CAMPAGNA, F. 2016. *Talk Real London – Exit Europe?* [online]. London: ROAR Magazine. [25. 5. 2016]. Available at: https://roarmag.org/2016/03/23/talk-real-london-exit-europe/

CAPLAN, P. 2016. 'Big Society' or Broken Society? [online]. *Anthropology Today*, 32(1). [15. 8. 2016]. Available at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8322.12223/pdf

CENTRE FOR ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS RESEARCH. 2013. *Hard to Swallow: The Facts about Food Poverty* [online]. London: The Centre for Economics and Business Research. [18. 8. 2016]. Available at: http://www.cebr.com/reports/food-poverty/

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE. 2012. *Small Charities Do 'The Heavy Lifting' in Poverty Fight* [online]. London: The Centre for Social Justice. [1. 4. 2016]. Available at: http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/blog/small-charities-poverty-fight

CLARKE, J., NEWMAN, J. 2012. The Alchemy of Austerity. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(3), 299–314.

CONSERVATIVE HOME. 2012. *Food Banks are part of the 'Big Society'– but the Problem They Are Tackling Is Not New* [online]. London: Conservative Home. [3. 7. 2015]. Available at: http://www.conservativehome.com/tag/big-society

CONSERVATIVE PARTY. 2010. *Invitation to Join the Government of Britain.* London: The Conservative Party.

COOPER, N., DUMPLETON, S. 2013. *Walking the Breadline.* Manchester: Church Action on Poverty and Oxfam.

COOPER, N., PURCELL, S., JACKSON, R. 2014. *Below the Breadline: The Relentless Rise of Food Poverty in Britain.* Manchester: Church Action on Poverty, Oxfam and Trussell Trust.

CROUCH, C. 2013. *The Strange Non-Death of Neo-Liberalism.* Cambridge: Polity.

DAILY TELEGRAPH. 2012. David Cameron's Welfare Speech in Full [online]. *Daily Telegraph.* [28. 8. 2015]. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9354163/David-Camerons-welfare-speech-in-full.html

DEAN, H. 1991. *The Constitution of Poverty: Towards a Genealogy of Liberal Governance.* London: Routledge.

DORLING, D. 2014. *Inequality and the 1%.* London: Verso.

FABIAN COMMISSION ON FOOD AND POVERTY. 2015. *Hungary for Change: The Final Report of the Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty.* London: Fabian Society.

FARNSWORTH, K., IRVING, I. 2011. Varieties of Crisis. In: FARNSWORTH, K., IRVING, I. (Eds.). *Social Policy and Challenging Times: Economic Crisis and Welfare Systems.* Bristol: Policy Press.

FEEDING LANCASHIRE TOGETHER. 2015. *Report on Food Poverty Project – Activity 2015* [online]. Blackburn: Feeding Lancashire Together. [28. 8. 2016]. Available at: http://www.feedinglancashiretogether.org.uk/

FELSTEAD, A., GALLIE, D., GREEN, F. et al. 2012. *Skills and Employment Survey.* London: Economic and Social Research Council, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods.

HARE, D. 2016. *Richard Hillary Lecture at Oxford University 'Why the Tory Project is Bust' David Hare.* London: The Guardian.

HARRIS, J. 1998. Scientific Management, Bureau-Professionalism, New Managerialism: The Labour Process of State Social Work. *British Journal of Social Work,* 28(6) 839–862.

HOLEHOUSE, M. 2014. Poor Going Hungry because They Can't Cook, Says Tory Peer [online]. The Daily Telegraph. [28. 8. 2016]. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/11279839/Poor-going-hungry-because-they-cant-cook-says-Tory-peer.html

HOLMES, C., MAYHEW, K., 2012. *The Changing Shape of the UK Job Market and Its Implications for the Bottom Half of Earners.* London: Resolution Foundation.

GARTHWAITE, K.A., COLLINS, P.J., BAMBRA, C. 2015. Food for Thought: An Ethnographic Study of Negotiating Ill Health and Food Insecurity in A UK Foodbank. *Social Science & Medicine,* 132, 38–44.

GENTLEMAN, A. 2014. *I Can't Get My Head Round How People Are Meant to Live on Nothing* [online]. London: The Guardian. [28. 8. 2016]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/04/food-bank-britain-can-mps-agree-causes-uk-poverty

GORDON, D., MACK, J., LANSLEY, S. et al. 2013. *The Impoverishment of the UK - PSE UK First Results: Living Standards.* Bristol: Poverty and Social Exclusion.

GRIFFIN, A. 2014. *Baroness Jenkin: a PR Consultant Has Attempted to Clarify the Remarks.* London: The Independent.

INMAN, P. 2016. *Benefit Cuts Will Drive Thousands of Children into Poverty, Says Report.* London: The Guardian.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE. 2014. *Global Wage Report 2014–2015: Wages and Income Inequality.* Geneva: ILO.

KNOTOVÁ, D. 2014. Social Pedagogy in the Czech Republic. *International Journal of Social Pedagogy,* 3(1), 30–38.

LAMBIE-MUMFORD, H., DOWLER, E. 2015. Review Article: Hunger, Food Charity and Social Policy – Challenges Faced by the Emerging Evidence Base. *Social Policy and Socie*ty, 13(3), 497–506.

LEVITAS, R. 2012. The Just's Umbrella: Austerity and the 'Big Society' in Coalition Policy and Beyond. *Critical Social Policy,* 32(3), 320–342.

LOOPSTRA, R., REEVES, A., TAYLOR-ROBINSON, D. et al. 2015. Austerity, Sanctions, and the Rise of Food Banks in the UK. *British Medical Journal.* doi:10.1136/bmj.h1775

LYMBERY, M. 2014. Social Work and Personalisation: Fracturing the Bureau-Professional compact? *British Journal of Social Work,* 44(4), 795–811.

MACALISTER, T. 2016. *Crude Awakening: Aberdeen Oil Workers Turn to Food Banks as Global Crude Prices Collapse.* London: The Guardian.

MACINNES, T., TINSON, A., HUGHES, C. et al. 2015. *Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2015* [online]. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. [14. 7. 2016]. Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/mpse-2015/commentary

MAHONEY, N., NEWMAN, J., BARNETT, C. 2010. Conclusion: Emergent Publics. In: MAHONEY, N., NEWMAN, J., BARNETT, C. (Eds.). *Rethinking the Public: Innovations in Research, Theory and Politics.* Bristol: Policy Press, 163–175.

MIROWSKI, P. 2014. *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go to Waste – How Neo-Liberalism Survived the Financial Meltdown.* London: Verso.

MONBIOT, G. 2016. *The Zombie Doctrine* [online]. Oxford: George Monbiot. [4. 5. 2017]. Available at: http://www.monbiot.com/2016/04/15/the-zombie-doctrine/

MOORE, S. 2012. 2012 Has Been the Year of the Foodbank [online]. London: The Guardian. [4. 5. 2017]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/dec/19/2012-year-of-the-food-bank

NELSON, F. 2015. *David Cameron Should Not Be Afraid to Talk About Food Banks* [online]. London: Daily Telegraph. [4. 5. 2017]. Available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/11511944/David-Cameron-should-not-be-afraid-to-talk-about-food-banks.html

OWEN, J. 2014. Busy Nottingham Food Bank to Close in Protest at Harsh Council Cuts NG7 Has Accused City Council of Using Food Banks to Justify Benefit Cuts [online]. London: The Independent. [1. 2. 2017]. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/busy-nottingham-food-bank-to-close-in-protest-at-harsh-council-cuts-9885641.html

PADLEY, M., HIRSCH, D. 2014. *Households Below a Minimum Income Standard.* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

PERRY, J., SEFTON, T., WILLIAMS, M. et al. 2014. *Emergency Food Use Only: Understanding and Reducing the Use of Food Banks in the UK.* London: Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, Church of England & Trussell Trust.

ROCHESTER, C. 2014. *Revisiting the Roots of Voluntary Action* [online]. London: Voluntary Action History Society. [29. 1. 2017]. Available at: http://www.vahs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/2014-01-13-Rochester-Revisits.pdf

SAVE THE CHILDREN. 2012. *Child Poverty It Shouldn't Happen Here* [online]. Manchester: Save the Children. [1. 2. 2017]. Available at: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/child-poverty-2012-it-shouldnt-happen-here

SEABROOK, J. 2016. *Regression Dressed Up As "Reform"*: *How Rhetoric Helped Dismantle the Welfare State* [online]. London: The New Statesman. [1. 2. 2017]. Available at: http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/welfare/2016/03/regression-dressed-reform-how-rhetoric-helped-dismantle-welfare-state

STANDING, G. 2014. *Why the Precariat is Not a "Bogus Concept"* [online]. London: Open Democracy. [7. 4. 2016]. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/guy-standing/why-precariat-is-not-%E2%80%9Cbogus-concept%E2%80%9D

STANDING, G. 2013 *Defining the Precariat – a Class in the Making* [online]. Vienna: Eurozone. [7. 4. 2016]. Available at: http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2013-04-19-standing-en.html

STANDING, G. 2011. *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class.* London: Bloomsbury.

TAYLOR-GOOBY, P., STOKER, G. 2011. The Coalition Programme: A New Vision for Britain or Politics as Usual? *The Political Quarterly,* 82(1), 4–15.

THE GUARDIAN. 2016. *The Guardian View on Zero-Hours Contracts: The Wrong Road to a Successful Economy*. London: The Guardian.

TIRADO, L. 2016. *Americas 'Welfare State' is Shameful: the UK Shouldn't Follow Our Lead*. London: The Guardian. [6. 2. 2017]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/nov/18/us-welfare-shameful-uk-public-services-private-profit

TRUSSELL TRUST. 2017. *End of Year Stats* [online]. London: Trussell Trust. [1. 6. 2017]. Available at: https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/

TUCKER, E. 2015. *Hunger Pains: More Children are Suffering this Summer* [online]. London: The Guardian. [6. 2. 2017]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/aug/05/children-low-income-families-hungry-in-school-holidays-cant-afford-food

WIGGINS, K. 2011. *Frances Maude Denies that Spending Cuts are Undermining the Big Society* [online]. London: Third Sector. [6. 2. 2017]. Available at: http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/francis-maude-denies-spending-cuts-undermining-big-society/finance/article/1053626

Eva Hvizdová and Beáta Balogová:
Creative Industry of Selected Handicrafts in Eastern Slovakia.
Mainz: Logophon, 2016.

In 2016, the scientific monograph by the authors Eva Hvizdová and Beáta Balogová under the name Creative Industry of Selected Handicrafts in Eastern Slovakia was published. The name seems to be unrelated to social work or related only marginally. It is because creative industry in social work is not an area to which more attention would be paid. Traditional crafts definitely have their place in social work, whether as a means of improving the economic situation of clients or as part of various methods of social work, e.g. sociotherapy, social rehabilitation, and ergotherapy. Despite the "marginality" of this phenomenon in social work, or even as a result of, I personally consider the text that the authors dealt with in the form of the monograph as a significant inspiration and stimulus for social work.

As the authors point out, "*The scientific monograph is based on the assumption that the cultural and creative economy is the natural environment for innovative ideas, and the development and enhancement of creative potential. We are aware that creativity is the key to innovative and interdisciplinary responses to global and local challenges, whether they are economic or social*" (p. 8).

The monograph consists of four chapters, which gradually offer a picture of the socio-economic specifics of the Eastern Slovakia region, the importance of the creative industry to support the development of the region, and the importance of social importance of the creative industry. The theoretical definitions presented in the first three chapters are concluded by a presentation of the results of the empirical research, which tries to elucidate the creative activity of selected craftsmen and craftswomen who develop traditional crafts. As the authors mention in the monograph introduction "their *products are beneficial to the development of intellectual property in terms of creative industries. This creates a space not only for individual development, but also enhances the quality of life in Eastern Slovakia*" (p. 11).
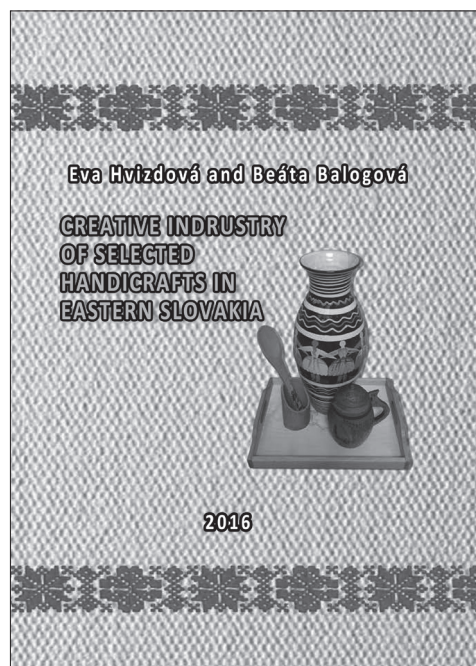
The primary optics, chosen by the authors to process their text, was the optics of the labour market and employment and the potential of using the creative industry as a tool to support the individual's ability in economic self-sufficiency. These optics are supplemented by a perception of tradition as one of the important values in society, especially in the Eastern Slovakia region. The authors, in identifying this aspect, relied on research by Kentoš, Ištváníková and Čižmárik from the year 2005. In this respect, the authors perceive tradition as a complex of values, among others devotion, humility and respect for customs. This link gave the authors a wider scope to analyze selected crafts as representatives of the creative industry of the Eastern Slovakia region. Thus, supporting creative industry as a specific intervention of social work on the macro and meso-level is analyzed on the pages of the monograph through its micro-level effects: in the life of specific craftswomen and craftsmen. As the authors point out, "*in the present context, we view social interventions as a space for self-employment to develop and create an area for renaissance of folk crafts in Eastern Slovakia. This allows an artisan to become unique in space and time*" (p. 85).

The fourth chapter devoted to the presentation of empirical research conducted in the form of interviews with eleven craftswomen and craftsmen, sets a goal, in the context of the standpoints processed above, to understand the mechanism of the renaissance of crafts by identifying the motivation of craftswomen and craftsmen to create and implement selected craft in the conditions of the Eastern Slovakia region within their own open critical reflection of their craftsmanship. The chapter, processed as a presentation of individual testimonies with authors commentaries, offers not only individual answers to the questions of researchers, but also inspiring data for further, perhaps more systematic research in this field.

For me personally, a specific view on the creative industry is offered by the optics of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the concept of self-actualization of the human. Although this concept is not referred directly by the authors in the text, my reading of the monograph was based right on it. Creativity as a manifestation of humanity can be perceived as deepening, spreading, and "enhancing" humanity (not only in the creating). It is the manifestation of the positive endeavor of a person to cultivate him/herself, his/her surroundings and his/her entire living world, including the relationships with him/herself, the others and the world in which he/she lives. A unique example of the eastern Slovakia craftswomen and craftsmen testimonies illustrates the process of self-actualization by means of creative activity. The need for self-actualization through creativity is natural and is inherent to all individuals. It is a tendency to update your potential - become real, your best and most complete Self, the one that a human is capable of becoming. By supporting creative industry, we enable both individuals and communities to meet both ranges of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, both basic needs, by gaining resources to fulfill them via selling self-made products, as well as the need of self-actualization and self-overlapping in creative self-realization in craft activity.

Although the monograph *Creative Industry of Selected Handcrafts in Eastern Slovakia* has personally inspired me to "think about other aspects" of the processed text, and the general ambition inherent to all authors of scientific publications, to invite discussion, was in my opinion fulfilled, the monograph lacked the final summary of research findings. To what extent it was the intention of the authors, or a certain omission, is not my task to judge. However, it is clear that this fact also motivated my own creativity. I believe that the data the authors obtained from their research will be further analysed, and will contribute to discussions on current trends in social work (not only in the field of employment and the labor market) and/or motivate others to do so.

Monika Bosá
Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovak Republic

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge: Intersectionality. Cambridge, Malden: John Wiley & Sons, 2016.

This book provides a good overview and discussion on the theory, perspectives and practice/research examples of the widely used concept of intersectionality as an analytical tool. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge coauthored this publication as a creative process of two people who first met at a conference in Durban, South Africa. In their very personal preface to the book they explore their creative process together and outline their work as "*an invitation for entering the complexities of intersectionality […] providing some navigational tools for moving through intersectionality's vast terrains. It is a roadmap for discovery and not a portrait of a finished product*" (viii).

Content

The book is structured into eight clear chapters, starting with outlining the concepts of intersectionality and ending with a revisiting including a critical review.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction into the diverse concept of intersectionality as an analytical tool via an intensive analysis of the FIFA structures and power dynamics on micro, meso and macro level of society. The authors suggest that, after putting aside all differences and/or contradicting lines within intersectionality concepts, the most basic definition that is commonly agreed to is: "*Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexities of the world and of themselves*" (p. 2). They proceed to explicate the six core themes of intersectionality as an analytical tool to incorporate social inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity and social justice (chapter 1).

Chapter 2 investigates two organizational focal points, critical inquiry and critical praxis, both within and outside of academic areas, with special emphasis on activist's perspectives and focusing on the interconnections between the two. The examples provided include domestic violence and the microcredit system founded by M. Yunnus/ Grameen Bank.

Instead of trying to provide one version of history for the concept, chapter 3 outlines a variety of historical processes. Starting by describing diverse social movements in the US in the 1960's and 1970's, the authors highlight the important struggle of the Black Feminist movement, the Combahee-River-Collective and multiple other less known narratives such as those belonging to indigenous feminists. Focusing on the 1980's and 1990's they proceed to describe the establishment of race/class/ gender studies within academic fields as well as introducing Kimberlé Crenshaw and the new umbrella term of 'intersectionality'.
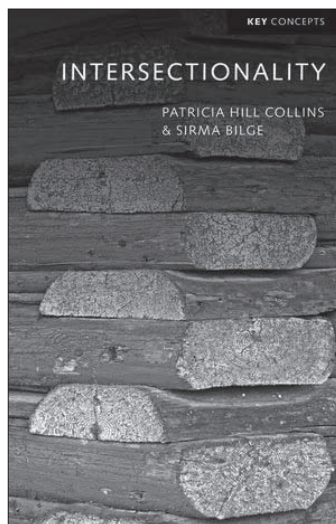
Chapter 4 outlines intersectionality's global dispersion within three different spheres – the global human rights fields, scholarship and academic discourse, and within new digital media. Many examples within the three fields are provided and critically analyzed while focusing on crucial definitional debates that are far from benign, as is explicitly demonstrated by the question of the defining role of the gender category, or the amount of categories that are reflected upon within intersectional studies (p. 104).

Chapter 5 focuses on the understanding of collective and individual identity constructions and their linkage with intersectionality and social justice, starting with an unusual exploration of hip hop. Here the authors draw important and diverse parallels to identity politics. The concluding point is made that hip hop too "*as is everything else, is a contested site of politics with its own specific forms of identity politics*" (p. 123).

Within chapter 6 the book captures issues of the global social protest movement against social inequality and neoliberal policies outlining transnational perspectives while including local issues as part of the global resistance (p. 141).

Chapter 7 outlines the interconnectedness between intersectionality and critical education, referring to Paolo Freire's concept of 'The Pedagogy of the Oppressed' (1970) and expanding to include recent initiatives using the umbrella term of Diversity. While pointing out important strengths, the authors maintain a critical lens within their analysis.

In the closing chapter 8, titled 'Intersectionality Revisited' intersectionality is described as being at the crossroads: It can either embrace the synergy between inquiry and praxis or engage in confrontation. The authors' opinion rest on a middle way '*by sustaining a creative tension that joins inquiry and praxis as distinctive, yet interdependent, dimension*' (p. 192).

Critical Discussion

This publication's major strength is to reject the scholar-activist divide (p. 32) which is clearly reached within this creative, diverse and thoroughly researched publication. The authors manage to cover a wide and diverse spectrum of areas within the field of intersectionality. One positive example of this diversity is chapter four, where the authors not only cover the global human rights scenes including its most relevant documents or conferences and provide an overview within academic disciplines (e.g. gender or queer studies or sociology), but are also willing to engage in a praxis linked debate on recent digital media/twitter campaigns like '#BlackLivesMatter' or '#GITNB' – Gay Is the New Black (p. 111). In terms of disciplines covered it touches mainly on social studies i.e. sociology or gender/queer studies and includes the category of activism. There are also substantial references to social work e.g. as a profession with a history of critical praxis. Overall there is little room for improvement or suggestions for changes within this publication. One small aspect that might be important to know for an academic readership is that some parts of the chapters have been written in a style that leans towards journalism rather than a more formal approach that is usually associated with scientific research or theoretical debate.

At the closure of the book the authors revisit the six core themes of intersectionality that have already been outlined in chapter 1 (social inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity, social justice), and use these as a structure to summarize and reflect their analysis. On both a critical and reflective level this is a very successful way to end a publication that is very well worth reading.

European Relevance

The publication includes many global examples that provide praxis and inquiry aspects relevant to all continents i.e. the FIFA example in the introduction, Yunnus Muhammad (microcredits) or the global movements like One Billion Rising for Justice. Throughout the publication, this wide and global perspective is positively reiterated and, while some of the examples are taken from the US/UK context, all chapters include references and highlighted examples from the Global-South. This represents an unusual and sensitive approach and is of great importance considering the centrality of power analysis within intersectional approaches.

Doris Boehler
Department of Social and Organisational Sciences
Fachhochschule Vorarlberg, Austria

Research Activities of Sociotherapy
at the Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov

One of the main subjects of research interest of the Faculty of Arts is the Theoretical and Methodological Contexts of Sociotherapy as a newly discovered method of social work. Within this topic the VEGA Project research was carried out from early 2014 to 2016. The project is aimed at a diagnostic research progress status of social therapy in Slovakia at its theoretical and empirical level. The issue examined in the project, deserves particular attention in the social and scientific environment, especially given its current importance. Scientific interest in social therapy arises as a need for reflection of social reality in order to identify and increase the effectiveness of social therapists, particularly because its performance is influenced by psychotherapy.

The need for the development of sociotherapy in relation to the theoretical and methodological elaboration and practical implementation, reflects the social reality in our society, with a focus on increasing the effectiveness of therapeutic help, the growing variability of target groups of social work in their specific environment while emphasizing the uniqueness of each situation. At present, despite the rich history and tradition in our country, sociotherapy still seeks its own identity, it develops, and finds it is irreplaceable in the process of helping and caring for people. As a dynamically developing kind of intervention it has become an indispensable and specific part of social work, and may represent a key way to help clients in their unique unfavourable social situations. At the same time, by its very nature and mission, approaches, methods and techniques, it significantly affects the overall form of social work as a discipline and practical activity. On the other hand, despite the growing interest of the professional public, in our conditions, sociotherapy can be seen as a vague kind of practice in social work in certain aspects. The term sociotherapy appears quite often in the scientific writings, but attention focused on terminology, methodology definition, specification and details is rather marginal.

Scientific goals for this project:
1. To systematize terminology by mapping the summary of relevant resources in the Central European area, which will be subjects of comparative analysis with the situation in social therapy in Slovakia.
2. To identify the institutional structure of the performance of social therapy in social work in Slovakia.
3. To identify the current status of the performance of social therapy, its methods and techniques with emphasis on scientific theories and approaches.
4. To identify opportunities and barriers to social therapy in the context of current trends in social work in Slovakia.

The most important result of the research project is a mapping of development of social therapy in its theoretical and empirical level in the Central European area on the background of historical reflection of its creation. Through the research initiatives which have the character of mixed design, the key characteristics of the process of social therapy performance were identified. The result is publishing of several monographs, for example Sociotherapy in social work, Therapeutic inspirations in sociotherapy, and others. Broader context of the project was targeted at identifying

opportunities and barriers of the social therapy process with emphasis on institutional structures, personnel resources and legislative concepts. In this regard, the results present modern scientific objectives, which contribute to the grounding of a knowledge base useful in social therapy performance and social therapists education, primarily by creating of the Sociotherapy Journal through which the professional discussion can continue.

Based on the above review of theoretical, legislative and terminological definitions of sociotherapy in social work, we decided to create a comprehensive definition and characteristics of sociotherapy. In summary, we perceive sociotherapy as a kind of intervention in social work, which may be based on various approaches (concepts), while using a variety of methods, forms and techniques of work aimed at activation of the (social) potential of a client, with a focus on the relationship of a client to the environment, a client's environment and a client in the environment, while the key role is played by therapeutic relationship.

The research points to the multifactorial nature of problems in sociotherapy. An interesting finding in the area was that social work in Slovakia, as a theoretical academic scientific discipline or practical activity, is now looking for its identity, developing and finding its unique place beside other helping professions in the process of helping and caring for people. Social work and its performance by social workers have in recent years gained some kind of lost attraction (which we especially see in the application of social work as a therapeutic help) and as increase in its credit. Social workers are considered to be full members of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary teams in the process of complex care of clients.

Sociotherapy is a living system in continuous evolution, responding to current challenges and trends in the context of the search for answers to the ongoing changes in society (especially in the context of a dynamically developing discipline such as social work).

Beáta Balogová
Faculty of Arts, University of Prešov, Slovak Republic

The Professional Identity in Narratives of Family Assistants – Characteristics of Research

The presented research is interpretive in nature (Wilson, 2010) and oriented towards an analytical interpretation of the narrative interviews with family assistants who assign meaning to the experience gained in their work. During their narrations, family assistants talked about themselves as active subjects realizing activities in the field of professional action. The assistants revealed the representations related to self-expression in the field of their activity. They reconstructed the course of events in which they defined the specific characteristics of their activity. Through the prism of activity, they constructed auto-definitions strictly oriented towards explaining the nature of their work and the functions included, as well as revealed how, from their perspective, they are perceived by others.

The research was focused on the interpretation of manifestations of professional identity understood as the *identity of the active subject*[1]. The professional identity was understood as a process of manifesting itself as an "active self" in a variety of activities taking place in different situational and social contexts, often in front of others. Therefore, it allows others to *assign the identity* of an active subject, more or less compatible with his/her intention to act.

The theoretical inspirations for this outlined dimension of identity, which was the subject of the study, were taken from the Transversal Analysis of the Activity by Jean-Marie Barbier (2016), which underscores the inseparable link between activity and identity. Further inspiration is the perspective of the symbolic interactionism defining a person's identity as a socially constructed inter-subjective process placed in contextual situations (Strauss, 2008; Goffman 1959, 1963).

The narrative analysis involved the transfer of several interviews' interpretations to a deeper understanding and insight (Kubinowski, 2011:169) using a coding procedure derived from the Grounded Theory of Kathy Charmaz (2006). Two types of signs pointing to the process of constructing the identity of the active subject were identified:

One is related to self-expression through activities, which can be classified as observable. They include activities specific for the active subject, the expression of activities such as specific activity lines, functions, and styles of activities that can be attributed to a particular identity.

The second is related to self-identification, which refers to the character of self-definition and the act of defining, in which the assistant reveals what he/she thinks of themselves, as the active subject.

The assistants' narratives were analyzed so as to capture the characteristics of the family assistants' elements of activities. The interpretation of the meanings in their narrations allows me to distinguish *activities oriented* at constructing information, the flow of information, constructing the format of contact with the care recipients, managing their own feelings and feelings of the families, as well as *activities addressed* to specific categories of families. Assistants talked about specific *lines* and *modes* designed to carry out the above mentioned activities. Through their use, they also characterized themselves through the revealed activities', prism of functions and style. Assistants talked about the specific situations that required the act of identification.

1. The *problematic instances* of the difficult-to-define situational identity of the assistant (see: Strauss, 2008).
2. *Defining situations* in which the assistant was assigned an inadequate or pejorative identity, which required him/her to undertake activities that alter an unsatisfactory image of him/her in the eyes of another.

As the study revealed, when assistants are experiencing failures in passing positive images about themselves, they lose motivation to persuade and negotiate their identity, and begin to feel a range of negative emotions, and question the sense of further work with the care recipients. It happens because of their inability to develop specific lines of activities and negotiate self-acceptable identities. During their first meetings with the care-receiving family, assistants are also faced with very general, imprecise, or inadequate expectations. Care recipients are not familiar with the role of the assistant. They perceive him/her in an inadequate way, quite different from the assistant's intentions. The initial period of their mutual contact abounds in "identity-oriented interactions" (Turner, 1968:102). Assistants express concern for the transmitted self-image, and interpret gestures of family members as signs of self-image, and are focused on influencing the process of assigning specific identities to them. The dynamics of constructing the identity of the active subject is based on the syntax of the relationships that take place between the particular assistant and the specific recipients of his/her activities. Based on the assistants' narrative analysis, it can be concluded that they receive

---

[1] Significant categories generated in the analytical process were marked in *italics*.

a *sense of an identity consensus* related to their *functional identities* when care recipients express understanding of the family assistant's functions. This is demonstrated by the families' activities, which are consistent with or close to the assistants' intentions (cf. Stone, 1977:93).

Izabela Kamińska-Jatczak
Department of Social Pedagogy
University of Łódź, Poland

References
BARBIER, J. M. 2016. *Leksykon analizy aktywności. Konceptualizacje zwyczajowych pojęć*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
CHARMAZ, K. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
GOFFMAN, E. 1959. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
GOFFMAN, E. 1963. *Stigma. Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. London: Penguin.
KUBINOWSKI, D. 2011. *Jakościowe badania pedagogiczne. Filozofia. Metodyka. Ewaluacja*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie- Skłodowskiej.
STONE, G. P. 1977. Appearance and the Self. In: *Human Behavior and Social Processes. An Interactionist Approach*. ROSE, A. (Ed.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
STRAUSS, A. L. 2008. *Mirrors and Masks. The Search for Identity*. New Brunswick (U.S.A.), London (U.K.): Transaction Publishers.
TURNER, R. H. 1968. The Self-Conception in Social Interaction. In: Gordon, Ch., Gergen, K. J. (Eds.). *The Self in Social Interaction. Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York: Wiley & Sons, 93–106.
WILSON, T. P. 2010. Normative and Interpretative Paradigms in Sociology. In: DOUGLAS, J. D. (Ed.). *Everyday Life. Reconstruction of Social Knowledge*. New Brunswick (U.S.A), London (U.K): Aldine Transaction. A Division of Transaction Publishers.

ERIS Journal – Summer 2018

The Journal invites submissions for a special edition on Social Work in Health Care Settings, Summer 2018

Introduction

The link between health, wellbeing and the social gradient i.e. social class, economic status, poverty, is well established. Local and global inequalities in health are measurable and represent major human rights issues affecting the marginalized and oppressed in most countries. Currently in Europe, national states are working toward new economic and organisational structures for the delivery of health and social care services to achieve equitable outcomes. At the same time, medical and technological advances have resulted in dramatic changes in the provision of care and services, the promotion of health and wellbeing and the delivery of rehabilitation, palliative and aged care. While the growing empowerment of health and social care consumers has resulted in a demand for increased choice and more personalised and tailored series.

The history of professional Social Work is rooted in the emergence of medical social work during the early 1900s in USA, Australia, and United Kingdom. However, new frontiers in health and social care effect the global south and north and create both challenges and opportunities for the profession's international relevance in addressing health equality and social justice. Tensions between competing economic, medical, social and human rights agendas are set to test practitioners, educators, academics and students of social work.

Special Edition

The purpose of the special edition is to explore the implications of working in dynamic and often controversial health contexts for social work practice, education, and research and theory development. Social work is an established interdisciplinary and transnational health care practice, contributing effective skills, interventions and technologies and providing measurable outcomes for health and wellbeing. Social work education seeks to offer state of the art teaching and learning opportunities to prepare students for working in interdisciplinary teams caring for individuals, families and communities. Social work students and practitioners are encouraged to undertake active leadership in health systems responding to the complex health and social needs of culturally diverse communities. Social work research evidences new interventions and sources of knowledge in collaboration with other health care disciplines and consumers of health services. Social work academics offer radical theories and insights as to achieving social justice and equality through health and social care policy, legislation and practices. Contributions representing advances in best and creative practice, education and research in social work in health care settings are therefore invited, together with interdisciplinary and international submissions.

Possible topic

The following topics are merely a guide:

- *Health inequalities and social policy i.e. human rights, personalisation and consumer choice, organisational contexts, health care costs and funding*

- *Specialist fields of practice i.e. hospital social work, rehabilitation and ambulatory care, mental health, child and family health, youth health, palliative care, trauma work, community and public health care, aged and dementia care, migrant and refugee health*

- *Ethics and values in health care, cultural tensions, controversies*

- *New practices and use of technologies in health and home care, interdisciplinary teamwork and decision-making*

- *Educating and supporting health care practitioners and emerging theories in health care*

Instructions

Manuscripts are to be submitted as academic articles in the range between 5,000 - 10,000 words (including its title, biography, abstracts, key words, the main body, list of sources, explanatory notes). See the website for further details on the format http://socialniprace.cz/eng/index.php and instructions for authors http://socialniprace.cz/eng/index.php?sekce=15

All submissions must include discussion of implications for social work practice, education, research, theory or ethics at the individual, community or policy level. We encourage prospective authors to contact the Guest Editor, Janet Anand, Professor in International Social Work, University of Eastern Finland at janet.anand@uef.fi

We are also looking for book reviews and reseach notes.

Book review is the standard literary genre. So please observe all review requirements. In the end of review could be answer to the question – "In what way does the book contribute to social work, respectively to social workers and workers in practice, education or research" Scope of review is set at 1,000 - 2,000 words. Reviews must contain the bibliographic data on the book (e.g. Daniel et al.: Vodáčková, Crisis intervention, Portal, Prague, 2002) and the name of the review author along with the contact. Please connect also copy of title page of the reviewed book.

Research Note is short text (1,000 – 1,500 words) about research activities on your faculty or department, about interesting dissertation thesis, project etc.

Submission Deadline

The deadline for submissions for this special edition is **March 10st, 2018**.

Two versions of the manuscript should be submitted to the editor's office, sent via e-mail to the administrator of the academic papers who will also provide you with additional information upon request: **barbora.grundelova@osu.cz**. One of these versions should be free of any information which would lead to the identification of the author. The other one should be a complete version of the article.

Our mission

Public commitment to the Journal

The journal for theory, practice and education in social work

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.

Social Work
and Violence Towards Women
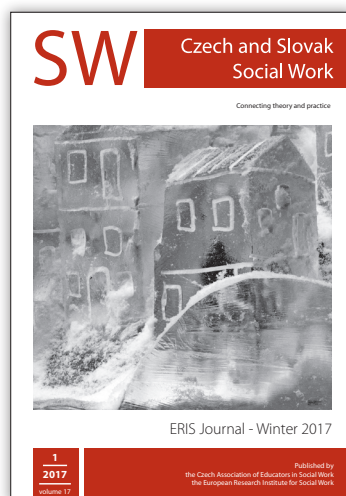
ERIS Journal - Winter 2017

Refugees and Social Work

Social Work, Health and Lifestyle