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SOCIAL WORK, EDUCATION AND POSTMODERNITY

THEORY AND STUDIES IN SELECTED CZECH, SLOVAK AND POLISH ISSUES

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Foreword

Special consequences of global economic recession, impacts of development and use of information technologies in everyday communication, and finally, Europeanisation or internationalisation in education – these are some of the challenges for current social work in Europe.

More than twenty years ago, a social change took place in the Visegrad Group countries. Since those days a discussion has developed in these countries concerning various forms of institutionalisation of social work in the postmodern era.

Past experience in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland is similar in many aspects. At the same time, it is possible to see certain differences in the approach and solutions to social problems adopted in these countries and those adopted in other European countries which are subsequently reflected in the education of social workers.

The idea of compiling the fragments of reflections by academics and lecturers in social work on the Europe-wide trends in development of social work and making them available in English translation to the colleagues in other European countries was greeted with enthusiasm by the European Association of Schools of Social Work. With their generous support, the year 2013 saw a platform emerging for discussion of academics and scholars working at five tertiary schools in three Visegrad Group countries. Their discussion has covered such topics as challenges and trends in education of social workers in Europe in the postmodern era.

The authors decided to dedicate their articles to the memory of

Prof. PhDr. Anna Tokárová, CSc.

the leading participant in the cooperation between individuals and institutions in the sphere of tertiary education of social workers in the Visegrad Group countries. They would like to express their gratitude, respect and admiration for the personality whose activity influenced generations of experts in social work and adult education not only in Slovakia, but also in the Czech Republic and Poland.

Liberec, 14 September 2013   Tatiana Matulayová

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Contents

Introduction

The authors of this book devoted their attention to the discrepancy between the boom in the university studies of social work and somewhat hazy notion of this discipline on the part of society. Since 1990, social work has been gradually gaining recognition at universities of the Visegrad Group countries. Yet, the qualified graduates of the university studies have not succeeded in convincing the academic community or the general public that they – as social workers – are able to provide professional help to people in troubles. Social workers have already studied for nearly twenty years at universities. Neither them, nor the public and nor the employers have a clear idea of what the social work graduates may offer apart from being administrators of various routine paperwork or performers of well-established helping professions similar to medicine, law or psychology.

This discrepancy seems to have its roots in historical discontinuities of the 1950s. The modernist project of establishing social work as a professional discipline took place during first half of the 20th century in the countries of Visegrad region. However this modernist project was scaled-down after 1950 with varying intensity in the individual countries of the Visegrad Group. It is tempting to speculate that the efforts to restore the professionalization process of modern type after 1990 may come up against unfavourable postmodern circumstances at the present time. The postmodern relativism, which invaded all thought frameworks in the individualised Central European societies, has cast doubt on the legitimacy of our assumption that we need to rely on expert knowledge and to trust their authoritative truths. As a possible consequence, since 1990 the Visegrad Group countries have constantly failed to reach and adopt nationwide consensus about the mission and specific expertise of social work. In these circumstances, it is hard to imagine that social work on a nationwide level would be able to acquire what a modern professionalization project presupposes: public recognition of the specific domain, authority of specific knowledge of social workers or legislative guarantee of monopolistic position for a loosely defined discipline to perform and provide specific type of help.

A loss of confidence in the validity of universal truths and acceptance of heterogeneous thought frames have had a different influence on the development of social work and its recognition as a specific specialised activity and on the development of social work education at tertiary schools. While this loss of confidence has prevented the social workers and the public from forming clear and readily comprehensible assumptions about the professional help provided by the social workers, it has made the situation easier for the proponents of different approaches to social work, enabling them to establish their own study concepts of this discipline at universities. The dissimilarity of the study programs was

no obstacle to their accreditation, especially in an atmosphere of general respect for diversity and otherness. The university management usually welcomed the accreditation of a discipline which was much sought after among the enrolees. The replacement of one truth with recognition of validity of dissimilar truths thus helps establish heterogeneous concepts of the social work study programs at a large number of tertiary schools throughout the Visegrad Group countries. Nevertheless, the graduates in social work have to look for a job in an individualised society whose stakeholders, primarily the employers, have no idea how to effectively utilise the graduate social workers.

A large number of social work graduates find themselves in trouble finding a job that would suit their specialisation and the degree of qualification. The employers fail to create sufficient number of appropriate job opportunities. This may be due to the fact that social work has never been accepted within the society as a strictly defined profession, enjoying the confidence of the public about its usefulness and unique knowledge and skills of its performers - unlike medicine, law or psychology. This gave rise to an unbalanced situation. On the one hand, there are social work university graduates on the other there is a instinctive notion that a social worker carries out some routine work which requires no specific qualification.

This imbalance brings up the following questions: Why the university graduates are not able to question the assumptions of the employers, colleagues from other disciplines, clients or the public that social work is characterised by a routine paperwork or everyday care and, as such, cannot bring forth anything specific? What is the relationship between the social work education and the recognition of its professional contribution to the solutions to problematic situations? What can be done by schools, students or social work graduates in a postmodern society to ensure that people accept the notion that social workers can offer them the expert assistance in solving the problems which the established, institutionalised, disciplines are not concerned with?

This book attempts to find the path to answering these and similar questions. In its first part, the readers are offered an image of institutionalisation of social work in the postmodern environment. The second part presents several studies of social work education in the Visegrad Group countries. The authors gather their findings in the areas of intercultural, participative creation of cognition and situational negotiation, which are relevant from the point of view of theoretical notion of postmodern institutionalisation of social work. These findings are highlighted for ease of reference in the closing section of this book.

Libor Musil

Tatiana Matulayová

FIRST PART

MODERN AND POST-MODERN

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SOCIAL WORK

Challenges of Postmodern Institutionalization for Education in Social Work

Libor Musil

In the eyes of Czech society, social work remains an institution with a vague purpose and blurred status. In contrast to social work in many other countries, this is not a consequence of its de-professionalization and postmodern casting of doubts on a domain that used to be clearer (see, for example, Clark, Newman, 1997; Laan v. d., 1998, Harris, 2003; Dustin, 2007; and other authors). In its modern past, Czech social work never attained clear attributes of a professional occupation (Wilensky, 1965: 283–308; Greenwood, 1976; Howe, 1986: 114–122) and was hence not accepted as a helping profession with a distinct domain (Musil, 2008). Prolonged, informed observation leads to the assumption that in Czech society we perceive "social work" as a legitimate and routine offer of social services and income maintenance. The latter are seen as suitable means of "social work" aimed at compensating for personal deficits[1] wherever individuals are prevented from satisfying their personal needs or the needs of their families (Musil, 2010). Understood in this way, "social work" can hardly be recognised as a helping occupation with a specific domain, because the public considers that workers in professions established under modern conditions (especially psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, teachers providing special education, lawyers etc.) and even workers in non-professional occupations such as day care, personal assistance etc. are, also experts in help with personal deficits.

A debate about the need for establishing social work would be useless if personal deficits were exclusively responsible for life difficulties of the recipients of helping occupations. I consider that the focus of Czech "social work" on personal deficits marginalises troubles related to problematic interactions between individuals and entities in their social environment. In Czech society, interaction problems are routinely regarded as a consequence of personal deficits. The latter are considered to be the source of life troubles, and emphasis is "logically" placed on help with managing them. Interaction problems pass unnoticed and two types of people in need are not afforded any help with managing such problems: first, those whose problems in interactions with their social environment present difficulties in managing life with a personal deficit, and second, those whose interaction problems present difficulties which are hard to manage despite the fact they do not actually live with a personal deficit[2].

Thus, in the Czech environment, help with managing problematic interactions, which – as will be shown below – is often understood as a distinct domain of social work (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965, 286, 288–291, 315–316; Bartlett, 1970; Laan v.d., 1998; Lorenz, 2004: 146–147, 2006; Payne, 2006; Musil, 2013a), is often unavailable to people who in fact may feel the need for such help. It tends to be available at random and cannot be expected as a routine part of what is normally offered by helping organisations. The managers and social workers from such organisations often do not anticipate that help with interaction troubles should be offered and (hence) the recipients of help do not actually expect it.

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[1] It is considered that personal deficits of individuals that are usually compensated for by using social services or income maintenance include, in particular, lack of independence due to a health limitation, disability, mental illness or personality disorder, lack of personal competence or qualification, poverty, drug addiction, inclination to deviance, etc.

[2] Where interaction problems bring difficulties which are difficult to manage for individuals without a personal deficit, laypersons and helping workers do not provide them with assistance in managing their problems in interactions, assuming that the interaction troubles are caused by a personal deficit. Instead, they look for their personal deficit in order to find an explanation for their troubles, or to help them with the assumed personal deficit.

Filling this gap in the offer of helping work in Czech society means not only aspiration for recognition and practical provision of skilled help with interaction troubles. Given the historical background outlined above, this also means an attempt at winning recognition for social work as a field oriented on help with interaction troubles in postmodern conditions.

It is my opinion that the contents of education in social work must be governed by this task. I understand that those who received this education should gain recognition for their field by helping those involved in the recipients' life situations to address the troubles present in mutual interactions. In my view, two topics are crucial in postmodern conditions in relation to education of social workers. First – the identity of the occupation, and second – negotiation of his role by the social worker. With a view to explaining the meaning of these topics and formulating them more accurately, in the following text I shall attempt to answer the following question: "From the viewpoint of postmodern institutionalisation, what education topics are crucial for cultivating the ability of social workers to provide a specific type of help and gain recognition for its routine use in society?"

In the following text, the answer to this question will be based on determination of the outer limits of the term "institutionalisation of a helping occupation" and a more detailed description of "modern" and "postmodern" institutionalisation of social work. By providing characteristics of postmodern institutionalisation of social work, I will substantiate the importance of identity and role negotiation for the social worker's ability to gain recognition for his occupation. Finally, I will offer three scenarios of postmodern institutionalisation in a society where modern professionalization has not taken place. I will outline the contexts in which, according to the assumptions known to me, it could be possible to put into practice the proposal for integrating the study of knowledge and "technical" apparatus of social work with a reflection on its identity and exercise of its improvised application in negotiation within the postmodern context of multi-occupational nets.

1. Social institution and institutionalisation of a helping occupation

In this chapter, I will define the notion of social institution and, subsequently, use the same to define institutionalisation of a helping occupation so as to make it a practical starting point for describing the modern and postmodern approaches to the institutionalisation of social work.

1.1 Institution

Sociologists understand social institution as an established pattern of actions and interactions of members of a group, by the application of which people express, either in fact or symbolically[3], an attitude to meanings accepted in the cultures of their groups (Keller,

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[3] To express practically an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of a group means to factually contribute, by using an institutionalised pattern of action, to the attainment of something that is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. help satisfy the needs of people with disabilities by donating to charity), or to factually restrict or threaten the attainment of something that is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. to deplete the fund from which the needs of people with disabilities are to be satisfied by committing theft in the foundation's office). To express symbolically an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of a group means to show, using an institutionalised pattern of action, a positive or negative attitude to what is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. to publicly manifest support to those in need by unpretentiously receiving the Three Kings' carollers every year or, on the other hand, by publicly showing aversion to support for the weak and disadvantaged by regularly attending concerts of a music band whose texts proclaim a message of racial purity). An institutionalised pattern of action can simultaneously serve to express an attitude to what is considered important by people in the group, both in fact and symbolically (a celebrity can donate to charity generously but also ostensibly for the media; theft can have financial implications but can also cast doubts on the trustworthiness of the foundation and its objectives).

1991: 54–56[4]; Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 39–40; and other authors). In the above understanding of the social institution, the defining elements are, according to theory, meanings of established patterns of actions and interactions for those who apply them on the one hand and, on the other hand, conditions for reproduction of institutionalised patterns of action[5].

Keller defines social institution from the perspective of meanings for members of groups of people. According to him, institutions are ways of satisfying needs or addressing a real or fictitious problem (Keller, 1991: 54–55). If we understand non-satisfied needs as a synonym for a problem, we can say that the importance of applying institutionalised patterns of action lies in the fact that they make it possible or easier for people to address problems with meeting their needs or attaining values that are important for them personally or for the groups (or parts of the same) to which they belong.

Not every pattern of action used to manage problems can be regarded as an institution. While there are endless patterns of actions which are used as described above, they can be called institutions insofar as they can be identified as standardised (Keller, 1991: 54–56; Colyvasm, Jonsson, 2011: 38) and are simultaneously accepted as legitimate ways of managing a problem (Keller, 1991: 56). The authors cited above present standardisation, legitimacy and complementarity between them as preconditions for the reproduction of abstract patterns of action. The word standardisation can be understood as a collective term covering transmissibility, exteriorisation and reutilisation, i.e. characteristics of the ways in which patterns are used. The word legitimacy is a collective term for recognition and knowing assumption of a pattern, i.e. for the characteristics of the ways in which it is experienced.

A pattern becomes an institution if its characteristic actions and typical interactions are transmissible (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 38–45). This means that actions and interactions anticipated by the pattern can be imitated and replicated over time, by various agents and at various places without a change in the understanding of the pattern accepted by a certain circle of people (Zucker, 1977: 728). For example, school is an institution. It is a pattern which defines the passing over of cultural contents as a characteristic action and defines interactions among teachers and students as typical interactions. Diverse cultural contents have been passed over via interactions between teachers and students for centuries in many schools of various kinds all over the world, without any fundamental change in the basic arrangement of the pattern.

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[4] Keller draws a distinction between functional and anthropological concepts of an institution. In the functionalist concept, institutionalised behaviour is oriented on meanings that are important for the whole group (e.g. the relatively complex pattern of actions and interactions which we call "school" is, for the members of the group, a means of socialisation and continuation of the group's cultural traditions), while the anthropological approach admits that established patterns of actions and interactions may represent personal meanings of individuals (e.g. the school, which serves as a means of cultural reproduction for the group, may serve a maltreated child as a means of personal escape from its unemployed, paedophile father). In order to bridge the difference between the two approaches to the relationship between the pattern of action and meaning of its application as observed by Keller, we say that "by applying institutionalised action, people express an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of their group". Putting it this way, both the functionalist interpretation (by applying patterns of action, people can express their attitude to something that is important for the whole group – take part in the group's cultural reproduction by sending children to school) and the anthropological interpretation (by applying patterns of action, people can express their attitude to what is important for themselves, a subgroup or the group in its entirety – for example, by failing to send their children to school and excusing absence, parents can use the institution of truancy to show unwillingness of a member of a minority subgroup to participate in the group's cultural reproduction; their children can use the same institution – truancy backed by parents – to demonstrate their personal wish to do whatever they like or show their personal wish to avoid teachers' criticism).

[5] Given that interactions can be seen as chains of people's mutual actions and reactions (Grossen, 2010: 2-4), the terms "established pattern of action and interactions", "institutionalised actions" or "institutionalised pattern of actions" can be considered synonymous and will be used as synonyms in the following text.

Exteriorisation is the first precondition for the transmissibility understood in this way. This means that an understanding of actions and interactions that are considered characteristic of the given pattern is passed over through symbolic communication[6] (Keller, 1991: 56) among members of the group and is therefore seen by them[7] as an obvious part of the outer world (Zucker, 1997: 728).

Routinisation is the second precondition for transmissibility. A certain pattern of actions and interactions is institutionalised to the extent that it is "ready-made" (Zucker, 1997: 728) – it is at hand for its (potential) users and is replicated by them when in use, without having to think about what course the action should take. The above exteriorisation is a precondition for routine application of patterns of actions and interactions. Routinisation is conditional on passing over the understanding of the patterns through symbolic communication. Patterns of action are then – according to Zucker – seen as rules given from outside that are an obvious part of the world around us and determine what is possible and rational (Zucker, 1997: 728). The members of a group are therefore routinely expected to use them when addressing a specific type of problem (Keller, 1991: 58).

As mentioned above, Keller (1991: 56) considers that institutionalised action is "standardised". For me, this term covers the three previously mentioned defining characteristics of institutionalised patterns of action. It is inherently transmissible and, at the same time, exteriorised and routine and these three characteristics is mutually interdependent.

In addition to standardisation, legitimacy is the second condition for reproducing institutionalised action. Following Schuman (1995, in Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011: 39–40), we can define the legitimacy of an institution as an understanding prevailing in the group that actions following a certain pattern are appropriate in terms of a socially constructed framework of values, rules, ideas and definitions (briefly, "cultural background"). We consider that this definition of legitimacy is abstract enough to include both the functionalist and anthropological approaches to the legitimacy of institutions as distinguished by Keller (1991: 56).

For functionalists, according to Keller, patterns of actions are legitimate insofar as they are "approved and sanctioned" in terms of meanings important for the whole group (for example, ties of relationship are desirable for ensuring biological, economic and cultural reproduction of the group). In the eyes of functionalists, legitimacy stems from the cultural background, and from the perspective of the latter, certain patterns of actions and interactions are seen as appropriate responses to problems and needs that are perceived as important for the whole group. Those who advocate the anthropological approach regard institutions as forms

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[6] Symbolic communication is a form of action which is characterised by communication or exchange of information, meanings and their interpretations through symbols. Symbols are attributes which act as an impulse with a substitutive role, i.e. attributes that mean something other than they directly convey or from which something can be derived in addition to what they directly convey (Nakonečný, 1996: 1255). Keller notes that this is a specifically human form of communication which makes it possible to obtain information regarding things, events and thoughts that are distant both physically and in time. Thanks to symbolic communication, humans can learn from the past, envisage the future and live in a world of abstractions. Keller, 1991: 36–37.) The ability to learn from the past using symbolic communication and hence to understand abstractions is a key to passing over and replicating patterns of actions and interactions among people in groups.

[7] In symbolic communication, the role of attributes can be taken by gestures, sounds, depictions, things, actions or colours (Nakonečný, 1996: 1255). It follows that the taking over of the communication of an abstract (unchanging) content of institutionalised patterns of behaviour by people is mediated by more than just spoken or written word (articulate sound or image); instead, it is carried by the vehicle of observation of people's everyday actions and interactions, the course of everyday events and the like. In other words, from the recipient's view, communications of institutionalised patterns of action are symbolised by his entire usual social environment. The patterns of action passed over in this manner can thus appear to be an "obvious part of the outer world".

of actions that are generally recognised in interpersonal relationships because they relieve humans of the need to re-explore and rethink the best ways to satisfy each need. In this respect, patterns of actions can be called legitimate insofar as they make it easier for people in the group to satisfy their collective needs or individual needs, even if such needs are perceived as appropriate by only a part of the group, or seen as inappropriate by a large or small part of the group (e.g. non-marital cohabitation). In this case, various cultural backgrounds that express what is appropriate in terms of the problems or needs of various entities within the group are seen as a source of legitimacy. The anthropological approach makes it possible, amongst other things, to distinguish patterns of actions that are appropriate in terms of problems and needs important for the whole group from patterns of action appropriate in terms of the needs that are constructed by a dominant part of the group as important for the whole group.

Colyvas and Jonsson point out that a pattern of actions becomes an institution if the relationship between its legitimacy and standardisation is that of mutual support. In other words, this is so if in the eyes of those who apply a standardised pattern of actions, legitimacy justifies transmissibility and repetition of that pattern and if a routine and repetition gives exteriorised practices the value of something habitual that exceeds their immediate usefulness. (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 40)

Keller comments on the way in which institutionalised actions are accepted. He points out that authors who discuss institutions (such as Sumner) distinguish between institutions and habits. Habit is an elementary form of action which is experienced as binding; people respect it and reproduce it by their actions, not always knowingly. On the other hand, institutions are conscious habits, with a disposition to additional rational justification of their binding nature. (Keller, 1991: 56) In this respect, for example, adult people's spontaneous tendency to show and name surrounding things to children is a habit. School can be seen as an institution in which the original habitual actions of adults are knowingly arranged and developed into a complex system of interactions among teachers and students, whose binding participation in interactions with teachers may be rationalised, e.g. by the need to cultivate qualified workforces, the need to pass over the cultural traditions of the nation, etc.

The division between habits and institutions leads to the concept that institutions are established by additional realisation and rationalisation of what were once unknowing habits.

If we summarise the above elements of social institution, we can define it as a standardised (i.e. transmissible, exteriorised and routinely applied) pattern of actions and related interactions whose application by others is routinely expected by people (individuals, groups or parts of them) affected by a problem with the satisfaction of needs or attaining values, who recognise the given pattern of actions and interactions as an appropriate means of addressing this problem on the background of the values, rules, ideas and definitions they have socially constructed.

A standardised pattern of actions and interactions usually encompasses an abstract understanding of the personnel structure of the institution in question. Since this article discusses institutionalisation of a helping occupation, it is reasonable to distinguish here between two types of abstract ideas concerning staff. In the first case, the personnel of the institution consists of its users only – those who use it primarily[8] as a means

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[8] I use the term "primary users" for entities whose problems the institution is expected to manage with a view to achieving its purpose. If a model institution encompasses the concept of executive staff expected to work towards achievement of the institution's purpose and the primary users interact with this staff to receive help with addressing their problems, the executive staff may use the institution as a means of addressing their own problems instead of addressing the primary users' problems. If this is the case, the executive staffs are no longer seen as the primary user but rather the "secondary user" of the institution.

of addressing their problems. For example, the institutionalised pattern termed "support group" expects that the users and, at the same time, exclusive members of staff of a support group will be people who personally struggle with the same problem. The other view is that the staffs of an institution comprise two groups of people – the users of the institution and autonomously organised executive staff. For example, the institutionalised pattern which is usually termed "family counselling" assumes that the users of the institution will be people with problems in family relations and the executive staff will be the counselling centre personnel, perhaps plus other family experts they may work with.

According to Keller, it is important not to confuse an "institution", or institutionalised pattern of actions, which is a recognised and standardised abstract idea, with an "organisation". The latter is a specific network of people who, at a specific place and specific time, act and organise their relationships on the basis of a recognised and standardised abstract idea. (Keller, 1991: 56) In the above examples, we refer to an understanding of the structure of staff which is part of the abstract pattern of "support group" or "family counselling". In these examples, "support group" or "family counselling" are institutions that the members of specific organisations applied to organise their interactions. We could name, for example, the support groups of people with diabetes mellitus at the Prague Teaching Hospital and the workers and recipients of help at the family counselling NGO *Srdce na dlani* in a certain town of the Czech Republic. Where I refer to institutionalisation of social work in this article, I refer to the clarification and acceptance of an abstract pattern which could be subsequently taken by people with interaction problems at various places in Czech society to routinely use the help of autonomously organised specialists in the management of these problems.

If there are organisations which are, in an isolated and unsystematic way, active in Czech (or other) society to offer help to people with interaction troubles, this does not necessarily mean that social work has been accepted by that society as a legitimate, standardised and hence routinely applied way of addressing interaction problems. An effective but isolated help from social workers may spark interest in a generalised understanding of professional help with interaction problems in the media, among the public, policymakers and employers of social workers as well as potential recipients of help. However, before a specific part of society accepts a comprehensible and abstract pattern of "social work", the individual cases of help from social workers will continue to be just isolated examples of a pattern taken most likely from abroad rather than routine examples of diverse applications of a legitimate pattern of addressing problems that people in society experience in their personal relations or relations with various organisations.

1.2 Institutionalisation

For me, institutionalisation is a process in which an abstract pattern of actions and interactions gradually attains the characteristics of a social institution. This means that a significant part of a social group begins to be aware of, and give a name to, a problem which is poorly addressed or new and yet to be addressed. At the same time it formulates a pattern of actions and interactions by reinterpreting an established habit or pattern taken from the group. It begins to use the respective pattern in a standardised manner as a means of addressing the problem and, consequently, knowingly assumes the idea that the given pattern of actions and interactions is a reasonable way of managing this problem. The said individual processes, i.e. naming the problem, formulating a pattern, using the pattern to address the problem, standardisation in using the pattern and knowing assumption of the pattern as a means of addressing the problem are mutually stimulative in the process flow of institutionalisation (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 38–45; De Swaan, 1990); as such they often run in parallel.

Despite this, it is possible to conceive, with some caution, a general sequence of the above individual and mutually supportive processes. De Swaan (1990) perceived the birth of psychotherapy as a process of institutionalising a helping occupation. He considers the birth of psychotherapy as part of a wider process in which various modern professions including social work were analogously established and delimited in relation to each other (De Swaan, 1990: 14). In this respect, De Swaan's concept of the inception of psychotherapy can be seen as a model for modern institutionalisation of all helping occupations. I will attempt to extract this model from De Swaan's discourse. In doing this, I will disregard the modern details of formulation, standardisation and legitimation of psychotherapy and will focus my attention on the general sequence of the individual processes of institutionalisation as a assumed by De Swaan. I will therefore consider the below-stated interpretation of De Swaan's concept of the birth of psychotherapy to be a description of the framework pattern of institutionalisation of a helping occupation.

According to De Swaan (1990), we can identify two, or in fact three, starting points of the process of institutionalisation of a helping occupation. The first is the specific context from which stem the impulses for formulating and applying a new pattern of actions (for example, psychotherapy, etc.). As a specific part of this context, De Swaan describes how people who live in the relevant social context experience a formerly unknown type of troubles. I will therefore take the experience with the formerly unknown type of troubles as the second, relatively independent starting point for the birth of an institution. The third starting point is the formulation of a new, or reformulation of an old, pattern of actions.

According to De Swaan, naming the experienced troubles as a problem which can be addressed using a pattern of action which has not yet been fully tested is a fundamental impulse for further development of the new institution. By using its pattern, even if only rarely at first, and as their awareness increases, people learn to name their troubles (e.g. difficulties accompanying the experiencing of privacy or leaving privacy when entering the public space) as problems (anxiety, neurosis, depression, etc.) that are expected to be manageable by applying the new pattern (psychotherapy). De Swaan repeatedly analyses the role of giving life troubles the name "problem". This generates the impression that according to him, institutionalisation is not necessarily triggered by experience with a formerly non-existent type of troubles, but primarily a new designation of certain troubles that could formerly be unknown or undetected. The new designation of troubles as a problem is understood by De Swaan as part of a new pattern of actions.

The endeavour to manage the newly named problem becomes a prompt for standardising the use of the new pattern and support for its legitimacy. Gradual standardisation of the use of a pattern together with naming the problem may result in conscious acceptance of the pattern as a means of addressing the problem. This may in turn support its legitimacy and further standardisation. Standardisation and legitimation of a new pattern of actions are described by De Swaan as a process of deepening knowledge, and awareness, of the terminology and language by which the purpose and rules of use of the respective institution are conveyed.

In my opinion, the above hypothetical sequence of individual processes can be seen neither as an algorithm of institutionalisation of a helping occupation nor as a measurable series of events expected in its course. For me, it is a description of a broad pattern of mutual stimulation among sub-processes within the process of institutionalisation of helping occupations. I will use the pattern derived from De Swaan's discourse as a background for asking questions related to institutionalisation of social work. In the following chapters, the said questions will be related, first, to the context of formulating a new pattern of action, i.e. social work, and second, the content of the pattern, i.e. the concept of social work, and

third, the ways of legitimation and standardisation of the new pattern. I will discuss answers to these questions in the modern and postmodern contexts in the following, second chapter.

2. Modern and postmodern institutionalisation of social work

The terms institution and institutionalisation are almost absent in literature on the social work occupation. Researchers describe the process of formation, standardisation and legitimation of abstract patterns of actions of social workers dealing with clients and other entities by using the terms profession and professionalization. They use the term "profession" (or "professional occupation)" to refer to an organised group of specialists which shows certain cultural, organisational and economic elements (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–308; Greenwood, 1976; Howe, 1986: 114–118; and other authors). They usually use the term "professionali-zation" for the process in which a group of specialists attains these elements (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283). The above authors believe that the cultural elements of a profession lie in the ethos of devotion to the client's interests and concept of help (mainly in terms of area of competence, function and method) supported by a fund of systematic knowledge and theory. The organisational elements of a profession include, in their opinion, autonomous professional association and guarantee of control marked by law over the professional skill of the members provided by the association. A key economic element of a profession is seen by the authors in the monopoly of a group of specialists from the given occupation on an activity in a specified area.

The above elements were regarded as appropriate in the conditions of modern society. Indeed, the professions existing today, including social work in some countries, attained these elements in its context (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965; Lorenz, 2006; and other authors).

Payne, Lorenz and Howe point out that postmodern development has cast doubts on the formerly respected characteristics of professional helping occupations approached from the perspectives of modernity. Emphasis on narrow specialisation was gradually losing its legitimacy in the last decades of the 20th century, while the universal ideas – providing little differentiation – about what the recipients of help needed and how they should be helped began to lose their credibility. The modern idea that the question of what means should be used to help and how such help should be provided is to be answered by a closed group of experts without the involvement of clients or representatives of their interest groups generates a suspicion that the experts will not take sufficient account of the diversity of people's problems, their cultural differentiation and other social groups' interests. The above suspicion gives legitimacy to attempts at what is called de-professionalization, which is promoted by the elites with the fear that closeness and autonomy of professions may pose a risk to their economic and political interests. (Payne, 2006: 141–162; Lorenz, 2007: 65–67) The idea of a universal theoretical concept of social work was defeated in the context of distrust of attempts at promoting one monopolistic truth and under the influence of the movements for the rights of various groups of clients of the welfare state (Howe, 1994: 524–525; Lorenz, 2007: 65–67). Howe is more explicit than other authors in his interpretation of these findings; he considers that social work is disintegrating into diverse parts, each following a path of its own. Their independent knowledge diverges and suggests disintegration of attempts of social work at unification in philosophical, theoretical, professional respects and in terms of education and organisation. (Howe, 1994: 525)

Under the conditions observed by Howe, it is no longer manageable or indeed impossible to present social work as a coherent and organised group with a clear mission, thus guaranteeing credibility of its members in the eyes of the legislature, the public and recipients of help. The arrangement and elements of the profession cease to provide legitimacy to the activities

of helping specialists. In professions that became standard professions in the past, their members continue to practice their rituals but face distrust among a large part of politicians, general public and recipients of help. Occupations that did not establish themselves as professions in the past can no longer become a profession in the modern sense of the word, or they face considerable difficulties in such attempts. This leads to the assumption that in present society, the term professionalization ceases to be an appropriate means of gaining insight into the processes of formation, standardisation and legitimation of abstract patterns of social worker's actions in interactions with the recipients of help and other entities. It appears that the term professionalization refers to the then – that of waning modern time – course of the above processes. It may therefore pose an obstacle to understanding how social workers gain recognition for their specific method of helping in postmodern society.

The term institutionalisation appears to me as a more appropriate means of gaining insight into the processes of formation, standardisation and legitimation of social work. From that perspective, we can distinguish between the modern concept of institutionalisation of social work, characterised by the "professionalization" perspective, and the postmodern concept of institutionalisation of social work, an appropriate presentation of which I will endeavour to provide on the following pages of this chapter. I will describe the typology of both concepts.

By "describing typology" I mean to depict a kind of "pure" picture of accurately "modern" and accurately "postmodern" social work institutionalization. Hence, detach the current mixture of modern and postmodern features in contemporary society. The notion of "postmodern institutionalization" seems to be unclear or missing in current social work literature. Depicting "pure" type of this blurred process seems to be the way to find base for understanding postmodern side of current social work activities.

I will attempt to reproduce the notions and key arguments used by the relevant authors to express their understanding of the processes of institutionalisation of social work in modern and postmodern conditions. I have chosen relevant authors who explicitly deal with the formation of social work as a professional, or otherwise constructed, occupation. I will interpret their arguments from the viewpoint of the above concept of institutionalisation of a helping occupation. I will gradually draw the contours of the modern and postmodern pictures of the social context in which take place the variously constructed processes of formulation, legitimation and standardisation of an abstract pattern of social workers' actions in relation to the recipients of their help and other entities in society.

2.1 Social context of institutionalisation of social work

Institutionalisation is described above as a process in which a pattern of actions and interactions is recognised by people in society as an appropriate manner of managing a problem or satisfying a need. I will therefore ask how the relevant authors understand modern and postmodern conditions of recognition of social work by people in society.

2.1.1 The nation state context – modern view and postmodern reflection on the modern situation

Both modern (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965; and other authors) and postmodern (Lorenz, 2006; Howe, 1994: 517–519; and other authors) lines of interpretation situate the emergence of social work in the context of the nation state of the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century. Both lines of interpretation consider that national consensus is a prerequisite for the recognition of social work. However, they differ in its interpretation. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 338–341) maintain that nationwide consensus is a permanent and inherent

feature of society and do not consider the possibility that it could be a temporary phenomenon. Lorenz (2006: 31), on the other hand, understands national consensus as a temporary *project*, vision of a culturally homogeneous society of the emerging nation state preached by the elite and accepted by loyal citizens. Wilensky and Lebeaux describe the circumstances of the emergence of social work in the United States of America ("America"); Lorenz points out the analogous conditions of establishment of social work in Europe. They agree that fear of destabilisation of the national entity by "strangers", i.e. immigrants, migrant workers as well as "outsiders" from within, was a strong impetus for the emergence of social work.

Modern interpretation of the context of emergence of social work

Wilensky and Lebeaux describe the American nation state as *industrial society*. They use this term to describe national economies with a high degree of mechanisation, bureaucracy and, most importantly, specialisation and the ensuing role differentiation. According to them, industrial societies are internally divided into the powerful ones with a high status the rank--and-file ones, a majority of which are those that sell their labour, not the product of their labour. The two cited authors maintain that the cohesion of that society, divided by specialisation and share of power, is ensured by interdependence of individuals and organisations mediated by the money system as well as by the nation state and a broad national consensus. The usual principles of consensus in national societies of industrial type mentioned by these authors include economic individualism, tolerance; endeavour to act appropriately according to expectations attained in the process of socialisation, nation-state allegiance and discretion towards outsiders (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 45–48, 338–341; and other authors).

Wilensky and Lebeaux understand social work as one of the results of the specialisation process. In addition to benefits, it also brings certain new problems that give rise to specialised groups which address them. According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, specialisation gave rise to social work in that it produced the complex system of specialised organisations. The problem appeared to lie in the lacking sense of direction in the system which Wilensky and Lebeaux characterise by saying: "We need guides … through a new kind of civilized jungle." The latter generates a demand for liaisons, of which social work is an "example par excellence", "a large part of its total activity being devoted to putting people in touch with the community resources they need but can hardly name, let alone locate." (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286)

The need to mediate a sense of direction in the "jungle" of big cities became stronger in America at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries with the influx of immigrants from overseas and, somewhat later, Mexican, Puerto Rican and southern Negro or white migrants "from farm to factory". Each of the groups had troubles with the sense of direction. "His problem of adjustment... created a demand for welfare services." (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 54–55)

According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, the emergence of social work is a response to the functional need for mediated direction in a complex of organisations. The mere existence of this need is not a sufficient precondition for recognising social work as a specialised profession. For its workers to specialise in the satisfaction of this functional need, they must first earn a reputation[9]. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 284–285, 340) consider that this is

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[9] Wilensky and Lebeaux do not use the word "reputation". They describe the influence of technical and social characteristics of workers in the profession on the public opinion, which De Swaan (1990) referred to as "reputation" in his theory of emergence of psychotherapy. The message derived from both theoretical lines of interpretation is analogous; De Swaan´s term appears more fitting. I therefore took the liberty of implanting it into my interpretation of the theory of Wilensky and Lebeaux.

possible because there is a broad national consensus in industrial society regarding the standard of proper behaviour of a professional. According to this assumption, social workers can acquire a reputation if they create an autonomous professional organisation and communicate to the public and the elite that its members act in accordance with what they are expected to do to fit into the national standard of proper behaviour of a professional. (Such expectations are discussed below in connection with the aspect of legitimation of social work.) If they succeed, and the existence of national consensus creates suitable grounds, they acquire a reputation, receive legal sanction to exercise their specialisation as an organised profession and hence a legal guarantee of monopoly on pursuing their specific activity. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 284–285)

Postmodern interpretation of the modern context of emergence of social work

Lorenz (2006, 28–44; and other authors) provides a description of the context of emergence of social work in Europe from the postmodern perspective. According to him, social work was established at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in connection with the need of the elite in the emerging nation states in Europe to safeguard loyalty of their culturally heterogeneous populations. The problem of cultural heterogeneity was addressed by support for citizens' identification with the understanding of a standard proper behaviour of a member of the national entity. The national standard of proper behaviour was not experienced by the citizens of states as an officially promoted pattern but rather as a *taken-for-granted*, "unquestioned" understanding of the proper behaviour of every human being (Lorenz, 2006: 33, 36, 38; and other authors).

In European countries, according to Lorenz, this understanding became the "criterion by which it could be decided who was to belong properly to the nation" (Lorenz, 2006: 31). At the same time it served as a premise for deciding how to respond to people who have fallen outside the national standard due to their poverty, disability or misbehaviour: whether to help them attain the standard and integrate them or isolate them through placement in an institution such as an asylum, hospital or prison. (Lorenz, 2006: 44) According to Lorenz (2006: 36), this approach was taken by educational and helping organisations with the objective of "levelling differences" in the standards of behaviour.

Lorenz (2006: 31) describes the selective practice of cultural homogenisation of the populations of the emerging nation states as a "project of creating a national heritage of standardised behaviour". According to him, social workers, or their early predecessors, became involved in the "project" (Lorenz, 2006: 44). They participated in "professionally objective" decision-making, which was based on professionally substantiated criteria (Lorenz, 2006: 31–34) regarding whether sources of public or civil help should be used for the benefit of integration or for social isolation of those clients who did not meet the standards of proper behaviour, the latter included outsiders as well as all those who did not meet the standards of proper behaviour due to mental function disorders or failure to understand the national standard. Where mental function disorders were identified as the reason for deviation from the standard, it was considered that such people needed treatment and, sometimes, permanent care. Where it was found that the deviation from the standard was due to poor understanding, it was considered that they were in need of education. (Lorenz, 2006: 33)

Howe's understanding of the role of the social worker in modern society is similar to that of Lorenz. Unlike Lorenz, however, he does not present social workers as objectively operating professionals. Howe says that "moral systems and the laws which reflect them" were the premise for assessment of the behaviour of clients by social workers. From this point of view, according to Howe, social workers engaged in the national project as direct implementers of "welfare legislation defining which people are problem and which people

have a problem. It also determines the kind of responses available to social workers, when they meet the difficult and the distressed." (Howe, 1994: 519; emphasis by Howe)

Despite the already mentioned dissimilarities, the above lines of interpretation are similar in the way they describe some key elements of the modern context of the emergence of social work. According to them, recognition of social work is conditional on a national consensus regarding the standards of proper behaviour of citizens. (For Wilensky and Lebeaux, this standard refers to citizens' sense of direction in a net of specialised organisations, for Lorenz it has to do with fulfilment of the vision of national identity.) Both lines of interpretation show that social work acquired recognition as a response to the lacking capability of a part of the population, especially immigrants, but also people migrating from rural areas to cities or otherwise "failing" people, to act in accordance with the national standard. Wilensky and Lebeaux emphasise the national consensus on the standard of proper behaviour of members of the profession. Lorenz refers to this dimension of the context of recognition of social work when he points out that social workers provide legitimacy for their decisions on people's capability to meet the national standard by applying the national standard with professional objectivity.

To put it more generally, four ideas are typical of the modern perspective presented by Wilensky and Lebeaux. First – the idea that the process of recognition of social work takes place in the context of a large social group. Second – the idea that the existence of a collective identity of this large group – nation – is a prerequisite for recognising social work. Third, the idea that recognition of social work is conditional on the ability of the organised group of social workers to satisfy the consensual expectations of the large group. Fourth, the idea that the ability of the organised group of social workers to satisfy the consensual expectations of the nation is a precondition for formal recognition of social work by the state power.

Lorenz confirms that the above ideas are relevant for understanding the process of emergence of social work in the modern context. While he formulates his interpretation based on postmodern perspective, he adds that a certain fifth idea is typical of the modern approach to institutionalisation of social work. According to this fifth idea, the recognition of social work depends on the confidence in grand narratives, or projects – visions of better future for everyone, formulated by the elites (Lyotard, 1993). According to Lorenz, social work received recognition at the time of birth of the nation states because citizens were won for the vision of a nation which will be successful if it becomes a homogeneous group of people behaving in a proper way. The nation state was not "a realisation of ancient dreams just waiting for their moment in history". It was the need of the nation states' elite to form a loyal population identifying with the vision of a successful nation that led to the endeavour to present the modern form of institutional framework for the nation and its territory as a "manifestation of historical destiny". (Lorenz, 2006: 28–29)

2.1.2 Recognition of social work in postmodern conditions

From the postmodern perspective, the above modern characteristics of the context in which social work acquired recognition in its early days, became a past illusion. People lost confidence in the grand narratives, or projects, of a better future for the whole nation and the collective identities of nations and other large groups were losing ground (Lorenz, 2006: 79–85, 99–104; Musil, 2008: 71–74; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15–16). This eliminated the large groups' consensual expectations from social workers and other professional groups that were able to organise themselves and offer their professionally justified contributions to achievement of promises for the future, thus acquiring reputation (Payne, 2006: 141–162, 185; Payne, 2012; Witkin, Iversen, 2008; Růžičková, Musil, 2009).

Since globalisation reduced the sovereignty of the nation states and the consensual expectations regarding proper behaviour of social workers vanished, the ability of the nation state to enact these non-existent expectations and guarantee their fulfilment from the position of state power faltered as well (Lorenz, 2006: 84–85; and other authors; Musil, 2011).

Thus, from the postmodern perspective, the modern conditions for institutionalisation of social work as a specialised occupation vanished. If, in a certain country, social work was not recognised as a standard way of addressing a problem under modern conditions, the question arises of whether it may become one in the postmodern context. When the relevant authors describe the postmodern context, they show that the following characteristics of present-day society have an effect on social work, in particular:[10] temporariness of social nets, individualisation of identities, validity and hence relativisation of all lines of interpretation, intercultural nature of communication, permanent negotiation, trust being conditional on the ability to control the rules of debate, uncertainty and returns to the universal "truths" and bipolar thinking of modernity.

Temporariness of social nets

Musil (2008: 73) points out, that the absence of a national consensus on the standards of proper behaviour of social workers and the lack of understanding regarding the concept of social work within the occupational community are both related to the nature of social structure of postmodern society. A limited number of large and culturally homogeneous groups such as nation or occupation were replaced by a quantity of variable and temporary social nets. According to Lyotard (1993: 98, 114–118), while negotiating on individual subjects, people in present-day society set up provisional, temporary and variable social nets; this creates a "a web of relationships that is ever more complex and mobile". The temporary nets, the members of which are brought together by the link of a "pragmatic alliance", repeatedly regroup depending on the current subject of discussion (Beck, 1992: 100–101)[11]. Within the nets, the debate takes place under changing rules in different situations and in negotiating on different problems (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176). In the context of these temporary social structures, it seems unlikely that large groups of people would attribute the same meanings to certain events in the long term.

Individualisation of entities

Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008) ask what it means for the concept of social work that the external structuring of people's individual identities has waned and that "the self" has become an individualised project. Giddens (1991: 83–85) claims that the take-up of electronic communications has made accessible and proliferated alternative options of identity and

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[10] Relevant authors usually do not ask whether and how social work can be institutionalised in the postmodern situation. They explore the aspect of *re-professionalization* or *reconstruction* (Lymbery, 2001: 378) of the professional conduct of social workers in postmodern (Lorenz, 2006; Witkin, Iversen, 2008; Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012) or quasi-market conditions (Chytil, 2007; Dewe, Otto, 2011a, 2011b), or in both of these contexts (Lymberry, 2001; Payne, 2006; Fook, Gardner, 2007: 3–11). They thus study re-institutionalisation of social work and, as a result, they indirectly opine on the establishment of the occupation in the postmodern context by describing the present conditions for the existence of social work and their effect on social work. Howe (1994: 530, see also 524–525) is cautious about re--institutionalisation of social work as an occupation and asks: "…if modernity's project is in decline can social work's discourse as originally formed survive?"

[11] Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) believe that the characteristics of late 20th century societies are not a display of a radical transformation and postmodernity but rather accomplishment or escalation of the principles of modern society. This is the reason why they refer to late 20th century society as "late modern". If I quote these two authors, I do so insofar as the description of selected characteristics of contemporary society in their texts is similar to Lyotard's (1993).

lifestyle. Everyone must find a sense of direction in the wide range of various options in their own way – depending on their personal life strategy. Individualised life-planning has therefore become a means of preparation and fulfilment of everyone's individual life course. (See also Beck, 1992: 131–137; Lyotard, 1993: 115; Lorenz, 2006: 101) Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008) therefore propose that support for life-planning become a key theme of social work.

Changes accompanying temporariness of nets and individualisation of identities

The variable nature of the web of social nets and individualisation of identities changes the conditions for recognition of social work as a legitimate model of addressing a problem. First, they imply validity of all lines of interpretation, thereby relativising them all (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 17). Second, they cause that every communication is intercultural (Lorenz, 2006: 101–115). Third, they require a permanent negotiation of identities, roles (Lorenz, 2006: 99; Payne, 2006: 157–159; Payne, 2012) and the rules of debate (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176; Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 88).

Validity and hence relativisation of all lines of interpretation

According to Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012: 16–18, 20–21; see also Fook, Garder, 2007: 4–11), development in the concept of social work and discussion of the same are a response to the uncertainty which follows from the relativisation of the lines of interpretation put forth by all the parties involved. Diverse views, beliefs, allegations and interpretations "are considered valid because they differ", which means "they are all relative" (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 17, see also Howe, 1994: 525). As a result, it is no longer obvious for social workers that their view of things is seen as legitimate in the discussion or in the decision-making process, and they may find it difficult to maintain their authority as a party to the communication equal to the recipients of help (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 20–21; Lymbery, 2001: 378; Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489), with the public (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 84,86), with managers (Fook and Gardner, 2007: 4–5), sponsors (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489), members of the team from other modern professions (Payne, 2006: 157-159), other social workers (Musil, 2008: 71-–72; Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 83), or with members of groups "that construct themselves as 'helping professionals' and encroach on social work's historic professional territory through both rhetoric and action" (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489). I believe that in terms of the conditions for recognition of social work, social workers cannot expect that recipients of help, managers, sponsors, team members from other occupations or competitors will respect social work's monopoly or the privileged "territory", no matter how delimited, of the occupation.

Witkin and Iversen (2008: 489) consider that social workers see the lack of authority of their view of things and the ensuing lack of respect for the domain of social work as a *threat* to themselves. Gojová (2013: 64–67, 82–90) noted that in Czech society, social workers experienced helplessness when faced with the lack of respect for their views among the public, recipients of help and managers and the lack of trust in their competence among those involved in governmental and municipal social policies. On the other hand, no negative response to the loss of monopoly was observed in Czech society. This seems to be a logical consequence of the fact that Czech social workers never had the impression that they should have a monopoly on a certain sphere of activity guaranteed by public opinion or law. For the time being, this interpretation must be voiced cautiously because nobody has inquired into the response of Czech social workers to the absence of monopoly in their occupation. This seems to be partly due to the fact that Czech social workers never lived with the feeling of an effectively guaranteed, delimited *territory*.

Intercultural nature of communication

The relativisation of all lines of interpretation which accompanies the individualisation of identities applies to all, and hence also "well established" (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 16–17) and "universal" (Lorenz, 2007: 65–67) thought frameworks such as "national homogeneity" or proper standard of a member of the national entity (Lorenz, 2006: 68). Minorities and civic movements defending the civil rights of those who are stigmatised for being different express the specific identity of social work clients more distinctively and emphatically than before (Howe, 1994: 524; Lorenz, 2006: 69; 2007: 66), the validity and definiteness of the standards of proper behaviour that social workers habitually relied on when classifying clients is now blurring (Lorenz, 2006, 21–22, 73–74). Given the relativity and hence validity of all lines of interpretation, and as a result of public articulation of diverse identities, individualised personal identities and interpretations of recipients of help are taking on increased significance (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 18; Lorenz, 2007: 65–66). Under these circumstances, social workers "are no longer the sole arbiter of the meaning of events" (Howe, 1994: 525). They sense or reflect on the validity of the personal views applied by the recipients of help and their ways of perception. Their communication with recipients of help thus ceases to differ depending on whether they communicate within or outside the social worker's culture. According to Lorenz, every communication becomes intercultural communication of people with different identities and different understanding of the subject of their attention (Lorenz, 2006: 63, 83–84, 101; and other authors). Howe says that if no privileged perspective is acknowledged, the truth becomes the result of "collaborative authorship" and "participatory, conversational mode of reasoning". "Understanding is no longer a mode of knowing, but a dialogical activity." (Howe, 1994: 525)

Permanent negotiation

If we summarise the foregoing, we can say that in their work, social workers establish temporary pragmatic alliances with the recipients of help, colleagues, managers, clerks and workers from other helping occupations and are engaged with them in intercultural communication in these alliances. This means that social workers, like all people in postmodern society, transfer from one net to another to communicate with people who may question their view, whose own specific views need to be understood and who must be repeatedly reasoned into the relevance of the social worker's thought frameworks. Due to the temporary and intercultural nature of co-operation, if they want to achieve something for themselves, recipients of their help or anybody else, they must again and again negotiate on everything they find important with those involved in the temporary nets. The variability of social relationships and individualisation of identities of the parties involved result in a situation where the recognition of social work under postmodern conditions is conditional on "permanent negotiation" (Payne, 2012) or constant negotiation on differences (Lorenz, 2006: 99).

Conditionality of trust on the possibility to control the rules of debate

What are the rules that govern communication involving constant negotiation on differences within temporary pragmatic alliances? Růžičková and Musil (2009: 87–89) ascertained that the social workers approached by them expressed a vision of clients who feel they should experience that "the social worker is a competent person who provides them with qualified help". However, they did not feel that the attempt to accomplish this vision could appeal to all social workers and that there could be a fair debate about this across the community of social workers, with rules suitable for all. "Every person has a specific understanding of social work", without "understanding that he works within his own paradigm and he should accept

a different organisation where they do things differently." They also stated that the vision of a recipient of help who, based on his personal experience, expects the social worker to provide a qualified and effective help can be developed and achieved by social workers within smaller nets of people from various occupations who want to join forces to help people from a target group, for example drug addicts, long-term unemployed, clients with a psychiatric diagnosis, the Roma people, etc. They described co-operation within such nets as an antithesis to social work in public administration and experienced it as a space "free of clerks" where they could do things in their own way. According to them, social workers from public administration "do not take our service seriously" while when meeting with people from their net, they "feel... familiarity" and are able to "consult on what to do with the authorities, how to position themselves in relation to the authorities, what to do with the labour office and how it all works... ".

Růžičková with Musil (2009: 88–89) consider that the way in which the social workers in their study construct their identity as members of a net of people who wish to help a target group corresponds to Lyotard's description of people's grouping in a postmodern situation. Lyotard says that people today have distrust towards the grand narratives, or projects, that promise a better future for all in the name of a noble idea. Instead, they temporarily form small special-interest nets. They do so mainly because they can discuss their topical problems using their own, autonomously and continuously negotiated rules (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176). In my opinion, this means that the recognition of social work in postmodern conditions is conditional on its acceptance by members of pragmatic alliances who believe that they have accepted the practical contribution of social workers and their thought frameworks during a discussion with rules under their control, and under the social workers' control.

Uncertainty and returns to universal "truths" and bipolar thinking of modernity

The picture of the postmodern context of recognition of social work provided so far appears far too complete in that it emphasises the impermanency and relativity of inconsistent thought frameworks. Everything seems temporary and questionable and everything needs to be subject to intercultural negotiation within temporary pragmatic alliances. This negotiation results in models of addressing problems that the members of alliances perceive, again temporarily, as legitimate institutions. Other problems will emerge later or in parallel and the members of existing special-interest nets will always regroup into new alliances to address each of them. In these new alliances they will temporarily negotiate other rules of negotiation and will apply intercultural negotiation to attain other, temporarily legitimate models of addressing other problems.

The relevant authors take the picture which emphasises the relativity of positions and impermanency of negotiation results to its ultimate conclusions by even relativizing its unambiguity. According to them, the relative invalidity of positions and impermanency of agreements generates uncertainty in postmodern people, which they attempt to escape by returning to a clear validity of modernity models. They do not always attempt to tidy up the web of incoherent ideas and unreliable agreements by mutual intercultural clarification. Instead, they sometimes tend to face the feeling of chaos by postulating self-evident and clear ideas of what is appropriate. This way, according to Lorenz, they attempt to question the very existence of the problem of mutual understanding. They postulate the "universal validity" of the values of a successful society and take this perspective to classify people around them as "good" and "bad". They may attempt to unilaterally suppress or silence the differences of the "bad" ones, often believing that for "their own good". (Lorenz. 2006: 111)

However, there is a substantial difference in comparison with the circumstances of the view modern. By adopting clear positions, the advocates of universally valid ideas of what is

appropriate do not become part of large groups of people with whom they would intrinsically and lastingly share their clear view. The wide range of clear ideas which have lost public trust due to their "universal validity" serves them as a huge stock of patterns. They surf it as a web browser to find a clear view to take and "arrange" the chaotic world, in order to reduce their personal uncertainty. If a certain social worker takes the standard of appropriate behaviour of her nation to find "diligence" and be able to divide clients into "deserving hard workers" and "hopeless sluggards", she by no means creates a new, hard-working nation. Instead she avoids the chaos that would emerge if she respected every recipient of help as an authentic individual with an individual life strategy. Or she forms a pragmatic alliance with several colleagues at the workplace with a view to assuring themselves, in an attempt to deal with incoherent demands of their managers, regulations and recipients of help, of the validity of the idea that "hard workers should receive more time while sluggards need nothing more than formal processing".

The relevant authors have found the tendency to use the range of "universally valid" patterns of modernity among both managers and social workers as they attempt to manage uncertainty. According to Dustin (2007: 13–30), managers use Fordist[12] methods of management to limit the uncertainty generated in them by social workers' tendency to apply the thought frameworks of their occupation. The latter do not emphasise outputs, which are the managers' priority, but rather the process of interaction with the recipient of help (Lymbery, 2001: 380; Dustin, 2007: 29). Consequently, social workers generate uncertainty in managers by deviating from the performance objectives of the organisation. Managers therefore attempt to promote performance objectives by routinizing working procedures and standardising performance indicators (Dustin, 2007: 28–30).

Fook and Gardner (2007: 7–9) describe how social workers experience the above response from their managers, adding that the managers' Fordism is a source of uncertainty among social workers. Social workers say that the managers' emphasis on procedures, administration, individual fragments of problems and outputs casts doubts on their understanding of how they should do their work. Witkin and Iversen (2008) and Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) describe how social workers cope with this uncertainty.

Witkin and Iversen claim that in terms of the position of their occupation in society, some social workers turn to modernist patterns of control of their positions. They therefore stress the "scientific expertise" of social work, exclusivity over knowledge and terminology of the occupation and control of their professional associations over entry into the vocation (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489).

Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) deal with the question of how social workers address uncertainty in relation to the recipients of help. According to them, the "competent professional – incompetent layman" model, in which the worker's relationship with clients was formed in the context of modernity, has been replaced, in the postmodern situation of intercultural interactions[13], by the "competent expert – competent expert" pattern (Nečasová,

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[12] According to Dustin (2007: xi), "Fordism" is characterised by the use of modern rationality or scientific management in creating an efficient organisation which generates material products of mass production. A Fordist organisation is characterised by standardised, non-differentiated products, mass consumption, vertical hierarchical management, centralised bureaucracy, clear delimitation of specialisations with clearly defined activities, role expectations from workers and a collective philosophy.

[13] I believe that what Lorenz (2006) refers to as universal presence of intercultural communication is the one side of the same coin whose other side is described by Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) as "relativisation of validity of all thought frameworks". I therefore took the liberty of introducing the notion of "intercultural communication" into the proposition presented by Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová, despite the fact that the authors themselves do not explicitly use it.

Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14–15, 18–20). This brings uncertainty for social workers in that, in the relationship of "two experts", the recipient of help legitimately obtains power which he may use unilaterally. Social workers therefore "may tend to resort to the paternalistic concept of social work as it provides them with the much sought-after boundaries where they can feel secure." (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 21).

2.2 Formation of a new pattern of actions and interactions

This section is dedicated to the question of how the relevant authors understand, or how their arguments can be used to construct, the causes for emergence and typical features of the abstract pattern of actions and interactions which has become known as "social work" in the modern context. I will describe the impulse for emergence and typical features of the abstract pattern separately for modernity and postmodernity.

I will considerably simplify the matter by renouncing description of the convoluted line of development of social work[14]. I will interpret the cited authors' arguments typologically and will therefore concentrate on the hypothetical "time of birth" of the modern understanding of "social work" at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the hypothetical "moment" of initiation of the postmodern understanding of "social work" in present-day society. I will describe the different characteristics of the modern and postmodern forms of the social work pattern at the "moment" of their hypothetical birth typologically, from four perspectives. First, in terms of the impulse, which led or leads in the given context to formulation of the abstract understanding of social work? Second, in terms of approach to the problem social work should address. Third in terms of ideas about the ways of responding to the problem, and fourth in terms of ideas concerning a typical form of interaction between the providers and recipients of help.

2.2.1 "Washing the black" – understanding of social work in the modern context

The understanding of social work which, according to the relevant authors, was born in the modern context, was expressed metaphorically by black social worker Dodson in the 1960s (1970: 89–96). He voiced the "washing the black" metaphor at a time when the movement for the rights of the disadvantaged began to publicly relativize the validity of the national standards of proper behaviour which social workers customarily applied in categorising their clients. He said his colleagues usually had no doubt that poor black people "could not be induced to participate". They admitted though that some poor black people "could be grown". Thus, according to Dodson, they say about them that they are willing to be "washed", to [be transmuted] into reasonable facsimiles of the dominant group members", which in America meant to become "black Anglo-Saxons".

Impulse

Dodson's anecdotal presentation of Lorenz's interpretation of the participation of social workers in the *project* of cultural homogenisation of the nation state's population (see above in 2.1.1) points out that the emergence of social work had to do with the way in which dissimilarity was understood in modernity. According to the above interpretations of the modern context of emergence of social work, cultural heterogeneousness of nation states' populations, or the need for cultural homogenisation of such populations, was the impulse to form an understanding of the specialised occupation.

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[14] Describing the development of social work as an institution would require a separate treatise which I cannot offer here. A basic understanding can be derived from the works of Lubove (1968), Davis (1982), Abel (1994), Parton (1994), Lorenz (2006, 2007); and other authors.

The authors differ in their interpretation of the motives behind the need for cultural homogenisation. Functionalists Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 54, 181–187, 286) considered that cultural homogenisation was a need for the social entity system. According to functionalists, the ethnic and religious diversity of newcomers, accustomed to a life in agrarian societies, did not allow for the creation of a motivated industry workforce. It was therefore necessary to promote their focus on patterns of behaviour that were appropriate in the context of industry and urbanised settlements (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 54). Foucaultian lines of interpretation present the endeavour for cultural homogenisation as an expression of the elites' interest in ensuring cultural grounds for governmentality (Parton, 1994: 14–19; Howe, 1994: 517; Lorenz, 2006).

Despite these interpretation differences, the above authors identically describe that social work was a response to problems due to dissimilarities between those who were and who were not compatible with the understanding of *normality*. Without a "culturally standardised" population, which was originally full of "the others", it would be impossible to have efficient modern industry and loyal citizens (Lorenz, 2006: 31). According to this interpretation, social work emerged as a response to fears of excessive dissimilarity and its consequences. It was brought to life and gained recognition as an agent of cultural homogenisation.

Problem formerly addressed by social work

Social workers were not the only agents of the mission for homogenisation. In addition to the elites, the mission also involved educators, medical doctors, psychologists, sports coaches, social service workers and administrators of social benefits (Lorenz, 2006: 31–36. Each of the groups had a specific role in the homogenisation task. Social workers were expected to address problems concerning the interaction between "the others" and people and organisations active in the modern, or industrial, society. According to the relevant authors, especially interactions between "the others" and their community as well as interactions between privacy of "the others" and the public life sphere were seen as problematic by the elites and citizens living in line with the acknowledged conventions.

Wilensky and Lebeaux note the problems in interaction between "the others" and community. They show that the ethnic and religious diversity of newcomers, accustomed to a life in agrarian societies, made it difficult for them to find a sense of direction in the notional "jungle" of specialised organisations (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286 It also reduced the ability of communities in large cities to appreciate conventional and regulate "deviant" behaviours (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 181–187). Thus, interaction between "the others" and community was difficult for both parties. "The others" found it difficult to find a sense of direction and it was hard for established community members to regulate the consequences of that deficiency.

Parton points out the problems in interaction between the privacy of "the others" and the public life sphere. He claims that at the given time, the emergence of social work was part of the solution to the unresolved problem of how child rearing can be made a public concern without destroying the ideal of the family and its self-regulation. On the one hand, it was necessary to respect the autonomy of private family life. On the other hand, it was necessary to ensure that public entities could regulate the impacts of unsuitable care for children on their actual or potential anti-social behaviour in later life. The public audience was presented with questions of this kind from the perspective of a social entity – state or community. Public policy measures were to promote interests that were presented as the interests of the whole entity. As such, they could not go without public entities intervening in the life of the families of "the others". However, their privacy was protected by the widely accepted ideal of an autonomous family (Parton, 1994: 16–17). The interaction between the public sphere and the family was therefore a delicate one.

The problem of troublesome interaction of "the others" with the public sphere and community, which was a partial aspect of the broader problem of cultural heterogeneity of the modern society population, gradually crystallised in the eyes of the elites and the public. The question arises of what stood behind its separation. Why the elites and the public considered it appropriate to separate the problems in interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community from the wider problem of cultural heterogeneity and to respond to these troubles separately? Literature does not claim this was a natural process. The relevant authors assume that the separation of a part of the problem was "natural" from the then-valid points of view.

What are these viewpoints? Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 249–250) say that part of the present specialisation "probably owes as much to considerations of professional jurisdiction and prerogative as it does to actual gains in efficiency", i.e. those gains that modern society usually expects from the establishment of a specialisation. Thus, according to the authors of modern time, there were two aspects in the modern context due to which it seemed natural that the problem of cultural heterogeneity should be further structured. First – the conviction that a narrower problem can be managed more efficiently. Second – it seemed obvious that a group of specialists attempts to monopolise the solution to a defined problem. Wilensky and Lebeaux point out that the two aspects may not always be consistent, but in the long-term the benefits for the social entity from applying both aspects are likely to meet in the future.

According to Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 249–250), the emergence of specialisation in respect of a partial problem for reasons not related to efficiency does not preclude benefits which would otherwise be hard to achieve. Narrowing the subject of specialisation into a partial aspect of a more complex problem may cause difficulties in co-ordination. In technical terms, however, this narrowing down should ensure that the specialist need not address the nature of the more complex problem, but rather concentrate on his part instead. Thanks to this, he can attain a considerable level of excellence in addressing the given part of the whole (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 258). Narrowing the problem down allows an organised group of specialists to monopolise the solution and ensure that the problem is managed exclusively by properly trained specialists. The latter will respect certain ethical standards, thanks to which they will deliver quality in performing activities specialised in the given partial aspect of the problem. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–285)

It can therefore be said that at their time, those involved in the formulation of the problem of interactions with "the others" spontaneously regarded separation of this part as an obvious step towards efficiently managing the complex problem of cultural heterogeneity. It is likely that this process was supported by social workers who endeavoured to obtain the status of a professional occupation. Narrowing the problem down enabled them, among other things, to present the scientific nature of the procedure applied in addressing the problem, thus gaining a prestigious reputation for their occupation. Lubove supports this thought. According to him, American social workers in the 1920s encountered a lack of a scientifically backed theory of effects on interactions between clients and their social environment. They addressed their fears of the impact of the lack of scientifically justified knowledge on the status of the field by a shift to psychiatry and by narrowing down their attention to whether the client's personality qualifies him for interaction with his environment (Lubove, 1968: 86).

The process of narrowing down the understanding of the problem, which was to be addressed by social work in the first decades of the 20th century, was presented in the previous paragraphs, by an example of the focus of modern social work in America. This seems to illustrate the way in which the subject of attention of social work as well as other helping profession was delimited in the modern context not only in America, but also in Europe. I consider that this modern way of defining the problem, or the subject of specialisation, was

characterised by a focus on a partial aspect of a more complex problem. Modern helping professions, probably for the reasons specified above by Wilensky and Lebeaux, were oriented on problems Barbier (2006) would refer to as "instituted". The meaning of the term "instituted problem" follows from the interpretation of the typology of a specialist's subject of attention as formulated by the author.

Barbier distinguishes between two types of problems[15] on which specialists focus their attention. On the one hand, according to her, there is a problem which has been "instituted" through a specialised theory. On the other hand, there exists a "natural" problem which emerges before the specialist as brought by the course of life or the development of a situation. The attention of a specialist dealing with a natural problem focuses on the flow of causation among several different aspects of the problem. If the problem is "instituted", the specialist's attention focuses on a single aspect of the "natural" problem. (Barbier, 2006: 36–37) It follows for us from Barbier's interpretation that the specialist concentrates on a partial aspect of the "natural" problem and becomes an outstanding specialist in its understanding and addressing. (The same idea is presented by Wilensky and Lebeaux above.) If constant new "natural" problems emerge as the situation unfolds, the specialist can repeatedly recognise "his partial aspect" and concentrate on it within each "natural" problem. The problem he specialises in is part of all "natural" problems.

According to Barbier, "instituted" problems are constructed as partial, while "natural" problems are constructed as more complex ones. The specialist's focus on the "natural" problem is oriented on links among its individual aspects. If these aspects are separated from the mutual links, they become the focus of a narrowly specialised, thorough attention of specialists in problems which have been "instituted". (Barbier, 2006: 36–37)

In terms of the above typology, the problem of the difficulties in interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community was "instituted" at its time as a partial aspect of the then up-to-date, "natural" and more complex problem of cultural heterogeneity of the national entity's population. For me, this way of defining the problems which, according to the expectation of the elites and the public, should be the focus of a modern helping profession, was typical of the process of modern or modernist institutionalisation, i.e. institutionalisation process being under way under the modern social condition.

We can therefore conclude that an expectation arose in the modernist context that a social worker should be a specialist in help with managing a partial aspect of the complex problem of cultural heterogeneity. This partial aspect can be shortly referred to as troubles of "the others" in interactions, with the community and entities of public administration.

Understanding of the social worker's response to troubles of "the others" in interactions with public administration and community

Social workers were expected to respond as mediators to the above-mentioned troubles in interactions. The relevant authors describe the modernist approach to their mediation task in two ways – as a means of satisfying the needs of the social system or as a technology of government.

Functionalists Wilensky and Lebeaux understand mediation, which they believe social workers routinely performed, as a means of satisfying the needs of the social system, for

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[15] Barbier deals with education as a cognitive activity and she therefore refers a "subject of attention" rather than to a "problem" (Barbier, 2006: 35–37). Given that I apply her typology in interpreting the process of construction of "problems" on which social workers concentrated in the process of institutionalising their field, I consider the notions of "subject of attention" and "problem" synonymous in the given context.

example its need for integration or continuation. Social work should aid integration and continuation of the system by mediating the resources available in the community (moral models, information, opportunities, services or support) to individuals and families who otherwise have a scarcity of these resources (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286).

Authors with a Foucaultian perspective interpret mediation as a means which ensures government through actions of the state power and public entities towards "the others". As mentioned above, these actions could not be ensured without the agents of government entering the privacy of families, which, however, was protected by the ideal of autonomous family. Social work, with its task of mediating the action of public measures into the microsphere of everyday private life of specific families and individuals, became a means of surmounting this delicate barrier (Parton, 1994: 15–17; Howe, 1994: 517–519; Lorenz, 2006: 41–44).

From the perspective which interprets social work as a "technology of government", the mediation of resources to "the others" is accorded the role of a means of power. Parton (1994: 19) therefore uses the term "investments in individual lives" for the mediation of resources. From this point of view, social workers were expected to use the mediation of resources to families and individuals as a leverage by which the expectations of public entities influence the private conduct of citizens. Through mediation of resources and various organisations' discourses into the life of specific families and individuals, social work was to endeavour to forge alignments between the personal projects of citizens and the image of social order, spread sought-after norms of living, bring about changes in behaviour and encourage families to overcome their moral failure (Parton, 1994: 17–19; see also Howe, 1994: 517–519).

Availability of resources and support for integration were to depend on the social workers' discretion as to whether the specific individuals were "the others" who could be (re)integrated or "the others" whose (re)integration was not possible (Lorenz, 2006: 43–44; Howe, 1994: 517–519). Dodson would say that the approach of "the others" to help depended on the social workers' judgement on whether their clients "could grow" or "could not grow" or whether they "wanted" or "did not want" to be "washed". It was necessary to "wash" those who "could and wanted", i.e. help bring their behaviour closer to the national standard and thus be able to overcome obstacles to interaction with various entities, especially with public and private organisations and people who lived in accordance with the national standard and the established lifestyle. For those who "could not or did not want to be washed", the social worker was expected to ensure control by providing them with living conditions and an appropriate form of care. Lorenz (2006: 44) notes that public entities and citizens often imagined this appropriate form of care as an asylum – work & shelter, institution or prison (Lorenz, 2006: 44).

Understanding the interaction between social workers and recipients of help

Similar to other institutions, the abstract pattern of addressing the problem in interactions between "the others" and community or public administration includes the concept of the institution's staff. The concept of staff usually comprises two ideas. The first is the idea of abstractly, impersonally designed types of parties involved in addressing the problem at hand. The second is the idea of the expected course of mutual interactions between these types of parties. Based on the relevant literature, the understanding established in the modern context is that social work staff comprise two types of parties involved in the welfare process.

One is a social worker who is expected to be employed by a civic or state-controlled organisation whose mission is to attain philanthropic goals or deal with citizens in matters of public administration. The authors agree that the predecessors of social workers were mainly

volunteers who were active, especially in the late 19th century, in philanthropic initiatives. Social workers soon began to be employed by civic or state organisations (Lubove, 1968: 1–21; Parton, 1994: 16–18; Lorenz, 2006: 45; and other authors). I believe that the idea of social worker usually performing his work within employment began to shape in parallel with the above. Apparently this was in no way altered by the fact that approaches to participation of civic organisations and their employees in the delivery of the citizens' social rights enacted by the state developed in various ways in different countries (Lorenz, 2006: 45; and other authors).

It can therefore be concluded that in the nation states, where the state placed the provision of the enacted benefits or services into the hands of governmental authorities and organisations controlled by the state, the social worker could be typologically seen more as an employee of a state-run organisation. In those nation states where the state engaged civic organisations in the provision of the enacted benefits, the typology of a social worker would be more that of a civic organisation employee, or perhaps also of an employee in general, no matter whether in the civic or state sector. Either way, the concept of a social worker probably was not one of a volunteer, a "pre-professional ancestor" of social workers described by Lorenz (2006: 44). It is uncertain whether Lorenz meant to say that social workers were, unlike their predecessors, "professionals" in the sense that they were employees rather than volunteers, or in the sense that they were trained specialists identified with the culture of their occupation and colleagues associated in the same professional organisation.

The literature which refers to the birth of the understanding of social work in the late 19th century and first decades of the 20th century describes a gradual increase in the number of professionally trained social workers (for example, Lubove, 1968: 22–54; Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 291–298; McLaughlin, 2008: 4–5). On the other hand, it does not mention whether social workers at that time were members of professional associations or chambers. The latter were set up later in connection with partial success of social workers' endeavour to obtain the status of a professional occupation for their vocation. It is difficult to tell whether and when the opinion that a social worker is not just an "employee" but rather an "employee organised in a professional association" became part of the abstract understanding of a social worker. Lorenz and other Anglo-Saxon authors, i.e. those I mostly refer to in this paper, use the term "professional" in two meanings without distinction. First, to refer to a worker from a "professional occupation" (see Greenwood, 1976 and the introduction to chapter 2) and second when speaking about a person who works as an employee, in an employment relationship.

In the modern understanding typology, the other party, in addition to the social worker, involved in addressing the problem at hand is the individual or family that is "different" because this individual or the family does not act in line with the obvious concept of a person as defined by the national standard.

Given what literature says about the modern concept of the relationship between a social worker and the recipient of help, we can conclude that in the contemporary understanding, the interaction between them should follow the "expert - client" pattern. Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová claim that from the perspective of this pattern, a social worker was considered competent and able to address the problems of the client who was seen as an incompetent layman. To help the "helpless" client, the social worker, taking on the role of an expert, gathers data about the situation of the former, diagnoses, formulates a solution concept, delivers therapy and assesses the whole procedure. The understanding of his interaction with the client can be called summarily as "catalytic" – the social worker is seen as a "catalyst" of certain reactions on the client's part without any change on the part of the social worker (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14).

It can be concluded that this model of interaction of a "competent expert" with an "incompetent client" corresponds with the above-described idea of the social worker as an agent of cultural homogenisation. In this concept, social workers assess eligibility for integration of "the others" whom they regard as incompetent in respect of the national standard.

2.2.2 The arenas of negotiation – understanding of social work in the postmodern concept

Fawcett (2012) distinguishes "postmodern" and "critical postmodern" perspectives, because according to her, they respond differently to the relativisation of all positions and thought frameworks. According to her, "postmodern" perspectives deconstruct various thought frameworks, thus depriving them of privileged positions and questioning the possibility of accepting any of them as appropriate. "Critical postmodern" perspectives also understand deconstruction as a source of the non-privileged status of various thought frameworks. They do not refer to relativisation in general but rather to relativisation of the thought frameworks of the parties involved in a context or situation. They assume that the mutual respect of the parties involved in a certain situation, which follows from relativisation designed in this way, can be a starting point for negotiation. Within the negotiation, the parties involved in the given situation can take into consideration those of their identities and positions that they find relevant for the situation, and present them in the given context. Thanks to this, according to Fawcett, they can use negotiation to jointly distinguish procedures which are acceptable and unacceptable in the context of the given situation (Fawcett, 2012).

In our opinion, the term "relativism which opens room for negotiation on the situation", which Fawcett distinguishes from "simple relativism", is analogous to Lyotard's idea of temporary stabilisation of the rules of debate through situational negotiation. Lyotard refers to negotiation between people who distrust "narratives" which describe present events as a process directed towards a future fulfilment of a generally accepted value that is waiting to be accomplished. These people do not have unifying ideas at their disposal. If they are faced with a problem, they set up a pragmatic alliance with those who, led by different motives, wish to assert an interest in addressing the problem. They do this repeatedly as new problems continue to emerge with the changing situation. This way they create temporary, thematic (problem-oriented) nets, across which they negotiate on the rules they intend to use in discussing their issue. This enables them to discuss it using their own rules that suit them at the given moment (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176).

If there is a unifying element, it is the idea that they want to control the rules of the discussion they are involved in. According to Lyotard, they manage to put this idea into practice in a special-interest association which, following its own rules of discussion, seeks a way of formulating and expressing the common interest for which they temporarily brought themselves together in the given situation. Fawcett analogously formulates an idea of negotiation in which relativisation of all positions enables the parties to consider the positions of the other parties and thus reach the conclusion that a procedure is appropriate for the given situation. We consider that Payne (2012) refers to a similar idea when he uses the term "permanent negotiation" and Howe with his "participatory conversational mode of reasoning" (Howe 1994: 525). Lorenz analogously speaks of constant negotiation on differences.

I believe that the concepts discussed by Lyotard, Fawcett and other above-mentioned authors highlight the fact that postmodern relativism and de-hierarchisation of parallel thought frameworks generate the functional necessity of situational – starting yet again with every new theme or problem – negotiation on the rules of discussion and the participants' ideas of

how to proceed in the given situation. A provisional negotiation – one which starts again with every new situation – is "functionally necessary" according to the said authors. This is so because, first, there is no other way, under the conditions of postmodern relativisation of different views, of reaching agreement on a joint procedure in a specific situation and ensuring recognition of the relevance of social work's specific contribution to the resolution of specific situations (Lorenz, 2006: 99, Payne, 2012). The second reason is that from the viewpoint of critical postmodern perspectives, the usefulness of social work, and hence recognition of its contribution, is conditional on the application of a participative strategy[16]. The latter is, according to the authors who look at the matter from critical postmodern perspectives, a principle inseparable from negotiation under the conditions of relativisation, and hence validity, of parallel thought frameworks (Howe, 1994: 525; Fawcett, 2012: 171–172).

For me, the idea that there is a functional necessity of permanent negotiation suggests that permanent situational negotiation is a key prerequisite for institutionalisation of social work in postmodern society. It can also be seen as a key context in which institutionalisation of social work in postmodern society does or may take place. In every new situation, by repeated application of their own thought framework in negotiation with the other parties involved, social workers in postmodern situations do (Payne, 2006: 154–159, 2012; Růžičková, Musil, 2009) or may receive (Lorenz, 2006: 99) temporary but repeated recognition of their view of existing problems and their contribution to their resolution. Payne (2012) observes that by "permanent negotiation, social workers construct their roles, their identities and boundaries between helping occupations both within and outside their organisations".

If permanent situational negotiation is a key to recognition of social work, then the "arenas of negotiation" in which social workers, according to Payne (2012), negotiate on their roles, identities and boundaries with other occupations, is the context in which today's institutionalisation of social work does or may take place. According to Payne (2012), three particular arenas are relevant for social work. The first is characterised by negotiation among the recipients of help, the social worker and the agency. The second arena is delimited by negotiation among advocates of political interests, authorities promoting certain rules of the social order (including the welfare state) and participants of ideological discourses. The third arena of permanent negotiation on roles, identities and boundaries of social work is seen by Payne in the interaction between the agency and the profession. Elsewhere, Payne (2006: 154–158; see also Růžičková, Musil: 2009) identifies a fourth arena, which is characterised by negotiation on the approach to a theme (case or situation) and its solution in a multi-disciplinary context. Somewhere in these arenas there are impulses that generate, or may generate, infinitely repeating processes of provisional formulation, legitimisation and standardisation of patterns of addressing the problems which are typical of social work.

Impulse

I shall elaborate on the assumption of the relevant authors – as justified above – that modernity gave rise to the problem of cultural heterogeneity of nation-state populations where social work established itself as a method of managing problems in interactions between "the others" on the one hand and community and entities of public administration on the other. I would therefore like to find out what is or can be the impulse for an analogous process

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[16] In addition to functional necessity, some authors explicitly emphasise (Fawcett, 2012; Howe, 1994), and others indirectly admit (Lorenz, 2006; Payne, 2012) that the participative nature of permanent situational negotiation coincides with the value-based emphasis of social work on respect for the positions of recipients of help and other parties involved in their life situations or other agents participating in the process of help.

in a postmodern society in which the institution of a mediator between the conforming majority and "the others" was not established during modernity.

I do admit that a postmodern analogy of the modern institutionalisation of social work need not take place at all in the present-day context. Nevertheless, the development of modern-type societies led to the emergence of a specific field of activity focusing on problems in interactions. I am therefore asking whether people in postmodern society construct an analogous, albeit differently structured problem. Is it so that an abstract idea of an activity focusing on a problem analogous to the modern problem of interactions with "the others" has been crystallising in the postmodern conditions without being inspired by the modernity model? The relevant authors do not ask "whether", but "in what form" the mediation role of social work will continue in the postmodern conditions (see, for example, Parton, 1994: 29; Lymbery, 2001: 380; Lorenz, 2006: 101; and other authors). Does it mean that they believe the modern pattern will continue to be influential or do they think that an analogous pattern will emerge again in the postmodern conditions, differently and in a different form, independently from the modern model? Answers to these questions are unknown to me. With the knowledge of a possibly erroneous conclusion, I shall assume that in postmodern society, there are impulses[17] for the emergence of an analogy to the idea of a problem in interactions and ways of managing it. I therefore seek in the relevant literature for reasons for the above.

The relevant authors mention three such impulses. First – functioning of institutions being conditional on intercultural understanding (Lorenz, 2006: 115). Second, managing life under postmodern conditions being conditional on individualised life-planning (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008; Lorenz, 2006: 101–104). Third, impacts of managerialism in helping organisations on the life of users of help (Parton, 1994: 29; Dustin, 2007; and other authors)

According to Lorenz, the conditions of functioning of institutions have changed in a society of multiple identities, where it is impossible to expect understanding which would stem from a broadly shared standard. Communication within a culture has become intercultural communication of people with individualised identities (Lorenz, 2006: 106). It should be added that such people follow and express situational interests formulated temporarily within thematically oriented nets or pragmatic alliances (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176). The individualisation, temporariness and situational nature of personal perspectives means that people who would interpret the contents and subject of their discussion in the same way come to communicate only rarely.

According to Lorenz, the conditions for the use of usual institutions have changed under these conditions. This is conditional on intercultural understanding. Without such understanding, people with different identities and with temporary, situational-conditioned interests are unable to use institutions such as help with securing material living conditions, ensuring human and legal rights, establishment of links where the parties involved can rely on mutual responsibility, etc. The ability of people with different identities and temporary, situational-conditioned interests to use the above and other institutions depends on their mutual understanding which is posited on acceptance of the premise that others are different (Lorenz, 2006: 101–115).

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[17] The abstract idea of social work can obviously be taken from a different cultural environment. I assume, however, that its recognition as a practically applicable means of resolving the problem is conditional on the experience of society, which adopts the abstract idea, with the problem, or with situations in which people experience the problem (see Berger, Luckmann, 1991: 75). An abstract idea of the solution which is taken from a different cultural environment may bring attention to the problem or encourage a tendency to construct it socially. This, however, can occur collectively provided that people have, or believe they have, experience with the given problem.

Lorenz (2006: 101) interprets the intercultural nature of all communication and its effect on the use of institutions as an impulse for a change in social work. In his concept, social work is to become or becomes a means of intercultural understanding which has become part of every interaction.

The assumption that the functioning of institutions is conditional on understanding among people with different perspectives is also valid in postmodern society where the modern idea of social worker as a mediator has not been very successful. Here, the multitude of identities limits understanding among those who act according to established patterns of interaction. We therefore assume that attempts at overcoming this type of limitation may be an impulse for formulating the idea of a mediator who helps people negotiates understanding where a lack of it prevents them from establishing or experiencing relationships using normal patterns of interaction, whether they are patterns of personal, helping, public, administrative, business or other interaction.

The subject of individualisation of identity is related to another probable impulse for the emergence of social work. As stated in section 2.1.2 above, relativisation of collective patterns of identity and broadened choice of various identities, especially by electronic means, has made individualised life-planning a means of preparation and fulfilment of every individual's life course. Lorenz (2006: 102) and Navrátil, Navrátilová (2008: 126–127) point out that this situation deprives people from traditional patterns sanctioned by authorities that formerly provided and "prescribed" a clear direction to people. Navrátil and Navrátilová therefore consider that social work should take on the task of helping with life-planning those people for whom creating and effectuating a personal life strategy, is difficult without authoritative patterns. For many people it is not easy to choose from a chaotic choice of role models; to consider the risks accompanying the choice; to base the personal strategy of their own life on personal choice and further development of the chosen models; to make decisions accordingly; to negotiate on the arrangement of relationships with people and organisations so that these relationships, as a minimum, do not obstruct realisation of their personal life plan (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008).

Navrátil and Navrátilová consider that these troubles are the reason for adjusting social work to new circumstances of life. I am asking what the existence of troubles with life-planning means in terms of forming and adopting an understanding of social worker in a society which has no historic model for such an idea. I consider that from this perspective, troubles with personal planning of one's life in a culturally heterogeneous environment may become an impulse for the emergence and acceptance of the idea of a facilitator of forming and implementing life strategies in interaction with a culturally heterogeneous environment.

Parton and Dustin lead us to ask another question: Can the impulses for crystallisation of the idea of social worker's mediation role come to exist as a response to the consequences of the procedural approach[18] to the distribution of social services for their recipients? In countries where social work as an occupation was established in the modern context, procedural approach began to be applied in the 1970s in connection with managerialism.

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[18] A social worker who applies the procedural approach expects that the recipient of the service will approach him with a clearly formulated requirement concerning a pre-defined problem. The worker considers it appropriate to respond to the problem in a predetermined way, i.e. by performing a set procedure or performing a procedure selected from among several set procedures. If the client's requirement is not related to a problem which is determined by rules, the worker considers it appropriate to pay attention only to a problem determined by rules, to reduce the client's requirement to that problem and disregard the remaining part of the client's requirement, i.e. his other problem (Musil, 2013b).

Parton (1994)[19] and Dustin (2007) interpret this process as part of postmodern development. Parton considers the context in which proceduralisation of social work asserted itself to be a consequence of criticism of the welfare state discourse, called "welfarism" (Parton, 1994: 24). The latter, according to him, was influenced by political neo-liberalism, whose position was consonant with the arguments of a range of other critiques of welfarism such as civil libertarians, academics, feminists, socialists, ethnic minorities and other community and interest groups, none of whom would identify themselves with the new right or neo-liberalism (Parton, 1994: 25). This criticism from various sides led, according to Parton, to questioning of the authority of the thought framework of social work which emphasised a "rehabilitative intervention". According to critics, the rehabilitative approach did not produce the outcomes promised by its supporters and it failed in regulating the risks faced mainly by children and young people.

A discourse for which Parton used a term taken from Johnson, "welfare pluralism", began to establish itself to the detriment of the authority of the rehabilitative approach to social work. According to this discourse, the agents of social services policy and superiors of social workers placed emphasis on monitoring the risks of actions and both individual and family responsibilities. The core of social work gradually began to lie in assessing the risks and allocating scarce resources in an individualised way, particularly with a view to controlling the dangerous and supporting the isolated and neglected. Emphasis on plurality of providers, minimisation of services provided by the state, use of informal sources of care, contractual arrangements, inspection and participation of the so-called consumers in decision-making has gained ground in the sphere of social services. According to Parton, the services policy has become an arena for a plethora of localised and partial interests pursued by local and partial policies. The role of social workers shifted from direct provision of help to care management (Parton, 1994: 25–30).

Dustin characterises care management as a purchase of social services from the public budget with a view to satisfying approved needs of the consumer at acceptable costs of acquisition of the services on the market. The purchase is made by the care manager who, based on criteria set by the employer, assesses consumer needs and decides which of them can be justifiably satisfied based on the set criteria. He determines an individualised "service package" which should satisfy the approved needs of the given consumer and ensure that the costs of purchase of the services are acceptable for the relevant budget. The proposed service package is usually subject to approval by the superior; the care manager subsequently selects a provider from a range of organisations in the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors and makes contractual arrangements for the supply of the services to the consumer. He keeps continuous, standardised electronic records of the performed activities and keeps track of their temporal and financial demands using the set standards. (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors)

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[19] Smith and White (1997) refuse Parton's postmodernist interpretation of proceduralisation of social work in England. The authors explain their understanding of Parton's individual postmodernist propositions and raise arguments that question them. They interpret proceduralisation of social work in England as a consequence of the dictate of central state power and its policy interwoven by economic liberalism. They interpret social work in England as a profession with a capacity for action. Unlike Parton, who proposes relativisation of the authority of knowledge of social work in the context of (not only) neo-liberal criticism of its rehabilitative approach from various sides (Parton, 1994: 22–29), these authors do not explain why social workers are unable to effectively apply their alleged capacity for action. The arguments raised by Smith and White against Parton's propositions undoubtedly deserve to be discussed, but this would exceed the thematic scope of the present chapter.

On the basis of her own research, Dustin shows that the role of a care manager in everyday practice does not fully comply with the above-described expectations of the superiors. She ascertained that care managers indeed assess consumer needs using eligibility criteria; they purchase predefined types of services falling within their cost limits and they spend time by recording prescribed activities and financial costs thereof. At the same time, however, they provide consumers with help that their superiors believe should be done by contractual service providers. Care managers arranged for interactions between consumers and providers; they represented consumers in their negotiations with "budget keepers" regarding inclusion of services in the "package"; provided for integration of services from various providers; represented consumers in negotiations with them and supervised the quality and comprehensiveness of the services provided to a specific consumer (Dustin, 2007: 57–119).

From the view of the assumptions regarding the postmodern context of institutionalisation of social work, Dustin's findings can be interpreted as a display of relativisation regarding the validity of the thought frameworks of all the parties involved: while the superiors relativize social workers' occupational understanding of help to consumers, the latter and social workers, in the role of care managers, relativize clear validity of the superiors' expectations. According to Dustin's findings, care managers do this because they understand "consumers" as "clients", i.e. people in need of help. According to them, clients have an excessively limited choice of services due to the superiors' economising on costs. They need help with clarifying their needs, deciding on the possibilities offered, they need to learn about their rights and need help with exercising them, they need help with accepting changes, etc. (Dustin, 2007: 81–100).

In other words, based on their experience with consumers' responses, care managers believe that consumers need to be guided through the process of mediation of services, but they do not receive this help. This type of experience seems to be a possible source of considerations on the part of care managers and their "clients" regarding the social worker's role as a guide through the process of mediation of services.

This assumption is, however, disputable. According to Dustin, care managers are led to regard consumers as "clients" who need guidance, because they know the concept of case social worker. Many of them had a practical personal experience with this concept in the past. In other words, they notice gaps in the system of care management because the understanding of the social worker as a guide was previously acknowledged in the society where they live and its abstract model is available to them. Despite this reservation, I consider that experience with clients' responses to gaps in the procedural approach to the distribution of social services may lead to considerations regarding guidance through the process of mediation also in a society where the abstract model of social worker as a guide is not common. In the Czech Republic, for example, there are groups of helping workers from various organisations and occupations who meet to discuss ways of mediation of comprehensive help to clients and seek ways of overcoming administrative and organisational obstacles to provision of this type of help (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87; Nepustil, 2011: 77; and other authors).

Problem currently addressed by social work

On the basis of the relevant literature, two views can be taken to characterise the understanding of the problem or problems to be addressed by social work in the postmodern context. The first is in terms of the substantive nature of problems. The second is concerned with the ways in which social workers look at problems of material nature in the postmodern context.

In substantive terms, the relevant authors point to the problems of social exclusion. According to them, social exclusion may occur for three reasons. The threat of social exclusion may occur, first, due to a lack of communicative competence of individuals in intercultural negotiation. Secondly, it may result from inability of people to form a specific idea of their proper life. Thirdly, social exclusion may be the result of proceduralisation of the provision of help. These three reasons for social exclusion are mutually related in the postmodern context.

As mentioned above, Lorenz refers to the functioning of institutions which is conditional on intercultural understanding. In his opinion the latter can be attained through intercultural communication. A problem occurs if the parties to the communication are not able to engage in intercultural communication:

"If it is impossible to overcome the differences between culturally constituted positions communicatively, it becomes impossible to constitute a society from individuals, each with their own identity, whilst allowing these individuals the freedom to be different" (Lorenz, 2006: 106).

This, I believe, means the following in the language of the theory of postmodern society: Limiting an individual's option to follow his own ideas of his proper life would prevent him, in a society of multiple options where authoritative life patterns are not trusted, from taking options, engaging in the situational negotiation on roles and relationships and fulfilling temporary arrangements on the same. Such an individual would be deprived of the option to enter the arenas of negotiation and would therefore become socially excluded. However, social exclusion need not be due to an external limitation of individual choice. It may also result from the individual's poor communication skills in clarifying the mutual differences with others and, thus, the ability to negotiate on accomplishment of his ideas about life and relationships with people. A lack of this ability would cause social exclusion even if the individual's ability to negotiate were not limited externally. I believe that in the above citation, Lorenz formulates a problem which can be called "social exclusion as a consequence of a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation".

If the inability to constantly negotiate and understand mutual differences were to affect a large number of individuals, society would face the problem of "disintegration due to a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation": "It becomes impossible to arrive communicatively at a sufficient level of commitment by individuals to each other and of solidarity among people characterised by ostensible differences" (Lorenz, 2006: 106)[20].

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[20] It might be assumed that Lorenz's interpretation is not postmodern in the strict sense of the term. Lorenz explicitly bases his considerations on the Habermasian idea of integration of a community through communication (Lorenz, 2006: 104). Lyotard points out that Habermas' concept is modernist because it follows Hegelian logics of integration of all elements of everyday life and thinking into an organic totality or Kantian logics of synthesis of the language games of knowledge, ethics and politics into a whole of a different order (Lyotard, 1993: 18–19). Should Lorenz's vision of forming solidarity through intercultural communication follow this Habermasian logic, this would not be consistent with the assumed relativisation of all thought frameworks, fragmentation and individualisation of identities on which Lorenz bases his case regarding the interconnection between intra- and intercultural communication (Lorenz, 2006: 104–106). This inconsistency, however, is not typical of Lorenz's arguments. Lorenz refers to Lyotard's criticism of Habermas (Lorenz, 2006: 109) and adopts a situational understanding of the formation of solidarity through intercultural communication. His concept is therefore consistent with the above Lyotard's concept of temporary stabilisation of the rules of discussion through situational negotiation (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176), rather than with the Hegelian organic totality or Kantian synthesis of language games of a different type into a totality of a different order. I am led to this thought, amongst other things, by Lorenz's statement that "the necessity of [constituting] community [through the act of communicating] […] gives the task of grounding the self without reference to essentialism some minimal prospect of success" (Lorenz, 2006: 104). I consider that Lorenz is rather inclined here to adopt the above view of "critical postmodernism" and situational participation (see Fawcett, 2012).

Social exclusion caused by a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation occurs if people are unable to explain to each other the differences in ideas of their proper life, and the consequences of these differences. While they have an idea of their proper life, they are unable to put it into practice in interaction with their social environment.

However, there are also people who do not have a clear idea of a proper life. Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008: 131) point out that some people are threatened by social exclusion because they are unable to independently answer the question of "how to live and experience an authentic and perhaps even happy life". Their social inclusion is not limited because they are unable to clarify mutual differences with other people. Instead, they are at risk of exclusion because they are unable to form or clarify their own ideas of proper life and, as a result, have nothing to clarify in interaction with others.

There is also another pitfall waiting for people who find it difficult to form independent ideas of their proper life or are unable to negotiate the accomplishment of these ideas through intercultural communication. If they approach helping workers with a view to resolving the consequences of their difficulties in life-planning and intercultural negotiation, they may hear that this is a type of help which social workers do not provide. Their employers do not expect them to endeavour for intercultural understanding which would enable those asking for help to clarify what is important for them and what they need help with. They do not even ask social workers to mediate this understanding to other people, e.g. providers of help etc. What they find out is that the helpers' task is to assess the risks accompanying the actions of the person requesting help, limit these risks by an intervention where appropriate and monitor whether the intervention was successful (Parton, 1994: 24–30). They may also find out that the task of the helping workers is to arrange pre-determined services in the cheapest possible way in order to satisfy pre-defined, approved needs, and not necessarily all the needs that the applicant for help expects to be satisfied and may be unable to negotiate. (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors) If the helping workers' roles are designed in the way described by Parton and Dustin, people usually do not receive help with overcoming a lack of direction in life, lack of communication abilities or lack of understanding with other people and organisations (e.g. other providers of help). In that case, procedural help will confirm the exclusion of those who approached it because of exclusion.

Social workers thus face the problem of "a lack of mediation of intercultural understanding between applicants for help and providers of help". If mediation of intercultural understanding is a prerequisite for social inclusion, a lack of it can be seen as a factor leading to social exclusion. Parton characterises this problem by quoting Bauman, according to whom the most distinct type of social division in the postmodern conditions lies in a tension between "autonomously conceived self-definitions and imposed categorizations experienced as constraining and incapacitating" (Parton, 1994: 29). We can only repeat what has already been said. According to the relevant authors, the restraining categorisation mentioned by Bauman often occurs in helping organisations because social workers or their superiors attempt to manage the uncertainty which follows from relativisation of their positions by returning to the bipolar thinking of modernity (Dustin, 2007: 28–30; Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14–15, 18–20; see section 2.1.2 above).

The above problems of a lack of life direction, difficulties in intercultural communication and a lack of understanding with others in a culturally fragmented environment are formulated in literature in a manner which corresponds to the above modern concept of "instituted" problem (see 2.2.1 above). They are constructed from the viewpoint of the specialised theory focused on help with problems in interactions. Their construction directs the specialist's attention to intercultural interaction as a partial aspect of a more comprehensive, "natural" problem of social exclusion. They are formulated so as to apply to the established focus of social work on

problems in interactions and so that, in turn, (potential) social workers can specialise in support for interactions in a culturally fragmented environment.

However, this delimitation is not consonant with the findings of Růžičková and Musil on how social workers in the postmodern context define the scope of their attention. The social workers they interviewed in the spring of 2009[21] reported that they wanted to address "certain issues" together with people from various organisations, regardless of "whether they are psychologists or social workers", or "psychiatrists" or other helping workers. They used the term "certain issues" for the current problems of a target group (e.g. drug addicts) or the current lack of a type of help (e.g. case integration) These findings can be interpreted as a sign of inclination of the interviewed social workers to focus on problems that Barbier, cited above (2006: 36–37), would call "natural". Their interest in "consulting" psychologists, psychiatrists and other helping workers on these problems can be seen as an indirect indication of endeavours to address links among individual aspects that are obvious to people with various qualifications (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 83, 86–87).

To me, the idea of a shared focus on various aspects of "natural" problems is also present in Payne's illustration of the construction of the role of social workers in a medical facility. Payne (2006: 154–159; 2012) says that social workers negotiate their role over and over again, case by case, in multiprofessional settings. The latter, according to Payne, are established inside the given organisations "in the course of events" so that people from various occupations involved in them (e.g. social workers, carers and psychologists) can jointly use their specific knowledge in addressing mutually related aspects of everyday problems. According to Payne, social workers, like workers from other helping occupations, enrich the joint approach to the problem by their specific knowledge, expertise and skill. According to Payne, each such person's practice represents an alternative and these various alternatives balance one another.

The above interpretation of the findings made by Růžičková and Musil and Payne's findings leads me to conclude that the postmodern context gives rise to the tendency of people with specialist training to understand the problem they deal with from the perspective of their qualification, as a partial aspect of a more comprehensive, natural problem. This thought seems to be supported by the assumption put forth by Lyotard (1993: 175–176) that in the context of relativisation of all perspectives, specialists do not bring themselves together based on inclination to an authoritative truth or perspective, but rather situational, depending on what subject they find topical.

It therefore appears that in the postmodern context, social workers – like workers from other specialisations – have a tendency to consider the problems they address to be partial aspects of more comprehensive, natural problems. While this thought coincides with the above assumptions of the theory of postmodern situation, it will require empirical verification.

Understanding of the social worker's role

The relevant literature defines two different types of understanding of the role of social worker in postmodern society. One type represents a description of approaches to social work in helping organisations that are influenced by the above discourse on "welfare pluralism". Following on from Parton (1994: 26), I will refer to this type as the "idea of a care and family life manager". The other type of idea of the role of social workers follows from reflections on

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[21] Růžičková and Musil (2009: 3) conducted non-standardised, in-depth interviews with thirteen helping workers who were qualified in social work and held the position of "social worker" or considered themselves social workers at the time of the inquiry. The objective of the inquiry was to answer the question of how the interviewed social workers viewed the option of pursuing a common goal collectively, as social workers.

the problems of people who are threatened by social exclusion due to a limited negotiating capacity in an environment of individualised identities and multiple options. I will refer to it as the "idea of facilitator of intercultural negotiation".

Literature provides an empirical description of combinations of the two types of ideas of the social worker's role (Dustin, 2007, see above; Musil, Janská, 2011; and other authors). The two can therefore be seen as limit types[22] with the assumption that the two ideas compete in practice or that there are attempts at interconnecting them in various ways. Thus, by describing the two types, we endeavour to express the idea that in the postmodern space, concepts of the role of social workers result from negotiations in which different approaches are mutually combined or compete.

Parton provides a typological description of the idea of care and family life manager. He says that in the context of "welfare pluralism", social workers are not constructed as case workers (Parton, 1994: 26; see also Dustin, 2007: 4). According to Parton, knowledge of resources and nets has become crucial for them and the main activities of someone who should be a social worker today are...

"...monitoring and inspection…, assessment [of risks or needs[23]], planning, care management, negotiation [and] coordinating [care packages], using information technology, and operating the law and procedures... more and more time is spent on administration; in meetings; on writing reports; and on liaisons to [scarce] resources – rather than on direct work with clients or, as they are now constructed, users and consumers […] The management of information itself becomes the central rationale for policy and practice, from those in central government to professionals on the front line" (Parton, 1994: 24, 26).

Characteristics of the idea of social worker as a facilitator of intercultural negotiation can be found in Navrátil, Navrátilová and in Lorenz (2006). These authors formulate ideas of the tasks of social work that would help people overcome their lack of competences in interactions with a fragmentary social environment, thus limiting their social exclusion, which accompanies this condition. Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008: 132–133) formulate the idea of help to people whose understanding of partial options and related decision-making risks is limited by a lack of ability to form their own ideas of proper life. Lorenz (2006: 99, 175) provides reasons for a vision of reconciliation of solidarity and respect for differences in identity. In doing so, he indirectly proposes a concept of help for those who do have ideas of a proper life for themselves but are unable to put them into practice because they lack the communicative competence to enter the arenas of negotiation to engage in intercultural negotiation.

Combining the ideas of Navrátil with Navrátilová and those of Lorenz leads to a concept of the role of social worker who helps people negotiate the utilisation of partial options in the accomplishment of their life plans in two different ways. On the one hand, he empowers the individual to formulate a vision of himself. On the other hand, he helps create conditions that enable individualised situational negotiation regarding the utilisation of specific options.

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[22] I use the term "type" for a crystallic formulation of a specific configuration of characteristics that occur, simultaneously and with various intensities, in empirically recorded cases. I use the term "limit types" for two or more crystallic formulations of different configurations of characteristics that, in the eyes of their author, represent limit points of the presumed space in which there is a likelihood of a diverse variety of empirical configurations that, in various ways and with various intensities, put together the present characteristics included in the crystallically formulated configurations placed in the assumed limit points.

[23] Dustin (2007: 6) says that in terms of care management, protection against risks "is constructed as one of a possible range of needs" If the care manager ascertains in the process of assessment that a child needs protection from risk, he will mediate satisfaction of this need through preventive work provided by healthcare, education services and the voluntary sector.

Navrátil and Navrátilová assume that a social worker should help individuals with finding a sense of direction in life. They therefore expect him to help people "plan their life course in a network of opportunities and risks" and thus manage the uncertainty created in them by the pressure of options or lack of resources (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008: 132–133). (Lorenz, 2006: 175) understands help with life-planning as part of support for the individual's "personal mastery". This involves, according to Lorenz, "communicative competence in every interaction" which, in the context of individualisation of identities and relativisation of all thought frameworks, has to do with intercultural communication (Lorenz, 2006: 101, 98–115).

The above Lorenz's vision of reconciliation of solidarity and respect for differences in identity can be seen as a formulation of the idea that the social worker's role will include, in addition to support for people's personal ability to find a sense of direction in the network of opportunities and risks, also support for their right to be different while being treated as equal. This, according to Lorenz, should be aided in two ways – within the case at hand as well as in terms of integrating people in the community.

Within individual cases, social workers should facilitate situational and temporary arrangements regarding the meaning of individualised identity of specific people and the meaning of cultural differences between them. According to Lorenz, these arrangements are a prerequisite for success of every helping intervention. He considers that without mutual understanding of individualised perspectives and situational interests of the helping party, the recipient of help and other parties involved in his interactions, it is impossible to negotiate a useful goal and method of help. For example, satisfying material needs in the form of care may be entirely ineffective if the provider and recipient of the service fail to negotiate understanding regarding the needs of the former and possibilities of the latter. In the world of individualised identities, it is impossible to rely on mutual pre-comprehension that would rely on a generally accepted idea of what the recipient of care needs. Indeed, any "general" assumption is very likely to fall outside the individualised expectations of someone who lives his life plan. This applies both to help consisting in the provision of social aid benefits and, for example, to advocating the rights of the recipient of help before authorities, in business relations, etc. (Lorenz, 2006: 98–115, 175).

In terms of people's interaction in a community, it is not reasonable to expect in the postmodern context that people with an individualised identity can integrate themselves into the community by adopting other people's values without mutual adjustment. Social workers should therefore enter the negotiation on community bonds related to the interests of those receiving their help, and they should work, on a case-to-case basis, towards ensuring that these bonds are based on situationally and temporarily negotiated ideas of mutual responsibility and claims of the parties involved. In this manner, social workers can support people's ability to manage mutual differences in both public and non-public negotiations on specific topics in a community. They can simultaneously prevent rules of interactions created without consideration of the rights, ethics and individualised interests of people in the community. (Lorenz, 2006: 99, 175)

Dustin empirically described ideas of social worker's role that share the above characteristic as "care and family life manager" and those as "facilitator of intercultural negotiation". The care managers she interviewed in the years 1998 to 2000 assessed – along the line of "welfare pluralism" – consumer needs by approved criteria and purchased pre-defined types of services within specified cost limits, etc. Simultaneously, along the line of the idea of facilitator of intercultural negotiation, they accompanied the consumer in negotiations with the "budget keepers" and providers of contractual services in order to help consumers clarify and express their rights and needs and enable providers to understand the needs of those who

consume their services. (Dustin, 2007: 57–119, see above) As social workers, officially in the role of care managers, i.e. in practice, "in the course of events" – during negotiations on the interests of individual consumers – they formulated a more comprehensive idea of care manager, as the one who facilitates understanding and negotiations between the consumer and the providers regarding the purpose and manner of use of those services which the social worker, in the role of care manager, mediated to the consumer.

Payne (2006: 4–12) believes that there is an infinite series of ideas of the social worker's role that are based on combining characteristics of different concepts of social work. He claims that "every case and every social work action contain elements of [different[24]] views" (Payne, 2006:18). He seems to suggest that ideas of social work in the present-day context are situational, or situationally negotiated and temporary. Social workers who officially act in the role of care manager create some of the notionally infinite series of ideas of their role independently of their superiors (for example, Dustin, 2007: 66–67, 70; White, 2009; and other authors), others with the superiors' aid (for example, Dustin, 2007: 68, 87, 97; Evans, 2009; and other authors) and yet another in both ways at once (for example, Clark, Newman, 1997: 95–120; Musil, Janská, 2011; and other authors).

Understanding the interaction between social workers and recipients of help

Ideas of the role of social worker as a care and family life manager (in short, "manager") and facilitator of intercultural negotiation (in short, "facilitator") differ in the ways in which the interaction between the helper and the recipient of help is understood. Combining these two concepts means to deal with the question of whether and, if so, how to reconcile the unilateralism, which is typical of the manager's understanding, with the symmetrical approach to interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help, which is characteristic of the facilitator's idea.

Dustin describes a typologically pure concept of unilateral interaction between the care and family life manager and the recipient of help. Potential openness to the idea of "consumer", as the recipient of help provided by the care manager is called, is usually limited by the superiors' expectations. Superiors expect that care managers will contractually mediate exclusively the satisfaction of approved consumer needs, i.e. those needs that were pre-defined by law or through the superiors' orders. At the same time they expect the care manager not to exceed the set cost limits for the services that the approved needs are to satisfy. They also expect care managers to purchase the services from providers with whom the superiors arranged a block contract in advance and in a manner they consider advantageous. According to Dustin, the above expectations mean that the defining of consumer needs is more resource led than needs led (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors).

Under the given circumstances, social workers in the role of care managers respect that consumers have a personal concept of their unsatisfied needs, but they assume that some of their needs cannot be satisfied. While they do admit the question of how to satisfy consumer needs, the primary question for them is how to help consumers decide within their limited possibilities. (That is, when three types of needs cannot be satisfied: needs that are beyond

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[24] Payne (2006: 12–20) uses a triple typology of "therapeutic", "transformational" and "social order" views of social work that mutually overlap in practice. This typology reflects the long traditions of social work and, as such, in practical terms it is not a reflection of the response of social work to the problems of postmodern society. I therefore cannot use it directly for the present discourse. On the other hand, I do identify a response to the postmodern context in the understanding of the links among the above three types of views. Payne (2006: 15, 18) says that „these different views fit together or compete with each other" and "every case and every social work action contains elements of all three views".

the definition of approved needs; needs that would be "too costly" to fulfil; and needs that cannot be satisfied through services purchased by a block contract.) They must ask how to manage situations in which they should say: "Oh, sorry, you can't have that." (Dustin, 2007: 86–88).

It can therefore be said that superiors expect care managers to build on a pre-defined range of possibilities and ensure that consumers accept the purchased services even if their needs remain unsatisfied. Care managers voice their criticism of this task. In setting up an individualised service package, they refer to their awareness of the possibilities framed by the employer's expectations while de-prioritising their personal understanding of consumer needs. This is where their understanding of the interaction with consumers is unilateral. They comment on this by saying: "We should use the term 'partner', but the systems are not in place to make people feel they are partners." (Dustin, 2007: 97).

The concept of "family life manager" also assumes a unilateral approach to the situation and needs of the family. According to Parton (1994: 24), this concept inherently involves the expectation that social workers will regard assessment and limitation of the risks that accompany the behaviour of family members as their primary task. In the role understood in this manner, the task of social workers is to assess, using previously given instructions, the degree of risk, and hence suitability or unsuitability of behaviour of family members (Parton, 1994: 25–26).

The unilateral approach to the interaction between the "care and family life manager" and recipients of help as developed in practice does not correspond to how the understanding of the same role was declared by the proponents of "welfare pluralism". The latter, according to Parton (1994: 25), showed that "the participation of consumers should be central to decision making". According to Dustin (2007: 81; and other authors), the declared intention was to increase consumer choice. Research has shown, however, that it was impossible to proceed very far with this intention because care managers are expected "both to assess needs and represent… the funder of services". According to Dustin's findings, these two aspects of their role were in conflict. Care managers formulated it as a conflict between what they thought they were expected to do and what they in fact did. Their role was limited to assessment of approved needs and purchase of services. They found themselves in the purchaser role and were therefore expected to focus their attention on services rather than their users. The duration of their contact with consumers was limited accordingly and there was a lack of time for discussing usable services and rights of consumers that would create grounds for their decisions. Consumer choices were limited by block contracts with large suppliers of cheaper but standardised, less adjustable services. Unmet needs were not being documented and, as a result, there was no background for establishing those services that were not available. Sometimes the required services were "not on the menu". Thus, the declarations of the proponents of "welfare pluralism" concerning a co-deciding user led to the "false impression of an empowered user". The so-called consumers did not become partners (Dustin, 2007: 69–99; see also Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15).

The subjects of Dustin's research address the above tension between the officially declared and experienced understanding of the interaction with the recipients of help in that they regard the recipients of help as "clients". This means they understand them as people who "need to be helped". Care managers therefore approach interaction with them as a relation of imbalance of power between an "expert" and people "who had a problem that was so great that they were not able to make choices or that they forgone the right to make choices". (Dustin, 2007: 95–97) This "returns" them to the modern, unilateral understanding of the "competent expert – incompetent client" relation (for more on this, see section 2.2.1).

In terms of the theory of postmodernity, this "return" can be interpreted as an attempt of care managers to manage uncertainty. Uncertainty is created in them by the tension between the officially declared understanding of the consumer as a partner and the employers' pressure to reduce the range of needs of supposed consumers, regardless of what the latter actually wish. The shift towards the modern understanding of the relationship of between a helping expert and an incompetent client sparks hope in care managers that as "powerful experts" they will help helpless clients in managing the tension between their needs and the limited service options. It should be pointed out that the care managers' return to the idea of an expert is a response to their superiors' attempt at managing fears of their own. These fears are due to the emphasis of the subordinate care managers on the process of interaction with consumers instead of the economic outputs of their work. Employers fear that this tendency of care managers will worsen the cost/benefit outcome, which is the centre of their attention.

Those "below" create uncertainty in those "above", where managing the uncertainty by those "above" creates uncertainty in those "below"; they are taken by surprise when they are unable to deal with consumers according to the official doctrine, i.e. to take them as partners in decision-making. Those "below", i.e. care managers, respond to this by "returning" to the unilateral expert approach, which paradoxically allows them to avoid an even more unilateral suppression of individualised perspectives of service users. If care managers consider themselves experts, they attempt to accompany consumers through the process of negotiation and change, on a case-to-case basis, both the superiors' decisions regarding whether needs can be approved or not and the providers' approach to the meeting of these needs.

If the above interpretation gives the impression of chaos, it has served its purpose. It is a confrontation with the experience that well-known and rather clearly formulated ideas can attain unexpected meanings in the context of relativisation of perspectives. In terms of understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help, it seems particularly interesting that a unilateral approach where the social worker is an "expert" may become a means of exercising an individualised personal perspective of the "client".

The exercise of an individualised personal perspective of the recipient of help is an important part of the understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of his help, as formulated by the authors of the concept of "facilitator of intercultural negotiation". According to them, intercultural negotiation requires that the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help be symmetrical (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008: 133; Lorenz, 2006: 106–108). Thus, it is required that the recipients of help be understood as "experts on their own lives" or "experts by experience" and the process of help conceived as communication between two experts (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15, 18). In this approach, the recipient of help is seen as an expert who has enough information about his life. Despite being informed about his life better than others, he may still lack instruction for proper behaviour and may lack resources for using the available information. It is hence the helping expert's task to provide or mediate these "ingredients". (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 18–19). Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012: 18) consider that the understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help as interaction of two experts is appropriate in the context where relativisation of all thought frameworks supports their parallel validity and respect for "otherness" (see also Lorenz, 2006: 107).

In practice, the idea of two co-operating experts may be in conflict with the above effort of employers to proceduralise social workers' dealing with the recipients of help in order to prevent the time-consuming, and hence costly, multi-cultural communication between them. The idea of symmetry may also be in conflict with the above-described tendency of care managers to manage the consequences of proceduralisation of their decision-making by

following the pattern of an expert helping a helpless client. In addition, the idea of collaborative partnership between two experts may also collide with social workers' fear that the recipients of help will abuse the power conferred on them by the partnership with a view to acting unilaterally. Led by this apprehension, social workers may resort to more paternalistic patterns of conduct where they could feel relatively safe from the potential unilateral conduct of the recipients. (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 21)

It can therefore be assumed that neither of the two typologically pure patterns of interaction between the social worker and the recipient of help is likely to be followed directly. In different situations, both the unilateral and symmetrical approaches to the interaction meet circumstances that generate doubts (for example, the recipient's tendency to apply pressure, or rather the opposite, his inclination to reach agreement; uncompromising attitude of the superior or, on the other hand, his openness to negotiation, etc.). These and similar circumstances differ by situation. Every case and every social worker's action may become an arena in which the parties involved situationally negotiate, in the course of events, on various combinations of different approaches to interaction between the helping person and the recipient of his help.

2.3 Legitimation and standardisation of an abstract understanding of social work

The above patterns of behaviour, whose culturally diverse variations have become known as "social work", are related to the managing of the effect of interactions among people with different cultural orientations on society or the life of people in it. We face the question of how, according to the relevant authors, the modern and postmodern versions of these patterns attained, attain or may attain legitimacy and become standard ways of managing the above problems. In other words, how the idea that acting according to the interaction pattern called "social work" is appropriate in terms of the values, rules and other ideas accepted by individuals and groups in society was, is or may be spreading in modern and postmodern society, and how acting according to these patterns became, becomes or may become an imitated, obvious and routine part of life for these individuals and groups.

Legitimacy is based on, and standardisation usually stems from, substantive compatibility of the relevant pattern of managing unresolved problems with understanding peoples of such problems, or people's conviction that there is a link between the solution pattern and their understanding of problems. I addressed this substantive part of the interpretation of legitimacy and standardisation in section 2.2 above where I discuss the impulses and problems that led or lead to the creation of the pattern of behaviour called "social work". In this section I will discuss the ideas of the relevant authors about the processes that led, lead or may lead to the conviction of people in modern or postmodern society that the relevant pattern or patterns are an appropriate and routine way of addressing the problems constructed by them. We will therefore discuss the ways of forming legitimacy and standardisation of the modern pattern of "mediator of interactions of the others with the public sphere and community" (see 2.3.1) and, subsequently, the postmodern combinations of the patterns of "care and family life manager" and "facilitator of intercultural negotiation" (see 2.3.2).

The relevant authors' ideas of legitimation and standardisation of the patterns are mutually related (see chapter 1 above). I will therefore describe them in parallel.

2.3.1 Modern version: legitimation and standardisation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community

The modern understanding of legitimation and standardisation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community is centred an around the notion of consensus. Modern authors are convinced that it is spontaneously present in the web of social links (Wilensky and Lebeaux, Lubove), while postmodern commentators of modern development (De Swaan, Parton, Howe, Lorenz) see it as a social construct whose emergence was stimulated by the elites, and they therefore perceive it as if it were someone's "project".

It is stated in section 2.1.1. that according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, social work was a response to the practical ("functional") need to mediate a sense of direction in the national consensus and the "jungle" of specialised organisations to immigrants and "the others" in general. This functional need, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, led to the emergence of a specialised activity which we called, in section 2.2.1., as mediation of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community (hereinafter "mediation of interactions of 'the others'"). It seems that the above need for a sense of direction in the national consensus and the "jungle" of specialised organisations was the impulse for the emergence of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others". However, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, it was not sufficient for recognition of this pattern of behaviour as an appropriate means of managing the problem of cultural heterogeneity of industrial society.

For the mediators of interactions of "the others" to specialise in the meeting of the relevant functional need, they first had to gain reputation as members of a specialised profession. In the eyes of Wilensky and Lebeaux, a broad consensus in national industrial society regarding the proper standard of behaviour of a member of any profession is the initial precondition for reputation of this kind. The pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" may become legitimate, according to the two cited authors, if people who wish to specialise in the mediation of interactions of "the others", form an autonomous professional organisation. The latter must clearly delimit the specific activities of its members and regulate access to the performance of these activities in a manner ensuring that the workers from the occupation act in accordance with generally accepted standards of proper professional conduct. This will make the professional organisation a guarantee in the eyes of the public and the elite that the members of the organisation act in accordance with the consensual expectations of the national entity. Under these circumstances, the existence of a national consensus creates grounds for those specialised in the mediation of interactions of "the others" to gain appropriate reputation and, as an organised profession, obtain legal authorisation to exercise their specialisation and a legally guaranteed monopoly for their specific activity (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–285, 299).

The standards of proper conduct of a member of a profession include, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 285), first, technical competence, i.e. exclusive mastering of scientifically justified and specialised knowledge and skills that are understood as a prerequisite for the provision of high-quality services. Secondly, it is observance of the expected principles of dealing with clients. These include "impersonal" conduct which avoids emotional involvement; "impartiality" displayed in the provision of a high-quality service to everyone regardless of the social worker's personal sentiment; and finally, motivation by the "service ideal" where the worker devotes to the client's interests to other interests whenever the former and the latter are in conflict. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 298–303) point out the analogy of the above standards of proper conduct in medicine and social work in the United States in the mid-20th century.

In my opinion, two characteristics of the above ideas of legitimation of social work in modern society are particularly worth noticing: first, the meaning of conformity in relation to consensual expectations and, second, relevance of the status of the occupation as an indication of legitimacy.

The above interpretation points out, on the one hand, that the understanding of modern society as one which is based on a "broad consensus" leads to the idea that legitimation of social work as a specialised profession is conditional on conformity with nationwide consensual expectations, or that legitimacy of the social work profession is identified (illogically but appropriately in terms of personal feelings) with the above type of conformity. Emphasis on conformity may seem trivial to those who regard society as a consensual structure.

However, the absolutely obvious need for conformity to obtain legitimacy is relativized by assumptions regarding postmodern society. According to them, social workers should endeavour for legitimation of their activities in a fragmented society where, instead of "big" consensuses, there is a plethora of individual situational consensuses. This view gives rise to the thought that the understanding of legitimacy as conformity may be appropriate only for a society of modernity where people trust the dominant interpretations of the world and the future[25]. It thus seems that the term "conformity" may become a useful means of understanding the processes of legitimation of social work specifically and only in the modern context.

The interpretation by Wilensky and Lebeaux further clarifies that the modern theory of professionalism includes the assumption that certain status indications are a display of legitimacy and conformity towards nationwide consensual expectations or standards (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283). According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, social workers who convince the public and the elites that they act in accordance with the standards of a member of the profession can gain the prestige and legal guarantee for monopolising their specialisation. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 283) assume that monopoly has to do with power and income. I consider that the advocates of the consensual interpretation may apply the assumption regarding the close links among legitimacy, conformity and status with such obviousness that they may in fact confuse legitimacy and status.

Confusing or identifying the ideas of legitimacy, conformity and status may also be misleading in modern society where (according to theoretical assumptions) people trust the dominant interpretations of the world and the future. In modern society integrated by the national consensus, people may gain influence if they act in a non-conforming way but with the image of legitimacy, or non-conforming behaviour may become so common in that society that people lose sight of the lack of its legitimacy in everyday course of their lives. However, it is always possible to point out the consensually adopted ideas of proper behaviour.

Theory has it that this possibility is absent in the postmodern context. The reason is that there is no consensus that could be taken by people to accept a single standard of behaviour as proper, to jointly appreciate conformity with that standard and to generally grant influence to

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[25] I believe that trust in the dominant lines of interpretation of the world and the future characterises the modern authors of functionalist and conflictualist theories. Metaphorically speaking, both Parson, referred to by Wilensky and Lebeaux, and Marx, can be thought to propose that society can "function" as a whole if it inherently involves (normal) people's conformity with the order trusted by (normal) people in terms of values and rules. In this respect, functionalists and conflictualists differ in their understanding of how such an order arises in society and in their view of legitimacy of the order in the capitalist society. On the other hand, they are at one in that a sound society cannot go without an order accepted and followed by a majority which does not show signs of a lack of social adaptation.

those who act in a conforming manner. In reality, the influence which follows from acceptance of a certain type of behaviour and its expected benefits is respected only temporarily. It is accepted by only a limited circle of members of one of a long series of special-interest alliances who make joint efforts to address an individual situation. As a rule, conformity with this situationally accepted behaviour is not a source of acceptance and influence in the eyes of agents from other special-interest and situational alliances. The members of each of these alliances jointly negotiate on the solution to a given situation and they temporarily perceive everyone else from the viewpoint of the solution they have temporarily negotiated. At the given time they therefore have a tendency to view the behaviour they negotiated among themselves within their alliance as proper behaviour for the given situation, a standard of proper behaviour for all people, including members of other temporary alliances.

It therefore becomes a rule that agents from one situational alliance (which we identify as alliance A) may gain power in society and the ensuing status indications through behaviour which agents from other situational alliances (OTHER alliances) do not consider legitimate because of their own idea of proper behaviour. The conformity by the members of alliance A with a behaviour which appears illegitimate to the members of OTHER alliances may bring power and other status indications to members of alliance A. On the other hand, conformity with the standards of proper behaviour negotiated in OTHER alliances need not bring similar influence and status indications. As a simple illustration, successful members of fictitious alliance A rely on quantitative presentation of their projects in grant procedures controlled by advocates of quantitatively designed research. The approach of the members of alliance A and the approach of the (fictitious) selection committee may appear illegitimate to members of other alliances who consider it appropriate to take a quantitative or qualitative approach to research depending on the subject of study. However, the approach which they find problematic brings financial support, and hence prestige etc., to the members of alliance A.

Thus, conformity, legitimacy and status become disjointed; one ceases to be the prerequisite for another. In terms of the endeavour to understand the postmodern processes of legitimation of social work, the inadvertent tendency to assume that there is a tight link among legitimacy, conformity and status could be misleading.

However, the modern interpretation of legitimation of social work assumes that legitimacy, conformity and status are closely linked. This, in my opinion, explains why modern lines of interpretation emphasise organisational unification of social workers, which they consider a prerequisite for attaining status indications (reputation and legally guaranteed monopoly) by the occupation. According to them, organisational unification is to ensure that the behaviour of workers in the occupation becomes standard and conforming in terms of the expectations of the nationwide consensus. Anglo-Saxon literature describes two models of organisational unification which strengthened in the past the conformity of social workers with the nationwide consensual expectation, giving them acceptance and power. In the first model, the instrument of unification of social workers lies in the formation of their autonomous professional association. In the second model, the unification instrument is represented by reorganisation of the conditions for the professional activity of social workers carried out by the state, which accompanied a change in the concept of the remit of public authorities.

Lubove (1968: 131) describes the effects of unification into an autonomous professional association as follows:

"...a professional group could not maintain its solidarity or the confidence of the public as long as training procedures, the level of minimal technical competence, and ethics were left to the individual practitioner. [American] Association [of social workers established in 1921]

described the raising of training and personnel standards […] concerted effort to persuade the public of social work's professional character and to heighten the social worker's awareness of herself as a member of professional community […] endorsed the need for an ethical code […] expressed interest in […] salaries, opportunities for promotion, and agency personnel policy […] The forging of a group identity […] despite this diversity had been a feat of no mean proportion […] than […] acculturation and control."

According to McBeath and Webb, 1991: 747–748), analogous changes in the behaviour of social workers and in their status were brought by the unification of social workers incited by the state's reorganisation of their role in public agencies. In England of the 1970s, this reorganisation resulted in a "triumph" of the generic concept of (the training of) social worker as a "multi-purpose skilled enabler and facilitator". At the time in question, the generic concept established itself in connection with the organisational unification of social workers under the Social Service Departments. Social workers had previously operated in specialised agencies as administrators of isolated laws which regulated help to isolated target groups. After the reorganisation, as employees of local social service authorities, they were to provide comprehensive assistance to clients with various problems in line with diverse, specialised legal provisions. According to McBeath and Webb, the establishment of the generic concept was "important in giving a greater professionalism to social workers... and identity to the field of social work." According to them, the unified approach helps social workers "gain power and status once they become a unified group and they would have to assume […] responsibility for professional standards, ethical behaviour, client commitment and advocacy on behalf of those they served…".

Lubove, as well as McBeath and Webb, interpret the organisational and ideological unification as a step towards standardised actions, strengthened public trust and improved status of social workers. As we believe, the concurrence of these changes can be interpreted, in accordance with the above-mentioned assumptions of Wilensky and Lebeaux, in that the organisational unification made it possible to present to the public a more wholesome picture of the social worker, whose conformity with the nationwide consensus regarding the standards of behaviour of a professional serving the public was guaranteed by his membership of a trustworthy organisation, i.e. a national professional association or public agency.

From the perspective of a postmodern observer, Lorenz discusses in detail the legitimising content of those standards of proper behaviour of a member of the profession which, as we mentioned above, is called "technical competence" by Wilensky and Lebeaux. He speaks about the conditions of legitimacy of social workers' decision-making regarding competence of "the others" to meet the standards of proper behaviour by a member of a modern national entity. According to him, acceptance by the elites and the public is conditional on social workers' ability to translate the national standard into a professional language (Lorenz, 2006: 33). The way in which the social worker formulated the standard of behaviour of a member of the national entity represents one of the standards of technical competence of a member of the profession.

Social workers' decision-making was seen as legitimate by the elite and the public to the extent they translated the standard of proper behaviour of a member of the national entity into a system of professionally substantiated criteria and to the extent they applied these criteria to decide "objectively". In doing so, social workers, according to Lorenz, built on an understanding of "normality" defined as "mental health" and "social adjustment". They understood both of these displays of normality as conditions whose definitions and attributes were determined on the basis of a systematic observation of the relevant behaviour. From this perspective, "mental health" and "social adjustment" were regarded as phenomena that could be objectively recognised on the basis of demonstrably identified attributes. Knowledge of

these attributes made it possible to set criteria and social workers were able to use them to "objectively" ask the following question: Should "the others" be treated and cared for because they deviate from the standard due to deteriorated mental health, or rather educated and culturally integrated because the deviation of their behaviour from the standard is due to a lack of social adjustment? (Lorenz, 2006: 31–34; and other authors)

Recognising the circumstances that cause "otherness" according to attributes determined by observation, allowed the public and social workers to believe that the attributes of a more or less complete "mental health" or "social adjustment" were identified "objectively" and "impartially" in clients (Lorenz, 2006: 33). The fact that the conclusion they made was evaluative, or measured against the idea of what is appropriate, could, and indeed did, slip their attention. "Mental health" and "social adjustment" were seen as a precondition for compliance with the standard of proper behaviour of a member of the national community. Unlike Lorenz, the modern context did not see this standard as a specific national convention. The public and social workers saw this convention as an obvious idea of proper behaviour of every individual, rather than a construct which was derived from a (more or less authentic) national tradition in order to heighten the loyalty of nation state citizens (Lorenz, 2006: 28, 31–36; and other authors).

Lorenz assumes that professional understanding of the attributes of "normality", "mental health" and "social adaptation" and approaches to managing them used by social workers became an obvious and routine part of the picture of modern man and society for nation-state citizens. However, Lorenz and other relevant authors fail to discuss explicitly how this occurred in social work. We consider that the modern-context interpretations of legitimation of social work involve an implied assumption that the adoption of professional ideas of normality and related notions occurred somewhat automatically, just because helping professionals and the public were equipped with a shared comprehension. Lorenz (2006: 31–33) assumes that this shared comprehension was rooted in the generally accepted picture of national standards of proper behaviour, a widespread idea of the problematic nature of cultural heterogeneity, or threat from "the others", and a belief that the participation of professionals in the project of cultural homogenisation is or should be a "function of reason".

This assumption by Lorenz may be justified but it seems incomplete. It is likely, on the one hand, that social workers' professional ideas regarding normality and approach to work with normality could be professional "translation" of generally shared – and hence known to laymen – standards of behaviour and attitudes to "the others". It can therefore be assumed that thanks to the shared comprehension, which was based on attitudes shared by laymen and professionals, the public spontaneously adopted the professional ideas of normality. On the other hand, this assumption does not explain how the public acquainted itself with the professional translation and practical application of its usual ideas in order to feel confident that social workers assess normality and its attributes "objectively", i.e. rationally and on the basis of substantiated assumptions, without moralising (Lorenz, 2006: 33; Lubove, 1968: 97) or without prejudicial reasoning (Lubove, 1968: 103–105, 112). In other words, independently of established ideas whose substantiation is unknown at the time they are applied.

Theory assumes that legitimation of a pattern of behaviour involves mutual stimulation with the pattern's standardisation in the process of its institutionalisation (see chapter 1 above). This means that people accept, and knowingly adopt, a pattern of behaviour if they begin to experience it as an obvious part of life in society and if they become accustomed to its routine use in specific types of situations. (And vice versa, if people accept the usefulness of a pattern, this enhances their tendency to act routinely according to that pattern.) From this perspective, fulfilment of the premise of researchers into modern professionalization that

legitimation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" is conditional on scientific nature and rationality of its application (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 284; Lubove, 1968: 106; and other authors; Lorenz, 2006: 33; and other authors) would depend on the actual existence of two assumptions. First, the general public consensually expects, and perhaps wishes to believe, that social workers assess normality rationally or objectively. Second, the general public has acquainted itself with the arguments of social workers and obtained experience with the rationality and objectiveness of its practical application, either personal or communicated.

The first of the two assumptions is discussed above. The answer to the question of how the second assumption could be satisfied (if it ever was satisfied) is proposed by De Swaan. He describes the process of acceptance of the helping professionals' view by laymen and refers to it as "proto-professionalization" (De Swaan, 1990: 99–108; and other authors). I consider that in the context of proto-professionalization, the modern general public was able to acquaint itself with the notions and methods of classification that were used (objectively, according to Lorenz) by social workers and learn to use them to find a sense of direction in everyday life and to categorise everyday experience.

According to De Swaan, in the process of their professionalization, workers with a specialisation begin to interpret certain "troubles" of people as "problems" which they treat as professionals. They create theories to describe and classify those problems and construct methods to treat them. They introduce training courses to teach about their theories and treatment methods and establish organisations that regulate collegial co-operation and professional practice in dealing with those problems (De Swaan, 1990: 100). We can analogously assume that specialists in the mediation of interactions of "the others" began to identify people's troubles with "the others" as problems with "normality". They created, or adjusted to their needs, theories of "social pathology" (Lorenz, 2006: 35) in order to be able to classify normality problems as problems of "mental health" and "social adjustment". They constructed methods of "integration" of those lacking social adjustment and "care" procedures for people with a mental deficit. They established training courses and, somewhat later, social work schools. And they established voluntary groups, civic organisations and, supported by the state, they set up organisations that began to employ the mediators of interactions of "the others".

According to De Swaan, professionalization continues in that "professional classifications and conceptions of troubles as problems that may then be categorized and treated by members of a certain profession are next adopted by outsiders". This occurs first among laymen, who are socially close to the profession, e.g. members of adjected professions, assistants and clients. Their insight into the language of the profession further spreads among laymen through conversation, reading and learning. This way laymen "adopt fundamental stance and basic concepts", i.e. the instruments used by the members of the respective profession. "People redefine their troubles as… problems suitable for treatment [by members of the respective profession]". The division of labour that established itself among helping professions becomes a guide for them to categorise their everyday troubles. In this way, laymen become "proto-professionals" and the whole process can be analogously termed "proto-professionalization" (De Swaan, 1990: 100–101).

Proto-professionalization directly contributes to legitimation of the profession in that the public learns in the process to name, perceive and live everyday experience in a manner which respects the delimitation of problems and manners of treating them constructed by professionals. In terms of legitimation of social work, this would mean that the public of modernity learned to understand everyday troubles with "the others" as problems of "normality". It would thus learn that the difficulties with "the others" to which people

normally tend to respond emotionally can be "objectively" termed as consequences of "mental dysfunction" or "lack of social adjustment". The general public would thus attain the language of social work and begin to make sense of its responses to the displays of "mental dysfunction" or "lack of social adjustment".

Proto-professionalization assists legitimation of modern professions also indirectly in that, according to De Swaan (1990: 101–108), laymen begin to understand adopted terminology and classification of everyday troubles as "self-evident" and "indisputable". Some recommendations from the members of the profession change into laymen's everyday habits. (For example, some laymen "became more cautious in handling conflicts, referring to general rules rather than directly to their own interests and feelings".) Laymen also become more likely to consider the professional intervention of the members of the profession as a routine response to the relevant types of problems. Laymen begin to accept not only the need for help from the profession, but also a general need for professional help as such, regardless of the problem they face (they begin to regard themselves as "clients").

In short, the picture of the everyday experience of laymen and the picture of the problems to which a profession refers become *"reciprocal"* in the process of proto-professionalization (Berger, Luckmann, 1991: 74–77). The same happens, in the process of proto-professionalization, with the laymen's and professionals' ideas regarding the manners of addressing people's everyday troubles. If the ideas of the problem and actions leading to its resolution are reciprocal, according to Berger with Luckmann (1991: 74–77), people begin to perceive them as a standard, self-evident and routine part of the outside world. If we accept the idea of proto-professionalization described by De Swaan, we can assume that the idea of "normality", which occurred by translating the national standard of proper behaviour into a set of "objectively described" attributes of "mental health" and "social adjustment", was thereby transformed into a standard (repeatable, self-evident, routine) part of the picture of modern people's world.

2.3.2 Postmodern version: legitimation and standardisation through situational negotiation of patterns of behaviour of the social worker

We have stated above that in terms of the theory of modern professionalization, the occupation appears to be legitimate insofar as its members convince the public and the elites that they offer a useful way of addressing a serious problem. It is considered that the public reached this conviction in the modern past because the members of the occupation passed on to the clients, and subsequently another circle of people involved, a domain-specific way of naming the problem and manner of addressing it. Convincing the public of the usefulness of the way of addressing the problem offered by the occupation opened the way for an ideological and legislative discussion of public-policy players of the nation state, during which the occupation and its members were granted (and sanctioned by the state) a monopoly on addressing the problem in an occupation-specific way. Thus, the occupation and its members were gaining influence and other status indications for which the monopoly opens – or helps open – the way.

As I noted above (see 2.3.1), we consider that this type of interpretation of modern professionalization relates legitimation of social work to, or almost identifies it with, the gaining of the status indications of a professional occupation. From this perspective, public and legislative discussion on the grating of monopoly and other status indications appears to be the central arena for negotiations on legitimacy for social work. However, Payne points out that this assumption of the theory of modern professionalization ceases to be justified:

"In the 20th century social work became involved in a discourse of professionalization, but the understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of developing a profession changed. Thus, the discourse became less concerned with the formation of a professional status, but by ways in which knowledge and relationships with other professions are managed... The important thing is to analyse the discourses about what this particular profession is and how it interacts with others." (Payne, 2006: 185–186; see also Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 492).

"Multi-professional settings" (Payne, 2006: 159) became the key arena for negotiations on social work's legitimacy.

Růžičková and Musil ascertained, in the above-cited research, that the interviewed social workers found the idea of a collective action of all social workers unrealistic. It is desirable, they said, "that people experience the social worker as a […] competent person who would provide them with qualified help". However, they did not believe that a correct discussion could take place across the community of social workers, which would lead to attainment of the desired condition. They rather endeavoured to attain it together with people from various organisations and with different domains of qualification (psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, etc.), with whom they shared interest in helping people from the target group. It made sense for them to "consult" these people on subjects related to (the ways of) help to the target group in question. They placed emphasis on discussion according to rules that they were able to control in terms of formulation and observance. In this respect, they referred to the rule of mutual respect between advocates of different positions, rule of common selection of topics, rule of relevant discussion, etc. (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 88–89).

The participants of the research conducted by Růžičková and Musil described the arena for negotiations on the legitimacy of social work as social structures that they thought were characterised by specialisation in (the ways of) addressing the problems of a target group (i.e. "natural problems" – see section 2.2 above) and co-operation of experts with different fields of qualification. As mentioned above, Payne (2006: 159) refers to these social structures as "multi-professional settings". To avoid the term "professional", which belongs to modernity, I will refer to them below as "multi-occupational nets".

They may take various shapes and forms. As a starting point for describing their diversity, we propose distinguishing between two types – "case" and "thematic" multi-occupational nets.

The composition of a "case multi-occupational net" changes from case to case, depending on what types of specialised knowledge are found appropriate by the parties involved as a means of addressing the specific situation. "Case" is the characteristic subject of attention of this type of a multi-occupational net, and workers with various fields of qualification are brought into the net by their involvement in addressing the case or situation. Payne (2006: 158–159) gives an example of this type of a net, formed within an organisation by the medical doctor, nurses, social workers, hospice patient and his wife. In addition to the recipients of help, case multi-occupational nets are entered by helping workers from one or several organisations (Musil, 2012: 69–70).

We consider that the multi-occupational case net should be distinguished from the "cross-occupational thematic net". Within this net, workers with various types of specialised knowledge together discuss theoretical, methodological, strategic, economic and other aspects of work with a target group, or the way of providing help. Instead of a certain case, attention of this type of a multi-occupational net focuses on a set of questions related to a certain theme. Workers with various qualifications are brought into the occupational thematic net by variously motivated interests in participating in the discussion of a subject. Experience with participation in a multi-occupational thematic net is described by the above social workers interviewed by Růžičková and Musil.

We assume that there exist, or may exist, multi-occupational nets that combine the characteristics of case and thematic arrangements.

Růžičková a Musil (2009: 86–87) interviewed members of several multi-occupational thematic nets. They used the word "occupation" or "professional organisation" for their nets and stated they felt "occupationally related" to their members. One of them said: "[…] I do not really feel like a social worker and I am rather at one with the addictology profession […] I am so saturated by my occupation that I no longer feel the need to meet [with social workers]." For the approached social workers, a multi-occupational thematic net is, among other things, an arena for negotiating on their own identity. Based on the accounts of the members of these nets, we can formulate the assumption that the identity a social worker negotiates in a thematic net involves two dimensions. This is, firstly, identification with the discourse of social work and, secondly, identification with the "occupation". The participants in the research conducted by Růžičková and Musil used the word occupation to refer to the group of people from their thematic net and the discourse negotiated by that group.

The interviewed persons expressed their identification with social work by wishing that the clients experience that the social worker is a competent person (should have "a minimum of three years of post-secondary school studies in the area of social work"), who would help them in a qualified way. According to them, this could allow social workers to gain "respect", which would "help them make sure that our work makes sense". (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86) It can be concluded that they felt to be social workers who wanted to gain recognition for their occupation and existential satisfaction for themselves.

In our opinion, they expressed their identification with the "occupation", which they considered to be their multi-occupational thematic net, by claiming that "they profile themselves more by the occupation than by whether they are psychologists or social workers", and it is important for them "to meet with colleagues from the whole country because this is the point from which they somehow derive their identity". (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87).

The interviewed were unable to express the importance of meeting in the multi-occupational thematic net ("occupation") for the formation of their identity. As mentioned above, they "somehow" derive from it their identity. We consider that they used this vague term to say that the multi-occupational net had a meaning for them as an arena of negotiation regarding application of their own discourse of help in which they can gain "respect" for and find for themselves the "meaning" of that specific discourse. In a multi-occupational thematic net, they can "consult" people with different discourses of help who can be expected to appreciate the effort to help people from "their" target group and appreciate the specific contribution of social workers to the jointly negotiated discourse or the practice of helping the group. They can negotiate with these people in various situations on the means and ways in which they, as social workers, can contribute to resolution of the target group's problems. This helps them realise how their contribution to the situational negotiated resolution of a certain topic differs from the contribution of others. In this way, they can gain recognition for the specific knowledge of their field of qualification and become aware of themselves and their role in the comprehensive process of addressing the natural problems of the target group they are interested in.

Dustin has found out that social work gains reputation not only in thematic, but also in multi-occupational case nets. Dustin (2007: 103) observes that managers in certain organisations opined that "in a multidisciplinary setting, it is very clear to me that doctors and district nurses and people like that regard social workers as fellow professionals". One social worker expressed his analogous experience as follows: "If we are pulling together the psychologist, the consultant, the psychiatrist and the occupational therapist, and if we were not professional ourselves, how could we perform the role?" (Dustin, 2007: 104).

It can therefore be assumed that in the postmodern context, social workers gain legitimacy for their specific way of help by negotiating their contribution to the discourse of multi-occupational nets. Typologically, this path to recognition takes two basic forms that can presumably be variously combined during the social worker's career. The first type leads to recognition of the specific contribution of social work through negotiation of the social worker's contribution to the discourse of a thematic net. The second type of path to recognition of the specific contribution of social work consists in gradual negotiation of participation to the addressing of a series of specific situations in case studies. The composition of both thematic and case nets is temporary and variable and the social worker may engage in a series of nets of both types during his career. The temporariness and variability of case nets is more obvious because the situations of individual recipients of help tend to be variable and different cases may therefore require the involvement of experts with different specific knowledge. Some cases may require the involvement of a medical doctor, others ask for a lawyer and yet another for an occupational therapist or priest. These variations in the composition of multi-occupational case nets may occur relatively quickly. In these variable structures, the recognition of social work's specific contribution is therefore conditional on considerable adaptability and ability to improvise on the part of the social worker.

Payne describes the process of legitimation of social work in multi-occupational nets; he says the following about those involved in multi-occupational nets, including social workers:

"[…] all professionals [involved] are their area of practice in any multi-professional setting; they do not just bring a professional label that defines a sector of responsibilities, they do not just bring their well-honed knowledge, expertise and skill but their practice represents alternatives and balances to each other. They represent their profession by what they do." (Payne, 2006: 159)."[…] develop knowledge together with others in relationships, so that they are part of the creation of understanding and accept the value of the process of social work rather than the content". (Payne, 2006: 158).[26]

This type of legitimation is characterised by taking place within "everyday negotiation" on a case or theme, i.e. a specific situation. The social worker's contribution to the shared discourse of those involved in a multi-occupational net is embedded in his specialised knowledge; however, is not directly derived from the established content of that knowledge but rather experience with "what is successfully done" (Payne, 2012). This idea of Payne's is conveyed, in my opinion, by the above sentence that they "accept the value of the process of social work rather than the content". In a multi-occupational net, social work does not win recognition through a convincing terminology and sum of knowledge but rather by flexibility and useful situational application.

Consequently, a pattern of the social worker's behaviour becomes legitimate insofar as it has been negotiated by the members of the multi-occupational net and found appropriate to their

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[26] The relevant part of Payne's sentence on page 158 literally reads: „[…] to develop knowledge together with others in relationships, [to become] part of the creation of understanding […]" (Payne, 2006: 158) In fact, the text is designed in such a way that Payne first gives the above recommendation taken from Healy ("to develop knowledge together with others, to become part of the creation of understanding"), and subsequently demonstrates on an example that social workers do follow this recommendation in practice (Payne, 2006: 158–159). By this example, he intentionally creates the impression that social workers indeed "develop knowledge in mutual relationships with other professionals, as a result, of whom they become part of the creation of understanding". We therefore took the liberty of placing the sentence from page 158 after the sentence from page 159 and formulate it as an empirical statement rather than a recommendation. This allowed us to disregard certain details provided by Payne in favour of concentrating on his interpretation of the process of legitimation of social work within the multi-occupational arrangement of co-operation.

shared understanding of the situation (case or theme) being addressed. A pattern of the social worker's behaviour negotiated in this manner becomes an institution if the social worker and the other members of the net expect that the pattern could prove successful again in an analogous situation (when addressing a similar case or theme). This does not mean, however, that it will be seen as authoritative and valid without further modification the next time an analogous situation is negotiated. It is likely that the members of the (more or less modified) net will look at it as one of several alternatives, the validity of which is questionable and its application must be discussed again. They will probably negotiate a new, different understanding of the new, albeit analogous, situation. The social worker will be forced to negotiate on the new application of the previously "proven" pattern and reformulate it so that it is found appropriate to the new situation (case or theme) during discussion with the other members.

I consider that from the above perspective, we can formulate two types of conditions of legitimacy of social work in the postmodern context. The first one is related to the social worker's contribution to the resolution of the situation dealt with by the multi-occupational net. The other type of condition pertains to the social worker's actions in the multi-occupational net.

Recognition of the social worker's contribution to resolution of the situation

According to Payne, the social worker's steps can be accepted as valid provided that he contributes to the resolution of the situation he is dealing with together with the other members of the multi-occupational net in a way which is later evaluated as something *"that is successfully done"* (Payne, 2012, see above), or alternatively, something regarding which the social worker convinces others that it can be done successfully and it is then appreciated by others as successful because they believe in its success.

The members of every multi-occupational net formulate their own measures of what is done successfully. If we take into account the temporariness of these evaluations which individual nets – transforming from case to case – negotiate over and over again for every new situation, their variability seems endless. However, the relevant literature can be interpreted in that this variability is created during the situational negotiation in a notional space which delimits at least the following five types of measures of what is done successfully:

- practical help has been successfully provided to specific individuals,
- interactions that were previously problematic have been successfully mediated,
- the requirements for performance, effectiveness and budget control have been successfully met,
- the disobedient have been successfully channelled into proper behaviour, which resulted in less vagueness and lesser risks,
- the specific knowledge and original contribution of the members to the resolution of the existing situation has been presented in a way which the members accept.

In the postmodern context, according to the relevant literature, different members of multi-occupational nets measure what is done successfully using one, but often several, of the above five criteria.

McBeath and Webb formulate the assumption that the members of multi-occupational nets measure what is done successfully in terms of whether specific individuals were provided with practical help. They explain that in the postmodern context, practical help is understood as help to specific individuals which need not be and is not justified by the provision of the service in the name of society and the state. In postmodern social work, according to these

two authors, "what most are agreeable to is the immediate satisfaction of needs and desires at a unilateral level" (McBeath, Webb, 1991: 759). Other authors provide evidence that things are seen in this light by both members of multi-occupational nets and social workers. Payne (2006: 158–159) shows that members of multi-occupational nets consider it a success story when social workers contribute with their knowledge, which is specific and unusual for others, to mutual understanding and practical resolution of people's troubles. (Payne illustrates this argument on the example of recognition shown by the doctor and nurses towards a social worker for her contribution to a practical resolution of the dilemma of a married couple; they wanted to stay at home after the husband's serious illness but feared the wife would fail as a caregiver.) Růžičková and Musil (2009: 85–86) established that the social workers approached by them considered the "endeavour to help the client in one way or another" to be one of the preconditions of legitimacy of their contribution to the work of multi-occupational nets.

Reasons to assume that members of multi-occupational nets find it important whether they managed to mediate problem-free interactions are presented by Dustin (2007: 129, 134–139) and Lorenz (2006: 115). According to Dustin (2007: 129, 134), case managers preserve, despite proceduralisation of their role, "elements of traditional social work, that is, mediation, negotiation, integration and surveillance". It can therefore be assumed that case managers will decide whether their negotiation with users and providers of help was successful based on, amongst other things, the changes in interactions that were successfully mediated between them. Dustin (2007: 134–139) observed that some case managers consider it successful when they manage to adjust the needs of users on the one hand and the offer of the providers, co-ordination of services and budgetary decisions of their superiors, on the other hand. Lorenz (2006: 115) proposes that, in the context of individualisation and relativisation of all perspectives, it is not possible for an individual to use an offer in the pursuit of his personal life plan unless he manages to mediate mutual intercultural understanding for the intentions of the party that wishes to use the offer and the interests of those who provide the offer or influence the conditions of access to it. It is analogously reasonable to assume that it is impossible to co-ordinate the expectations of users with the offer of providers unless there is successful mediation of mutual understanding of the different views of the users, budget holders and providers of help regarding the needs of users, ways of satisfying them and funding options. Case managers have experience with the consequences of differences in the perspectives of users, budget holders and providers (Dustin, 2006 84–90, 134–139; and other authors) and it can be expected that their idea of successful mediation includes success of intercultural negotiation.

McBeath and Webb (1991: 759) and Dustin (2007: 129–134) show another type of aspects relevant in measuring what is done successfully. According to them, emphasis is placed in the postmodern context on social workers' ability to meet the requirements for performance, effectiveness, budget control, and hence also calculability. Based on these aspects, social work is considered successful if it economises on funds or derives maximum benefit from funds spent. This occurs, in the eyes of social workers' employers, if they meet the performance limits for their work and cost limits for the purchase of services, respond only to the needs contained in a check list, dedicate attention and time only to those inputs and outputs that can be monitored and audited, and report these inputs and outputs in a calculable manner.

The fourth aspect for measuring what is done successfully is the question of whether the disobedient have been placed under control, the vagueness of their responses has been reduced and whether the risks potentially accompanying their responses have been mitigated (Howe, 1994: 527–530; Parton, 1994: 25; and other authors). These criteria of successful social work first asserted themselves under the pressure of the media and social legislation

makers in work with families and children; later they were also applied in work with delinquents (Howe, 1994: 529) and people with mental disabilities (McLaughlin, 2008: 81–99). Dustin (2007: 88–90) claims that case managers were frustrated when they were forced to define the needs of users in a limited way in order to keep them within the budgetary limits of the organisation. In our opinion, this finding can be interpreted in that one of the tasks of case managers is to regulate the risks that could be introduced into the organisation's budget by vague behaviour of all service users in the negotiation on the contract. Howe (1994: 527–530) explains that in this context, the term "behaviour control" is not understood as modification of inappropriate behaviour by rectifying its causes. According to the author, it involves "treating the act rather the actor, the offence rather than the offender […] Change […] is to be achieved by external compliance and not by internal insight. The disobedient are required simply to conform. The individual's social performance is all that matters." (Howe, 1994: 527) From this perspective, it is seen as a success when the social worker negotiates (contractual) conditions with the disobedient under which the disobedient conforms (Howe, 1994: 528).

Acknowledgement that the proposed definition of the situation and the corresponding approach to its solution may be successful depends on more than just what the social worker proposes. It also depends on how he proposes it. If the social worker wants to achieve recognition of his specific knowledge of the current situation and his contribution to its resolution, he must present his proposals in a way which the members of the net consider legitimate, or he must convince the members of the net that the manner in which he presents his proposals is appropriate to their contents and deserves respect. Typologically speaking, in a specific net, the social worker can meet with members who recognise three types of arguments[27]. Some accept "evidence-based arguments", using evidence which is obtained by an external observer and is considered valid for all situations within a category. Others recognise "arguments based on interpretation of the situation in question by the parties involved"; this kind of understanding is considered to be valid only for the given situation. Yet another group accepts arguments that are based on a combination of the above two types of arguments. It is likely that the members who measure what is successful by compliance with the requirements for effectiveness and calculability or by the limitation of risk are more prone to accept evidence-based arguments. It can also be assumed that those who measure what is done successfully by the provision of practical help to individuals or by mediation of problematic interactions will take account of arguments that are based on interpretation of the situation by the parties involved.

I was inspired to formulate these assumptions by a summary of a debate on appropriateness of evidence-based practice, presented by Witkin and Iversen (2008: 480–483). According to them, the central idea for this debate is that evidence-based arguments promote proceduralisation and limitation of participation of recipients of help, while arguments based on interpretation of the situation by the parties involved allow participation and promote consideration of the situational context in an endeavour to resolve a situation. This leads to the assumption that the kind of arguments which social workers take in negotiating their role in multi-occupational nets, or which they are forced to take due to the expectations of the other members of the same net, has an effect on proto-professionalization of the public. If social workers use evidence-based arguments, these arguments stem not from the parties involved in the situation, but from the authors of published studies and methodologies. Recipients of help therefore do not participate in the formulation of the net members' ideas regarding the recipients' situation and its resolution. They do not become members of the net,

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[27] This typology is based on the findings obtained in the discussion of appropriateness of what is called practice based on evidence for social work (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 478–483; Dewe, Otto, 2011b; see also Lorenz, 2004). More detailed evaluation and interpretation of that debate would exceed the limits of this text.

and therefore "only" workers from other disciplines become acquainted with the terminology of social work. If social workers use arguments based on interpretation of a situation negotiated by the parties involved in it, these arguments are derived from the recipients of help. In this case, the recipients of help participate in the formulation of the net members' ideas regarding the recipients' situation and its resolution. They thus become involved in the net and the terminology of social work is transferred to them too. The ability to recognise which of the above kinds of arguments the other members of the net accept and the ability to appropriately modify or defend one's own line of argument may hence be important for the recognition and application of the social worker's contribution within the net as well as for transferring social work's specific knowledge to the public.

It is common that in measuring what is done successfully, actors of multi-occupational nets deal with the question of how they should, in their understanding of the appropriate contribution of individual members of the net, combine several incongruous types of the above criteria, and sometimes even further criteria. The situational understanding of what should be successfully done, negotiated by social workers, therefore tends to be the result of a compromise between hardly compatible types of expectations.

For example, Dustin (2007: 133–136) found that case managers experience a "conflict" between their focus on the interests of individual service users and the superiors' emphasis on the use of available resources by all members of the target group. According to Dustin, superiors try to set the criteria of users' eligibility for the service so that the available resources are distributed evenly to all individuals. Frontline workers, on the other hand, weigh the interests of the users they represent on an individual basis and attempt to see them as a "whole person" rather than a fragmented set of disparate needs of a "typical member of a group". This means, in our opinion, that case managers in specific situations negotiate and apply ideas of what should be achieved that variously combine the criteria of "conformity with budget control" and "help to individual people".

Lymbery also points out that various types of criteria are combined. According to him, in the interest of credibility, social workers must perform their task procedurally and impersonally as the superiors require of them, and simultaneously, to attain credibility in the eyes of users, they must identify the drawbacks of the prescribed procedures and promote alternative views of the organisation of services (Lymbery, 2001: 379–380). We can therefore assume that social workers address the tension between the expectations of the superiors and those of the users by combining the requirements of effectiveness and limitation of risks on the one hand and expectation of practical help or mediation on the other hand.

The above illustrations of combining various criteria of measuring what is done successfully highlight that a social worker cannot expect that the success of his actions will be measured using constant criteria. Instead he should be prepared to adjust his contribution during negotiation in changing situations based on what diverse evaluation criteria will be applied in relation to his actions by other members of the net in question. From this perspective, a definite and constant concept of the specialised role of a social worker is not an institution in the postmodern context. On the other hand, situational negotiation of a continuous wave of new variations of this role and the contribution of the way this negotiation is designed in the changing situations become an institution. A social worker who knows how to do something will not attain recognition of the contribution of social work. In contrast, a social worker who is able to negotiate a situational form of what he can do while taking into account what the other members of multi-occupational nets expect of him, will attain recognition of his contribution.

Social worker's eligibility for situational negotiation of a role

Witkin and Iversen characterise the behaviour of a social worker in a multi-occupational net. The two authors deal with the question of how social work can attain recognition in a situation where no answer is taken as the right or best answer without further negotiation. Under these circumstances, legitimacy of the social worker's actions is conditional on his ability to improvise as he "resolves into action through dialogue and relationship". To do this, he needs "versatility" and ability to "respond […] with imagination to the prospect of living without securities, guarantees, and order". (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 492). In other words, legitimacy of the social worker's actions depends on his ability to repeatedly negotiate and implement the role he is expected to play in diverse situations – in addressing specific cases or in looking for access to specific themes.

The need for negotiating his role in the course of events and in changing situations is pointed out above by Payne. Witkin and Iversen add that in doing this, the social worker must rely on himself. He applies his specific knowledge, and can achieve recognition for his contribution, by responding to the constantly new situations (cases or themes) and negotiating on their definition and resolution with the members of the nets that usually change their composition with every new situation. If, under these circumstances, he is to negotiate a solution to the changing situation in a dialogue with the other members of the net and taking into account the existing relations among them, he must rely on his own imagination and improvisation rather than act mechanically, indiscriminately according to established orders, routine procedures or "reliably" proven patterns. The latter must be adjusted on a case-by-case basis to the characteristics of the given situation and its interpretation as negotiated among the members of the multi-occupational net in the course of events.

Fragmentation

We can assume from the above that legitimation of the contribution of social work through negotiation in multi-occupational case or thematic nets occurs fragmentarily. Social workers negotiate their roles and contribution separately through the specialised, and hence differentiated, environments of individual nets. This leads to legitimation of diverse patterns of behaviour. These patterns are established as individual elements of comprehensive responses of diversely oriented multi-occupational nets to specific natural problems. They are hence designed so as to take account of the multi-occupational and more comprehensive discourse of the specific net and situation rather than just the general aspects or theories of social work. While the latter may exist and be respected, they are applied and modified in the nets in interaction with the knowledge of specialists with a different focus. This means that the legitimation of the patterns of behaviour of social workers does not take place integrally in an enclosed, specialised environment of the "profession", but rather separately in diverse, usually multi-occupational nets.

The fragmentation resulting from this manner of legitimation of patterns of social workers' behaviour is described by Howe:

Social work is allowed to fragment into various bits which break off and go their separate ways. Each fragment evolves and re-generates under the organizing power of its own philosophy and values. The knowledge bases which inform each field also become increasingly different and independent, indicating a possible breakdown of social work's […] attempts to unify it philosophically, theoretically, professionally, educationally and organizationally" (Howe, 1994: 524–525).

Howe formulated this description of fragmentation of social work from the viewpoint of the Foucaltian idea of the unifying effect of the discourse of (state) power. He therefore does not see transformation as a consequence of a separated negotiation of legitimacy of social work patterns in temporary multi-occupational nets. Instead, he regards it as a consequence of a weakened unification power of legislature and public policy of the welfare state, the weakening being due to general relativisation of the authority of universal theories and truths. Before this relativisation occurred, people trusted the idea of a generally valid or dominant truth. Thus, according to Howe, in the hands of social legislators the universal theories of social work could play the role of preface for the discourse of the welfare state which, through its power, determined the language and ideas of social workers from all fields of personal social services. From this point of view, Howe assumes that the weakening of the discursive power of social policy of the state caused a part of the original discourse to break off from the whole. By "broken off" parts, he refers to social work performed in various fields of the welfare state, the discourses of which have become disconnected without the unifying effect of the discourse of state policy. The fields (work with the family, children, delinquents, people with mental and physical disabilities, elderly people, immigrants, etc.) continue to exist in the administrative sense, but according to Howe, their discourses became diversified.

In my interpretation of the postmodern legitimation of patterns of conduct of social workers, I do not consider fragmentation a consequence of the weakened unifying power of the welfare state. (In our opinion, reduction of the state does not result in differentiation. I rather believe that it reduced the need for multi-occupational nets and other actors of civic society to act autonomously despite the state.) I assume that fragmentation occurs as a result of separated situational negotiation of social work's contribution in addressing specific natural problems in diverse multi-occupational nets. Even so we regard Howe's description of fragmentation as an ingenious picture of fragmentation of social work discourses. We may have different views of the impulse, but our understanding of the postmodern fragmentation of social work is analogous.

For me, the "broken-off part" has a different meaning. Howe uses this term for the disjointed discourses of social work "fields" that formerly existed as an integral part of the consensually designed welfare state. I consider that the "broken off", or rather "emerging", parts of social work are the multi-occupational thematic nets that crystallise "from below" and independently of the state. In Czech society, it is less common that these thematic nets focus their attention on formerly existing "domains" of the welfare state. They rather target natural and newly emerging problems of the target groups to which, according to the members of thematic nets, public administration formerly paid no attention or fails to pay appropriate attention today. This applies to the problems of target groups such as drug addicts, foreigners, some minorities, clients of medical facilities, people with multiple problems and the like (see Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87).

If the above assumptions regarding fragmentation of social work are justified, social workers cannot expect that other social workers have the same ideas of their role. If they meet, in a multi-occupational net, with social workers from different "fields" of public administration or from other thematic nets, they must situationally negotiate with them their contribution and their role in the same way as with medical doctors, psychologists, lawyers, nurses and carers. It is no longer realistic to conceive a network of social workers with homogeneous knowledge of the occupation who applies the same discourse in negotiating their role and contribution to the resolution of a given situation. (Given the experience with the lack of modern institutionalisation of social work in Czech society, it is necessary to note: "if it ever was realistic at all".) Social workers seem to have become (or have always been) an inhomogeneous group of people who apply their specific discourse of help in diverse ways.

They seek legitimacy of their role and their identity among those who deal with specific problems. For them, "occupation" primarily consists not in social work, whose discourse of mediation of interactions they use to a greater or smaller degree, but thematic nets with more complex, and hence different discourses.

In some social workers, this situation creates feelings of uncertainty that, according to Witkin and Iversen, they attempt to eliminate by returning to the modern patterns of control over their status. Therefore, they stress the "scientific expertise" of social work, exclusivity of knowledge and terminology of the occupation, control of their professional associations over access to the vocation and similar aspects (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489). We believe that an example of attempts at constructing certainty in an uncertain situation is provided by the arguments of Smith and White (1997), who question the picture of fragmentation of social work formulated in parallel by Howe (1994) and Parton (1994) and declare that social work continues to be a strong profession. McLaughlin (2008: 122–126; and other authors) points out that not only social workers, but also the representatives of the state (in the UK), respond to the fears and feelings of uncertainty with the use of modern means of regulation of the profession. According to McLaughlin, in the postmodern context they began to see social workers and their dealing with the recipients of help as a risk and strengthened the legislation on mandatory registration of social workers. In terms of what Howe says above, they did so in a situation where the unifying power of the legislation and public policy of the welfare state weakened under the influence of relativisation of the authority of universal ideas of social work.

3. Education topics and preparation of social workers for postmodern institutionalisation

We arrive at the central question of this chapter: "On what topics should the education of social workers concentrate to ensure they are able to negotiate and develop, in multi-occupational nets, their specific contribution to the resolution of up-to-date topics and situations of recipients of help and thus gain recognition in the postmodern society for routine use of social work?" I believe that the above-stated understanding of postmodern institutionalisation of social work gives rise to the need to cultivate with students those topics that are related to social worker's co-operation with other members of multi-occupational nets. This includes, in my opinion, especially the following two topics: "identity of social work and its mission in postmodern society" and "negotiation of the role and contribution of the social worker together with other members of multi-occupational nets. In view of the arguments provided above, I believe that the other members of multi-occupational nets include the recipients of help, workers in other helping occupations and social workers, who refer to mutually different discourses.

I consider that emphasis on the above two topics changes nothing in the need to teach social workers how to help those who need their help. That is, to cultivate with students their specific knowledge and "technical" apparatus of the social worker. It is my experience that this topic is the usual central point for those who design and implement the curricula in social work studies. I consider that less attention is paid to the context of knowledge and "technical" apparatus of the graduate and his or her ability to improvise and independently apply the specific knowledge of the occupation in contexts of multi-occupational nets that are situational and oriented on natural problems.

Improvisation, which seems essential for gaining recognition for oneself and for social work as such, is conditional on strong anchoring, which in turn makes it possible, with some level of skill, to promptly develop variations.

A social worker who is not certain about his specific mission and not sure what he can offer that others cannot, would be inclined, in interaction with workers from other helping occupations, to take ownership of the other parties' missions. He would not be able to offer anything to the recipients of help without being led by an order which, however, is not expected to exist in the context of situational negotiation. If he did not know himself what aspect of a given problem, different from the aspects emphasised by the other members, he wanted to "enter" into the jointly created picture of the situation which is to be resolved, he would probably become an incompletely qualified assistant helping to implement the goals of workers from other occupations. (Which happens to social workers relatively often, e.g., in their relation to medical doctors – see Simpkin, 2005.) This would, however, have two consequences. In the short term, the picture of the situation being addressed by the net in question, and the manner of its resolution, would be unknowingly deprived of the dimension or dimensions that are dealt with by social work. The solution would be less comprehensive and the quality of the service provided to the recipients of help would be lower. In the long term, the members of the net would not be offered the specific contribution of the social worker and social work would not receive even a fragment of legitimacy in the given net.

Therefore, in my opinion, improvised situational negotiation requires that the social worker apply a clear idea of his identity and knowingly follow a mission, in order to have an idea where the other members of the net should focus their attention and for what purpose the social worker and the other members should jointly apply, in an improvised way, their technical skills. Reflection on the possible concepts of social work and, if possible, a clear idea of social work's identity and mission in postmodern society should become the starting point of his studies and practice. Reflecting on the identity of social work, he can readily develop variations of a topic appropriate to the situation which is being negotiated and to the relationships that exist within the net in question.

To be able to readily develop variations of the central topic and mission of social work accepted by him as valid, he needs to apply a number of skills: Interpret the situation which is being addressed from his perspective, i.e. from the perspective of social work. Understand the perspectives and interpretations of the situation of other members of the net and the differences between them. Understand how others construct their understanding of what should be done successfully and hence what others expect him to do. Identify potential tensions between his interpretation of the given situation and the interpretations made by others. Identify potential tensions between his idea of what should be done successfully and what is expected by others. Identify the arrangement of relationships between members, e.g. the arrangement of their personal authority and inclination to dominance and inflexibility, or partnership and openness, estimate the effect of mutual formal and informal obligations that regulate relationships among members outside the net, their behaviour in the net, etc. Decide whether he accepts, or will try to modify, the ideas and expectations of others. On the basis of all the above, and perhaps more, findings, observations and decisions, formulate and continuously complement his contribution to the resolution of the situation so as to make it appropriate to the situation and viable at the same time. Select, implement and continuously complement his communication strategy in the net. Etc.

The social worker should do all this readily, depending on the degree of urgency of work accepted by the members. For example, Payne (2006: 158) states that workers from other occupations and recipients of help have a tendency to question the technical knowledge of social workers "because it is perceived to be non-technical" by them. If this situation occurs, the social worker must expect that aspects he considers complex will be trivial for others and they will not be willing to pay time and attention to them.

Thus, in order to manage the role of a party to situational negotiation, the social worker should be trained in it. If this is not done, his chance to assert himself personally, and gain recognition for the contribution of social work to the resolution of situations as they come, will depend exclusively on his personal capabilities. The latter are likely to be highly differentiated and can therefore be (and probably are) too volatile to form a basis for legitimation and standardisation of social work.

I consider that knowledge of the aspects of identity of social work and communication proficiency in their situational application are prerequisites for the social worker's ability to enrich the picture and idea of resolution of the situation currently addressed by those involved in the respective net. Education should help ensure that the social worker takes ownership of a mission, is able to express it in the descriptive language of the relevant situation and can convey it comprehensibly. Then, in my opinion, he can attract attention of others to those aspects of the situation being addressed that represent the mission and knowledge of social work but slip the attention of people with a different personal or professional perspective. In this way he will enrich the approach to the resolution of specific situations and help troubled people manage life in present-day society. If education helps ensure that the social worker does all this repeatedly, his personal professional fulfilment can contribute to legitimation of social work as a specific part of multi-occupational discourses of help.

4. Conclusion – unclear question of postmodern birth of specific knowledge and identity

The considerations of the above-cited relevant authors include the obvious assumption that a specific identity, specific knowledge or specific contribution of social work exist and act in the postmodern context. Payne believes that the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work is a source of its specific contribution for the actions of multi-occupational nets (Payne, 2006: 156, 184; and other authors).

If we compare the above-mentioned theoretical constructs of an abstract pattern of social work in the modern and postmodern contexts (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above,) we find out that the cited authors construct each of the two contexts differently, but understand the identity or specific focus of social work continually. Their understandings of modern and postmodern identity include identical elements. The first of these is the focus on mediation of problematic interactions. The second is the expectation that social workers will help manage those obstacles to a mutually acceptable course of interactions that follow from the cultural differences between the parties involved in them. I therefore consider that these two aspects are the core of the cited authors' ideas about the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work as well as the specific contribution of social workers to the postmodern discourses of helping work. It can be assumed that despite the fragmentation of social work, they attribute to its diverse offshoots a shared focus on mediation of problematic interactions which absorbs, when necessary, modification of cultural barriers to the resolution of practical[28] problems by those involved in the interactions.

The assumption that the focus on mediation of problematic interactions and potentially also modification of cultural barriers in the course of them is a matter-of-fact specific feature of social work appears to be a heritage of the development of social work as a modern

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[28] In the arguments presented by the above authors, modification of cultural barriers to mutually acceptable responses of the parties involved is not understood as reduction of the mediation of interactions just to its cultural dimension. Lorenz (see section 2.2.2 above) considers that modification of cultural barriers is a prerequisite for the resolution of the substantive content of problem interactions. According to him, the purpose of mediation of a change in interactions lies in an appropriate solution that could be blocked, amongst other things, by cultural differences.

profession. Authors from countries where social work became established as a modern profession during the 20ᵗʰ century consider the question of specific contribution of social work to the postmodern discourses of helping work either answered or answerable. They do not ask the question from where and how the specificity of social work in the postmodern context emerges (if not already present).

This question arises, e.g., in Czech society, and may arise in other societies where modern professionalization of social work did not occur. While the word social work is used there, its ideological and practical meaning remains unclear and blurred. The idea of the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work has never been formulated and has never established itself in societies of this type. Some social workers become involved in multi-occupational nets but they are often rather uncertain about the substance of their specific contribution to their discourse. If they try to follow on from the above-mentioned traditions of the modern social work profession discussed in literature, they encounter a situation where the members of nets with other fields of qualification and recipients of help often do not expect that social workers could or should bring any specific contribution to the resolution of the problems "on the table".

If people in societies, where modern professionalization of social work did not occur, experience troubles that are elsewhere managed with the help of social work, the above situation may bring difficulties to those who are unable to manage these troubles as well as to society as a whole. It is conceivable that, somewhere, modern professionalization of social work has not occurred because society has other institutions for managing the difficulties that are elsewhere delegated to social work. If this is not the case, we believe it is appropriate to ask whether and how the described situation could be changed: "How, if at all, a formerly non-existent idea of a specific focus of social work emerges, is accepted and routinely used in the postmodern context?"

I consider that it is reasonable to formulate three scenarios of how the ideas of the specific identity, knowledge and contribution of social work developed in societies where the modern acceptance of the social work profession did not occur. I will refer to these scenarios as "zero", "parallel" and "mixed".

The zero scenarios follows on from the premise that postmodern development depends on the past and from the implicit assumption of the above-cited authors that social workers derive their specific contribution to the postmodern discourses of helping work from the modern universal idea of a specific focus and role of social work in society. This idea became established by way of modern professionalization and the public accepted it at a time when people still had confidence in the idea of a single truth. Social workers and the postmodern public accept this comprehensive picture out of inertia and the fragmentary development leads not to its destruction, but inner differentiation. True, postmodern fragmentation leads to diversification of the "broken-off parts" of social work, but these remain within the focus on the mediation of problematic interactions which was established earlier, during modernity. Social workers with various profiles can extract from it their ideas of their specific contribution to the discourse of multi-occupational nets.

However, this scenario is not feasible in societies where modern professionalization has not taken place, the abstract idea of social work has not been accepted and social workers therefore have nothing to follow up on. Here, the fragmentary attempts at formulating the specific contribution of social work take place in the context of general vagueness of the term "social work" to which people attach non-descript, and hence unspecific ideas. (For example, they use the term "social work" to refer to social services that are not occupation-specific because workers from various helping occupations participate in their delivery, etc.) Under

these circumstances, the fragmentary ideas of the specific contribution of social work that, according to the assumptions of the zero scenarios, need a historically established older model cannot occur. The idea of an accepted specificity of social work remains nil because the fragmentary attempts lacked a comprehensive framework and each took a separate path. It is also possible that social workers did not find their specificity because, instead of their own, unformulated identity, they adopted established ideas of the specific contribution of other, earlier established modern occupations (such as psychology, psychiatry, law, etc.).

The "parallel" scenario is built on the premise of discontinuity. This means that the conditions of modern professionalization were radically replaced by the postmodern context and the specificity of social work must be sought without referring to the patterns established earlier, whose universal validity has ceased to be worthy of trust. In this respect, the development is "typologically pure" according to the logics of postmodern institutionalisation. Each social worker negotiates, in different multi-occupational nets, his own original and specific contribution, by taking his own path. However, in doing so, he respond to analogous impulses and problems that are brought by the same postmodern society. He mediates his contribution to the resolution of these impulses and problems to other helping workers and recipients of help in the course of negotiations in individual nets. The natural problems of the various target groups and individuals that social workers respond to have some common characteristics – for example, they are related to a lack of intercultural understanding among people with individualised identities, etc. This means that social workers – each in own way – seek for their contribution in different multi-occupational and thematic contexts, but all respond to analogous impulses and problems. They will reach independent of one another and in parallel, an analogous formulation of the specific contribution of social work. The recipients of help and helping workers with a different field of qualifications gradually acquaint themselves with this contribution as they negotiate on the resolution of problems with social workers and they see the practical form of their contribution as they jointly implement the results of the negotiations.

The "mixed" scenario is based on the premise that institutionalisation of social work does not take place in a typologically "pure" context. Different identities of social work emerge in a society with postmodern features and are negotiated in various multi-occupational thematic nets. This differentiation of identities confirms the general vagueness of ideas of social work, which was left in society by unaccomplished modern professionalization of the occupation. The public is accustomed to what it considers an obvious thing – monolithic and long-established modern professions such as medicine or law, and it therefore does not take seriously something as indistinct and blurred as social work. The need to establish itself alongside professions with a modern status can lead social workers who operate independently in various multi-occupational nets to endeavour to promote a clear and universal definition of social work. Although social work becomes spontaneously established along fragmentary paths, social workers will still begin to look for ways to present a clear self-definition to the public in an attempt to become a clear part of people's everyday world.

Literature does not offer arguments in support of any of the three above scenarios. We do not know whether any of them will prevail.

In terms of the purpose of the above proposal to integrate the study of knowledge and "technical" apparatus with a reflection on the identity of social work and training of its improvised application during the negotiation of multi-occupational nets, the zero scenarios seems the least favourable. I expect that if the proposed thematic composition of social work studies is implemented, it will promote legitimation and reutilisation of the utilisation of the methods of help by which the graduates of modified studies can contribute to the discourse of help in multi-occupational nets. This could ensure that people in difficult situations routinely

receive help which is not available to them at all or is available randomly. The zero scenarios would not make it possible to fulfil this purpose. This does not mean, however, that the initial assumptions of the zero scenarios are unjustified.

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SECOND PART

TRAINING IN SOCIAL WORK

IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

The Institutionalisation of Ethics Education in Social Work: Applying Ethical Theories (a Summarised Discussion)

Mirka Nečasová, Alois Křišťan

Introduction

Philosophy and ethics are crucial subjects taught at colleges and tertiary schools (including universities) which provide education in the field of social work. These subjects are also incorporated into the minimum education standards as defined by the Association of Educators in Social Work and into the criteria established by the Accreditation Commission of the Czech Republic on the basis of which the Ministry grants accreditation to schools.

The incorporation of philosophical and ethical topics into the curricula for helping professions is intended to provide students, i.e. future and current social workers, with a certain set of tools which will enable them to cope with ambiguous or contradictory situations which they may be exposed to due to the various (often obscure) requirements from the field of professional ethics, societal ethos (within the culture which the employee and/or the client comes from) as well as personal beliefs and values. The objective of philosophy teaching is: "to enable students to acquire a background for critical thinking based on selected topics of the European philosophical tradition and reflect on their own stance with respect to their practical application," whereas in the ethics courses, students are led "to recognise ethical problems which may be encountered in practice, to be able to specify and formulate justified ways of solving these problems and develop a critical awareness of the ethical codes and documents concerning human rights. This should guide to an ability to reflect on behaviour, actions, stances, motives and the nature of the institutional or structural framework in terms of moral quality" (ASVSP [on-line]). Students are also encouraged to "learn about the major ethical theories and their application in specific cases" (ibid.).

Generally speaking, there is wide-spread agreement among professionals as regards professional ethics and values being one of the pillars of the profession, as well as one of the objectives of education in philosophy and ethics. There are actually various approaches to education. This is also documented by the discussion about education in the field of ethics which took place among educators over the years 2010-2012. We believe that this discussion reflects the broader context within which social work and social workers operate. The objective of the present article is to acquaint the reader with the discussion and outline its setting within a broader context.

Discussion

1) Opening article (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Talašová)

The discussion was initiated by reactions to the article *Využití vybraných etických teorií v praxi sociální práce (The application of selected ethical theories into the practice of social work)* written by Mirka Nečasová, Zdeňka Dohnalová and Renáta Talašová and published in issue No. 3/2010 of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work.* The article aimed at demonstrating "how ethical theories can be used for an improved understanding of problematic situations and for obtaining several possible views of a particular situation and solution thereof" (p. 76). The authors initially, referring to Banks (2006), define the concept of an ethical dilemma when a social worker "realises two or several contradictory possibilities.

What decision should he/she make when these possibilities represent incompatible moral principles" (ibid.). The way in which the employee perceives the situation depends on several factors, e.g. moral sensitivity, an ability to reflect on the situation and self-reflection, personality, the experience of the decision-making process, knowledge and skills level, etc. The authors chose to make use of a specific case study to demonstrate the application "of certain elements of three different ethical theories: deontology, utilitarianism and the ethics of care" (p. 77) to illustrate three diverse schools in the sphere of professional ethics. The authors' intention was to view the ethical theories as primarily a tool or device for education in social work, i.e. not necessarily as guides to an optimal solution to the specific cases, although this intention is not explicitly mentioned in the article.

In their model case, Anna consulted an unincorporated organisation which provides web counselling to pregnant women in distress. This service is of a rather short-term nature, aimed at providing basic information to clients, primarily concerning possible solutions, and providing contact data concerning the relevant experts. Anna has been married for five years in Austria, has two daughters and was concerned about an issue which occurred in 2000, while living in the Czech Republic, when she put her newly born son up for adoption due to her situation at the time which seemed to be hopeless. She is currently unhappy and upset that she cannot care for her son the same way she does for her daughters. She realises that she cannot interfere in his life but would like to know how he is doing. The counsellor provided Anna with support in her difficult situation and consequently provided Anna with the contact data for the organisation which deals with adoption issues and would in all probability be able to provide her with additional information. In her next email Anna mentioned another problem, the fact that her mother had refused to see her after the adoption. She described how she is haunted, day after day, by the memories of her son. The counsellor referred Anna to a professional psychologist. Anna refused to see the psychologist. She firstly feels she cannot trust an Austrian psychologist and secondly she does not want her current family to learn about her troubles. Anna would like to know how she can donate money to the unincorporated organisation because she believes the organisation will be able to help other women in a similar situation and perhaps enable them to not have to abandon their children. She continually describes her anxiety and suicidal thoughts which she has overcome with the sense of responsibility for her daughters. The counsellors sent her contact information about therapy centres near her place of residence. She once again repeats that she has no confidence in psychologists and speaks of her troubles and anxiety connected with the loss of her son. The counselling centre staff is of the opinion that Anna is not motivated to actively solve her situation and is instead only interested in having the opportunity to speak about her sufferings to someone who is willing to listen and reply. By making a donation she may be trying to solidify contact with the counselling centre. Although the centre staff does understand her approach, it would be in conflict with the centre's objectives to prolong this situation and would consequently be counterproductive. The centre staff is thereby faced with the question: *Should we maintain or break off contact with this client?*

The authors at the beginning of their article outline three selected ethical theories and subsequently apply these specific aspects to this case study.

Kant's deontological theory

Kant's ethics are based on the crucial phenomenon of good will, i.e. the ability to act according to certain objective laws: "...to choose that only which reason independent of inclination (whose sources always come from the world of sense) recognises as practically necessary, i.e., as good." (p. 78). Kant refers here to a motivation which arises from a duty which corresponds with a categorical imperative, and a motivation that stems from the inclination connected with the hypothetical imperative. In the hypothetical imperative, the practical necessity for possible behaviour is understood as the means to something else. A hypothetical imperative is therefore conditional and one can only escape it if one gives up the purpose behind it. A categorical imperative is in contrast behaviour which is necessary in and of itself without reference to another end, i.e. is valid unconditionally. Various versions of a categorical imperative are signs of its universal validity ("Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature", p. 79), of the unconditional value of a person ("...act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in that of any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." (ibid.) and of the autonomy of the will.

The authors illustrate the requirement of universal validity and the unconditional value of a person on the basis of the example mentioned directly by Kant (1976): If someone finds himself forced by necessity to borrow money, but he knows that he will not be able to repay it, he should ask himself whether this principle of self-love (or own advantage) would become a universal law. This particular man, according to Kant, would not keep his promise which would necessarily contradict reason. When we breach a duty we discover that we do not want our maxim to become a universal law. We only want to make an exception in our own favour in this particular case. In addition, we would be treating the other person as a means for our own purpose, thereby denying his/her dignity. The consequences of our actions are, therefore, not primarily important, but it is instead the motivation arising from our good will led by reason, the idea of necessity and the universality of the relevant maxim.

Application to the model example

The counselling centre employee realises that she has to make a decision on the basis of a rationally justifiable objective law and should avoid having compassion for the client and fears about her reaction. The employee should consider whether the rule concerning terminating a service for a client who does not herself want to terminate it would be universally acceptable (to view the situation sub specie universitatis). The authors do not think so. The objective of the web counselling portal is to provide information and help in contacting specialised sites and facilities. The rule may consequently be reformulated as follows: the client does not belong to the target group of the web counselling portal and as such will be referred to an adequate service provider and the contact broken off sensitively. This rule appears universally acceptable, even for the client as she should not ask for an exception in her own favour.

The second version of the categorical imperative admonishes us not to use other people as a means but always as an end. The counselling centre staff considers whether they are using the client as a means for their own purposes or not. This would occur if the centre employee maintained the contact with the client in order to saturate her need for self-realisation through (Kopřiva, 1997), rejection of changes (Lishman in Adams, Dominelli, Payne, 1998), desire for power and general fulfilment of her personal needs (Hawkins, Shohet, 2004).

Consideration of the necessary autonomy may lead to a termination of the service due to respect for the client. From the rational point of view it is not consistent to maintain a contact which leads clients away from initiating autonomous rational endeavours to solve their problem. Moreover, the client in fact uses herself (not only the centre staff) as a means for her own purposes. She thereby also denies her own autonomy.

An analysis of this case from the point of view of deontological ethics may actually encourage the counselling centre staff to think about their own motives.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is the second of the selected ethical theories. The criterion used for assessing the value of behaviour is the consequence(s) of such behaviour, rather than compliance with the categorical imperative as suggested by Kant. The value of behaviour, as assessed in utilitarianism, consists of the extent to which the consequences of behaviour are useful for good, where "good" should mean a quantitative or qualitative calculation or the experience of pleasure, as opposed to the suffering of those involved in or affected by such behaviour (social hedonism). There is a distinction made between the utilitarianism of behaviour where the consequences of individual behaviour are measured and compared, and the utilitarianism of rule where the consequences of universal principles are assessed. Compliance with a rule,

in this case, is derived from the calculation of potential consequences, not on the basis of the rational justification for the necessity of complying with the rule.

Application to the model example

The staff of the unincorporated organisation should in this case first examine the circumstances and consequences of the behaviour and then decide what to do so as to attain the greatest possible sum (quality) of pleasure for as many those involved as possible.

If they decide to maintain contact with Anna they would be permanently occupied with this communication (the sense behind which they are in fact questioning) and may not be able to dedicate their work time fully to other clients. The staff are well aware that they have conscientiously tried to help Anna (e.g. by finding psychologists near her place of residence) despite the fact that she does not actually belong to the target group of the organisation. If they kept in touch with Anna, her current needs would be fully met as she is quite satisfied with the e-mail communication and is not interested of involving anyone else in the solution to her problem (the present family, a psychologist or the adoption organisation). Anna, in the counsellor's opinion, needs specialised psychological aid (see her remarks about suicide) but this is not something that can be provided by the web counselling service.

If the staffs break off contact with the client, they will have more time available for other clients within the target group. The staff will not reproach themselves for providing help to a client who made a financial donation to the organisation but who does not in fact make use of its services. The staffs are fully aware that they have offered Anna a possible solution to her situation, follow-up services, but she, for some subjective reasons, has decided not to make use of these solutions as yet. From the point of view of quantitative calculation of the experience of pleasure, it would be advisable to terminate the collaboration even if Anna will resent the decision. On a short-term basis and from her point of view, this procedure is not likely to bring forth any good. She may feel cheated and even more isolated in her difficult situation (in addition to the risk of suicide). After some time, however she may actually decide to actually consult one of the recommended psychologists. Adequately selected psychotherapy would enable Anna to come to terms with her own past which will undoubtedly do both her and her family a great deal of good.

The utilitarianism of rules (or principles) asks which rule (which principle) is of higher priority at the particular moment. For the organisation staff it is of higher priority to work at present in compliance with the rules of the organisation. They consequently terminate the contact being aware that they have provided Anna with the best possible services and that now it is up to her whether she makes use of them or not.

The ethics of care

The ethics of care which explores the differences found during research into the moral developmental stages of boys and girls is the final theory mentioned in the article by Nečasová et al. (see Kohlberg in Heidbrink, 1997, Gilligan, 2001). While men in the final stage of moral development typically emphasise abstract principles, women incline towards maintaining relationships. Men base their actions on an assumption of equality (everyone should be judged equally), whereas women have the assumption of non-violence (no one should be harmed). Moral judgement in women is initially focused on survival (the pre-conventional stage), only to later be concerned with benevolence (the conventional stage) and finally reaching a reflective understanding of care as the most adequate guide to solving conflicts in human relationships (the post-conventional stage). "Women construct moral problems in a characteristic manner as the view moral dilemmas as a conflict of

responsibilities. This construction was traced through a sequence of three perspectives, each perspective representing a more complex understanding of the relationship between self and other, and each transition involving a critical reinterpretation of the conflict between selfishness and responsibility." (Gilligan, 2001: 125). Ethical problems and dilemmas usually emerge from contradictory duties, with the context-conscious and narrative thought pattern being important for an appropriate insight into and a solution to these duties. Male ethics of justice place an emphasis on a competition between rights and solutions and requires a formal and abstract thought pattern. There are consequently crucial areas of interest emerging in relation to the ethics of care, namely: relationships, responsibilities, emotionality, communication and contextuality.

Application to the model example

From the perspective of the ethics of care, there is one obvious and important factor in the model example, this being the fact that the service is provided by women.

The counselling centre (female) employee was forced to make a moral decision concerning the termination or retention of the contact with Anna within the framework of which she takes account of fears of her deteriorated mental condition (suicidal thoughts). She may also be concerned about the family members if Anna actually decides to take her life. Concurrently, she feels a responsibility, i.e. "the need for a response that arises from the recognition that others count on you and you are in a position to help." (Gilligan, 2001: 79.) If the employee sensed the fears of a deepening dilemma connected with the awareness of Anna's reliance on the employee's help, she would be at the conventional stage feeling the urge to help the client at any cost. Aware of the fact that web counselling cannot help Anna if she tried to provide through the intervention certain further services which are not normally provided by the counselling centre (e.g. psychological consultation), she would run the risk that she would not make use of them properly.

According to Gilligan, the post-conventional stage of moral development corresponds to the awareness that apart from the ability to care, people are also able to accept due respect from others thereby protecting their own dignity (Henriksen, Vetlesen 2000). A employee at this stage should have her limits clearly defined so as to be able to enter into the interaction with the clients. She assesses which services should be provided to the client based on her own (professional and personal) possibilities and how effective these services would be. The employee demonstrates respect for the needs of both the client and herself.

From the perspective of the contextual pattern of thinking, the employee has to ensure possible support for Anna from her closest environment, the circumstances behind the poor relationship with the client's mother, the reasons why Anna chose not to speak about this situation with her family, etc. The employee should subsequently guide Anna to improvement or restoration of her relationships with her relatives and beloved ones. The employee should not terminate the contact herself but should instead lead Anna and empower her so as to be able to terminate the contact and assume responsibility and control over her own life.

Summary

Although the authors did not intend to "deliver an exhaustive account of how individual theories treat the discussed dilemma or problem" (p. 86), they are still of the opinion that the application of selected concepts of various theories will serve to provide specific substantiation of possible decisions. Termination of the contact with the client, in the authors' view, is substantiated from the perspective of Kantian deontology by reference to the necessity of leading the client to make her own free will decisions motivated not by pleasure

but by duty. From the utilitarian point of view it is justified by a reference to the probable benefit of a larger quantity and a quality of happiness for a larger number of people involved. The conclusions of the analysis based on the ethics of care bring the counselling centre staff to the same point (termination of the contact). They additionally, however, depict how to reach this target. More precisely, to keep in contact with the client, to jointly endeavour to "understand the context, mutual responsibility and support for integrating the client into the network of relations" (p. 86) thereby leading her to the point where she is courageous enough to solve her difficult situation and terminate the contact herself.

In their conclusion, the authors express the opinion that *"the analysis of the situation from various points of view is the basis for an informed decision for which the social worker may assume responsibility"* (cf. ibid.). Although it is only an application of several concepts, the authors see it as an opportunity to limit the danger resulting from merely intuitive decision-making. They identify with the views of Henriksen and Vetlesen (2000: p. 53): "being a moral subject means, apart from empathy and caring abilities, to have purely cognitive abilities, thereby being able to analyse the situation and judge what will be the proper course of action."

2) Reaction 1 (Jinek, Křišťan)

The article discussed above produced a reaction which was published by Jakub Jinek and Alois Křišťan in the following 2011 issue of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work* under the title *Etická teorie a její aplikace – problém pro sociální práci (Ethical theory and its application – an issue for social work)*. They expressed, on the one hand, their appreciation of the Nečasová et al. article for its effort "to didactically and comprehensibly demonstrate the importance of ethics studies, not only for graduating from school but, above all, for personality development and justification of ethical attitudes in practice" (p. 126). Jinek and Křišťan, in contrast, have pointed out certain trends indicated in Nečasová's article which may strengthen inclinations on the part of students towards schematic thinking and expectations as to simplified and unambiguous theorems which they could acquire and use. They raised the following objections to the article.

Obscurity of concepts

An obscurity of concepts is illustrated by Jinek and Křišťan with the example of "dilemma", which, in ethics, means deciding on or choosing between two unacceptable possibilities, while in general (in social work) it is used to denote deciding or choosing between two incompatible possibilities. Nečasová et al. seemed to confuse these two definitions in their article. Another example deals with the concept of teleology and its definition as stated in the article by Nečasová et al. at page 80: "philosophical teaching which prioritizes the consequences of behaviour." Jinek and Křišťan argue that this definition incorrectly combines two definitions of this concept: "teleology as »philosophical teaching« arises from the existence of the final cause (Spaemann/Löw, 2004), and teleology as consequentialism, i.e. an ethical school emphasising the consequences of actions" (p. 126).

Presentation of theories

According to Jinek and Křišťan, the manner in which the relationship between these theories is presented, i.e. without a broader historical contextualisation, gives the impression that these theories or conceptions are completely unrelated or contradictory "but if we want to compare these theories one needs to assume a certain bottom line in their premises" (p. 127). In this context, Jinek and Křišťan argue that Kant does make use of such concepts as moral emotion,

virtue, good character, but instead sets them within a different context. Utilitarianism, in the atmosphere influenced by Kant, attempts to provide its own alternative to deontology. Gilligan along with additional authors are inspired by feminist ethics and explain their stance with respect to tradition. It would therefore be appropriate to present these theories within the framework of broader currents of ethical thinking.

This is also related to the schematic method used for introducing the individual theories. Each theory is presented through several (although essential) characterizations from which the patterns of action are derived for the case study in question. This creates the impression as if there was always one necessary pattern of behaviour, thereby misleading students into "an interpretation", whereas e.g. Kant's ethics appear to be focused exclusively on duty, ignoring the consequences which are accounted for by utilitarianism. None of these theories, however, demonstrate a proper regard for the interpersonal relations and the context which are conscientiously treated by the ethics of care. This would thus seem in the readers' eyes to be the one and only sufficiently developed theory. Such a reductive interpretation lacks respect for the problem as a whole and thereby loses the ability to become a plausible argumentation strategy" (ibid.).

An insufficient historical understanding correlates, in Jinek's and Křišťan's opinion, with that methodological inconsistency due to which the authors of the relevant source literature are not always cited. The original article therefore only draws on the general notion of the conceptions, mostly taken from textbooks. Jinek and Křišťan point out the wide-spread unfortunate habit of repeating information which has already been published (so-called re-writing of the existing texts *in extenso*) without an effort to explore and understand the issue more thoroughly. Students are consequently prone to repeat those well-worn clichés and close the door on the possibility of reflecting on the theories themselves.

Mode of application

Jinek and Křišťan found the application quite schematic. They are apparently disappointed to see the authors "instead of a thorough presentation of an argument on the advantages of the individual theories, placing an emphasis on the concrete situation ("case study") which leaves the impression that it is somewhat pre-interpreted on the basis of a conviction that a particular theory is appropriate for application" (p. 128), in this case, the ethics of care. They illustrate their opinion by pointing to the different methodological status of the characterisation of the theories discussed. If the ethics of care incorporates or relates to such spheres of interest as relationship, responsibility, emotionality, communication and contextuality, then all the argumentation is quite pointless or redundant because such a programme can only be fully accepted in social work. "The abstract principle (duty, utility) and the characteristics of a particular situation (relationship, context and communication) cannot be as such compared with one another. It is nevertheless obvious that Kant with his emphasis on duty does not intend to deny the importance of relationship (see above), just as Mill with his concept of utility does not want to deny the necessary contextuality." (ibid.). These theories thus enable various degrees of concretisation: Kant focuses on the principles of moral assessment, whereas utilitarianism, with its focus on the procedures used for the application of a universal principle to a specific behaviour, lies on the borderline between the principal and the concrete. The ethics of care in particular aims at proper courses of behaviour.

A solution in the range of the ethics of care also has an advantage with respect to the topic of the case study, with this corresponding with one of the major characteristics of this ethical school, i.e. the topic of communication. According to Jinek and Křišťan, the culmination of the argument is seen by Nečasová et al. in the transfer of agency (the one who breaks off the contact is the second person), which is scarcely conceivable in the case of Kant or

utilitarianism. Jinek and Křišťan also emphasise the accidental nature of this transfer of agency. "Although it might seem a tremendous success when the other person does something we would like to but cannot do on our own initiative, it should be mentioned that this result is actually accidental" (p. 129).

They also see the question of gender as particularly problematic. The reason for having a preference for the ethics of care is the fact that the subjects making the decisions in the case study are all women. The discussion might as well be over at this point for the males taking part in the discussion. Jinek and Křišťan thus demonstrate how the assessment of theories depends on the authors' own preliminary options. Ethics is consequently reduced to the mere ability to imagine "an appropriate case study for which the ideas and theories are but an arsenal of arguments which support the selected solution" (ibid.).

Summary

The writers responding to the original paper thus level criticism particularly at 1) the tendency towards a schematic application of ethical theories which are incompatible in their nature, 2) an a priori preference for the ethics of care, i.e. the fact that Nečasová et al. judge the theories based on their own assumptions which are hidden in the partial case study.

Jinek and Křišťan also reject the widespread erroneous notion that "in the history of thought we find a reservoir of ideas available to be 'used'." (p. 129). Instead they suggest that we immerse ourselves in this "well" and try to think along "with it", i.e. try to understand these ideas from within and perform some serious thinking about our own views and stance down to the principal base. "Theory is not available here 'to be used in practice', but also works vice versa. Practice does not force us to throw theory away because of its 'uselessness'" (ibid.). Theories cannot therefore be used as a direct guide to application but can instead provide certain strategies for dealing with and putting forward the arguments as a means of justification. This can be acquired through thorough reflection and thinking through the author's ideas. An essential prerequisite for this procedure is both the internalisation of these theories and motivation (they should arise from our own quarrels with a certain situation/problem and with our ethical presupposition). To quote these writers, they are not attempting to suggest "that Kant's ethics would only bring benefit to those who immerse themselves in a 10-year-long scientific study thereof. Ethics is not a discrete or elitist discipline, but instead makes it possible for a complete newcomer to obtain insight into the state of affairs" (p. 130). This specific idea becomes obvious in situations when students express their interest and appreciation of the fact that they have found their own way through a problem, etc. Ethics education should therefore ensure "that students assure themselves of something they have learnt so that they are able to speak knowledgeably and sensibly, as well as comprehensibly, about the situations they encounter" (ibid.).

In conclusion, the authors suggest that ethical theories in the educational process should be presented to students in the following manner: 1) in their specific context, 2) with an emphasis on the methodical status of the particular theory, 3) taking account of the danger of simplified straightforward causality, 4) with the option of an "empathic" or "charitable" recognition of the value of various theories, and 5) with an endeavour to make the study of ethics motivating (i.e. enlivened by those ethical questions which every student asks him/herself).

3) Reaction 2 (Nečasová at al.)

In the next issue of *Czech and Slovak Social Work (3/2011)* Mirka Nečasová, Zdeňka Dohnalová and Renáta Talašová responded to the criticism by Jinek and Křišťan in their article entitled *How should ethics be taught in social work?* In their reaction, they first focus on the nature of social work as an eclectic discipline and consequently respond to the criticism of the application.

Social work as an eclectic discipline and traditional science

The article begins with a definition of social work according to IFSW. "The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people in order to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work." (IFSW [on-line]). Unlike other helping professions, social work treats the life situation of clients in a complete manner. The goal is to help establish a balance between the expectation of the environment, support by the social environment, and people's abilities to cope with the expectation of the environment. The term "coping" entails the fulfilment of the expectation as well as denial of this expectation or redefinition thereof. The social worker employee thus helps the service user in establishing the balance if the user him/herself fails to do so (cf. Bartlett, 1970; Musil, 2004). To comply with these requirements, the social worker should make use of knowledge of various other disciplines (including law, psychology, demography, sociology, pedagogy, philosophy, ethics, medicine etc.) with this calling for an eclectic approach. Eclecticism, as understood by the authors, is the application of several elements of theories and strategies intrinsic to various schools or even disciplines. Such an extensive coverage and the necessity to integrate at least some of the findings, theories and approaches of these disciplines pose the inherent risk of superficiality and difficulties in treating these heterogeneous elements correctly.

When the authors examine the question of what possible benefits may be provided for social work by traditional sciences which are, in fact, free of an eclectic approach, they refer, with a certain hyperbole, to various approaches adopted by a scientist who is confronted with a new thesis (Galtung in Horyna, 1998). They mention the following reactions, characterised by typical questions: the Anglo-Saxon style (How can I operate with and make use of the new thesis in practice?), the Teutonic (How can I deduce the thesis?), the Gallic (Is the thesis neatly pronounceable in French as well?) and the Nippon style (Who is your master?). According to Horyna, the Central European philosophical-cultural environment is characterised by the Teutonic style. It is "a compact style of reaction to new issues, where the state of affairs is more likely to be overwhelmed by a profundity of theoretical treatment..." (p. 79). Due to the nature of social work, it is probable that the philosophy and ethics education carried out in this Teutonic style would be rejected by the students because they would simply miss the point of it. "To rectify the experience of those who *only come into contact with philosophy as a less than useful, narrowly defined, science for the chosen few*" (Fischer, 2008: 5) there is a need, Fischer suggests, to adopt an approach which views philosophy (including ethics) as an open discipline" (ibid.). An "Open discipline", in this context, means a science which introduces topics related to the helping relationship in its broadest sense, thereby contributing to the personal growth of the social worker, a more profound understanding of the client and the helping relationship with a view to achieving more efficient communication in the help offered. If we accept the aforementioned typology, the approach outlined by Fischer actually resembles the Anglo-Saxon style as opposed to the Teutonic one (which comes as no surprise considering the relatively practical nature of social work as a discipline).

Apart from the aforementioned openness and practicality, the authors in their considerations as to the possible benefits provided by traditional sciences to social work also mention the need for humility. "Classical works of philosophy and ethics are available through our own interpretation or interpretation of other authors." (p. 79). This interpretation, although apparently objective, always presupposes a certain subjective selection and arrangement. It also means that there are various interpretations and it is not quite clear which ideas underlie the visions of the previous authors. "Which is the real Kant or Mill? Ultimately, this question has no answer because *written texts only come alive when someone else reads them*". (Boylan, 2000: 184) (ibid). The reader only selectively accentuates certain elements. In social work, these are presumably the elements which enable him/her to view a concrete practice.

Reaction to criticism concerning the application of elements of selected ethical theories

The authors declare that their intention was "to analyse the issue from multiple points of view in order to demonstrate what basis may be provided for the follow-up solution thanks to an acquaintance with selected ethical theories" (p. 80). Jirek and Křišťan, in the authors' opinion, derived their reaction from at least two crucial misunderstandings of the original article that they criticised. The reason for the misunderstanding "may lie in the preliminary assumptions within the intentions of which the text was read, although a certain inaccuracy in terms of the formulation and lack of refinement of the text may also be to blame" (ibid.). What kind of misunderstanding does this involve?

Jinek and Křišťan presume that the authors of the original article viewed the selected theories as alternative to one another without any historical context which would have implied their cohesion and interrelationship. The authors in their reaction, nevertheless, agree that it is suitable to focus on the historical context, although they emphasise that their article was primarily aimed at various possible (not alternative) views of the concrete situation. "Although Kant did not avoid such topics as compassion or moral emotion, his key concepts are actually those of duty, autonomy and the categorical imperative. Similarly, the ethics of care has its fundamentals in the concept of relationship, although it also views the avoidance of using others and oneself as a means as extremely important (but always with respect to a specific relationship). The essential issue for utilitarianism is the quantity of good (happiness) as opposed to misery, although the issue of self-sacrifice is also raised here" (ibid.). It concerns an accentuation of various elements taken from the various theories, be it in the form of abstract concepts which may become the basis for a particular course of action, or in the form of the properties of a specific situation which indicate e.g. the nature of the social worker-client relationship. From the point of view of social work, the ultimate objective is to help the client "...so that he/she is able and willing to help him/herself (and the result following this objective is unlikely to be perceived as accidental)" (ibid.).

The second misunderstanding concerns Jinek and Křišťan's assumption that the authors have a preference for applying the solution in accordance with the aspects which are predominantly present in the ethics of care and that they in advance chose a suitable case study which would best fit their intention to achieve this pre-set goal. The reason for such a preference is seen in the gender imbalance (which limits the validity of the results of the article to women only). The authors argue that in their original article their intention was to emphasise various elements of theories which have some influence on the decision-making process as well as on the final decision, yet they did not propose a final solution at all. They also refer to the well-known finding that "approaches which correspond with the ethics of care are variable and present in both female and male culture" (p. 80) (see e.g. Nečasová, 2001: 41).

They consequently respond to the remark concerning the ambiguity of concepts. They agree with Jinek and Křišťan that in social work and ethics (as a part of philosophy) the same

concepts have different meanings, with the important aspect being that the author and the reader share the same specifically used meaning.

Teaching ethics in social work

Apart from the five points proposed by Jinek and Křišťan, the authors have more of an interest in paying attention to the skills and abilities of social workers to respond to those ethical questions encountered in everyday practice. They are of the opinion that ethics should be taught within the context of social work if possible, in a form that is both comprehensible and practical.

4) Reaction 3 (Fischer)

The discussion hitherto is pondered over by Ondřej Fischer (2012) in his paper *Is ethical theory an appropriate tool for practice in social work?* presented at the conference 7th Hradec Days of Social Work. He bases his article on the premise that "ethical theory is still looking for its place and mode of application in the Czech environment" (p. 74) and considers several conditions and prerequisites for successful interconnection between theory and practice in this environment. He defines ethics for the purpose of professional practice as follows: "a discipline which not only identifies a set of important values for practice, but first and foremost, stimulates a critical theoretical view to be taken on the ethically problematic situations in practice" (p. 74).

The author initially summarises the discussion of the application of ethical theories which, in his view, demonstrate two different approaches to ethical theories. The article by Nečasová et al. is distinctive for its endeavour to demonstrate the path to a more consistent application of ethical theories in practice and warns of certain unfortunate formulations in the characterisation of individual theories, a simplified approach to the practical application of these theories and an inadequate expectation of using these theories in order to solve these dilemmas. The authors, he suggest, "see the ethical theories as certain standard paths through which one can achieve the particular results of solved ethical dilemmas but fail to reflect on the historical context within the source of these theories" (p. 75). Jinek and Křišťan, on the other hand, view ethical theory "more as an outcome of historical-philosophical reflection on a particular author and his/her thought" (p. 75). In their reflections they try to find away "for practice to enrich theory and vice versa" (ibid.).

The concept of theory

Fisher demonstrates that "theory" as interpreted in the classical concept entails a specific enhancement of our own views. In modern interpretations, the essential "questionability" of this enhancement is emphasised. This is due to a necessary simplification of the issues or due to a certain type of thinking determined e.g. by generalisation, taking observations out of their context or from the ideas of a certain leading thinker, etc. The question remains whether this simplification of the facts being reviewed, which is inherent in every theory, is not actually in conflict with the requirement set out by Jinek and Křišťan for "an understanding of the old books from within". Fischer adds that "even the most profound *understanding of the old books from within* could not exclude a certain distortion of the situation being examined by means of a more or less precise comprehension of the applied theory" (p. 76).

Fisher continues with another question as to whether the ethical theory should only enable "students to assure themselves and substantiate something they have already known from their moral understanding, as indicated by Křišťan and Jinek" (p. 76). From the point of view of critical reflection practice (here understood as a consideration "in a particular situation and

of a particular situation"), the ethical theory (as the justification of an ethically proper course of action) would probably differ from the original views of the subject (whether it is a student, social worker or teacher). This subject may thus gain a certain inspiration or a different view of the situation which did not come to his/her mind before, which may also become evident in his/her approach to a certain solution. Ethical theories thus lead to a certain specific forming of views, understanding and appreciation of values in practice which bears a sign of universality compared with subjective and at times relatively simplified views. Nevertheless, people always take a stand on this universality, which may result in an appreciation of further (new) values and views which may come in handy when dealing with ethically significant situations. "The extent to which these values are evident to the particular employee or student always depends on the degree to which they understand the context of the relevant ethical theory." (p. 77). Ethical theory thus questions the subjectivist world-view and urges us to think through and distinguish between the contemporary and historical context of the theory concepts. The education should ensure that its output not only includes knowledge (understanding) and skills (ability to apply) but also recognition of the objective meaningfulness and purposefulness of the subject studied (stance). "If a knowledge of ethical theory has to therefore be included in social work ethics courses, it should not only be the educator, but also the student, who can meaningfully formulate the specific benefits of the studied ethical theory for life and professional practice" (p. 78).

The author closes his musings by suggesting that the role of theory in the sphere of social work practice seems to be legitimate even in ethics. It assists in critical reflection and enriches the approach to social work with new values. It also serves as a tool for an improved identification of methods for dealing with ethically significant practical situations.

Conclusion

The purpose of the article is to provide a wider scientific community with certain insight into one of the discussions and/or to invite the community to participate in the same.

The views of the participants in this discussion do not have to be seen as antagonistic but rather as parts of a continuum, where the extreme position on one side is characterised exclusively by an endeavour to re-interpret the opinions of classical thinkers (featuring a lifelong immersion in the study of individual theories). The extreme position on the other side would feature an exclusive reliance on practical experience and routine procedures without theoretical reflection. The first extreme position, from the perspective of educators, would be occupied by the "teacher philosophers", who teach ethics and philosophy using their own language and thoughts without any deep interest in social work. The opposite position would be held, however, by the "non-philosopher teachers", who teach ethics and philosophy only providing students with the schemes and standards of a code of ethics. Similarly, these extreme positions are seen among students, on the one side by those who cram theories into their heads for obtaining credits in a particular subject without understanding the practical application of the theories, the other extreme position being held by those who search for guides to specific practical solutions. It is evident that defending these extreme positions is basically of no benefit to the development of the discipline, to education quality or as assistance to clients. The concept of education in fact ranges widely across the entire continuum.

It is symptomatic that this discussion takes place during times full of contradictions which certain authors refer to as modern or postmodern. The modern world, which once treasured grand all-explaining theoretical systems, homogeneity, unambiguity and continuity, is currently gradually displaced in certain areas by the radical plurality of postmodern thought.

The postmodern age is instead characterised by ambiguity, permanent de-construction and re-construction of meanings, doubts concerning the monopoly of influential and well-established theoretical perspectives and practical approaches. Postmodern society is viewed as a network of contents which are continually constructed by people through their language, thus an understanding of these contents is enabled thanks to language. "Truth is made rather than found." (Rorty, 1996: 3) Language is no longer seen as an expression of the internal mentality of an individual and of conceptions through which we explain the world. With all these new and alternative views of human rationality emerging and disappearing in a pluralist society, "language (becomes) inherently a by-product of human interchange" (Gergen, Thatchenkery, 2002: 235) and rationality a form of collective participation. Otherness is becoming predominant to a greater extent than ever before, including those views and opinions which used to be abandoned (e.g. an experience-based view of the client as opposed to the specialist view of the professional). An increased emphasis is currently being placed on the perception of differences between various concepts of life, forms of knowledge and rationalities, on the ability and willingness to comprehend this diversity of meanings through discussion, and on negotiations between the views of individual participants in the discussion. "In every decision, one should always keep in mind the blind spots in one's vision and protect oneself against one's own and everyone else's absolutisations. This is not only done in order to become firmly convinced that the situation may look completely different from another point of view, but because this consciousness will pass into a concrete decision-making process and practice. The world built on this principle will become more specific in particularities but more coherent as a whole" (Welsch, 1995: 52).

We are of the opinion that plurality in teaching philosophy and ethics brings forth, apart from certain disadvantages (e.g. relativism), a potential for creativity and mutual enrichment and as such may be seen as positive. A mutual openness to otherness and an ability to share one's visions, even if they arise from a completely different way of thinking, is an essential prerequisite. A familiarisation with other approaches and notions also entails the cultivation of an individual's ability to share with others without necessarily adopting their ideas which may seem new or unusual. Through discussion we may come to the conclusion that an individual approaches are close to one another even more so than it might seem at first glance. Without participation in the discussion, this finding would have been extremely difficult to discover.

When looking at the practice of ethics education in social work in the Czech Republic we can ascertain that the importance of this discipline is widely recognised. Could these reflections on various concepts of applying the theories contribute to a more profound understanding between the supporters of different approaches to the education in this discipline, within the aforementioned continuum, and subsequently to a more appropriate adoption thereof?

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Education of social workers in Slovakia

Tatiana Matulayová, Beáta Balogová

Introduction

An analysis of social work as a profession proceeds from an analysis of the societal context, its generation and development. The final decades of the 20th century saw a discussion concerning the ever increasing impact of modernization on the present and future of social work. It is the nature of social work to be full of contradictions. Public expectations, as articulated by politicians in connection with the mission and objectives of the social work profession, are often contradictory as well. They are in addition in direct contradiction with the expectations of the social workers themselves. Their altruistic motivation for choosing to work in social work does not correspond with the current proclamations appealing to the public responsibility of this profession or with the increasingly stronger trend to have a preference for the concept of empowerment within the framework of critical and postmodern practice. The on-going de-construction of the welfare state, accompanied by an increasing pressure on economization of social work and a parallel increase in new social risks, have emerged as new challenges for the further development of social work. The editors Bernd Dewe, Hans-Uwe Otto and Stefan Schnurr have defined these challenges as follows: welfare state reform, managerism of social work services, ambivalence and/or risks of preferring evidence-based practice and tendency for de-professionalization in social services.

Generally speaking, social work is expected to stimulate social change and as such should be a morphogenetic institution.[29] It is disputable whether such an expectation is realistic under the existing conditions.[30]

From a historical point of view, social work developed as a modern social institution focused on solving social problems (Merten, 1997) at the turn of the 20th century.[31] Its roots can be traced to the emergence and development of the welfare state, primarily in the United States, Great Britain and Germany. The social work profession has continuously developed in these countries for more than a century.

The reality in Slovakia is quite different[32] as the continuity of development was interrupted in the second half of the 20th century and social work only began to establish itself as a profession as late as the early 1990s. The turbulent and uneven development within the profession in Slovakia has been determined by both internal and external factors. Apart from historical and cultural circumstances surrounding the perception and building of the system of public social protection and social work, the key internal factors over the past twenty years have also included a frequently changing conception of government social policy, a relatively complicated economic situation and growing social problems. The external factors can be analysed in the context of the impacts of modernisation, globalisation and Europeanization.

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[29] As implied e.g. by the latest definition of IFSW: "The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. The principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work."

[30] The situation in the Czech Republic has been analysed for example by Josef Zita (2008).

[31] Merten, R. *Soziale Arbeit alle autonomes Funktionssystem der modernen Gesellschaft? Argumente für eine konstruktive Perspektive.* In: Merten, R. *Systemtheorie Sozialer Arbeit. Neue Ansätze und veränderte Perspektiven.* Opladen: Leske + Budrich. 2000.

[32] Similar to other countries of the former Soviet bloc.

The social context of social work established as a profession after the year 1989 – the need for social work within society and the legacy of Socialism

Political change taking place in 1989 brought about substantial changes in the national economy and management of the countries of the Visegrad region. These changes included, amongst other things: the loss of traditional markets in Socialist countries, the conversion of the armaments industry, privatisation and price liberalisation.[33] Negative social-economic impacts on the population, as well as the need to reform all spheres of social life, gave rise to a public demand for qualified professional social workers.

Basic conditions have been gradually established to set up social work as a profession starting in 1990. This was primarily enabled by the first legislation in the field of social security. Act No. 180/1990 Coll., which amended Act 100/1988 Coll. on social security, broke up the state monopoly in the sphere of social assistance and allowed both legal persons and natural persons to provide social services. The plurality of the social assistance subjects allowed by Act No. 83/1990 Coll. on freedom of association[34] and by Act No. 308/1991 Coll. on freedom of belief and status of churches and religious communities[35] culminated at this time with Act No. 135/1992 Coll., on provision of social services by legal and natural persons. This act formed a transparent space for new providers of social services.

The public administration underwent the first stage of restructuring, which encompassed the disbandment of national committees and the establishment of new state administration bodies (district and borough councils), over the years 1990-91. An Act issued by the Slovak National Council No. 369/1990 Coll. On the general administration system as of 1 January 1991 introduced the principle of self-governing bodies within the territory of Slovakia. A dual model of public administration began to form in Slovakia.

Institutional space for practicing the social work profession has undoubtedly expanded as a result of this new legislation. Within the situation of decentralised public administration, the first stage of decentralisation of public authorities and the extraordinary activation of the third sector along with evident interest on the part of foreign experts (scholars and practitioners) in Slovakia and in social work, it has been possible to see an enormous willingness to establish the social work profession on a firm basis. Various examples of collaboration projects can be seen at all levels (state, region and community).

At the level of state policy, analytical, strategic and conceptual materials are being created that presume the development of the autonomous profession of social work.

Attention has been paid to the university education system with Comenius University in Bratislava[36] becoming the first place to establish an independent Department of Social Work supported from abroad.[37]

The changes in the ideology and political system could not, however, represent an instant change in institutions and organisation culture.

Due to ideological constraints, social work did not officially exist as of the 1950s. It was nevertheless still practiced, primarily by the bureaucratic state apparatus (local and district national committees). Control prevailed over assistance with the so-called "medical model"

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[33] The disbandment of Comecon, the loss of markets in the former Soviet Union.
[34] The formation of unincorporated associations was made possible.
[35] In the framework of which single-purpose facilities began to exist established by churches.
[36] The Faculty of Education.
[37] At present, the activity of Jeff Helmer (Netherlands) may serve as an example.

being pursued.[38] The preferred interventions during that period included social security benefits and residential social services. Although some of the "social workers" at the time (the majority were women) attended two-year follow-up courses in social-legal protection these courses were but a weak preparation for the profession as such, a poor apprenticeship being a product of the times. There was no professional preparation or training at the university level or any system of continuous education.

After the year 1989, the legacy of Socialism manifested itself in full force at the institutional level primarily in the thoughts and behaviour of all those individuals responsible for establishing social work as a profession (including politicians, managers, ordinary staff)[39] Oldřich Matoušek (1999), with respect to an analysis of the state of the residential service system, uses the term "idol" to denote the illusion concerning the act of helping.[40] He mentions the idol of central control and obligatory methodology, the idol of the personality disorder, the idol of personality reconstruction, the idol of the dysfunctional family, the idol of the collective as a therapeutic agent and the idol of professionalism achieved through formal training and education.

The foundation of the Slovak Republic as an independent state: changes in social conditions

The former federal state of Czechoslovakia was peacefully dissolved on the basis of a political decision. The Slovak Republic became independent on 1 January 1993. In its new political, economic and even territorial conditions, the state began to reform the old and create new rules for the operation of all sectors of the national economy.

In terms of conception and state policy, the most important document issued by the government concerning social work was the Conception of the Transformation of the Social Sphere of 1996 which not only defined the basic principles of the reform but also delineated the idea for the new social security system. It consequently formed the conceptual basis for the development of the social work profession.

There are a growing number of universities and colleges throughout Slovakia which offer not only full-time but also distance study programmes in social work. Interest among the public, primarily among the state administration staff, grew rapidly in the initial years (as of 1993). Apart from other factors, the growth was influenced by the 2nd stage of the public administration reform which was finalised with the adoption of the Slovak National Council Act No. 221/1996 Coll., concerning the regional and administrative division of the Slovak Republic, and Act No. 222/1996 Coll., concerning the organisation of local state administration. As a result of the reform, a local level of the state administration was established with 8 regional authorities and district authorities, which led to an increase in social affair department staff and a certain pressure for them to attain proper qualifications.[41]

The development of social work was significantly influenced by the Slovak National Council Act No. 195/1998 Coll. on social assistance, which was the first act to define social work, the qualification requirements for social workers and deal with issues concerning lifelong education.

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[38] In the reference literature, it is also referred to as "diagnostic"; this model was used at the very early development stage of social work even in the USA and other countries.

[39] And it is still evident.

[40] Derived from a Greek word "eidolon", i.e. image, apparition, phantom.

[41] Altough there were no qualification requirements defined for social workers at this time.

As of 1 January 2002, the first regional self-governing body was established, 8 superior self-governing territorial units (Act No. 302/2001 Coll.), which took over the responsibilities of the state administration. This gave rise to a symmetrical model of public administration at the regional level which enabled the same borough to be served by the institutions of both the state and self-governing administration. The self-governing administration was only established at the local level. Act No. 416/2001 Coll. gradually transferred further responsibilities from the state administration bodies to the municipalities and self-governing regions over the years 2002-2004.

Non-governmental organisations also began to establish themselves in a parallel manner in the area of social work providing an alternative to the social work provided by the state.

The need and specific form of the standards of social work, in terms of profession, education and employment, were discussed at the level of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, within the community of social workers and later within the Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia.[42] The process of adopting these standards at the legislation level or at least in the form of consensus at individual levels or in the professional communities has been relatively slow, unsatisfactory for many of those involved and is still unfinished.

This state of affairs correlates with the absence of any trade organisation or an independent labour union. In the said period, various professional (trade) organisations of social workers were established but lacked the necessary political force to lobby for the interests of the community of social workers. One of these organisations, the Association of social workers in Slovakia in its General assembly in Žilina, held on 31 May 1997, adopted the social worker Code of Ethics.

The Slovak Republic – a new member country of the European Union

After a longer period of preparation for accession, filled with the approximation of legislation in the field of social security to that of the European Union, the harmonisation of the social protection system as well as the use of financial resources from the pre-accession funds, the Slovak Republic became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004.

The accession has also induced requirements for qualified social workers as a result of the increased agenda and approximation of the EU laws. Another circumstance which influenced increased interest primarily among employed applicants for social work study was the result of the Slovak National Council Act No. 312/2001 Coll. on the civil service according to which a civil servant in performance of his/her professional activities must comply with a minimum requirement of having completed the first stage of university/college education. This primarily applied to the staff of the district authorities, later to public employment agencies, social issues and families. This act required that workers begin their studies by the end of 2005. The eagerness to join the social work study programmes was also seen among other target groups, such as police officers, penitentiary staff, customs officers, staff of national insurance offices, municipalities as well as businessmen, bank clerks, and private company employees, predominantly those working in the human resources departments, etc.

The reaction on the part of the school system to the public demand for qualified social workers consisted of support for establishing social work study programmers throughout public universities in Slovakia. The increase in educational opportunities was later multiplied by newly established private colleges and universities as well as new state universities.

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[42] Established in 1996.

The pressure on the part of society and political requirements for further expansion have later led to several consequences and threats in the area of social work education concerning, for example, the practical use of social workers or the quality of education. The conditions established for the sphere of university education consequently failed to fully reflect the existence of these consequences of expansion, specifically in relation to the labour market.

The development of social worker university education should at the same time be viewed within the context of the on-going three-stage reform of the Slovak university education system. The process of reform has, for example, brought about the following: the abolition of higher-secondary-school education in the field of social work (in spite of the previous development and support of this sector), the introduction of complete accreditation, changes in financing, etc. The consequences of these, and many other measures and legal regulations, on the public demand for the area of social work university education and the relevant labour market segment would definitely deserve a separate in-depth analysis. The everyday life of the qualified social workers as well as the current students and lecturers in social work reverberates with the question of the social prestige and status of social work in relation to the quality of education.

At the level of state education policy in relation to accession to the EU, the European college and university environment needs to be taken into account and its influence on the member countries. The influence of the Bologna process must first of all be adequately emphasised in the area of undergraduate and graduate preparation of social workers. The adoption of a system ensuring easily recognisable and comparable academic titles also via so-called diploma supplements, has supported opportunities of Slovak graduates to establish themselves on the labour market. The most important change has been, however, the adoption of an educational system which is virtually based on two major cycles: undergraduate and graduate. Access to the second cycle in social work is subject to the successful completion of the first study cycle the duration of which should be at least three years. A problem is posed by so-called "affinity study programmes" which are currently accepted for admission to the follow-up graduate degree. The second cycle of the social work education is recognised as a separate cycle. Applicants are allowed to join the so-called vertical transfer (i.e. after graduating from a university or college, they may continue their studies elsewhere in the country). One can even complete the third stage of university education in a social work study programmes in the Slovak Republic. The doctoral viva voce on the basis of which the academic title of PhDr. may be obtained even in the social work specialisation consists of a certain rarity in the European Union.

Slovak universities and colleges are currently using the ECTS credit system which is recognised as an appropriate tool for support of broad student mobility.

The support of the inevitable European dimension in university education, primarily with respect to the preparation of curricula, cooperation between institutions, mobile schemes and integrated study, training and research programmes, is still, in my view, an insufficiently reflected challenge in the area of the social worker education. To illustrate this thesis, this article points out general data which actually bears a certain meaning for the education of social workers. In its evaluation of the 10-year use of the Erasmus programme in Slovakia, carried out in the academic year 2007/2008, the National Agency SAAIC claimed that the programme involved approximately 6000 full-time students which accounted for 1.05% of the student population at the time. For a comparison, 3.5% of the student population of the EU took place in the programme over the same time. It is also important to mention the fact that while Slovak students generally view Germany, France and Spain as their target country, the majority of international students enrolled in Slovak universities are from the Czech Republic and Poland, based on my own experience, students of social work lack an interest in studies or

an internship abroad within the Erasmus programme. Those who are interested often have a preference for those countries with the native language are close to Slovak.

Social work as a science: (re)defining scientific theory in the process of social changes

When the socio-ecosystem changes discussed above are properly reflected upon their impact becomes apparent primarily in the area of (re)defining the scientific theory of social work which is, according to Hendel (2005), perceived as a system of concepts and statements which represent the abstract explanation of the selected phenomena. Theory consequently allows for understanding the phenomena of the ambient world, to explain, to criticise or to predict them. It is a concentrated set of knowledge expressed in a certain symbolic manner. Development occurred at a turbulent pace, both in the Slovak Republic and throughout Europe as well as within the scientific theory of social work. The scientific theory of social work is thus in continual movement with the development of the science requiring continuous verification, falsification of the existing theories, the refinement of them and completion and creation of new theories which would be specific to the Slovak environment. These social and procedural system changes should be respected by educators in social work[43], and the professional association of social work[44] as well as the actors, these being the social work professionals.[45]

Defining or redefining the scientific theory of social work in the process of social changes has become inevitable. Strictly speaking, theorists are often found "in trouble" when asked about (re)defining the theoretical-methodological premise of the theory of social work. Complications actually begin with the very definition of the science of social work. In Slovakia, for example, the question as to whether social work is a "genuine" science has been discussed over the past two decades. This "sitting on the fence" inhibits the development of social work as a science which needs to respect the requirements for development of a scientific theory in order to maintain its scientific nature. Science is characterised by the set of systematically organised findings about a certain topic area as well as by the process of generating these findings on the basis of certain rules. By combining the *science* and the *discipline,* we also demonstrate our interest in its social, cultural, spiritual roots which together make up a broad network of relationships. In this sense, science may be understood as a certain type of *social institution* (Hendl, 2005) with its functions and tasks performed for the sake of society.

Another important factor is the fact that science cannot be separated from scientific research. In this respect, we also have to face certain problems in the Slovak environment. Theorists often "blunder" when trying to define the scientific research and research methods and do not seem to realise the uniqueness of the approach implemented in social work. They consequently continue "borrowing" definitions primarily from sociology, psychology or pedagogy, as if they were unaware that their Anglo-Saxon colleagues had already "found their way through the problem". The results of the research findings are therefore prone to appear chaotic, confusing and irrelevant to the theory or practice of social work. The entire situation actually resembles two communicating vessels whose relationship should be as close as possible. Science and research complement one other. A set of systematically organised findings, science, would not exist without the process of generating new findings, i.e. without research. Research involves a systematic, carefully planned activity led by the effort to answer the questions raised and contribute to the development of the discipline. P. Gavora (2006, p. 7) provides the wider context for the science/research relationship.

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[43] These include university and college centres in Slovakia which educate students in the area of social work.
[44] Successfully functioning and developing organisations, such as the Association of Educators in Social Work and the Association of Supervisors and Social Counsellors, above all.
[45] All the governmental, non-governmental and private institutions and organisations which implement social work in Slovakia.

Another troubling issue is the practice of social work which highlights the significant difference between and hierarchical nature of science and practice. *Science* is a higher form of cognition than everyday cognition. Unlike everyday routine cognition, science employs special procedures, sophisticated methods and processes and even technical tools and equipment. Another difference is the fact that science is not focused all that much on practical goals and steps but instead on the theoretical cognition and development of theories which would explain and clarify the world. Science precisely describes the analyses, categorises the observed phenomena and explains them, thereby serving the practice to understand the on-going social phenomena and know how to react to them in a competent manner. At this point, scientific research comes in as a link between science and practice, being based on the *empirical* principle which requires all scientific findings to be acquired on the basis of evident facts, to be objectively verifiable from our experience. In our environment we still encounter, however, problems when the practice, always and under any circumstances, "dictates" what the scientific objectives of theory should be. As a result, science and scientists are only able to passively observe the "destructive" consequences of this unfavourable development in relation to the science of social work, its research and (primarily) to practice itself. The establishment of the Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia in the first post-revolution decade was an extremely important step in remedying the situation.

The Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia

With a view to supporting the qualitative development of university and college education of social work, an initiative by lecturers from the Department of Adult Education and Social Work at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Prešov (under the authority of prof. Anna Tokárová) and her colleagues gave rise to the Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia which was established on 2 March 1998 as an unincorporated association and registered with the Regional Authority Office in Prešov. The *Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia* (hereinafter AVSP) was established as a voluntary association of universities, colleges and secondary schools which provide education in the field of social work across the Slovak Republic. AVSP's activity has been focused on presentation, promotion and defense of its members' interest through negotiations with other legal bodies or persons which operate in the Slovak Republic and abroad. In addition, AVSP aims at being involved in other associations and in the preparation and continuous innovation of the Minimum Standards for social work education and monitoring adherence to these standards in various AVSP-member sites. Last but not least, it has sought to establish conditions for mutual collaboration of the AVSP members.

ASVP's genesis can be divided up to the present into four developmental stages with respect to the association management. Important activities took place at the first stage led by prof. Anna Tokárová. The *Basic Education Standards for Social Work* were finally adopted in March 2002. These standards were conceived in a series of meetings where representatives of all those involved, from various areas of social worker preparation and education, and representatives of employers providing social work, fully accepted the motion by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic, by means of which they committed themselves to adhere to the standards in their curricula and training programmes. The application of the Basic Education Standards took place within the framework of the Conception of Preparation and Further Education of Social Service Providers and was as such a guarantee that the graduates of social work study programmes would acquire the required professional profile. These standards were created and evaluated in the meeting of the Expert Group of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic in Lučivná, January 2002. The association of educators accepted the principles as a framework standard which was applied in evaluation of the curricula at the social work secondary schools and colleges.

The education standards for social work identify social work as an individual field of study. The document characterises the basic requirements for social work education and defines the professional profile of the graduates. Graduates of the first education degree in social work are expected to carry out the following: analyse the problems and opportunities which arise in various areas of the social sphere, propose adequate forms of social assistance and entire systems thereof in order to fulfil the requirements for maintenance and improvement of the population life, create activities and implement them on site, work with specialists of other professions, propose, conceive, implement, expand, adjust and localise the forms and methods of social work. The theoretical knowledge of each social worker should include the essentials of sociology, statistics, demography, psychology and the theory of social work which are necessary in order to perform the tasks of social work, a knowledge of special areas which are inevitable for social work with a client in a family, residential social work, social work in institutes and institutions, as well as an awareness of the client's family, personality, social group and social assistance facilities. Social work graduates should be able to work with a client in the area of social assistance, be competent to work as an outreach employee and family counsellor for social issues, as an assistant to youth, seniors and the disabled and other people who rely on someone else's help. They can also be a "liaison officer" for various institutions and social security administration, a specialist for institutes and care-providing homes, social care institutions and children's homes and custody centres, as well as asylum providing homes for individuals, families, groups and communities. A graduate of the first degree should be prepared to work in the social-cultural sphere, in education organising activities (for the unemployed, homeless, retraining courses, etc.) and should be involved in the preparation of social research (*Education Standards for Social Work,* 2003). He/she should be able to present the factual and technical problems of social security to various kinds of clients and to people who rely on social assistance, use their collaboration in search of an optimum solution, effectively participate in the work, research or project team, understand and explain the quantitative dimensions of social problems, organise his/her own study and further education, keep abreast of the latest developments in the theory and practice of social work, observe changes in legislation with respect to labour, family and social issues and apply the same to his/her work. Based on this defined professional profile of a social worker, we have focused on an analysis of professional profiles at universities and colleges in Slovakia.

It should be added that the uniform system of study programmes, based on these standards, is still under construction in Slovakia, as it was in the period described above. The majority of the schools have struggled with an insufficient number (or unavailability) of experts for certain thematic units and with a lack of money to pay for the courses provided by the external teachers. The existing study programmes consequently still have something to improve on both in the general and the specific standards.

A second significant activity of the Association was the acceptance of these standards by the Commission of Accreditation in 2004. The Commission continues to respect the standards as the basic description of the social work study programme.

Over the second stage, until 2004, the Association was presided over by prof. Strieženec, under the auspices of whom the collaboration with the Czech Association of Educators in Social Work flourished, particularly through its participation in the editorial board of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*. During this period, representatives from selected public universities, which offered a social work study programme, held meetings on a regular basis. Issues of education quality, specifically the so-called "study programme description", were a major topic, i.e. efforts to allow vertical mobility within various curricula in Slovakia through a common study programme/standard. This was a time involving planning and implementing cooperation between educators, e.g. in the form of lectures or even

classes/courses presented by visiting lecturers at several universities, or via reciprocal exchange of lecturers (examiners) during the final state exams. The results of this cooperation also included the textbook *Sociálna práca* (Social Work) published by a large collective of authors (representing all the associated educators) under the leadership of Professor Tokárová.

The issue of initiating the formation of a social worker Accreditation Body was specifically discussed and the relevant bill was prepared in a concrete wording. Due to the absence of political will, however, the bill was never submitted to the Slovak National Council.

The third developmental stage of AVSP in Slovakia was undoubtedly connected with its new chairman prof. Milan Schavel, who has been in office since 2004. Over this period, the articles of association were amended and its internal structure stabilized. Collaboration with the Czech ASVSP deepened during the preparation and publishing of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*. Over certain periods (approximately 2007-2009), there has been an increasing demand for raising and using European funds. Several projects have been implemented thanks to these funds. The membership, comprised of natural and legal persons, has been stabilized. The last few years (since 2010) have seen an increasing demand on the part of educators to assert themselves with respect to the Commission of Accreditation and cooperate with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and families in managing issues of social work education. One of the tools was the activity of AVSP members in creating the study programme description, through establishing work groups focused on individual subjects (courses). These goals (the need of which has been discussed since 2006) have not as yet been implemented.

A number of members of AVSP have been engaged in the institutionalising processes of the social work profession as of 2011. They initially formed a work group aimed at the creation of a new code of ethics for social work. They also participated in the preparation of a bill concerning the social work profession late in 2012. Over this period, AVSP also discussed the so-called Global Agenda and the possibilities of joining the appeal for activisation of social workers and support for recognising the social value of the social work profession.

In spite of its nearly 15-year-long tradition, AVSP has remained an unincorporated association and as such is not able to be a partner for the Commission of Accreditation at the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. The activity of the organisation is determined by its human resources, specifically speaking by the real time possibilities of its individual members to pursue the association's mission and objectives. The unincorporated association is not professionalised; it has never had any employees and lacks the necessary financial resources for development of its activities.

The contribution of AVSP in Slovakia, however, is evident. Over a long-term basis, it contributes to the discussion within the academic community and to the development of cooperation with the Czech ASVSP. The Association takes the primary role in the publication of several single-topic issues of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work* or in supporting international dialogue in the area of social work education.

The fourth stage of AVSP existence, beginning in 2012, has been connected with the new president prof. Beáta Balogová and a new board of directors composed of: prof. Ján Gabura, Peter Brnula, PhD., Markéta Rusnáková, PhD., prof. Miroslav Tvrdoň, Eva Mydlíková, PhD., prof. Milan Schavel, PhD., Peter Jusko, PhD. Over this period, the AVSP members completed the process of finalising the Social Work Act in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. They participated in the preparation of the preamble to the bill and created a strategy for follow-up support of the bill in the Slovak National Council. The adoption of the social work act would significantly accelerate the development of social work in Slovakia. The management and board of the association have processed the initiatives for

complete accreditation in 2014 and a curriculum for the undergraduate preparation of social workers in the Slovak environment. In addition, these bodies conduct expert discussion concerning the quality of the specialist magazine in relation to the requirement set out by the funding agency of the Ministry of Education and the Commission of Accreditation. Additional important steps taken by the association have included, the preparation of a nationwide reference work entitled "Vademecum of social work" which involved major experts in the area of social work which processed the individual entries in this encyclopaedia. The association members have also prepared drafts for university/college textbooks which would also include works by specialists from various university sites and departments, corresponding to the required curriculum and basic education standards.

Anna Tokárová: the key personality in the sphere of social work education and its development

Social work as a field of study has been established and developed in Slovakia thanks to several major personalities already mentioned herein-above. This section involves several words about the legacy of prof. Anna Tokárová, who significantly contributed to the development of social work education in Slovakia.

Anna Tokárová witnessed the formation of this field of study at the Faculty of Arts (Pavol Josef Šafárik University in Prešov), the birth of the Association of Educators in Social Work as well as that of the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work* where she held the position of editorial board president for a number of years. Her research focused on various topics of sociology of education, andragogy, social work, gender studies aimed at a systematic approach in sociology of education and teaching strategies for adult learners, pedagogic efficiency and optimisation, social work and human rights, globalisation, education of women, quality of life, myths and gender stereotypes in the light of gender equality policy and feminist criticism. She initially explored sociological aspects of education and theoretical questions concerning the newly established discipline of pedagogy for adult learners in the following works: *A Systematic Approach to the Sociology of Education and Teaching of Adult Learners (1986), Pedagogic Efficiency and Optimisation of Education and Teaching of Adult Learners (1989), etc.* After 1989, under the new socio-economic conditions, she organised and arranged a number of academic conferences with international participants focused on the latest disciplinary problems and topics in the field. She edited and contributed to numerous collections, anthologies and proceedings including: *Trendy praxe a teórie vzdelávania dospelých na Slovensku* (1996) *(Trends in the Practice and Theory of Adult Education in Slovakia), Globalizácia a jej sociálny rozmer* (1998) *(Globalisation and its Social Dimension), Globalisation – Opportunities, Risks, Social Impact* (1999), *Paradoxy globalizácie, vzdelanie a sociálny rozvoj* (2002) *(Paradoxes of Globalisation, Education and Social Development), K metodologickým otázkam výskumu a hodnotenia kvality života* (2002) *(On Methodological Issues of Life Quality Research and Evaluation), Globalizovaný svet, kvalita života a vzdelávanie* (2005) *(The Globalised World, Quality of Life and Education), Synergetický prístup k edukácii – v globalizovanom svete chaosu, neistoty, rizika a paradoxov* (2006) *(A Synergic Approach to Education – in a Globalised world of Chaos, Uncertainty, Risk and Paradoxes),* etc. Prof. Tokárová was the editor and co-author of a national university textbook [10] and studies of social work theory. She explored socio-andragogical aspects of gender studies and published several treatises on the topic, such as *Feminizácia v školstve na Slovensku a jej sociálno-pedagogické súvislosti* (2006) *(Feminisation in the Education System in Slovakia and its Socio-pedagogic Correlations), Równość płci i praca przedstawicieli zawodów pomocowych* (2006*) (Gender Equality and Work in Helping Professionals), Idea humanizmu a rodová rovnosť v zrkadle strategických dokumentov EÚ a SR* (2010) *(The Idea of Humanism and Gender Equality as Reflected in Strategic Documents of the EU and the*

Slovak Republic), Gender Education and the Engaging Potential of Actors of Gender Equality (2011), *Syndróm naučenej bezmocnosti u obetí násilia – genderové a sociálno-andragogické aspekty* (2011) *(The Syndrome of Learned Helplessness amongst Victims of Violence – Gender and Socio-andragogical Aspects)*, etc.

This brief account of prof. Tokárová's activities suffices to illustrate her extraordinary importance for the development of social work in Slovakia. Her school of gender-conscious social work was unique in the Slovak environment. Thanks to her activities extending to the Czech Republic and Poland, she became a popularising agent in terms of the results of research and the specifics of social work in Slovakia.

The role of students in the development of social work education

The role of students is of paramount importance, their creativity, activity and eagerness, for the development of social work as a field of study. Educators in social work consequently pay systematic attention to students. A student scientific-specialist activity consisting of a competition for research studies by social work students is such an example.

The school and nationwide rounds for this competition take place each year. The importance of the competition and its output (proceedings of student work and studies) bring benefits for various people involved. This scientific and specialist activity is the first experience for students to be a researcher who takes this opportunity to explore the secrets of theory, methodology as well as empiricism, thereby learning about the pitfalls of "field work". The universities and colleges, represented by the scholars, make use of the participation in this contest to present the results of their scientific and pedagogic efforts. Simultaneously, the scientific-empirical cognition is being confronted during the competition. Over the last two decades the greatest contribution has been obtained, however, by the science of social work itself, which via the competition "drags" all the participants into its "secret world" and helps them find the Gordian knots leading to higher quality scientific-methodological concepts. Through choosing their research topic, as announced by the lecturers, the students enter the public academic field. They demonstrate a familiarity with both the theory and methodology of science; learn to command the essentials of scientific work and the adequacy of theoretical conclusions respecting the legitimacy of social work as a field of study. The competition is an opportunity for the students to present and confront their works within a broader specialist framework. There is additionally professional feedback provided in the form of reports from tutors and examiners.

The current state of university and college based preparation of social workers

University and college based preparation of social workers in Slovakia is based on the requirements of *Act No. 448/2008 Coll. as amended, on social services,* according to which a social worker should acquire his/her qualification at the first, second or third degree. To ensure the quality of education, AVSP and the *Commission of Accreditation* have adopted the *Education Standards for Social Work* which should be incorporated into the curricula of individual universities and colleges in Slovakia.

As regards the issue of quality of university and college based preparation of social workers, the criteria for quality must initially be defined and discussed. Should it be the question of quantity (the number of applicants and students), or the quality of the graduates (how does one measure this quality, however?), or compliance with the requirements for the application of education standards in the curricula? Which of these criteria is sufficiently relevant and the most objective one? If the criterion of quantity is taken as the primary, we should be extremely satisfied since the number of graduates has more than doubled in Slovakia since 2003. The study of social work is likely, however, to be perceived as less than demanding in the eyes of society and often motivated by an easy way of obtaining a college diploma. If the

second criterion is taken as primary, i.e. the quality of the graduate, the obvious question would be how to measure the quality, and/or who would be authorised to do so. In practice, we often have to face a problem which has been noticed by a number of employers. The quantity of social work graduates does not guarantee quality performance in this helping profession.[46] This is subsequently followed by poor level of work experience. There is only one objective criterion remaining, this being respect for educational standards.

Social work education is currently provided at public universities. Social work study programmes are available at seven public universities and two private colleges in Slovakia. The public universities include: *Comenius University in Bratislava*, *Pavol Josef Šafárik University in Košice*, the *University of Prešov*, *Trnava University*, the *Catholic University in Ružomberok*, *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra*, and *Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica*. The private colleges are *College in Sládkovičovo* and *St. Elizabeth College of Health Care and Social Work in Bratislava*. The evaluation of the quality of the university/college based preparation of social workers should draw upon *Act No. 131/2012 on Universities and Colleges,* social worker curricula and *Education Standards for Social Work*, which is incorporated into the individual study programmes, recommended curricula and graduate profiles.

The quality of social work education has been a closely monitored issue which can be demonstrated by a number of studies by both Slovak and Czech authors.[47] The history of social work, part of which includes the social work school system in Czechoslovakia, has been dealt with by Pavla Kodymová and Jiřina Šiklová in their publication *Základy sociální práce* (2005) *(Basics of Social Work)* in the part *The domestic tradition of social work*. The history of social work and the social work school system in Slovakia has been primarily explored by Jana Levická (1992, *Náčrt dejín sociálnej práce*) *(Outtline of social work history)*. The chapter *The social work school system* discusses not only the history of the social work school system in Slovakia but also abroad. Levická has also published her findings in the publication by Anna Tokárová et al. (2003) *Social Work – chapters of history, theory and methods*. Jana Levická (2010) deals with the nature of the contemporary social work school system. Issues of education and specialist preparation of social workers are discussed in *Sociálna práca – kapitoly z dejín, teórie a metód (Social Work – chapters of history, theory and methods)* by Mária Machalová, Milan Schavel, Anna Tokárová and Zdenka Vasilová (2003). Attention is paid to the status and conception of the preparation and further education of social workers in Slovakia. The educational requirements for the professionalism of social workers are analysed along with the qualification prerequisites for the performance of social work.

The evaluation of the current quality of the present school system is based on the contributions of various authors contained in the following works: *Výzvy a trendy vo vzdelá-vaní v sociálnej práci* (2012) (*Challenges and trends in social work education*), *Realita a vízia sociálnej práce* (2011) (*The reality and vision of social work*), *Od teórie k praxi, od praxe k teórii* (2011) (*From theory to practice, from practice to theory*), *Riziká sociální práce* (2010) (*Risks of social work*). Additional recommended reading includes works by Mária Davideková (2005): *Komparácia obsahu univerzitného vzdelania v študijnom odbore sociálna práca na Slovensku (Comparing the content of university education in the field of social work in Slovakia)*, Soňa Kariková and Marta Felšková (2004), *Psychológia v príprave sociálnych pracovníkov (Psychology in the preparation and training of social workers)*, Mária Machalová (1997) *Biodromálny a celostný prístup v psychologickej príprave sociálnych*

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[46] A significant number of students confine quality performance to their years of study of both degrees.

[47] It is truly logical that an evaluation of the historical development of social work is based on both theoretical conceps of both a Slovak as well as Czech provenance as these two nations lived in one country up until 1992.

pracovníkov (A Biodromal and holistic approach in the psychological preparation and training of social workers), Radka Janebová (2011) *Význam vzdělávaní pro sociální práci, O vzájemné averzi světa vzdělavatelu a světa praktiku (The importance of education for social work − On the mutual aversion between the communities of educators and practitioners),* Ľuba Pavelová, Milan Tomek (2010) *Aké sú požiadavky na profesionálny profil absolventa študijného programmeu sociálna práca? (What are the requirements for the professional profile of a graduate in a social work study programme?),* Gabriela Lubelcová (2011) *Sociológia sociálnych problémov ako platforma pre sociálne intervencie (The sociology of social problems as a platform for social interventions),* Zuzana Mališková (2012) *Etika sociálnej práce ako oblasť vzdelávania sociálneho pracovníka (The ethics of social work as an area for education of a social worker).* The journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*, also supported by the Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia, is another valuable source of reference concerning issues of social worker education. Practical preparation is discussed in the article *Praktická výučba v odbore sociálna práca, jej fungovanie a efektivita pre profesiu (Practical teaching in the field of social work, its functioning and efficiency for the profession)* by Ladislav Vaska and Peter Brnula. In this context, Milan Schavel and Mária Davideková analyse the minimum standards for education in their article, published in the magazine under the title *Vzdelávanie v sociálnej práci, porovnanie obsahu štúdia na vybraných fakultách (Education in social work, a comparison of study content at selected faculties).* Apart from this magazine, the articles *Príprava komplexného systému ďalšieho vzdelávania sociálnej práce v rezorte Ministerstva práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny (Preparation of a complete system for further education in social work under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)* and *Perspektívy v príprave a vzdelávaní sociálnych pracovníkov (Perspectives on preparation and education of social workers)* by Schavel were published in the magazine *Práca a sociálna politika (Work and social policy).*

The history of social work education system has be discussed and analysed as of 1989 by Schavel (2012) who has suggested that since this time, social work has been re-established as a profession along with the university education system and education in social work. He points out the influence of social, political and economic changes. After the revolution, new social problems arose (unemployment, homelessness, higher crime rates, drug addiction) which needed to be addressed. Following the western pattern, Slovakia established a societal institution for social work. With the establishment of social work as an institution, new demands for skills among social workers arose. This involves the transition from care and security to social assistance and correlates with the need to introduce social work as a separate field of study at universities and colleges.

The formation of the social work education system at Slovak colleges and universities is dealt with by Eva Mydlíková (2011). Mydlíková points out that the oldest education providing subject in the field of social work in Western Slovakia is *Comenius University in Bratislava,* where the *Department of Social Work* was established at the *Faculty of Education* in 1991. Social work is studied here at undergraduate (bachelor's), graduate (master´s) and postgraduate (doctoral) degree levels, both full-time and distance study programmes. Additional departments of social work subsequently appeared. With the dissolution of the Federal Republic in 1993, numerous job opportunities emerged in the area of social work. This development increased the need for qualified employees in the sphere of social work and social policy, at a nationwide, regional and local level (Schavel, 2012) in 1994, *Trnava University in Trnava, the Faculty of Health Care and Social Work* and in 2000 at the *Catholic University in Ružomberok, the Faculty of Education.* Both the universities provide bachelor´s, master´s and doctoral degrees of social work study in full-time and distance study programmes.

With the adoption of *Act No. 312/2001 Coll. on civil service*, all employees in public offices are required to have at least a first degree college/university education. This primarily applied to the staff at district authorities, later to public employment agencies, social issues and families (Schavel, 2012). This gave rise to an increased interest in social work study. The number of applicants exceeded the openings. This situation evoked an immediate reaction on the part of other Slovak universities.

In this context, Mydlíková (2011) speaks of a successor emerging in 2001 – *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care.* At present, one can study bachelor´s, master´s and doctoral degrees in social work at this university in both full-time and distance study programmes. Private schools have also recently emerged in the education market. One of the first was *St. Elizabeth College of Health Care and Social Work* in 2003. It provides bachelor´s, master´s and doctoral studies in social work in full-time and distance study programmes within the framework of institutes. *Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica* opened a bachelor's study programme in a full-time and distance form at the Faculty of Education in 2004.

The specialist study of social work has been offered as early as 1990 at the Department of Andragogy in eastern Slovakia, within the framework of the subject *Education and Teaching of Adult Learners*. Social work as a separate field of study has been offered since 1996 at the *Faculty of Arts in Prešov, University of Pavel Jozef Šafárik*. The *University of Prešov* was established as a result of transformation in 1997. The university offers bachelor´s, master´s and doctoral degrees in social work study in full-time and distance study programmes (Lukáč, Tokárová, 2013). As of 2005 the same programme has been provided at the private *College in Sládkovičovo*, *the Faculty of Social Studies*. Social work education has been also offered by *University of Pavel Jozef Šafárik, the Faculty of Arts, Department of Social Work* with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in a full-time and distance form as of 2007 (Mydlíková, 2011). This data concerning recent developments in the social work school system and education is presented in Table 1. Education in social work.

Table 1 **Education in social work in Slovakia**

Department	Year established	Established by	Faculty	Bc. (Bachelor of Arts)	Mgr. (Master of Arts)
KSP Prešov	1990	State	Philosophy (Arts)	yes	yes
KSP Bratislava	1991	State	Education	yes	yes
KSP Trnava	1994	State	Medical and Social Work	yes	yes
KSP Ružomberok	2000	State	Education	yes	yes
KSP Nitra	2001	State	Faculty of social sciences and health care	yes	yes
KSP St. Elisabeth	2003	Private	Social work and health care	yes	yes
KSP Banská Bystrica	2004	State	Education	yes	no
KSP Sládkovičovo	2005	Private	Faculty of social sciences	yes	yes
KSP Košice	2007	State	Philosophy (Arts)	yes	yes

Source: E. Mydlíková (2011, p. 20).

Social work as a science as well as a profession requires qualified social workers. Apart from personal qualities, skills, etc., a social worker is also characterised by knowledge and special training. The need for special training provided to social workers and the obtaining of a certain degree thereof are set out in *Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on social services, Section 84*.

Preparation in the field of social work requires a specific vocational training which is provided in Slovakia within the framework of tertiary education, the process of professional socialisation in the pre-professional and professional development of a social worker (Machalová, et. al., 2003).

The training and preparation of social workers is provided at present at the level of tertiary education, lifelong education and department education (Strieženec, 1999). The college/ /university training of social workers is fairly differentiated in Slovakia in terms of both content and organisation. As regards organisation, it is differentiated as a separate field of study and a specialisation of associated disciplines. As regards differentiation in terms of content, the individual universities and colleges are distinguished from one another by their curricula and the depth of the subject studied (Machalová, et. al., 2003; Pasternáková, 2009). This distinction between curricula is related to the focus of the individual universities and colleges. The *University of Prešov*, *the Faculty of Arts*, for example, with its *Institute of Educology and Social Work* is focused on andragogy, *Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty* is aimed at philanthropic activities, *Comenius University in Bratislava* specialises in counselling, *Trnava University* in health care services, *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra* focuses on Roma population related issues and finally *Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica* concentrates on social pedagogy, etc.

Based on the depth of the study contents, the social work field of study (776100) in Slovakia has given rise to various study programmes including: applied social work (776113), ethics – social work (613108), charitable and missionary work (776121), charitable and social service (776121), integrating social work (776124), missiology, diakonia and social work (617115), social service management and organisation (776115), development assistance and missionary work (776127), social and missionary work (776108), social and missionary work with the Roma community (776108), social work in the Roma community (776110), social work with children and youth (776129), with a focus on missionary and charitable work (776103), aimed at counselling (776107), aimed at family (776128), aimed at the Roma community (776119), aimed at social-health care for seniors (776114), in the Roma community (776105), social work in the health care system (776116), social work in public administration and social services (776118). See the website for *The Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education* (2012a) for more details.

The question as to whether the individual study programmes allow for studying the methods of social work at the college/university level has been thoroughly discussed (e.g. social counselling and social mediation as independent study programmes). This is followed by considerations as to whether education in social work should focus on the social worker as a specialist working with a specific target group or take into account the versatility of the social worker who is able to approach various target groups experiencing various life situations. Overall, agreement can be reached with the statement by Levická (2010) that study programmes structured in this fashion may only provide quality preparation if they observe the set out paradigm of social work.

There are two evident tendencies to identify within the framework of the content differentiation. These tendencies are delineated by Levická (2010) who defines social work as a science as well as a practical activity. Education in social work respects this fundamental premise which is subsequently reflected in the curricula of individual universities and colleges. The first of these tendencies is practical education (i.e. pragmatically focused study programmes). Based on this tendency, the education is focused on practical skills. Students are liberated from theory and practice forms the basis for the education. The risk of these study programmes might be in the possibility that social workers in real life situations would not be able to understand certain specific internal and external factors. This is because the

focus of these study programmes is in all probability confined to the acquisition of a narrow set of knowledge. In spite of this type of practical content, the need for research is often apparent in the qualification studies.

There is a second tendency in contrast which perceives social work as a science (university-focused study programmes). Students are not only prepared for practice as a social worker but also trained to become a member of an academic-teaching staff (Levická, 2010). Education can primarily be explored at present in the second of these spheres. This can be substantiated by the gradual establishment of social work as a science. It is also reflected in the modified and adjusted study programmes offered by colleges and universities in contrast to the situation in the past when professional practice was emphasised to a greater extent than at present. Theoretical knowledge is currently being increasingly emphasised. This is connected with problems encountered by individual universities and colleges in the creation of their curricula. Maximising of curricula may occur in an effort to obtain polyvalent social workers. This may only be achieved among students through mechanical drills. At the same time, however, the curricula are being reduced. It seems reasonable in this context to favour the demand for specialisation of social work. This may subsequently lead to separate individual study programmes. This development would, however, result in the problem pointed out by Levická (2010), this being the fact that graduates in social work, i.e. in specialised disciplines, are not sufficiently prepared for quality performance of the social work profession.

College/university-based training of social workers in Slovakia is available within this context. Social work as a field of study (3.1.14) is classified within the field of the study system as 3.1 Social and behavioural sciences (*Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, 2013*). In Slovakia, at the bachelor's degree (Bc. title), master's degree (Mgr. title), postgraduate study (PhDr. title) and doctoral programme (Ph.D. title). Social work study programmes are available at seven public universities and two private colleges in Slovakia. A major emphasis is placed on improvement of quality of education in the field of social work, as initiated by the Educators in Social Work (Schavel, 2012). The social worker is a professional who works in a problematic social field. As a professional who is qualified to deal with various problems, he/she is able to use certain specific skills and competences. Apart from certain personal prerequisites which every social work should meet or demonstrate such as empathy, warmth, congruence, authenticity and creativity, he/she needs to acquire those skills needed for successfully carrying out the social worker profession. The skills of social workers should primarily include: the ability to "listen", the ability to induce the client to cooperate, the ability to comprehend the problem, the support of the client and use of the empowerment conception in work with the client, inspection of the quality of the social services provided (Schavel, 2005). These skills should be acquired by the graduates over the course of their academic studies. According to the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, a social worker should be able to communicate and involve himself, plan, assess, support, encourage self-sufficiency, intervene and provide services, work for an organisation while being able to work in a team, and develop his/her professional and social skills (Levická, 2003). A social worker should demonstrate diagnostic abilities, social skills and psychological skills (Tvrdoň, Machalová, 2003). With reference to these European documents, a professional profile has been created in Slovakia for the social work graduates to be incorporated into the Education Standards for Social Work.

In spite of 20 years of practice, there are still education-related issues in the field of social work education. One of these issues is the increasing number of social work graduates. This data is presented in Chart 1 *The number of graduates in the social work full-time study programme* and in Chart 2 *The number of graduates in the social work distance study*

programme. These are based on the Statistical Journals of the colleges/universities and the Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education.

Chart 1: **The number of graduates in the social work full-time study programme**
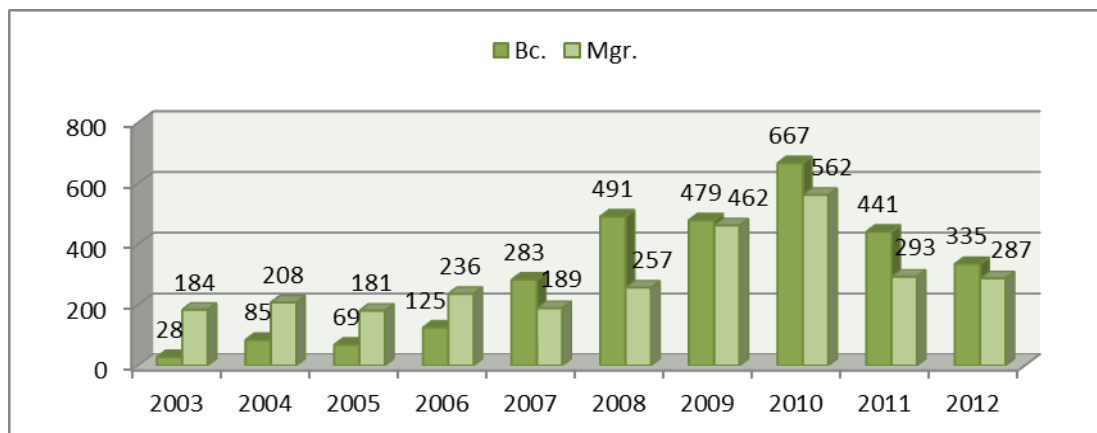
Source: Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education) (2013)

Chart 2: **Number of graduates in the social work distance study programme**
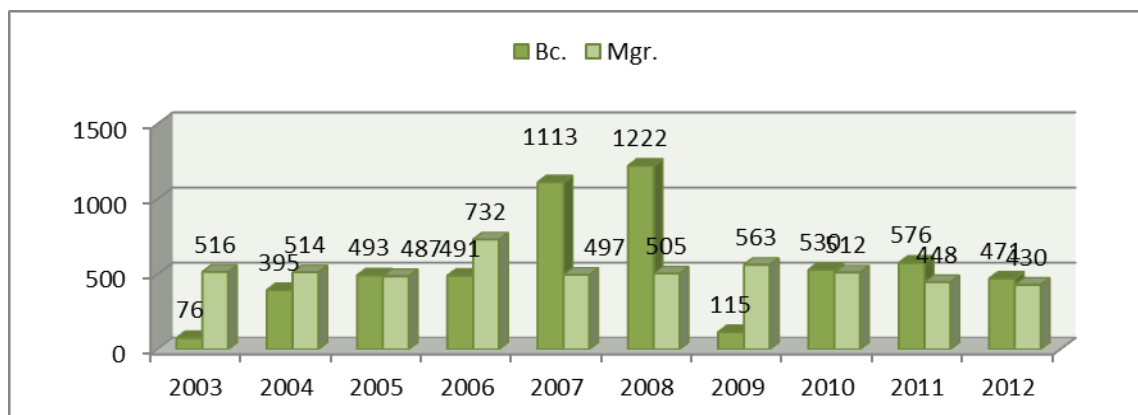
Source: Ústav informácii a prognóz školstva (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education) (2013)

A number of experts agree that the higher number of students does not clearly correspond with their later job opportunities or the success rate of the actual placement in the labour market. The reason for this problem may be the inconsistency between the qualified social workers and the social welfare system of the Slovak Republic. Ján Gabura and Eva Mydlíková (2012) in this context have suggested that the Slovak system fails to provide adequate conditions for qualified social workers. Graduates in social work have no opportunity to apply their education and, above all, their qualified potential which they acquired during their college/university training. The social welfare system in Slovakia has created no material conditions or career opportunities for full utilisation of graduates' skills and knowledge.

Education in social work has undergone a number of risks at present and faces challenges concerning more quality provision of education in this area. It is not a simple task for colleges or universities to design its curriculum. As suggested by Dávideková (2005), there would be need to harmonise the practical requirements with the content of the social work study, taking into account the international conventions as well as the major directive of the European Union (*Council Directive on a general system for the recognition of higher-education diplomas*) in order for a social worker to find his/her position in the labour market and avoid such risks. On the basis of this requirement, the *Coordination Commission for Further*

Education and Development of Scientific-Research Activity was formed by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. The commission adopted the *Education Standards for Social Work in Slovakia* in 2003. Through adopting these standards, the commission has ensured a prerequisite for harmonisation in the education of social work, but has also created a space for specialisation of individual universities and colleges.

Conclusion

Education in the field of social work in Slovakia has experienced dramatic changes over the past two decades compared with other areas of tertiary education. During the first decade, attention was paid to establishing the field of study supported by educational standards and basic text-books. Simultaneously, a great deal of effort was expended to create proper conditions for a specialist discourse (a joint specialist journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*, events attended by scientists, academics and scholars).

The quantitative increase in the number of social work educators and students, driven by the public education policy, began to be gradually replaced at the end of the second decade with a focus on quality and support for the identity of social work as a science, profession and field of study.

The educators themselves, through their non-profit organisation "Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia", have devoted their efforts to flexibly reacting to the needs of society, specifically to those of regions and employers. Their shared purpose is to contribute to the support of the identity of social work as a profession and enhance its social prestige. Over the past several years, they have consequently intensified their activities aimed at the creation of relevant legislation, amendment to the University/College Education Act and the preparation of a new act on social work. The issues under debate are as follows: education standards, formation of specialised study programmes versus a general social work study programme, support for research into employers' and regions' needs, research into the actual placement and success rate of graduates in the labour market or the question of assessing the quality of education.

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The context of changes in Slovak tertiary schools providing education in social work

Tatiana Matulayová

Introduction

The status of tertiary schools, the expectations about them on the part of society and the evaluation of their contribution and quality, financing and other issues have been discussed not only among specialists but also among politicians virtually all over the world for more than four decades. The consequences of the marginalisation of industry increase in the sector of services and information technologies, advancing neo-liberal policy, globalisation and other processes and phenomena are all consequently reflected in the tertiary education system. The academic world is not a world on its own. It is linked with the world of public administration, the economic and civil sector. Universities are an integral part of the social world. They are formed by the world while forming the world through their activities. The situation within society (values and problems) determines the status and mission of universities.

Discussions have been held concerning the consequences of globalisation (e.g. Tokárová), the introduction of academic capitalism (e.g. Slaughter, Rhoades, 2009) and global changes in tertiary education within Slovakia. Changes in society after the year 1989 initiated efforts aimed at transforming and Europeanising tertiary education. The establishment of the independent state initiated discussion on the status and tasks of Slovak tertiary education and science in the international context.

The political project of "the society of knowledge", emphasising the commodification of knowledge, has been promoted. The core strategic materials for the sphere of tertiary education in Slovakia declare the acceptance of university education perceived according to OECD, the Lisbon strategy and the Bologna declaration. The influence of EU policy is recognised and fully accepted by educators in social work. Academics and scholars from the field of social work often discuss EU documents concerning the tertiary education level as a source of inspiration for the Slovak environment.

Educators in Social Work in Slovakia

After more than twenty years of education in social work provided at Slovak universities, one can speak of established educators in social work, i.e. tertiary schools which provide university education in the field of social work. They are united in the Association of Educators in Social Work in Slovakia which is an unincorporated association of individuals and organisations. The association has never had its representative in the Commission of Accreditation (the advisory body to the Slovak Government) which, among other issues, deals with the competence and qualifications of tertiary schools to perform and provide the study programmes (Accreditation Commission [online]). The association has no employees. Its activities are carried out by its members on a completely voluntary basis. This characteristic suffices to illustrate the actual possibilities and limitations of the association with respect to the development of tertiary education in Slovakia.

Definition of the third mission of tertiary schools

The concept of the third mission, or sometimes referred to as "the third role", is defined differently in the specialised literature as well as in political documents. It is generally based on the concept of the two "conventional" or "traditional" roles of tertiary schools, namely: education and research. In post-industrial society, these two are supplemented by a third mission, i.e. an emphasis on the roles with respect to social practice and social agents. The discussion of the third mission, or the public responsibility of tertiary schools and their role in relation to the innovations, has intensified since the early 1990s when cooperation between universities and industry took on greater importance. Etkovitz and Leysdorf (2000) have discussed the future of science in postmodern society based on the evolutionary model of the non-linear development of innovation. The metaphor of a triple spiral, taken from biology, reflects changes in postmodern society, its individual segments and the roles of industry, science, and government as well as their mutual relations. The model not only depicts the diversity of institutional forms and patterns of policies, but also explains their dynamics. Its use is quite broad, from an understanding of the knowledge-generation process, through the complete construction of innovation, to the future of science in society.

The achievement of the third mission is subject to the premise according to which the generation of knowledge is a complex process. The mission of tertiary schools has always been to generate and share knowledge. Whereas in the past, the "owners" of this process were academics/scholars in the enclosed space of classrooms and laboratories, currently cooperation with the external environment is becoming increasingly important. The process of knowledge generation is influenced by both the context and the behaviour. Knowledge which forms know-how arises from experience and reflection within a certain context. Tertiary schools represent the first context, whereas work experience amounts to another one and a particular region (or local area) yet another. Tertiary schools generate codified knowledge and their application in practice requires certain know-how. If there is no such know-how in place, the problem occurs in the transfer of knowledge. For a proper generation and transfer of knowledge at a tertiary school it is important that the college/university begin accepting the heterogeneous, trans-disciplinary and integrated process of knowledge.

A monograph by Goppner and Hammalainen, released in the Slovak language in 2009, has had a key role in establishing the topic of integrated generation of knowledge within the context of the Slovak environment. The topic was explored by Kvetoslava Repková (2011) in the joint journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*. It can be concluded within this context that the magazine strives to cultivate discussion into the relationship between theory and practice, or on the importance and specific features of research into social work. It is also engaged in supporting discussion concerning the relationship between social policy and social work. The development of social policy in the sphere of social security and the labour market, along with the development of legislative working conditions for the performance of social work, are all viewed by social workers as something which suppresses the autonomy and identity of social work (e.g. Musil).

Characteristics of tertiary education in the Slovak Republic

The government policy on tertiary education has had a decisive influence on the third mission of tertiary schools in Slovakia. How are the roles of tertiary schools defined in the strategic materials? What kind of approach has been adopted by the Slovak Republic towards the position of tertiary education within society? The following is a brief survey of selected strategic documents with regard to the questions above.

The transformation of tertiary education has been implemented in Slovakia since 2002. It was initiated by the implementation of the Bologna declaration and efforts on the part of Slovakia to involve itself in the European area of tertiary education. Slovakia has at present launched a three-stage tertiary education system (bachelor´s, master´s and doctoral programmes) and introduced a credit system in accordance with ECTS principles.

Pursuant to the applicable legislation, i.e. Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on tertiary schools, tertiary education may only be provided by tertiary schools. The Slovak tertiary education system is based on a system of independent self-governing tertiary schools managed by their own bodies with the predefined scope of competences of the central state administration bodies. To enforce its tertiary education policy, the state primarily uses legislative tools and economic tools as well as its control mechanisms (e.g. through the Commission of Accreditation). It has been the duty of the Ministry of Education since 2002 to compile and publish the *Tertiary Education Annual Reports*. This duty is carried out on a regular basis unlike one of the other duties of the Ministry, namely the updating of the long-term programme for the field of tertiary education. This programme was only published once, in the year 2010.

The initial and updated programmes are derived from the concept of tertiary school missions as embodied in the OECD concept (for details, see e.g. Kačmářová, 2010), although the document repeatedly stresses that, for example, the results of education are always understood in a broader sense, i.e. as all the benefits (direct and indirect) which society obtains from channelling expenditures into education. The higher education system is defined as a tool for development of human resources. There is an emphasis on the importance of education and support for younger employees.

Apart from education, tertiary schools also carry out research activities. Research funding is governed by the applicable legislation, namely by Act No. 172/2005 Coll. on government support of research and development. On the strategic level, the field of research is also governed by the document *Long-term state policy on science and technology by 2015* which was adopted by virtue of the Slovak government decree No. 766/2007 and updated by the document *Fenix Strategy*. Out of the twelve itemised priorities defined in the document, the subject of social work research is the most closely connected with "Civilisation challenges – finding solutions to social inclusion". This priority identifies research topics such as civics, transformation of values and the position of an individual in the network of social relations, the development of educational methods and forms as well as internationalisation of the European Union area. The transfer of findings is focused on the area of cooperation with economic entities.

The final analysed document is the *National Reform programme of the Slovak Republic 2013*. In the field of tertiary education, science and research, a new concept for the years 2013–2020 will be prepared to serve as the basis for the preparation of a new act on tertiary schools. The proposed measures are predominantly aimed at issues of financing, the quality assurance system and the development of cooperation with the private sphere, for example, through support of applied research.

In summary, none of the strategic documents explicitly make use of the term "third mission" or "third role" of tertiary schools. They do emphasise, however, the "new roles" or public responsibility of tertiary schools and cooperation with industry and the private sphere. Cognition and knowledge are predominantly perceived as goods, whereas education and research are viewed as services. The Slovak Republic has joined in an approach which accents the economic dimensions of tertiary education. Academic capitalism is manifested in all aspects of the government policy on tertiary education, science and research: from organisation and financing, through quality and results measurement, to projects concerning

future development. Educators in social work receive minimal support and appreciation for the development of cooperation with civil society organisations or for their contribution to local democracy. Political declarations are of course merely a beginning. Particular measures are vital in order to introduce these statements into everyday practice. Paul Chatterton and John Goddard (2000) in this context have suggested that in spite of the claimed necessity for tertiary schools to contribute to local and regional development "only a small percentage of universities are perceived as a community-based institution serving the needs of the local area/region. If there were no declarations, however, there would be no awareness of values and visions and consequently there would be lacking strategies and measures aimed at their implementation.

The concept of territoriality in the Slovak government policy on tertiary education

The role of tertiary education system in the development of regions is irreplaceable, particularly in the era of post-industrial society and its development (e.g. Glasson, 2003, Ručinská, 2009).

Over the course of the 1990s, the government policy on tertiary education supported the transition from elite to a mass university education. This was a reaction to the fact that the Slovak Republic at the time lagged behind other countries in terms of the number of university-educated people. This was combined with a rising trend in the unemployment rate, particularly among young people. One can essentially speak of the quantitative development of tertiary education having taken place in Slovakia up until the academic year 2007/2008. As indicated by recent statistics, the number of students has declined and the situation in the sector of public schools has been stabilised. As of January 2013, tertiary education was provided by 20 public tertiary schools, three state-owned tertiary schools, 13 private and two foreign schools based in the Czech Republic. The same source, based on EUROSTAT data from the year 2010 (EHEA [online]), suggests that the Slovak Republic, in comparison with other European countries, has a comparable number of students per one tertiary school. These statistics are a reaction by the Ministry of Education to critical comments by the academic community on the increasing number of tertiary schools.

The spatial aspects of the education system are being analysed over a long-term basis within the sphere of geography, primarily by the collective of authors Gurňák, Križan, Lauko (e.g. 2011). A considerable densification of the tertiary school network across the Slovak Republic may also be seen as positive, if one accepts the premise that each tertiary school has its own specific impact on the region. Slovak literature in the field of social work does not cover the topic at all. There are no studies which would reflect the impacts and consequences of the increased number of educators in social work in Slovakia. Over the past several years, questions have emerged concerning competition between public and private tertiary schools providing tertiary education in social work not only within the same region but even at times within the same town.

Research by Gurňák, Lauko and Križan (2011) implies that there is a general trend towards shortening the commuting distance to tertiary schools. The majority of tertiary schools form their own regional background with the decisive portion of students. The de/formation of this background is subject to various factors. An important factor is, for example, the existence of two or more schools in one city (Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra), or several cities in close proximity to one another (Košice - Prešov, Bratislava - Trnava, Banská Bystrica - Zvolen). The authors conclude that Slovak tertiary schools are gradually becoming level. Differences between the leaders and the average have diminished. A decisive criterion for enrollment has become the availability of school in every sense of the word, i.e. from efforts at minimising the actual financial expenses related to studies for the potential purpose of minimising efforts expended on the acquisition of university/college qualifications.

An explanation may be found in the categorisation of individual tertiary schools (university/non-university, public/private tertiary schools). This categorisation corresponds to various evaluation criteria applied to their results and financing. Two major private tertiary schools (in terms of regional coverage and the number of students of social work) are classified as tertiary schools of a non-university type. The degree of their financial independence is high as they are not financed from the national budget. Similarly, different requirements are imposed for measurement of their performance.

The implied results indicate the problematic nature of the concept of territoriality (the search for a possible relationship between the capacity of tertiary schools and demands of the region) and its measurement in the tertiary education policy. Tertiary schools are autonomous institutions, characterised by state regulations and by a preference for international or at least nationwide operations, primarily in the field of scientific-research activities. This fact is clearly expressed in the Slovak educational system by the structure of the quality evaluation criteria. The available statistics indicate that the Slovak tertiary schools are thus far primarily producers of qualified social workers. In this context, there is also the question of the potential of the students recruited from various regions and the preparation of tertiary schools in order to develop this potential. There is no research or studies as yet which would answer the question as to whether the graduates actually have the skills required for the labour market.

A critical reflection on the reality of social work in Slovakia

The opening premise of the reflection concerns the link between research, education and practice in the field of social work (e.g. Göppner, Hämäläinen, 2008). How is the current state of social work practice perceived by tertiary school teachers? How do they describe the current state of education in social work? Which dilemmas and issues concerning education practice are being discussed? The answers to these questions are viewed as crucial for understanding the implementation of the third mission by educators in social work in Slovakia. The source of evidence is specialised literature, primarily the proceedings of conferences and the journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*. Due to the capacity and objectives of this chapter, it only presents several selected opinions.

The nature of the discussion is illustrated by selected opinions published in the conference proceedings focused on challenges and trends in social work education held in April 2012 in Prešov. The conference was attended by representatives of the majority of the Slovak-based educators in social work.

Ján Gabura and Eva Mydlíková (2012, p. 142) speak of the situation: "After twenty years, it seems that we have based the education of social workers on idealised views of social practice..." (p. 142).

"The system of practical social work has been changing more slowly than trends in education on an ongoing basis."

"The externally presented value of social work, focused on support for the improved quality of a client's life is often a formal cliché, because when it comes to field work, there are no conditions in place for concrete implementation of these intentions." (p. 142)

These opinions illustrate the evaluation of the current state of education in social work as carried out by Slovak university and college teachers of social work. Both of the authors are part of the generation which founded tertiary education in social work in Slovakia after 1990. They established and are still teaching at the first department of social work ever founded in Slovakia and are currently recognised by the academic community as the leading figures in social work.

International literature concerning the subject is also critical of social work in practice. This criticism is predominantly based on a negative evaluation of the way the principles of a neoliberal policy are promoted. This doubtful practice is represented by a trend towards economisation of social work which is accompanied by a redefinition of the key ethical categories of social work, e.g. solidarity, social justice and empowerment (Kunneman, 2005). In contrast to international literature, the Slovak discourse is not explicitly focused on searching for the causes of the negatively perceived situation in practice and education in the field of social work. The state of affairs in social work, as described above, is viewed as a challenge which would encourage social work educators and teachers, to, on the one hand, work with students, "to teach them to overcome those obstacles which prevent full utilisation of their potential, to put their new ideas into practice..." and, on the other hand, the involvement of the educators themselves who "should be more engaged in the change in the traditional social policy and social welfare system" (Gabura - Mydlíková, 2012, p. 143). At the same time, the issues of legislative protection of the social worker profession are accented as well as those of the broader identity of social work as a profession and science. Educators in social work have been involved in specialist preparation of a bill concerning the conditions and requirements for the performance of social work and protection of the profession from the year 2012 up to the present day.

A number of authors have analysed the entire context, the tertiary education system in the Slovak Republic, as a determinant of the development of education in social work. These authors consequently direct their attention to the financing criteria. A clear illustration within this context is Milan Tomka's and Martina Hrozenska's (2012, p. 48) opinions of these issues: "little money for science and research, schools financed primarily on the basis of quantitative and sciento-metric criteria, mass university education, isolation of research teams..." The pragmatic approach and the effort to react at least at the level of educators in social work are all demonstrated by the challenging tasks set up by themselves. These involve updating the description of the academic discipline *3.1.13 Social work* as the basis document for creation of educational programmes at tertiary schools, arranging efficient performance of practical training and dealing with didactic methods for social work, thereby linking theoretical and practical education (2012).

The journal *Czech and Slovak Social Work*, (whose issues have been analysed as of 2008) features on a regular basis, primarily in its publicist section, articles in which the authors and/or respondents express their critical thoughts on the current state of social work in the Czech and Slovak Republics. The proportion of Slovak respondents and their reactions is considerably lower. In general, however, it can be concluded that the magazine's attempt to initiate and conduct critical discussion and/or polemics has only encouraged a small group of readers to participate in the discussion.

Volunteering in the tertiary education of social workers in Slovakia

Tertiary school students represent a significant target group in the volunteering policy the global, European and nationwide level. Their voluntary engagement, for example in Europe, has received systematic support from various programmes (e.g. Youth in Action). They are additionally a point of interest for tertiary education policy. Systematic support for voluntary involvement of students, lecturers and other staff represents genuine potential for the implementation of this mission within the framework of the third mission of universities. It is quite common for universities and tertiary schools in the world to not only support the academic community but also arrange for opportunities for volunteers.

The situation is different in Slovakia. As demonstrated above, the strategic documents completely lack any formulation of the third mission of tertiary schools. As a consequence,

there is no identification of the social importance of the systematic support provided to volunteers on the part of tertiary schools.

Do social work educators in Slovakia pay enough attention to pursuing the third mission of tertiary schools through student volunteering? How is the cooperation between tertiary schools and volunteer organisations institutionalised? Do social work educators function as active participants in the volunteer movement in Slovakia? How is volunteering as a phenomenon in social work dealt with and didactically processed in social work study programmes?

The volunteering phenomenon has been part of social work from the founding of social work as a profession and science. It is consequently quite naturally present in the social worker educational process. As demonstrated above, Slovak tertiary education policy, at the strategic and implementation levels, lacks all conditions for systematic support of cooperation between tertiary schools and volunteer organisations. It is up to individuals at present, social work teachers, as to whether they would assert the idea of systematic cooperation with volunteer organisations on their work site. A similar situation can be seen in the didactic approach to and elaboration of volunteerism as a phenomenon in social work.

The concept of volunteer centres (Ellis, 1999) and the broader volunteer infrastructure in Slovakia (e.g. Brozmanová Gregorová and Mračková, 2012) are relatively new. The highest form and degree of institutionalised cooperation between educators and volunteer organisation is the existence of the university-based volunteer centre. Although there is no such institutionalised form as yet, it was already contemplated upon at two university sites (namely, *the Faculty of Education* at *Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica* and subsequently *the Faculty of Arts* at the *University of Prešov*). In both cases, independent volunteer centres were finally established with certain personnel interlinks and staffed by social work teachers (for details, see e.g. Matulayová, 2012). Additional educators in social work, as opposed to cooperating with volunteer centres, usually prefer working with particular non-profit organisations which are not focused on particular client groups or social problems. The Department of Social Work, the Faculty of Education at Comenius University in Bratislava, has worked for many years in particular with the unincorporated association *Sociálna práca* whose goal, among others, is to support volunteer and charitable activities.

Personal links between the volunteer movement and educators in social work is rare. It consists of a particularly narrow circle of university teachers (Eva Mydlíková, Alžbeta Brozmanová Gregorová, and Tatiana Matulayová up until 2012).

The only available resource describing the development of cooperation amongst volunteer organisations and universities in Slovakia is *VALUE: National Report – Slovakia* (Mračková, 2010).

Volunteering as a phenomenon is more frequently discussed within the context of the practical training of students, primarily as one form thereof (Matulayová, Brozmanová Gregorová, Vavrinčíková). *St. Elizabeth College of Health Care* and *Social Work in Bratislava* is a unique example of a Slovak social work educator engaged in development aid. The college organises health care, social and educational projects in Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, Cambodia, Haiti and the Ukraine.

The social work study programmes at certain tertiary schools include an independent subject (course) focused on the management of volunteering within the framework of theoretical preparation. The envisaged result of the course consists of preparation for the position of coordinator with certain acquired skills.

Based on the education standard (as represented by the description of the social work study programme), we may only assume that the phenomenon of volunteering in social work is incorporated within the didactic content of such subjects as: History of social work, Methods of social work, Social policy, Social work in the third sector, etc. There is no analysis, however, of the didactic content of these or any other subject and we therefore lack the context and educational objectives of volunteering as a subject of study.

Volunteering is also a subject of research carried out by social work students. The 7th year of the Prize for the Best Thesis or Yearly Paper on Philanthropy will be held in 2013. This consists of a competition awarding the best student academic work from the fields of philanthropy, volunteering and/or the third sector. The competition is organised by the non-profit organisation Centre for Philanthropy with a view to "reviving the concept of philanthropy among young people and encouraging them think of donorship as such and its impact on the life of individuals as well as on society." (CPF [online]).

In spite of volunteering issues being present in the education of social workers, its didactic potential is still unrecognised. A limiting factor may also be the lack of critical reflection on the contribution of volunteering on the part of all those involved (the region, tertiary school, students). The only positive contributions hitherto emphasised within the context of the practical training were those of the volunteer engagement of the social work students (Matulayová, 2003, Brozmanová Gregorová, 2007, Vavrinčíková, 2003).

The value and principles of social justice are often discussed, even in the sphere of education of social workers. Universities may work as a paradoxical space. They on the one hand open up opportunities, while, on the other hand, they may give an impression of being exclusive and oppressive in relation to marginalised groups of students. Based on the example of England and the results of their own qualitative research, Clare Holdsworth and Jocey Quinn (2012) propose a new conceptual framework for analysis of the studying process among students and their perception of social justice through the performance of volunteer activities. This example illustrates the broad sphere of activity for tertiary schools in the context of implementing the so-called third mission.

Innovations in tertiary education - the Service-Learning Concept

The Service-Learning teaching method provides an opportunity to implement the third mission of tertiary schools. James C. Kielsmeier (2010) explains that this concept incorporates a philosophy of education, a model of community development as well as a learning method.

Problem-based learning is the didactic starting point. The interest in the service-learning concept dates back to the early 20th century. It is related to John Dewey's ideas of "the continuity of experience". Learning in a classroom was supported by the opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge in a real life situation. Dewey's disciple, William Kirkpatrick, explored and worked out the project method. The major idea was to create opportunities for students to apply the knowledge acquired in school by providing a service which would react to the real needs of a community. Working for the benefit of the community is part of civil life. It is perceived as socially important, appreciated and supported by society. The school's tasks in relation to society and its values were elaborated within the educational policies of various countries. A different ideological background has been reflected in the philosophy of education and subsequently in the teaching and learning methods and forms.

The service-learning concept is consequently hitherto unknown in Slovakia. The first attempts at examining this concept as part of practical experiments carried out in tertiary education of social workers have only been seen in recent years. The Faculty of Education at *Matej Bel*

University in Banská Bystrica has offered an optional course based on the service-learning concept for several years. The *Faculty of Arts at the University of Prešov* similarly implemented a project in the academic year 2011/2012 with a view to introducing this optional course on an experimental basis (for details, see Lipčaková, Matulayová, 2012).

In order to receive systematic support in introducing the service-learning concept, its characteristics need to be explained in comparison with volunteering. A significant difference can be seen in terms of the degree of volunteering, subjective motivation and activity. A student has internal motivation to become a volunteer, with volunteering being an expression of his/her free will and with he/she often seeking out the volunteer opportunity him/herself. In the framework of the service-learning model, the most active tertiary school is the one which is more intensively engaged in the preparation and organisation of the service which is provided by the student for the benefit of the community. A student is expected to achieve the predefined educational goals and he/she receives credits for accomplishing this subject. The degree of his/her free choice is limited.

A unique international study (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2010) demonstrated a positive correlation between the student involvement in service-learning programmes and their volunteer engagement (scope, frequency, number of hours). The introduction of the service-learning educational concept in the school system would be an appropriate subject for discussion about support for youth participation throughout Slovakia. The discussion has been recently initiated by IUVENTA, the Slovak Youth Institute (a state organisation aimed at implementing the state policy amongst children and young people).

Conclusion

The future of social work as a profession and science is co-created by the current processes taking place in the sphere of tertiary education. The economic dimension is over-accented in EU member countries, along with economic development being seen as the major topic and academic capitalism being promoted. The Slovak Republic has adopted this neoliberal narrow-minded attitude to the status and tasks of tertiary schools within society in its strategic documents. Although cooperation with civil society and the role of tertiary schools as powerful regional centres is implicitly present in the discourse, it has been insufficiently analysed at the research level.

Educators in social work are contemplating the third mission of tertiary schools in the creation of study programmes, in theoretical preparation and in practical training. These reflections, however, are fairly intuitive, accidental, based on the educator's own engagement and rather partial than intentional, system-based or systematic.

Volunteering in social work was a completely abandoned topic in the original specialised literature and an unsupported field of study 15 years ago. The situation has changed, however. The volunteering phenomenon can be analysed and explored in social work at present (in practice and education) thanks to the existence of syllabuses, dissertations as well as experience gained by university students - volunteers, and teachers of social work collaborating with volunteer organisations. A possible motivation for this kind of research on the part of educators in social work would be in compliance with the requirements and expectations of students, employers and the general public. Evidence in the form of research findings is a prerequisite in modern society for further development of discussion on the identity and opportunities of social work. Educators in social work are legitimate participants thereof.

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Mediation in Social Work

Sylwia Pelc

Introduction

Multiple social as well as economic processes currently have a considerable impact on the functioning of units within society and entire social groups. They also influence the level and quality of life of modern people. With respect to these points, the assistance provided to an individual in the European (including Polish) discourse of social work is often perceived as providing inter-disciplinary activities treated as a collaboration of various specialists whereby the collaboration increases the effectiveness of the support which is provided and the ability to manage the problems of people in difficult life situations. One of these activities is mediation, treated as an alternative form of conflict resolution, hitherto used predominantly in the context of justice. It was intended to settle conflicts while allowing citizens to resolve the conflict amicably, swiftly and at relatively little cost. The discussion within Poland has spread to other professions, including social workers who have begun to view mediation as an activity which, in many cases, can help their clients manage problems.

The current article focuses on mediation as a new working method aimed at clients in social assistance institutions. Particular attention is given to mediation, i.e. an alternative form of conflict management, as a working method applied to clients in social work where the mediation itself as well as the interpersonal communication techniques used in it may be extremely useful or even critical with respect to the client, his/her understanding of the situation, his/her ability to articulate the problems, needs and expectations, and particularly for the mediator-aided identification of the client's actual propositions with a view to solving the particular problem in a manner which would be satisfactory both for the client and the social worker. This is the only resolution which may provide the possibility of a long-term and sincere change within the client and his/her behaviour, thereby leading to a genuine and permanent positive change in his/her situation.

The first part of this article provides a definition of social work and mediation as presented and referenced in contemporary literature. The second part interprets the idea of mediation as an alternative method for resolving conflicts, its principles, as well as the benefits of mediation in the field of social work. The third part is primarily concerned with the topic of mediation skills among social workers based on the latest studies and with the characteristics of the social work educational system in Poland, with a special focus on mediation techniques as essential skills from the perspective of working with clients receiving social assistance.

Social Work and Mediation – a Definition

In order to have a closer look at mediation within the field of social work, it is worth carrying out an analysis of several selected definitions of both social work and mediation. When pursuing this goal, it becomes evident that both these activities include somewhat similar objectives and functions which need to be fulfilled in relation to the needy.

The Committee of the European Council has invented a comprehensive and quite broad definition of social work. According to this definition, social work is a specific professional activity aimed at improving mutual adaptation of individuals, families, groups, the social environment they live in, and raising the awareness of the personal dignity and responsibility of the units by reference to the potentials of specific individuals, inter-professional links as

well as the forces and resources of society.[48]The International Association of Schools of Social Work has developed a general, globally applicable, definition stating that social work supports social changes, resolution of problems in interpersonal relations as well as extraction of human potential and liberties in order to achieve well-being. The basis of social work is formed by the principles of human rights and social justice.[49] The applicable Act on Social Assistance of 2004, currently valid in Poland, describes social work as a *professional activity aimed at assisting individuals and families in empowering or acquiring skills for functioning within society through carrying out proper social roles, as well as establishing those conditions that support such a goal.* Helena Radlińska defines social work somewhat differently, describing it as an extraction and multiplication of human power, improvement thereof and organisation of joint steps leading to human well-being.[50] Ewa Marynowicz, in contrast, suggests that social work is a profession promoting social change, resolution of problems arising from interpersonal relations, as well as empowering and challenging people to enrich their well-being.[51] Analysing the aforementioned definitions, social work may be interpreted as having several essential goals: empowerment and acquiring skills for functioning within society and fulfilling social roles, use of human potential and powers with a view to changing his/her life for the better, resolving interpersonal problems, assisting in the adaptation of an individual and/or group for their function within the community they live in as well as in developing a sense of personal dignity.

As regards the definition of mediation, it is most commonly understood as mediation in a certain conflict the goal of which is to help two or more parties reach a mutual consensus. The definition by C. W. Moore is even more precise. Moore suggests that mediation is an intervention in an on-going negotiation or conflict; the intervention is carried out by an acceptable third party without authoritative power to make a decision which would settle the dispute, but which instead helps the parties in disagreement reach a voluntary and mutually acceptable consensus on the issues in question.[52] Fedorowska, a professional mediator,, has presented a quite interesting definition. He views mediation as constructive management and resolution of conflicts, reaching a consensus in the presence of a mediator who should be an unbiased person, disinterested in the dispute. He/she helps the parties realize their resources and strengths. He/she spends the majority of the time dealing with the constructive present and future which are not linked to the general conflict of the past which can no longer be changed.[53] The Ministry of Justice of Poland has also developed its own definition which delineates mediation as an attempt to reach an amicable resolution to a conflict which would be satisfactory for both the parties through voluntary negotiations conducted in the presence of a third person who is neutral in terms of the conflict and the parties, i.e. a mediator who supports the process of negotiation, smooths out all tensions and helps the parties reach a compromise without interfering in any possible solution.[54]

[48] G. Grzybek, *Etyczne podstawy pracy socjalnej (Ethical principles of social work)*, published by ATH, Bielsko-Biała 2007

[49] G. Grzybek, *Podstawy pracy socjalnej. Ujęcie antropologiczno-etyczne (Principles of social work. Anthropological-ethical approach)*, published by ATH, Bielsko-Biała 2007

[50] M. Granosik, *Profesjonalny wymiar pracy socjalnej (The professional dimension of social work)*, published by Śląsk, Katowice 2006

[51] E. Marynowicz-Hetka, *Pedagogika społeczna. Podręcznik akademicki (Social pedagogy. An academic handbook)*, published by Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 357

[52] Ch. W., Moore, *The mediation process. Practical strategies for resolving conflict.* Jossey-BassPublishers. San Francisco 1996, p. 53

[53] D. Fedorowska, *Warsztat pracy zawodowego mediatora (A professional mediator workshop)*, published by Kancelaria Mediacyjna "Primum Consensus", Wrocław, 2011, p. 12

[54] Ministry of Justice website www.ms.gov.pl

In the current author's view, based on first-hand professional mediator experience, mediation is a process of interpersonal communication which makes use of a third unbiased person with a view to helping the disputing parties reach a consensus which is not detrimental to any of the parties and which allows the parties to attain peace and return to regular operation and functioning within their own social reality. When examining these definitions, several essential goals of mediation emerge: helping the parties reach a mutual understanding, constructive resolution of the conflict, smoothing out tensions, helping the parties identify their potentials, returning the parties to peaceful and regular operations and functioning within social reality, with a concern for the sense of personal dignity of both parties.

This analysis of social work and mediation may point to a conclusion whereby both the activities are aimed at helping and supporting people in difficult situations through the presence of a third person whose intervention aims at constructive resolution of the problem and smoothing out of the tension arising therein. Both the social worker and the mediator should help people in need through identification and extraction of their potential and abilities, and finally return them to regular and peaceful functioning within social reality. All these goals are achieved by both professions with particular attention paid to human dignity. As suggested above, the goals and objectives of both professions are similar, the only differences being found in the methods or techniques applied and in the legal principles according to which these professions function.

The Idea of Mediation

Although the modern concept of mediation is approximately 30 years old and originated in the United States, the original very idea of mediation dates back two thousand years. The word *mediation* is derived from a Greek word *medos*, i.e. *mediating, neutral and unbiased*.[55] It was used for example to resolve conflicts between the city states of Sparta and Athens, where the roles of mediators were carried out by princes and kings. France acted as a mediator between England and Greece in 1849. Great Britain acted as a mediator between Brazil and Portugal in 1925.[56] As can be seen with these examples, mediation has a long tradition as a means of resolving various conflicts. It was explored to a wider range in the 1970s, however, by Americans. During that period, they began to take advantage of mediation widely as a result of problems in enforcing justice due to law courts overloaded with a number of claims and charges, too expensive law suits, and time-consuming legal proceedings. A similar situation has emerged at present in Poland as well as in the rest of the European Union. The emphasis should therefore be placed on the expansion of mediation as a growing phenomenon, as mediation represents an alternative form of conflict resolution both in legal institutions and within society. The European Commission released the Green Book concerning alternative methods of conflict resolution in civil and economic law in 2002. The European Union issued four recommendations which suggest that member countries introduce and promote mediation: recommendations concerning family issues, criminal law, civil law and administrative proceedings between public authorities and private persons.

The primary idea of mediation is to enable the parties to reach an agreement in the presence of a mediator as a neutral person and in a peaceful atmosphere while observing the principles of dignity and respect. One of the essential ideas of mediation concerns the availability of mediation for each person who may need such a form of support, i.e. the cost of mediation should be so low that anyone can afford it. If the parties are in a difficult financial situation in

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[55] M. Bobrowicz, *Mediacje gospodarcze – jak mediować i przekonywać (Economic mediation - how to mediate and convince),* published by C.H. Beck, Warszawa 2004, p. 13

[56] D. Fedorowska, *Warsztat pracy zawodowego mediatora (Professional mediator workshop)*, published by Kancelaria Mediacyjna "Primum Consensus", Wrocław 2011, p. 12

Poland, for example, the mediator is entitled to waive his/her remuneration. Mediation is a form of private communication between the parties involved using a non-legal language. The power of mediation consists of establishing an atmosphere where both the parties are listened to, while trying to reach a mutual understanding and satisfaction which should be at least at a higher level than before. In mediation, one should use resources and strengths, concentrate on a constructive present and future as opposed to a frustrating past, leaving space for respect for mutual successes or previous positive experience.[57] Mediation is not a jousting tournament and is not of a confrontational nature. Its major feature is to prepare the involved parties for co-working on mutual understanding, most often by reaching a compromise, specifying the details of their mutual needs or the hierarchy of needs of the disputing parties. Mediation finalised with mutual understanding enables the parties to return to normal, peaceful operations in their community. Mediation thus consists of transforming a combat between people into a combat with problems. The mediator is a specialist in creative thinking whose task is to stimulate the disputing parties to achieve an independent and creative search for solutions which would be acceptable for both parties, as well as being logical, feasible, enduring and in compliance with the law.

The process of mediation must strictly follow the specified principles. Departure from these principles may completely ruin the possibility of reaching a consensus between the parties. For this reason, one of the mediator's tasks during the process of mediation is to observe whether these principles are observed. The essential principles of mediation are as follows:

a) the principle of voluntary action: entailing that the parties are supposed to participate in the mediation process of their own free will without any duress, and that the parties, at every stage of mediation, may resign from the process without any claims or reproaches raised against them;

b) the principle of informal approach: suggesting that mediation should enable the participants to enter into a free dialogue;

c) the principle of confidentiality: entailing that the information disclosed by the parties should be treated as confidential by the parties and the mediator;

d) the principle of mediator's impartiality: according to which the mediator must be a neutral person not engaged in the conflict between the parties;

e) the principle of decency and respect: the parties in their representations should make use of words and formulations which would not insult or offend the other party.

Mediation in Social Work – the Benefits

The contemporary concept of mediation goes beyond the sphere of justice and legislation and has spread gradually across the education system, public administration, business, health care services and social assistance. This has come about due to the universal nature of the concept which can be introduced into each community, environment, each dispute, irrespective of the disputing parties and their identity. The selected mediation techniques can be used in a number of professions, particularly in the social professions.

Social work is an activity which meets numerous functions in society. New functions of social work are increasingly discussed and stress is placed on certain existing, yet hitherto underrated, functions in connection with numerous social changes taking place in Poland which generate new social problems and new groups of needy. Mediation serves such a function within social work. Literature on the aforementioned function includes works by R. Castel who suggests that activities in the field of social work are most frequently focused on implementation of the following functions: protective, contesting and mediating. The last

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[57] *Ibid.*, p. 12

of these functions is mentioned in opposition to the management of social problems. From the perspective of social work professions, they focus their attention on preparing the contract draft involving the wards and social service users.[58] The mediating function is also mentioned by A. Jarkiewicz who views its essence in the social worker's and client's efforts to understand the problem and prepare a mutual agreement. Attention has been paid to the preparation of the contract draft. The employee assumes the role of mediator. His/her task involves mediation between the excluded and the excluding persons, i.e. communication which has been interrupted or broken down. In such a case, the employee does not attempt to take the side of any of the parties but instead tries to understand the position of both. The effect of his/her work is to come to an understanding.[59]

Up until recently, the mediating function in Poland has been, one could argue theoretical within social work. This function has begun to be implemented in practice in connection with the new roles assumed by social workers, these being family assistants, coordinators of substitutive care, street employees or organisers of local networks which have been introduced at present.

The area for application of the mediating function within social assistance can also be found in the Act on Support for Family and Substitutive Family Care System of 9 June 2011. According to the preamble, it functions, "for the benefit of those children who need specific protection and help from adults, the family environment, a feeling of happiness, love and understanding, in caring for their harmonic development, future independence and self-subsistence, to ensure the protection of the laws and liberties they are entitled to, for the sake of the family which is a basic element of society and a natural environment for development, and for the benefit of all its members, and particularly the children; convinced that effective assistance for a family which experiences difficult times in the process of raising children, and that effective protection of and help for children may only be achieved and provided through cooperation between all persons, institutions and organisations working with children and their parents...".[60] The aforementioned act introduces therapy and mediation into various forms of work with families, including consultation and specialist counselling, service for families with children and legal assistance.

The Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy by introducing the Act on Support of Family and Substitutive Family Care System has established a new profession to be incorporated into social assistance – *the family assistant*. The family assistant is a professional role independent of the social worker yet closely collaborating with the social assistance and welfare centre as well as with the social workers. The idea of this new professional role has emerged as the result of a growing number of Polish families characterised by the care-educational insufficiency. The assistant, working in the biological family of the child, deals with a number of difficulties in family relations which lead to malfunctioning in the family, which is closely related to the danger of placing the children outside the family. In accordance with this act, the assistant's tasks focus specifically on the following:

1) preparation and implementation of a family work plan, created in cooperation with the family members and in consultation with the social worker;

[58] E. Marynowicz-Hetka, H. Kubicka, *Analiza opracowań zagranicznych (francuskich) na temat pracy środowiskowej przygotowana dla potrzeb Stowarzyszenia Centrum Wspierania Aktywności Lokalnej CAL w Warszawie, (An analysis of international (French) research into community work, prepared for the Association of the Local Activity Support Centre "CAL in Warsaw")* p. 18

[59] A. Jarkiewicz, *Film dokumentalny jako narzędzie pracy socjalnej* w: *Praca socjalna. Kształcenie-działania-konteksty (Documentary film as a tool of social work, in: Social work. Education-activity-context),* edited by Kanios A., Czechowska-Bieluga M., published by Impuls, Kraków 2010, p. 185

[60] Act of 9 June 2011 on support of the family and substitutive family care system, Collection of Laws 2011 No. 149 pos. 887

2) in cooperation with the family members and the coordinator of the substitutive family care, preparation of a family work plan which would be coordinated with the help plan for the child placed in the substitutive care;

3) administration of help for the families in the course of improvement of their life situation, including the acquisition of skills of regular household management;

4) administration of help for the families over the course of resolving their social problems;

5) administration of help for the families over the course of resolving psychological problems;

6) administration of help for the families over the course of resolving the parenting problems;

7) support for the social activity of families

8) motivating family members to increase their occupational qualifications;

9) administration of help in searching, acquisition of and holding down a regularly paid job;

10) motivating parents to participate in group activities aimed at teaching proper parenting patterns and psycho-social skills;

11) providing support to children, in particular through participation in psycho-educational activities;

12) performing interventions and remedial activities in jeopardy of children's and family's safety;

13) individual consultations in the field of parenting and education for parents and children;

14) maintaining documents concerning work with the family;

15) periodic evaluation of the family situation;

16) monitoring family functioning after the completion of work with the family;

17) if requested by the law court, preparation of an expert opinion concerning the family and its members;

18) collaboration with the public administrative and self-government authorities, relevant NGOs, and other subjects and entities specialised in work with children and families;

19) collaboration with an inter-disciplinary group or with a work-group.

Particular attention will be paid to tasks 3, 5, 6, 8, and 13 within the context of the mediating function when looking at the account of tasks to be carried out by the family assistant in relation to the family supported by the assistant. These tasks undoubtedly include fulfilment of the specific function. Proper and effective performance of these tasks also requires that the family assistant should be able to make use of the mediation techniques. In reference to tasks 3, 5 and 6, administration of help to families in the course of improvement of their life situation, including resolution of their psychological and parenting problems, the essence of the help administration is to lead the family into a situation where it can fully understand, in cooperation with the assistant, its actual problems and reach an agreement with the assistant on the joint preparation of his/her suggestions on how to resolve the problem in a manner which would be satisfactory for both parties, i.e. the family and the assistant. Analysis of task 8, motivating family members to increase their professional qualifications where the assistant uses the mediation techniques to properly conduct the interviews and discussions with his/her wards in order to discover their strengths and potential which may be valuable and useful in the process of a job search. Concerning Task 13, individual consultation in the field of parenting and education for parents and children, the family assistant uses the mediation techniques to help resolve conflicts between the parents and those between parents and children. The mediation techniques might consequently be particularly helpful in the day-to-day work of the family assistant as his/her essential task is to engage the family members in preparation of solutions which are aimed at improvement of their life situation. Taking into

account the fact that a modern family, in addition to care- and education-related problems, is likely to face problems concerning violence, substance abuse or long-term unemployment, mediation and the techniques employed by the family assistant arouse the hope for more efficient work with the family and increase the chance that the family will return to its regular function in both the closest environment and the wider community.

The street employee is a new role for social work which has been introduced in Poland recently. Street work services are provided in urban areas which experience severe social problems such as homelessness, including that of children, drug addiction, prostitution or problems concerning large groups of illegal immigrants, or the phenomenon of multiculturalism which currently generates a significant number of conflicts. Street work is a method which has brought fresh hope to European social work with enormous demands being imposed on it from the very beginning of its existence. Street work is not merely work on the streets, but also denotes a sophisticated working method which consists of an activity in the immediate community of clients particularly those who, for various reasons, do not receive any institutionalised help. The work is carried out in the beneficiary's environment, based on principles established in cooperation with him/her and respected by him/her, at his/her pace and based on the plan he/she has accepted.[61] Apart from certain personal qualities, such as openness, patience and increased willingness to help, the street employee must also have a wide knowledge of the specific features of the target community, an acquaintance with psychology, law, sociology, health care education, premedical first aid and considerable communication skills, including mediation, since they form the fundamentals of his/her job. Without these skills, the street employee would not be able to enter the specific environment or establish positive contacts with the same. Mediation techniques are enormously helpful at the critical stage of street employee activity with the needy, particularly in the preparation of the plan of activities and principles according to which the plan is going to be implemented.

Community work is one of three methods in social work, in addition to working with individual clients and group work. In the current author's view, the implementation of the mediation function is particularly noticeable and the specific method would not be efficiently operable without great mediation skills on the part of the social workers who employ the method.

Community work is "(1) an activating-integrating project, (2) implemented on the basis of social work methodology, (3) in a form which allows it to be treated as qualified social service the provision of which (4) may (and even must) involve third sector organisations.[62]

Recognition of community work as a method of social work means, however, that the tasks assigned within its framework should be performed by the social workers. In the model of organising local society, the social worker's tasks have been "operationalized" by the function of the local community organiser. This function is related to the three community roles of professionals: (1) local animator, (2) network organiser, (3) local social politician (planner).[63]

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[61] M. Chechelska-Dziopak, *Streetworking – brakujące ogniwo pracy socjalnej (Streetwork - a missing link in social work),* Problemy społeczne, 2007, No. 6.

[62] B. Bąbska et al., *Ramowy model środowiskowej pracy socjalnej/organizowania społeczności lokalnej (Framework model of social community work/organising local society)*, published by Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wspierania aktywności Lokalnej CAL (Association of the Local Activity Support Centre "CAL"), Instytut Spraw Publicznych (Public Affair Institute), Warszawa 2011, p. 8–9

[63] M. Rymsza, *W stronę pracy środowiskowej i nowych ról zawodowych pracowników socjalnych (Towards community work and new professional roles of social workers)* in: Pracownicy socjalni i praca socjalna w Polsce (social workers and social work in Poland). Miedzy służbą społeczną a urzędem (Between public service and office), edited by Rymsza M., Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2012, p. 208-209,

Although each of these roles has different assignments, I am of the opinion that competence in mediation is a prerequisite for success in all three roles.

The local animator's task is to involve the local community without assuming any leading functions within it the animator should stimulate the group or community. He/she searches for natural leaders among the members of the community, initiates ties within the groups of locals and citizens and establishes local coalitions around the problems to be solved.

The local social politician (planner), according to the organisation model of the local community, is an active participant in the process of establishing and implementing the local social policy, encompassing the process of satisfying the community's needs as well as solving the local problems. The activities related to this professional role include: diagnosis of local needs and resources, management of strategic planning teams, co-working on relevant documents (e.g. local strategies for resolving social problems), organising and conducting meetings with associated groups of citizens and interest groups, cooperation with local decision-makers, politicians and leaders.[64] The network organiser, in contrast, is a function characterised by mediation or brokering, being responsible for the growing importance of horizontal links within the community and relationships of a network nature in the field of self--organisation and communication,[65] which "increasingly complete or even substitute traditional forms of organisation of public life, based on vertical relations.[66] The professional role of the network organiser encompasses facilitating the establishment of relations between the community or society members and organising networks of contacts, supporting the performance of community activities concerning the shared issues and interests of society.[67]

Analysing these three new roles which are currently assumed by social workers: family assistant, street employee and local community organiser, it can be concluded that social work often fulfils the mediation function. The tasks performed by these roles require widely developed skills in the field of interpersonal communication, including mediation techniques, as these are some of the critical elements of the work which may guarantee professional help for individuals, families as well as for entire social groups.

Conflicts within families, including issues of alcoholism and domestic violence, have become important issues in social work. Another important issue concerns conflicts in general-care facilities, re-socialisation facilities and socio-therapeutic institutions providing support for victims of violence, the disabled and people with mental dysfunctions. Finally, the context of conflicts arising from relationships with a client who is hard to deal with should not be omitted, these often being described as "demanding", or conflicts within the social assistance team. These issues give rise to a space which can be successfully filled with specialists in the field of alternative methods for conflict resolution, i.e. mediators working in the structure of social assistance. This profession of public trust not only influences the increased efficiency

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[64] M. Rymsza, *W stronę pracy środowiskowej i nowych ról zawodowych pracowników socjalnych* (*Towards community work and new professional roles of social workers*) in: Pracownicy socjalni i praca socjalna w Polsce (social workers and social work in Poland). Miedzy służbą społeczną a urzędem (Between public service and office), edited by Rymsza M., Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2012, p. 209, www.isp.org.pl

[65] Ibid., p. 209

[66] B. Bąbska et al., *Ramowy model środowiskowej pracy socjalnej/organizowania społeczności lokalnej (Framework model of social community work/organising the local society)*, published by Stowarzyszenie Centrum Wspierania aktywności Lokalnej CAL (Association of the Local Activity Support Centre "CAL"), Instytut Spraw Publicznych (Public Affair Institute), Warsaw 2011, p. 22

[67] M. Rymsza, *W stronę pracy środowiskowej i nowych ról zawodowych pracowników socjalnych* (*Towards community work and new professional roles of social workers*) in: Pracownicy socjalni i praca socjalna w Polsce (social workers and social work in Poland). Miedzy służbą społeczną a urzędem (Between public service and office), edited by Rymsza M., Instytut Spraw Publicznych, Warszawa 2012, p. 209, www.isp.org.pl

of social work and the use of resources but may also expand the scope of aid provided to the local community.[68]

Mediation in the social work provided by Polish social workers on the basis of research

When dealing with mediation issues over the course of social development, the need for education in the field of mediation needs to be perceived as well as for additional alternative methods for resolving conflicts and social problems. Before describing the education system for social workers in the field of mediation, it is worth exploring the latest research results concerning skills and knowledge in the field of mediation and the mastery thereof by Polish social assistance providers. Particularly interesting nationwide research among Polish social assistance providers was conducted by the association *Mosty Porozumienia (Bridges to Understanding)* and *Polski Instytut Mediacji (Polish Mediation Institute)* with the support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The research focused on the degree of knowledge acquired and demonstrated by social assistance providers concerning the conflicts and resolution thereof.

The research dealt with 790 social workers. The vast majority of the respondents examined were women (92.3 %). The largest group was that formed by individuals from 26 to 35 years of age which accounts for more than 1/3 of all respondents. Generally speaking, the decisive majority (88 %) were aged from 26 to 55 years. The oldest respondents, over 56 years of age, account for less than 9 %, while the smallest category is that including the youngest respondents, up to 25 years of age. Nearly 80 % of all respondents have higher education, with the majority of them having an MA degree and the rest having a BA degree. The remaining 20 % of respondents have a secondary education. According to the researchers, these are most likely members of administrative staff as since 1999 the profession of social worker may only be practised by a person with a specialised professional education or a holder of a degree awarded by a college providing specialised teaching listed in the Act on Social Assistance, for example, social work, social policy, resocialisation, sociology, pedagogy, psychology or other related disciplines. Another socio-demographic feature is the length of service in the social assistance and social support institutions. It has been demonstrated that the categories of persons working at the institutions for less than 10 years (44.4 %) and for less than 20 years form the decisive majority of the respondents (68.8 %). Less than 1/3 of the respondents are persons working for more than 20 years.[69]

Social assistance providers were asked about the conflicts they have to address during the course of their work. They have predominantly pointed to those conflicts which are experienced by their clients. The most frequently mentioned conflicts are those taking place in the family and the local community. Conflicts within the families most frequently occur in relationships with spouses or partners, while another area of conflict is the relationship between parents and their children, as well as among siblings and in-laws. Research demonstrates that the causes of conflicts within families are thought by social workers to mostly arise in relation to the following: financial issues (lack of financial resources for living, ways of spending money, probate issues), issues related to care (care for children and other family members). They may also derive from pathology in the family (primarily alcoholism, violence). These conflicts are likely to overlap with one another. The respondents also point out conflicts in the local community, mentioning conflicts with neighbours,

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[68] D Czakon, J. Śliwa, M. Woźniak, *Konflikty i mediacje w pomocy społecznej (Conflicts and mediation in social assistance). Wnioski z badań ogólnopolskich (Results of nationwide research),* published by Uniwersytet Pedagogiczny im. KEN w Krakowie (Pedagogical University of Cracow), Association *Mosty Porozumienia (Bridges to Understanding),* Kraków, 2013.

[69] Ibid.

employers and various institutions. The above-mentioned results indicate that conflicts in relationships between the social worker and the social service client are definitely less likely to appear. These conflicts most likely concern benefits from social assistance (rejection of the assistance or the amount of benefits), and the relationships between the social workers and the wards. While the social workers reproach their wards with "too demanding an approach" and "a lack of understanding rules and regulations", the wards claim that social workers primarily "lack any competence and good will".[70]

Research conducted by the Association *Mosty Porozumienia* and the *Polski Instytut Mediacji* indicate that the decisive majority of respondents (80.9 %) are of the opinion that mediation is not a popular form of conflict resolution. In spite of this less than optimistic indication, the social assistance providers do see some possible field of application for mediation in their work. The decisive majority (81.4%) believe that their clients need some help from the mediator and would be personally willing to refer their clients to mediation (80.3 %).[71] The afore-mentioned opinions are displayed in Table 1

Table 1. **The role of mediation in the respondents' opinion**

Do you think your clients need mediator assistance?		
Yes	643	81.40 %
No	147	18.60 %
Would you refer your client to the mediation service?		
Yes	634	80.30 %
No	22	2.80 %
Hard to say	134	17.00 %
Do you think mediation is a popular form of resolving conflicts?		
Yes	151	19.10 %
No	639	80.90 %

Source: Mosty Porozumienia and Polski Instytut Mediacji Sp.z o.o., 2013 r.

An alarming result of the research is the one indicating that only 13.4 % of the respondents believe that their qualification in the field of conflict resolution is sufficient while 83 % of the social assistance providers claim that they actively participate in resolution of conflicts as part of their daily work routine.

Table 2. **Competences concerning resolution of conflicts**

Direct participation of respondents in conflict resolution		
Yes	656	83 %
No	134	17 %
Competences concerning resolution of conflicts		
Sufficient	106	13.4 %
Insufficient	378	47.8 %
Difficult to say	306	38.7 %
Total	790	100 %

Source: Mosty Porozumienia and Polski Instytut Mediacji Sp.z o.o., 2013 r.

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[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.

Education of social workers in the field of mediation in Poland

The above-mentioned results of the nationwide research are not particularly optimistic as they indicate that only a small percentage of the social assistance providers are able to provide professional help to their clients in the field of resolution of their problems resulting from conflict situations with various backgrounds. Questions concerning the quality and nature of the social work education system in this field are consequently worth raising.

The majority of colleges licensed to educate and train social workers at present, usually do not provide any professional courses in the field of mediation skills. Although subjects such as interpersonal communication or psychology of conflicts have been introduced into the curriculum, mediation itself is only included as a form of reference. A number of colleges have introduced the following specialisations into the framework of the Social Work study programmes: mediation or family mediation, although these specialisation curriculums are established to teach theoretical rather than practical skills which is clearly demonstrated by the fact that the material within these curriculums is conducted by theorists as opposed to practical professional mediators. Such a selection of lecturers is due, however, to the frugality of the college and its commitment to assign a certain portion of the didactic work to the teachers who form the so-called "minimum staff", which is one of the prerequisites for the proper functioning of the study programme at a particular college.

The situation looks somewhat better in the first and second degree training courses for social workers which are a means of improving the professional skills provided to those who have served as social workers for three or five years. The curriculums of these training courses at the first degree, according to the requirements of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, include the module of *interpersonal skills in social work* provided in a scope of 40 lessons *the syllabus of which contains the topic of mediation,* whereas the second degree requires the module entitled "*mediation and negotiation*" provided in a scope of 20 lessons. According to the Ministry's requirements, these modules must be conducted by persons educated in the relevant field or having practical experience thereof which should guarantee the professional and practical conduct of these exercises.[72]

The new legislation on higher education in Poland, as introduced by the Act of 18 March 2011, does not dictate the precise framework of social worker education. Instead, the innovations promulgated in this legislation are expected to influence changes in qualification education in numerous professions, including social work.[73] The hitherto binding standards for study programmes were represented by the National Qualification Framework for Higher Education. The national qualification framework is supposed to provide greater autonomy to colleges in the didactic field, allowing for independent designing of curriculums and authorising social work practitioners to educate future social workers.[74] This is a promising development for both practical and newly adapted education as well as in the field of social work. In order to enjoy any fruits of this development, however, there will be a need to raise awareness of the enormous value of the practical education provided to social workers and pay attention to the inter-disciplinary nature of the social worker profession which opens up

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[72] Decree by the Ministry of Social Policy, of 17 April 2012, concerning specialisation in the profession of social work (Collection of Laws of 8 May 2012, pos. 486)

[73] Act of 18 March 2011 amending the Act on Higher School Education concerning the degrees of education and academic titles, and the degree of education and titles in arts, and amending other acts, Collection of Laws of 2011, No. 84, pos. 455

[74] Autonomy of college and school curriculums - The framework of higher education, project of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education "National Qualification Framework" in higher education as a tool for improvement of education quality, Warszawa 2012, p. 34-40.

numerous opportunities for practical implementation of the profession, provided that the inter-disciplinary skills, including the mediation skills, are included into a larger scope in the educational programmes of social workers and that the programmes are implemented by experienced practitioners and not exclusively by theorists.

Conclusion

In connection with the far-reaching social and economic changes taking place in the European Union, including Poland, a number of new social problems have emerged with the increasing size of groups of people who need support and aid. In relation to the afore-mentioned, the system of social assistance is expected to provide better and more efficient forms of support for the public, whereas social workers are expected to apply a new, inter-disciplinary and more effective approach to the problems of the needy. This is apparent in the new professional roles of social assistants which have been recently emphasised in Poland, such as family assistants, substitutive care coordinators, street employees and local network organisers.

One of the new methods within social work, which should be used with a view to achieving an improved and more durable resolution of clients' problems and which form an integral part of the work in the new roles of professional social assistants, i.e. mediation, is the process of interpersonal communication which employs a third unbiased person with a view to bringing the disputing parties to a consensus which is not to the detriment of any of the parties and which allows the parties to reach a peace and return to regular operations and functioning within their own social reality. There are several essential goals for mediation: helping the parties reach a mutual understanding, constructive resolution of the conflict, smoothing out tensions, helping the parties identify their potentials, returning the parties to peaceful and regular operations and functioning within social reality, with a concern for the sense of personal dignity of both parties involved.

Mediation in the field of social work in Poland is a new topic. As demonstrated by the latest nationwide research, social workers still see an enormous need for introducing mediation as a new method of work with clients. They also recognise and admit the fact that they do not feel competent in resolution of conflict situations in their daily work. The research results come as no surprise as the Polish social worker education system at present does not attach importance to mediation and it is not given sufficient space in the curriculum.

The new legislation on higher education in Poland, as introduced by the Act of 18 March 2011 nevertheless provides the education of future social workers with a solid chance. The opportunities which are provided by this new legislation, including the creation of individual curriculums and practitioners authorised to conduct didactics, would make possible improved, inter-disciplinary, more practically focused professional preparation of future social workers. To achieve this, however, there is a need to raise awareness concerning the enormous value of practical education even in the field of social work.

In the current author's opinion, the developers of training programmes in the field of social work, taking advantage of the new opportunities provided by the legislator, should pay closer attention to mediation, i.e. an alternative form of conflict management, as a working method applied to the client in social work where the mediation itself, as well as the interpersonal communication techniques used therein, may be extremely useful or even critical with respect to the client, his/her understanding of the situation, his/her ability to articulate the problems, the needs and expectations, and particularly to the mediator-aided identification of the client's actual propositions with a view to solving the particular problem in a manner which would be satisfactory both for the client and the social worker. This is the only resolution which may provide an opportunity for a long-term and sincere change within the client and his/her behaviour, thereby leading to an actual and permanently positive change in his/her situation,

which is after all of paramount importance this being the final goal of each activity in the field of social work.

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Conclusion

Libor Musil

This book raises the question as to how social work education influences legitimisation of contributions of social workers to solution of ordinary problems addressed by participants in multidisciplinary networks. This influence has not been fully mapped out in the Visegrad Group countries. The first part of the monograph provides a conceptualisation of postmodern institutionalisation of social work. The findings of the specialised studies, which are featured in the individual chapters in the second part of this monograph, may be interpreted from the perspective of the postmodern institutionalisation concept as aspects of the newly emerging image of the appropriateness of the social work education concept to the postmodern environment.

The authors whose articles are presented in the second part of this book discuss two topics concerning the concept of postmodern institutionalisation as treated in the first part of it, firstly, the issue of supporting the abilities of social work students to arrange for the contribution of social work in the intercultural environment of multidisciplinary networks. Secondly, they are interested in the issue of the relevance of the modern professionalisation concept to the experience of the development of social work in the Visegrad Group countries after the year 1990.

The issue of specialised preparation and training for negotiation in the intercultural environment of multidisciplinary networks is opened up by Mirka Nečasová and Alois Křišťan, Sylwia Pelc, Beáta Balogová and Tatiana Matulayová.

Nečasová's and Křišťan's argument suggests a hypothesis that the concept of social worker education in philosophy and ethics may involve an inconsistency between the declared focus and the study concept as applied in practice. The officially used standards leave out the graduates' abilities and dispositions to negotiate and arrange for the contribution in the multidisciplinary networks, although the participants in the discussion concerning the application of ethical theories speak of the communication skills of students. The minimum education standard as set up by the Czech Association of Educators in Social Work emphasises the ability pf graduates to identify their own stance in practice and become familiar with the structural framework of the practice. The objective of education, as suggested by this document, is critical thinking, the ability to reflect and skill at applying the

ethical theories to a concrete example. This formulation of the objectives places an emphasis on ethics-conscious cognition, thus the fulfilment of this objective would provide graduates with the prerequisites for a familiarity with the ethical positions of the participants in the multidisciplinary networks. It does not mention, however, the ability of graduates to use the result of the reflections on these various ethical positions in negotiations with the network participants. Quite a different image is presented in the discussion between Nečasová and Křišťan concerning the application of ethical theories in practice. The participants in this discussion debate, amongst other things, concerning the suggestion that the ethical theories should be perceived as a source of argumentation strategies for social workers, and that students, through thinking through these strategies, should acquire the ability to speak knowledgeably and sensibly, as well as understandably, concerning the situations they encounter. Nečasová and Křišťan additionally point to the communication objectives of education in philosophy and ethics, particularly by interpreting the discussion where the participants presented various stances as a process of participative construction of knowledge.

Sylwia Pelc places mediation within the context of intercultural negotiation in a dual manner. Firstly, she views mediation as a communication process and secondly as an activity which provides an opportunity to cooperate with various specialists. As suggested by Pelc, within the process itself these specialists may consult one another concerning the problems experienced by people in distress. From this point of view it seems logical that the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy requests that the social work students be taught in the art of negotiation (mediation). It may therefore be interesting to interpret the data, which Pelc mentions as her source of information, concerning Polish social workers and their perception of the mediation function. One of the questions these respondents answered concerned the type of conflicts the social workers have to come into contact with in their practice. The responses featured a wide range of conflicts among the clients and involved individuals in their life situations. The employees also mentioned those conflicts they had with their clients. They do not mention, however, a single conflict with other specialists who they work with in providing help to clients. This fact may be interpreted in four different ways. Firstly, it is possible that Polish social workers actually do not have any conflicts with other specialists even if they work together. This would mean that the cooperating relationships with other specialists are completely harmonious. We see this option as quite improbable. Secondly, it is possible that Polish social workers actually do not enter into any cooperative relationships with other specialists. This also seems quite improbable. Thirdly, the selected survey method

did not enable the respondents to speak of their conflicts with other specialists. This would mean that the authors of the research, quoted by Pelc, did not see the issue of relationships with other specialists as important, although it is perceived as vital from the point of view of postmodern institutionalisation theory as well as from the perspective of Pelc herself. Fourthly, Polish social workers do come into contact with other specialists and do encounter certain conflicts with these specialists, although they did not feel the need to speak of it because these relationships are not important in their profession. This would mean that Polish social workers in dealing with conflicts of various kinds in all probability cannot make do without mediation and perceive it as a technique for helping clients, but definitely not as a technique for legitimisation of their contribution to the cooperation in multidisciplinary networks.

Tatiana Matulayová deals with interaction in the networks with respect to cooperation between universities and their external environment. Matulayová suggests that universities, apart from their traditional educational and research functions, are focused on cooperation with the commercial and public sector. She calls the functions of this type a "third mission". This concept constructs the cooperation between academics and students with the external subjects as an analogy with the multidisciplinary network theory. In compliance with the theory, Matulayová depicts the cooperation between university staff and local persons involved as situational and aimed at a certain problem context. Lecturers, students and local persons involved integrate their specific views on shared topics into a more complete image of the particular problem or context which enables them to create the "know-how steps" focused on the particular context. Matulayová declares this perception of the development of the third mission as a healthy trend and examines what has caused its stagnation at Slovak universities. Her answer to the question may be taken as a hypothesis on how the postmodern context influences cooperation within the networks. Postmodern Slovak society, Matulayová suggests, primarily discourages cooperation between university staff and the public sector in local networks. The main discouraging factor as perceived by Matulayová is so-called academic capitalism the priorities and language of which do not incorporate appreciation of efforts on the part of academics to cooperate with civil society organisations. Matulayová's description of academic capitalism is analogous to Parton's description of the "welfare pluralism" discourse as discussed in the first part of this book. She suggests that cognition and knowledge are seen as goods and education and research as negotiable or marketable services. University management, anchored in this discourse, is not open to the non-marketable

cooperation of the university staff and students with the civil society involved persons. Such management does not provide conditions for students and lecturers in social work to obtain experience in overcoming obstacles of their own function and promotion of new ideas in the practice of the social help system where graduates often work and perform their tasks.

Beáta Balogová and Tatiana Matulayová raise the question of the appropriateness of the modern professionalisation concept to the process of observing the development of social work in the Visegrad Group countries after the year 1990. Similarly to Libor Musil in the first part of this publication, they also discuss the question of social work institutionalisation after 1990. While Musil raises the question for Czech society, Balogová and Matulayová do the same for Slovak society. The Czech and Slovak formulations of the issue concerning the institutionalisation of social work differ, however, in the authors' views concerning modern professionalisation. Musil bases his opinions on the premise that the institutionalisation of social work as a modern project of professional discipline is not feasible in the postmodern context where the concept of one uniform and correct interpretation has been completely abandoned. Balogová and Matulayová, in contrast, do not examine whether the professionalisation of social work is feasible in Slovakia, but instead map out the progress of its implementation. They describe the results of promoting the individual guarantees of social work professional status (consensus in the professional community, formulation and recognition of social work as a science, establishment of the professional chamber, legislative codification of the discipline, formulation and recognition of the social work education standard, establishment of disciplinary education, generation of new job opportunities for graduates, etc.) in the political, academic and managerial arenas. The image of social work professionalisation in Slovakia, however, as depicted by Balogová and Matulayová seems inconsistent. On the one hand the professional project concept is quite clear and the authors add specific data to its partial characteristics. On the other hand, the authors stereotypically speak of its failure. The professional community fails to reach any consensus. Social work as a science is questioned not only by the public and other specialists but also by practitioners from the professional community. Although some partial specialised associations of social workers are being established (including the Association of Educators), a project of a nationwide professional chamber has not been implemented. The discipline is codified in the legislation, specifically in the Act on Social Assistance, although the legislative guarantee of its monopolistic position is not available. The educational programmes produce armies of

graduates for whom the state or self-governing authorities do not seem all that eager to generate any working position.

This unfavourable situation is interpreted by Balogová and Matulayová as a transitional period or developmental stage of the gradual implementation of a modern professionalisation project which is being processed and is under way. The features of the discipline development, as described by the authors, may be seen as indicators that the institutionalisation of social work in Slovakia is in progress, in postmodern conditions and carried out in a postmodern manner. Certain characteristics of the situation in the Slovak Republic, particularly the inability to reach any consensus inside the professional community and the plurality of specialised associations of social workers, might also be interpreted as symptoms of the postmodern development of social work.

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