

SOCIAL **WORK** AND SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
IN A DYNAMICALLY CHANGING WORLD



Social work and social maladjustment

Opportunities and challenges in a dynamically changing world

Editors

Peter Jusko & Marcin Olejniczak



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Introduction

Social maladjustment is primarily associated with behaviors characterized by noncompliance with socially accepted rules and norms. This concept may be defined as a pattern of purposeful engagement in antisocial, destructive, or delinquent conduct. Individuals exhibiting social maladjustment often perceive their own behavior as normal and are capable of conforming to social norms when it suits them. Socially maladjusted behavior is thus a conscious and voluntary act; those who engage in it regard the violation of rules and norms as acceptable and justifiable.

Such behavior deviates from the prevailing norms of the majority culture within a given society, although it may be tolerated or even valued within certain subcultures. In contemporary society, social maladjustment manifests as a persistent pattern of norm violation expressed through phenomena such as radicalization and violent extremism, delinquency and criminality, substance abuse, and social exclusion.

Social maladjustment is a phenomenon taking on new dimensions in today's rapidly changing society. Globalization, technological advancement, demographic shifts, and economic instability are creating conditions in which social exclusion and maladjustment pose significant challenges for social work professionals. The edited volume *Social Work and Social Maladjustment: Opportunities and Challenges in a Dynamically Changing World* adopts a multidisciplinary perspective to examine these issues, providing an analysis of current trends, associated challenges, and potential solutions.

The book is organized into five thematic sections that address key dimensions of social maladjustment and approaches to its amelioration. The first section explores theoretical foundations and core concepts—including social exclusion, maladjustment, and radicalization—together with their implications for individuals and society. The second section examines the challenges of social work with marginalized groups, highlighting the limitations of outreach services and online supervision. The third section presents preventive and integrative strategies, encompassing work with immigrants, support for community centers, and social readaptation programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. The fourth section underscores the role of volunteering as an effective instrument for preventing social maladjustment. The fifth and final section considers the influence of modern technology and emerging trends in social work practice.

The editors believe that this volume will offer valuable insights not only to social work practitioners but also to students, policymakers, and members of the broader public concerned with social inclusion and the prevention of marginalization. Each chapter combines theoretical analysis with practical recommendations, thereby contributing to the development of more effective responses to this complex social issue.

Peter Jusko, Marcin Olejniczak

Chapter I. Introduction to social maladjustment and impact on society

1.1 Social Exclusion, Social Maladjustment and Social Work

MELANIE ZAJACOVÁ

Introduction

Social exclusion, which can lead to maladjustment, has a profound impact on individuals' well-being and social functioning. The shifting landscape of contemporary society has generated new social challenges, and social work must be adapted to meet these changing needs. In Europe, there is a growing emphasis on professionalization and elevating the educational standards of social work. These demands represent a new dimension in the field and highlight the importance of the role of social work in addressing societal issues.

Social workers aim to address social exclusion and maladjustment by promoting core social work values. These values, which include the dignity and worth of individuals, the importance of human relationships, and the pursuit of social justice, form the foundation of the social work profession. Addressing social exclusion and maladjustment has significant implications for social work practices, education, and training. Social work values compel social workers to confront these issues by advocating policies and practices that promote inclusivity and equality.

Social work definition and its core values

According to the global definition, social work is a practice-based profession and academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. The principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities, and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels.” (IFSW, 2014)

Social workers are prepared to respect the inherent dignity of humanity, the worth of every person, and their rights. The fundamental value in social work is also promoting social justice, focusing on eliminating oppression and ensuring respect and equal access to resources and opportunities. (IFSW, 2018). Addressing social exclusion involves recognizing and valuing the diverse experiences and identities of marginalized individuals and advocating for inclusive policies that support marginalized populations (Lee, 2021). Social workers advocate systemic changes to reduce social exclusion and promote equitable policies. Core values were set in the social work codes of ethics. To ensure the integrity of social work practice, these core values provide a guiding framework for ethical decision making and behavior.

Social work arose from humanistic and democratic ideas, and its values were based on respect for the equality and dignity of all people. Since its beginning, social work has fo-

cused on meeting basic human needs and developing the potential of each person. Human rights and social justice serve as motivation and justification for social work activities (Council of Europe, 1967). Social workers play a vital role in promoting and protecting human rights and social justice as these values are at the core of their profession. They use their expertise and skills to advocate for and empower marginalized and vulnerable populations and to challenge systemic inequalities and injustices. The Council of Europe's 1967 resolution on social work and social services highlighted the importance of social work in promoting human rights and social justice, which continues to be a guiding principle for social workers today.

Social workers almost constantly find themselves in a situation of conflict of interest; their decision-making is not enough to be legal, and it needs to be legitimate or ethical. Although the relationship between a social worker and his/her clients is legally equal, usually based on a contract, in reality it is an unequal relationship because the clients are often in a mental and physical state in which they cannot defend themselves against anyone. This relationship is similar to that between a doctor and a patient. Therefore, social workers must be bound by the ethical codes of their profession (Tomeš, 2015). The key parts of the supervision of the profession are compliance with ethical standards, protection of the human dignity of social workers' clients, and human rights. The explicit mention of human rights in the professional code of ethics allows problems, possible solutions, and tasks to be formulated on a legislative basis, as well as from the perspective of human rights. Thanks to this, the independence of social work as a profession is possible from power interests

(whether of the founder, social services organization, social policy, etc.) or from the illegitimate demands of the social work client. Social workers must act for the benefit of the client and society, not only because people (clients) or society expect it from them, but also because it is social work. This is its third mandate, and professional ethics thus become autonomous ethics (Opatrný, 2017).

The findings of sociologists, who are supposed to examine the "great social issues of the 21st century", such as social inequalities, exploitation, oppression, and impending ecological crises, are closely linked to social work based on the values of social justice and equality. The key value of social work, human dignity is expressed and specified in specific categories by the concept of human rights (Trimikliniotis, 2020).

The significance of social exclusion in social work

Social exclusion is a multifaceted phenomenon with social, psychological, and economic dimensions that encompasses the marginalization of individuals and groups from various aspects of economic, social, political, and cultural life (Grant et al., 2000). The term was first used in 1974 by a French politician involved in social issues to refer to groups of people not covered by state social insurance. He stated that these are socially maladjusted persons (delinquents and drug abusers, but also abused children, persons with disabilities, or single parents). However, in the 1980s, this narrow definition shifted to a more general term for the social disintegration of a person (Cousins, 1999). Mareš (2004) states that the concept of social exclusion has directly provided a paradigm shift in the perception of society, which is no longer interpreted only in the context of vertical-stratification inequalities but

also significantly includes the dimension of horizontal inequalities.

There are various approaches to defining social exclusion, and there is no universal understanding of this phenomenon among governments, institutions, politicians, and academics. After the analysis of features of these different definitions of social exclusion, he suggests one general: “a multi-dimensional, dynamic, society-wide process of agentive, institutional, and structural exclusion of communities, countries, households, individuals, groups, neighborhoods, populations, and territories from cultural, economic, political, and social life, based on age, caste, descent, disability, ethnicity, financial status, gender, HIV status, membership of a particular discriminated group, migrant status, race, religion, sexual orientation, or where they experience discrimination’ (Runcan, 2021).

Nowadays, it is often used interchangeably with terms such as marginalization, unemployment, or solitude but lacks theoretical clarity within social work (Cedeño, 2023; Schirmer, 2013). Social exclusion is described by various phenomena, such as inadequate housing, unemployment, or limited access to education and healthcare, which social workers must address to improve support for their clients in attending to the appropriate quality of their lives. The significance of social exclusion in social work is profound, as it includes the prevention, mediation, and improvement of individuals' social integration (Schirmer, 2013). It is also significant in social work because it lies at the heart of the profession, shaping both its theoretical underpinnings and its practical interventions (Sheppard, 2021). Contradictorily, Luhmann's systems-

theoretical framework suggests that exclusion is not inherently problematic, nor is inclusion always beneficial (Schirmer, 2013).

In summary, social exclusion is a complex issue that social work aims to address using various strategies. Social exclusion impacts both the mental and physical health of individuals and contributes to the ongoing cycles of adversity, inequality, and social instability. It is a widespread problem that weakens community unity and democratic participation (Yongzhuo, 2024). The field recognizes the need for a nuanced understanding of these concepts to effectively support individuals and communities affected by exclusion (Cedeño, 2023; Schirmer, 2013). The role of social work in promoting core values within the inclusion process is essential for achieving a more equitable and inclusive society (Cedeño, 2023; Yongzhuo, 2024; Michailakis, 2013).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines social exclusion as a dynamic, multidimensional process that is driven by unequal power relations that affects various dimensions (political, economic, social, and cultural) at different levels (Popay et al., 2008). The Final Report to the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health from the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network points out that there are diversities in the meanings of the social exclusion concept, in social relationships of power and control, and in equalities in human dignity, human rights, and health. Recommendations in this report emphasize the role of the state in changes and reversal of exclusion processes and in the support of full and equal inclusion, human rights protection and healthcare, education, and social care provision for all groups, regardless of their

characteristics. Social movements and community empowerment are essential to these changes (Popay et al., 2008).

The global economic crisis has further highlighted the need for inclusive social work practices that respond to exacerbated conditions of social exclusion (Strier, 2013). This informs both the understanding of clients' experiences and the development of effective interventions. Social exclusion can be understood as the denial or impossibility of exercising civil, political, or social rights (Byrne 1999). This refers to the lack of participation of people in those areas of social life, in which, according to prevailing social norms, participation is generally expected, namely, in systems of production, family life, community life, and political life, as well as in the exercise of basic civil rights, including the rights to political and religious beliefs and cultural/national rights, identity and recognition within civil society, participation in cultural activities, and, last but not least, in the sharing of social rights, including access to social institutions, education, health care, housing opportunities, and social protection (Mareš, 2004; Sirovátka, 2003). Interestingly, while social exclusion is a relatively new term, it encapsulates enduring topics within social work, such as exercise of authority, empowerment, participation, and the need for evidence-based practice (Sheppard, 2021).

Current definitions may be seen as problematic because the term exclusion is defined as a deficit and is used as a synonym for poverty, marginalization, unemployment, isolation, or solitude, so the discussion often ignores inclusion as a counterpart term and strength-based perspective. Understanding the paths of inclusion among marginalized groups can lead to a better conceptualization of social exclusion as a spectrum

(not a dichotomy) and developmental phenomenon (not a pre-determined one) (Cedeño, 2023).

However, social work is fundamentally concerned with issues of exclusion, and the key role of social work is to address these issues by focusing on empowerment, authority, choice, and needs. Inclusion and social exclusion underscore the social work profession's commitment to advocating for policies and practices that promote social inclusion and justice; therefore, an objective and value-based approach is needed, emphasizing practical reasoning and critical thinking (Grant, 2000; Sheppard, 2021; Strier, 2013). As Morris et al. (2009) point out, social work must find the means to engage with the policy agenda of social exclusion as a driver for change. The conceptual understanding of these processes and the ways in which approaches to social exclusion/inclusion can inform educators is therefore necessary. For this change, it is also necessary for service users to be present in this discussion - the voices and experiences of those most marginalized must be represented in policy and practice. To effectively implement this change, it is crucial that service users are actively involved in conversation, as their unique perspectives and experiences are essential in shaping policies and practices that directly impact their lives.

The role of social workers addressing social maladjustment in contemporary society

Social maladjustment can manifest in various forms such as anxiety, depression, and difficulties in social functioning, which are particularly relevant for populations undergoing significant stress (Wu et al., 2024). Understanding malad-

justment allows social workers to assess and address the complex needs of clients, thus facilitating better-tailored interventions and support systems. It improves the understanding of individual problems in their social context, providing information on the development of effective interventions and their implications for complex social work practices (Chetkow-Yanoov, 2000; Wu et al., 2024).

Research on social maladjustment in the social work context embraces early identification in educational settings, critical examination of definitions and legal interpretations, and incorporation of technological advancements in social computing (Center, 1990; Osuna Luna, 1988). In addition, research on social maladjustment in the social work context has also explored the role of community-based interventions and the importance of cultural competency among social workers in addressing this issue effectively.

The context of a society's contract includes social work issues related to the definition of the field of the client and the client and topics such as control and assistance, the use of power, or the moral responsibility of the social worker (Healy, 2022). The context of a society's contract also encompasses other aspects of social work, including the role of social workers in promoting social justice and advocating for the rights of marginalized populations, as well as their responsibility to uphold ethical principles in their practice.

The development of social work theory and the profession is influenced by the same social forces that shape the profession's agenda (Payne, 2021). Social work practice is necessarily responsive to current social realities that are shaped by current interests and concerns. A social worker's professional

role is defined by a set of assumptions that determines their role and the process by which they become social workers. These assumptions are influenced by the history of social work, its relationship with other professions, and social institutions, and may vary depending on sociocultural conditions. The formation of a social work's character is also influenced by a range of social processes and institutions that may not have a direct connection with the academic or practical level of social work, such as political and legislative changes or the interests of other professions.

Market pressures favor task-oriented goals, while "mainstreaming" social justice rhetoric and practice is shaped in a way that often negates or renders social justice meaningless, as it merely masks structural inequalities (Bhuyan et al. 2017). Social workers experience the impacts of changes in political ideologies on their practices. They must make efforts to make social work an instrument of social control that manages and, if necessary, punishes the vulnerable. Where social work talks about solidarity, cooperation, equality, and neoliberalization brings about concepts such as efficiency, competition, inequality, and individualism. Moreover, there are long-established opinions on whether individuals have personal responsibility for their own failure or exclusion because it is their fate or willingness to be. Thus, people suppose that it is either necessary to be resigned to an unchangeable situation or that it is possible to escape from the situation through an individual effort. However, the misuse of social work for social control poses a huge risk of not addressing inequalities in society (Estivill, 2003; Butler-Warke et al., 2020; Mayela, 2021).

The misuse of social work by the system and the failure to address societal inequalities represent a form of social control that is at odds with the goal of empowering social work based on the principles of equality and the protection of human rights. For social work to maintain its focus on people, their dignity, and basic human rights, it must be capable of developing and implementing a variety of strategies for evaluating and disseminating knowledge. While social workers cannot serve as administrators, they should strive to gain the trust of clients and the broader public in their professional expertise (Healy, 2022). It is crucial that the education and practices of social work consider the current social context. To effectively serve the diverse needs of communities, it is vital that educators and social workers remain informed about current social issues and incorporate them into their practices.

However, the connection between social exclusion and maladjustment is evident, as exclusion can lead to adverse outcomes such as antisocial behavior and emotional disturbances. Therefore, the study of social maladjustment must take part in social work because it directs the well-being and adjustment of individuals within their social environments. Social workers play a major role in identifying and addressing the needs of people by providing support and resources to those who may be experiencing exclusion and its associated negative effects (Howard, 2024; Bersamira, 2020; Ng, 2019). Moreover, a focus on inclusive education and support can help integrate the most disadvantaged students (Klasen, 2002; Louw, 2020), and the digital divide can be identified as a modern form of social exclusion that social work must address (Watling, 2012).

Additionally, addressing the digital divide requires a comprehensive approach that includes providing access to technology and resources as well as addressing systemic issues such as poverty and inequality (Sanders, 2021).

How can social work education and training be enhanced to better equip social work practitioners in addressing social exclusion among marginalized populations

Social work education and training hold significant importance in preparing future social workers to address the intricate and multifaceted issues of social exclusion and maladjustment. The crucial task and question for social work educators is "What measures can be taken to improve social work education and training to better equip social work practitioners in addressing social exclusion among marginalized populations?".

Despite the emphasis on human dignity and social justice within social work core values, evidence suggests that current educational programs may not fully equip students and future social workers with the necessary skills and knowledge. To address this issue, social work programs must prioritize the integration of diverse learning opportunities and experiences that foster critical thinking, empathy, and cultural competence in curricula (Johnson et al., 2014; Watling, 2012; Ng, 2019). There is also an experience that marginalized/excluded/maladjusted people may disturb "normal" citizens because they show them that they do not want to see and wish to acknowledge and from which they want to escape. It is similar for social workers, educators, and other professionals because it reminds them of the limits and difficulties of their work (Estivill, 2003). These gaps can result in social

workers who are less familiar with advocating and implementing inclusive policies and strategies. To address these gaps and ensure that social workers are equipped to advocate and implement inclusive policies and strategies, it is essential to provide ongoing training and education on these topics.

The objective of preventive measures is to anticipate the immediate causes of exclusion and the mechanisms that generate it. As many studies have demonstrated, basic healthcare and education are essential for economic advancement and social development. Together with the client, the social worker is looking for a path to change, possibilities to achieve autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency, motivation and resources for gradual steps to improve the client's life situation. Although progress in the social field is expected, it is not yet as tangible as anticipated. These approaches also emphasize the importance of education and training systems in developing new skills and knowledge (Estivill, 2003).

Social work programs are suggested to incorporate more practical training on social inclusion strategies, such as community engagement, participation in the meaning of being part of a whole, advocacy, and policy development. Additionally, it is recommended that inclusive research be conducted, and interdisciplinary collaboration should be promoted. A review of the role of social workers in policy advocacy and the significance of equipping them with skills to influence other professionals, policies, and practices, as well as continuous professional development, is necessary to ensure that social workers are updated on the most effective practices for promoting social inclusion.

Implications for social work education and training

To effectively tackle social exclusion, it is essential for social work education and training to equip practitioners with the knowledge and skills needed to engage with and support marginalized communities. It is crucial for social work education and training programs to integrate diverse perspectives and experiences into their curricula to foster the development of practitioners who are capable of addressing social exclusion. Moreover, incorporating diverse **perspectives** and experiences into social work education and training programs can also help promote greater professional competence among practitioners, enabling them to better understand and address the unique needs and challenges faced by different communities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING



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1. Inclusive work and research

Social work programmes must emphasize competences to inclusive, community work, teaching students to understand and respect people's diversity, and to work effectively with individuals, groups, and communities from diverse backgrounds (and reflect this perspective). Training should include strategies to engage with communities that experience social exclusion. Inclusive research in social work focuses on collaboration with marginalized populations, ensuring that their voices and experiences inform others. Engaging marginalized groups as co-researchers (rather than mere subjects) empowers them by valuing their lived experiences and insights. Participatory approaches that engage individuals with various disabilities, service users, or other professionals in the research process can lead to relevant and impactful policy changes (Johnson et al., 2014; Kia et al., 2022; Luchenski, 2018). This approach aligns with the core values of social work including dignity, respect, and social justice.

Reflective processes, through which social workers must subject their professional knowledge and skills to the challenges of current, specific situations, and the needs of clients, are integral to the concept of professionalization. This involves social workers creating meaningful connections with clients, as they are viewed as professionals who are knowledgeable and accountable for the process of resolving problems in challenging life circumstances (Noordegraaf, 2007). In this context, individuals facing difficult life situations are afforded the status of experts in their own lives with respect to the principles of self-determination, non-judgment, and individualization.

Social workers can be regarded as participating professionals with valuable competencies.

Courses that teach inclusive research methodologies can cover ethical considerations, strategies for engaging marginalized populations, and practical skills for conducting inclusive research. Providing opportunities for students to engage in inclusive research projects during their field placements or internships can enhance their understanding and skills in promoting social justice, and it is essential to prepare practitioners to effectively address the needs of marginalized populations (Hong, 2009; Nicotera, 2019).

2. Advocacy and policy practice

Social workers must be equipped with skills in advocacy and policy practices to address systemic issues that contribute to social exclusion. This includes understanding the policy-making process, how policies are formulated, and the roles of various stakeholders. Social workers must also be capable of analyzing and critiquing existing policies to identify areas needing change and knowing how to influence them to promote social justice. Education should cover the analysis of social policies and their impact on marginalized groups, preparing social workers to advocate for policies that foster inclusivity and equity, which involve skills such as lobbying, public speaking, and coalition-building (Liamputtong, 2020; Nicotera, 2019; Hong, 2009).

The courses should include discussions on race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other factors impacting individuals' access to resources and opportunities, internships in advocacy organizations, and governmental and non-profit organizations

engaged in policy work to stay updated on best practices and emerging trends (Hong, 2009; Havig, 2013).

3. Interdisciplinary collaboration

Addressing social exclusion often requires collaboration with professionals from other fields such as education, healthcare, law, and public policy. Social work education should promote interdisciplinary collaboration and teach students how to work effectively in diverse teams. Training programmes should provide opportunities for students to engage in interdisciplinary projects and community-based learning experiences. Interdisciplinary approaches enhance the effectiveness of interventions by leveraging diverse expertise and perspectives, leading to more holistic solutions (Louw et al., 2020). Collaboration with healthcare professionals can enhance understanding of the mental and physical health impacts of social exclusion. Integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and public policy can lead to more effective strategies for addressing the root causes of social exclusion, considering all aspects of their well-being, and promoting social justice. In educational settings, collaboration between teachers and school counsellors can help develop and implement strategies that promote social inclusion and academic success for marginalized students (Liamputtong, 2019; Luchenski, 2018).

Courses that emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration can cover topics such as collaborative problem-solving, team dynamics, and communication across disciplines. Using real-world case studies and simulations that require students to work in interdisciplinary teams and to understand the roles of different professionals can help students

consider the complexities of social issues, the benefits of collaborative solutions, and networking.

By focusing on these areas, social work education can better prepare future social workers to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration, ultimately leading to more effective, inclusive, and supportive practices. Social exclusion poses significant challenges for individuals and communities, but social work, guided by its core values, is well positioned to address these issues. By incorporating comprehensive education and training that emphasize community work, inclusive research, advocacy, and interdisciplinary collaboration, social work can effectively promote inclusivity and social justice.

Future recommendations

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the profound impact of social exclusion and maladjustment on individuals' well-being and social functioning. Social workers play a critical role in addressing these issues through the promotion of core social work values such as dignity, human relationships, and social justice. With their dedication to these core values, social workers can empower marginalized communities and bring about meaningful changes.

The definitions of social exclusion and maladjustment describe how these phenomena significantly impact individuals, often leading to adverse outcomes, such as mental health issues, social instability, or economic marginalization. Social exclusion is framed as a multifaceted problem with social, psychological, and economic dimensions, making it a critical area of focus for social work practitioners. Social exclusion can have a profound impact on an individual's well-being, and it

is therefore essential that social work practitioners take a holistic approach to address this issue.

The core values of social work – social justice, human rights, and respect for diversity – are emphasized as foundational principles guiding social workers in their efforts to combat social exclusion. The International Federation of Social Workers' global definition of social work highlights the profession's commitment to promoting social change, development, and empowerment of marginalized populations. In accordance with this definition, social workers play a critical role in advocating the rights and needs of marginalized individuals and communities and strive to create more equitable societies.

Social maladjustment can manifest as anxiety, depression, and difficulties in social functioning. By understanding the context and root causes of maladjustment, social workers can develop tailored interventions to support their individuals and promote social integration. Social workers play a crucial role in identifying and addressing various factors that contribute to maladjustment, enabling them to design targeted interventions that promote the well-being and social integration of the individuals they serve. By collaborating with other professionals and utilizing evidence-based practices, social workers can effectively support individuals and families to overcome challenges. In addition to collaboration and evidence-based practices, social workers can also advocate for systemic changes that address the root causes of social and economic injustices and promote greater equity and inclusion.

From the perspective of social work and education, seven key recommendations emerged to effectively address social exclusion and maladjustment.



Source: processing by author

Social work practices should embrace community-based participatory research (Springer, 2019) as a means of empowering marginalized communities. By involving community members in the research process, social workers can build trust, ensure that the voices of the most marginalized are heard, and foster collaboration in developing effective interventions.

In addition, the integration of technology into social work practices is crucial. Digital tools such as mobile applications and online platforms can enhance access to social services, especially for isolated or underserved populations. However, even the connection with the development of technology and the internet will not cease to offer further opportunities and challenges to provide services in the electronic space in the form of alternative methods and interventions. At the same time, it raises the need to address newly formulated ethical and legal issues in this context, such as client rights, privacy, confidentiality, and liability. Telehealth and virtual counselling services can offer critical support to individuals who may face barriers in accessing traditional in-person services.

Social work education should prioritize the adoption of integrated service delivery models that combine healthcare, education, and social services. Multidisciplinary teams comprising professionals from various fields can provide comprehensive and holistic support to individuals by addressing multiple dimensions of well-being. Training social workers to effectively collaborate within these teams is essential for delivering coordinated and effective services.

Social workers must be necessarily equipped with skills for effective policy advocacy. This includes understanding the policy-making process, analyzing existing policies, and identifying areas where change is needed to promote social justice and inclusivity. Social work education should incorporate training in lobbying, public speaking, and coalition building to empower future social workers to advocate systemic changes that benefit marginalized populations.

Social work practices should increasingly implement strength-based and trauma-informed approaches. These practices focus on recognizing and building upon individuals' strengths and resilience while also acknowledging and addressing the impact of trauma on behavior and well-being. Social work education programs should emphasize these approaches and provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to create supportive and empowering environments for their clients.

Enhancing cultural competence is critical for social workers to serve diverse populations effectively. Social work education should include comprehensive training on cultural competence, ensuring that social workers are prepared to understand and respect the unique experiences and identities

of marginalized groups. This training should equip social workers with the ability to tailor interventions to meet the specific needs of these populations.

Social work practices should focus on developing sustainable and long-term solutions for social exclusion. Programs should be designed with sustainability in mind, ensuring that they can continue to provide support and resources over time. Social work education should emphasize the importance of creating sustainable practices to achieve long-term success in reducing social exclusion and promoting social integration.

By integrating these suggestions into social work practices and education, the profession can better address the complex and multifaceted issues of social exclusion and maladjustment. Emphasizing innovative approaches, integrated service delivery, policy advocacy, strength-based and trauma-informed practices, cultural competence, and sustainability will equip social workers with the tools they need to effectively promote social justice and inclusivity. These recommendations highlight the importance of continuous evolution and adaptation in social work to meet society's ever-changing needs.

The future of social work offers numerous opportunities for innovation. The integration of technology into social work practice offers exciting possibilities for reaching and supporting marginalized populations. For example, virtual reality can be used to provide immersive training experiences for social workers, helping them develop empathy and understand the challenges faced by their clients.

Additionally, data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) can be leveraged to identify patterns and trends in social

exclusion, enabling more targeted interventions. AI-powered tools can also assist social workers in managing their caseloads more efficiently, freeing time for direct client interactions.

The role of social workers in addressing the digital divide is also crucial. As technology becomes increasingly integral to everyday life, ensuring that marginalized populations have access to digital resources and skills is essential. Social workers can advocate for digital inclusion policies and provide training to help individuals navigate the digital landscape.

In conclusion, by emphasizing the pivotal role of social workers in addressing these complex issues of social exclusion and maladjustment by adhering to core social work values and embracing innovative approaches, social workers can make significant strides in promoting social justice and inclusivity. The recommendations and opportunities outlined in this conclusion highlight the need for continuous evolution and adaptation in social work practices to meet the ever-changing needs of society. Through dedicated efforts, social workers can help create a more equitable and inclusive world.

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1.2 Challenges and opportunities in preventing radicalisation and violent extremism in a dynamically changing world

PETER JUSKO

Introduction

The society-wide reflection on the manifestations and activities of radicals and extremists in recent decades, as well as its accentuation in a dynamically changing world, raises the need to grasp this topic as an object of attention of science and research. The basic and initial requirement seems to be the elaboration of quantitative society-wide research in this field capturing the impact of current society-wide trends on the emergence, manifestations, causes, consequences, and prevention of radicalization and violent extremism in our society. Patyi (2023, p.11) states that in the context of the integration of radicalization and extremism into various social science analyses and theoretical concepts, his research is often linked to theoretical approaches such as the problem of anomie, modernization or concepts of socialization, disintegration, learning, psychoanalytic theories, etc.

In the field of theoretical reflection on this issue in the context of social work in the pre-pandemic period, we should mention the publications of the Department of Social Work of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Applied Sciences in Košice: *Extremism and Radicalisation in Social Contexts* (Lichner et al., 2018), *Manifestations and Radicalisation and Extremism in Social Relationships* (Tóthová - Šlosár (eds.), 2018). The important topic of radicalization prevention is addressed, for example, by Smolík (2020).

Among the foreign research reflections that already capture the period of the new coronavirus pandemic or the importance of social work in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, we would mention the study *Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature: A Literature Review* (Stephens - Sieckelinck - Boutellier, 2021), which identified 85 papers addressing the prevention of violent extremism. The authors note a high number, a rapid growth, but also a certain thematic and disciplinary fragmentation of the literature on this topic. They stress the importance of resilience in this area but also note the absence of an appropriate framework for its application to violent extremism. They propose an ecosocial approach as applicable in this area, addressing not only the possibilities for change at the level of the individual and the community but also institutions and the social environment. The second research study is *Norwegian Social Workers' Strategies in Preventing Radicalization and Violent Extremism* (Haugstvedt, 2019), in which in-depth interviews were conducted with experienced social workers conducting indicated prevention work against violent extremism in Norway to find out how they understand radicalization and what approaches and strategies they use in their practice. It was found that participants conceptualize cases of radicalization in the same way as other cases, i.e. as a social problem, and that established strategies in social work, such as client-directed practice, Socratic questioning, and motivational interviewing, play an important role in preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

The institutionalization of science and research in this field is primarily represented by academic and research workplaces, in the Slovak Republic, represented by the relevant departments of universities and colleges and the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The prerequisite for scientific research activities in this area is a comprehensive analysis of the current situation, which would be the basis for the preparation and implementation of scientific research, educational and preventive projects, and programs involving experts from the above-mentioned centers. A condition for the impactable functionality of such a model is "the need to create a bridge between academia and research institutions that possess knowledge and methodology on the one hand, and civil society and policy-makers on the other" (Křížková et al., 2017, p.18).

This text aims to identify current challenges and opportunities in the field of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism and to disseminate them in the professional community to provoke a professional debate and the subsequent profiling of a functional and self-optimizing prevention model.

Radicalisation and violent extremism in the educational context

The preference for market or economic aspects of the education of young people in secondary and higher education is forcing changes in the conceptual, content, and organizational aspects of the educational process. Efforts to avoid the potentially distorting consequences of these changes are also related to their other consequences. According to Čáčová (In: *On Extremism without Extremes*, 2016), Slovak schools are considered to be the most undemocratic environments in Slo-

vakia. Indeed, undemocratic forms of social governance are related to extremism, although this has only been partially confirmed in the research conducted (In Causes of the growth of radicalization and aggression of certain population groups, 2012, p.38). The results of this research show that the majority of respondents (55%) do not see a link between education and tendencies to extremism. Nevertheless, 39% of respondents see a tendency to extremism in persons with low education.

The inclusion of the issues of radicalism and extremism in the content of education is particularly relevant for secondary school students, as they are among the groups most at risk of these phenomena penetrating our society. The preparation of such oriented educational activities for secondary school students is thus a topical task not only for the founders of secondary schools in the Slovak Republic but also for the pedagogical and scientific staff of universities. We consider the inclusion of scientists and researchers from this interdisciplinary field in the creation or modification of the content of education in secondary schools to be necessary, especially in terms of increasing the qualification and expertise of responses to existing threats, given the unpredictability of various terrorist attacks already in the pupils and students of primary and secondary schools. In French schools, for example, a security drill will be held three times a year to teach pupils how to react to terrorist attacks.

Liessmann (2009) speaks of the false notion of an education that can be quickly achieved, quickly acquired as needed, and just as quickly 'forgotten' if there proves to be no demand for it in the educational or labor market. There is also an underestimation of the role of schools in terms of their impact on

the growth of extremism and radicalism in society. According to the results of research conducted in 2012 (In Mlýnek, 2012, p.35), members of Slovak society do not yet perceive schools in our conditions as a place that would contribute to the growth of extremism (64%), although almost a third of respondents (27%) noted such an influence of the school. A cross-cutting theme of the school educational process that should contribute to the deradicalization of extremist-oriented youth is the issue of human rights and their protection. Deradicalization is understood as part of a continuum of anti-extremist activities in which already radicalized individuals gradually give up their extremist positions as well as their contacts with the extremist scene. Education in this area, from primary school to higher education, especially for students of the helping professions, is a society-wide educational aspect of preventing these negative tendencies. Sjøen and Jore (2019) synthesized themes from the literature about intervention models that differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention levels to encompass the heterogeneity and complexity of radicalization issues in educational contexts. Their review suggests that educators should approach prevention through a humanistic, relational, and inclusive pedagogy, but that 'harder' prevention strategies are more likely to be used in school settings, which can have quite a negative impact on education.

Currently, the main source of risk is specialized, immediate performance and short-term profit-oriented, seemingly completely pragmatic human education (Beck, 2004). 'Forgetting' the historical context will have, but more likely already has serious consequences, e.g. in the form of radicalization

of youth as well as other population groups. Learning about the history of one's city, region, or the whole country is of immense importance for young people. We consider educational and commemorative activities that could provide young people with a source of lessons from our history to be an appropriate form of effective transmission of historical memory. One such activity, for example, is the project 'Students in the Footsteps of Totalitarianism' (On Extremism without Extremes, 2016). The results of the research "Causes of the growth of radicalization and aggression of certain population groups" (2012, p.54-55) show that the public sees large reserves in the action of schools in this area. An important task, we believe even a necessity, is a more active approach of primary, secondary, and higher education schools in preventing the growth of extremism. Regarding direct university studies in study programs, the content of which corresponds to this issue, we propose to broaden their content focus and, consequently, the profile of the graduate to include topics in the field of radicalism, extremism, and prevention.

These include, for example, study programs in social work, ethics education, and theology, as well as other teacher and non-teacher study programs, mainly in the social sciences and humanities.

Working with youth at risk of radicalization and violent extremism

In designing strategies for working with youth at risk of extremism and radicalization, it is necessary to identify the multipliers operating in this field, the extent of social support for this specialization of youth work, existing projects and programs for working with these youth, as well as the readiness of youth workers to work in this field.

The theme of multipliers working with youth also resonates with the themes related to youth radicalization. An example is the accredited training program "No Hate on the Internet", which prepares multipliers of the eponymous Council of Europe campaign to conduct workshops in non-formal education settings in youth work, focusing on human rights education and training. The effect of such events needs to be highlighted by constructive society-wide support for youth work in our society. An example of good practice in supporting youth work is the project of the Rhineland-Palatinate Federal Office for Social Affairs, Youth and Welfare called Complex - RLP, whose programs focus on e.g. exit support for right-wing extremists, parental initiative and assistance for parents of young extremists, or assistance for victims of extremist crime (In Prevention in the field of right-wing extremism, 2012, p.89). The readiness of youth workers completes the whole concept of working with youth at risk of radicalization and extremism. It should be stressed that the first contact with this target group should be with youth workers, not members of law enforcement agencies. Therefore, front liners in youth work need to have methodological procedures on how to handle individual cases of radicalization, i.e. to know what the first signs of radicalization are and how to recognize them, with whom to consult when radicalization is suspected, how to proceed when interviewing a person who is suspected of becoming radicalized, or how to proceed in cases where individuals who are intensively involved in extremist movements are identified (In Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.4).

When working with young people, youth workers are often confronted with the process of acquiring their own identity in these clients. Part of the identity manifests itself outwardly - for young people this may be, for example, the clothes they wear or the music they prefer, but part of the identity may also remain hidden, e.g. some beliefs and values (Bíziková - Vargová, 2017, p.3). There can be a difference between how a person perceives themselves and how other people perceive them, and this difference can be the basis of social inequality and injustice, which can result in the radicalization of a young person. Prevention of the risky behavior that can result from radicalization is particularly important in institutional settings, such as primary and secondary schools and educational establishments (student homes and boarding schools), social protection and social welfare institutions (centers for children and families), and detention facilities.

The instrumental aspect of working with youth at risk of radicalization and extremism is represented by a variety of activities of an informational, communicative, educational, and preventive-socialization nature. Types of such activities are for example:

- expert commissions, e.g. the Interministerial Working Group of Experts on the Elimination of Racially Motivated Crime, Extremism and Spectator Violence at the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic,
- anti-extremism campaigns, e.g. the Council of Europe's "No Hate on the Internet" campaign,
- projects, e.g. the Open Society Foundation's project "Don't be scared of extremes"

- roundtables, e.g. aimed at creating a regional network of actors active in the prevention of violent extremism and work with youth.

The essence of youth work including all these types of activities is the development of conceptual and comprehensive work of professional youth workers possessing relevant professional competencies with appropriate society-wide support for their work and its importance for the whole society. Haugstvedt (2020) draws on research findings through 17 in-depth and two focus group interviews with experienced youth workers involved in preventative work against radicalization and violent extremism to suggest that professional recognition is important for these workers and that a critical part of their interaction with peers and managers is sufficient time and understanding of how this work affects professionals on a personal level. Supportive measures such as peer support, debriefing, and supervision are also essential components of maintaining well-being after these encounters with clients.

Media contexts of radicalization and violent extremism

The dissemination of extremism through the mass media is an important part of the promotion of hateful and radical views. The internet, in particular social networks and websites, plays a key role in this process. Based on a content analysis of selected websites (In Mapping of public attitudes in the Czech Republic towards right-wing extremist, racist, and xenophobic ideas and their disseminators about the integration of minorities and foreigners. 2010), it was found that right-wing extremists attribute the following negative characteristics to immigrants, Roma, Jews, or other minorities: uncivilized,

maladjusted, social parasitism, or an inclination to criminal behavior. Often, in these cases, the authors of such statements are projecting their own subjectively perceived negative characteristics onto someone else.

It is precisely for these reasons that the public needs to obtain objective information from relevant sources. Journalists, especially from the so-called opinion-forming media, play a significant role in this whole process. A proactive approach to promoting the prevention of extremism in the media includes the work of serious and responsible journalists who can intervene positively in the area of opinion formation. We consider it important to note that by presenting different attitudes and experiences in the field of radicalization and violent extremism, more can be achieved than by convincing about the rightness or wrongness of particular attitudes (Dúbravová, 2014).

The internet and social networks are currently widely used to promote extremist views and activities. However, even before the Second World War, different ways of disseminating hate propaganda were identified. In 1937, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) was established in the USA to familiarize the American public with the issue of propaganda and thereby immunize them against the effects of the emerging Nazi propaganda. The Institute identified seven basic propaganda techniques: name-calling, glittering generality, euphemism, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, bandwagon, and fear appeal (Nad, 2017, p.9). We consider the spread of negative speech (so-called hate speech) to be the most prominent problem in the media coverage of extremism. Based on monitoring

activities focused on Internet extremism, the following problems were identified (In Mapping of public attitudes in the Czech Republic towards right-wing extremist, racist and xenophobic ideas and their disseminators about the integration of minorities and foreigners, 2010):

- The impossibility of recording all extremist content on the Internet,
- the absence of a flexible system for reporting and sanctioning illegal content on the Internet.
- the operation of extremist websites in third countries (especially in the USA), where different legislation makes it impossible to act against content that is illegal in our country.

In addition to the activities of the extremists themselves, reports and articles on radicalization and violent extremism are also presented in the media space. Their thematic structure includes, for example, actions, marches, and demonstrations of extremists, efforts to combat extremism by the state, criminality of supporters of extremism, information about victims of extremist violence, or the structure and functioning of extremist groups (Prevention in the field of right-wing extremism, 2012, p.24).

The media can therefore present both opportunities and threats in the area of radicalisation and violence prevention. Bamsey and Montasari (2023, p.119), based on a critical analysis, point out that the Internet plays a key role in radicalization to violent extremism. The authors also discuss how artificial intelligence could be deployed to reduce terrorist content online, making social media platforms a safer cyberspace for

individuals to operate in. Media campaigns against extremism may also be an opportunity. Drawing on good practice examples from other media campaigns can support their successful management. For example, viral marketing (In: Preventing right-wing extremism, 2012, p.61), i.e. the dissemination of information through social networks in a way that motivates the recipient to play the role of disseminator, can be used to reach the relevant target group. Risky or even pathological trends in the media could include, for example, the disappearance of genre divisions between entertainment and news, or the frequent portrayal of violence or various deviations as interesting curiosities (Kulifaj et al., 2016, p.25). Effective communication strategies directed against demagoguery, or presenting followable attitudes and experiences of recognized authorities concerning the fight against the spread of false information, discrimination, or unmasking such activities in the media space, act optimally against media threats.

The role of civil society in preventing radicalization and violent extremism

A prerequisite for effectively tackling the problems of radicalization and violent extremism in a democratic society is the achievement of an appropriate level of civic sensitivity to extremist manifestations. As defined by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (In Resolution 1754/2010: Fight against extremism: achievements, deficiencies, and failures, 2010), one of the basic characteristics of extremism is the rejection of the fundamental values and rules of the game of a democratic constitutional state. A democratic society should have a certain 'tolerance limit', according to which it can tolerate some deviations from established social norms.

The limits of such a tolerance limit extend to the point at which extremist action undermines the fundamental pillars of democracy. In the Slovak Republic, three events can be mentioned in this context:

- The murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová on 21 February 2018
- The terrorist attack in front of the LGBT café Tepláreň in Bratislava on 12 October 2022, where the perpetrator murdered two victims and shot one person.
- An assassination attempt on the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Robert Fico, on 15 May 2024.

It is precisely in the prevention of this point occurring, also due to the impact of such serious events, that the role of civil society is significant.

Thus, civil society is perceived as a strong and important actor in the development of the society of the development of society, and it is no different in the field of prevention of radicalization (Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.5). However, in Norway, as well as in other countries, the consensus is that in both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions, the state and local authorities must be the key actors, as they have the appropriate institutional, personnel, and also the financial infrastructure to do so. Sumpter (2017) notes that managing the divergent and sometimes competing interests of large state institutions in this area is not easy, and effective collaboration between them remains an obstacle to the success of civil society initiatives. Where government falls short, civil society organizations often fill the gaps, and their expertise, experience, contacts, and specific know-how are invaluable in countering

extremism. CSOs also enjoy a higher level of trust among the communities they engage with than the relevant state institutions.

Educational activities are also a means for civil society to prevent extremism. The combination of civic education and extremism prevention, e.g. through workshops aimed at testing the Fair Skills methodology (Křížková et al., 2017, p.10), allows social workers and their clients (children and youth) to test the acquired knowledge and experience in practice. Educational activities also have the importance of highlighting the importance of individual and society-wide influences on our attitudes and behavior. On an individual level, it is mainly about learning the basis and reasons for one's own beliefs, which will make one more prepared for one's own reactions, but also for the unexpected reactions of others, and will give one more chances to find the right path to the real goal, which is the acceptance of the idea of interpersonal respect and tolerance (Bízíková - Vargová, 2017, p.6). An example of society-wide activities is the selling of the experience of German experts to colleagues in other European countries (especially Central European ones) from their system of preventing violent extremism, which, also due to Germany's acknowledged sense of historical responsibility in relation to the consequences of the Second World War, is one of the best in Europe.

Another way in which civil society can participate in the fight against radicalization and violent manifestations in the population is by strengthening public awareness and citizens' active participation in strengthening security in society. When extremist manifestations undermine the security of society, they bring "not only" threats to the health and life of citizens,

but also to the very functioning of democratic society. Security threats and risks include not only extremist acts of brachial violence but also the questioning of democratic principles through disinformation hoaxes and fake news, which have a subversive effect on society. If such disinformation affects a substantial part of society, then the role of civil society is to contribute to reshaping the climate in society. An example of such activities in Slovak conditions is the cooperation between NGOs and academia in the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region, known in particular through the platform of citizens and organizations called Not in Our Town. Its aim is to promote and develop tolerance through social, cultural, and educational events.

Markovič Baluchová (2022) deals with the role of the media and civil society in humanitarian interventions and humanitarian campaigns using the example of the response of Slovak non-profit organizations to the conflict in Ethiopia. The paper points out the importance of the media and civil society in de-escalating tensions that arise in conflict zones.

In democratic societies (In Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.2), any terrorism or violent extremism should be considered a crime, but it is not permissible to react to it with force. Civil society can respond to this problem, e.g. through various possibilities of civic political education (Křížková et al., 2017, p.12), e.g. by applying anti-racist approaches, reflection on prejudices, democratic education, etc. It is also possible to contribute to the dampening of existing antagonisms in society through a well-thought-out concept of inclusion of minorities, especially migrants in the European context. From a quantitative and qualitative point of view, this role

of civil society is most elaborated in Germany (Heckmann, 2014).

Given the gravity of the problem, experts specializing in the problems of radicalization and violent extremism should move towards professionalization. In addition to their knowledge and instrumental equipment, the development of civil society is an initial component of this. In the context of preventing extremism, this is primarily about creating the conditions for a tolerant yet safe society.

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Participation in social work in anti-extremism and deradicalization activities

The existence of radicalization and violent extremism as negative social phenomena in our society, as well as the social response to them through anti-extremist and deradicalization policies, concepts, and prevention activities, accentuates the need to identify the implications that these processes have for the professional practice of social work. In the outlined context, we will attempt to identify selected opportunities and challenges that point to the functional participation of social workers in anti-extremist and deradicalization activities.

We consider social work in addressing extremism and deradicalization to be strongly client-centered social work. We assume (Kulifaj et al., 2016, p.58) that the client is the expert on his/her situation and therefore focuses on the issues and factors that he/she considers relevant. We also consider it important for the success of social work that allowing clients to make their own decisions increases their motivation to change, and at the same time promotes the legitimacy of so-

cial work. However, focusing on the client and promoting client autonomy has its limits. As an example, we can mention the application of the mentor service in the Czech Republic (Prevention in the area of right-wing extremism, 2012, p.56), which was implemented in cooperation between the Probation and Mediation Service and the Association for Probation and Mediation in Criminal Justice. It focused on individual social work with convicts who claim to be of Roma ethnicity and have been sentenced to community service or supervision as part of a suspended sentence.

The client's ability to function independently can be seen in the context of the concept of social functioning. The social functioning of a client at risk of radicalization and extremism is determined by the saturation of his/her needs, the non-fulfillment of which may give rise to problems, the solution of which is the subject of professional social work. In terms of forms of social work, it is primarily field social work, which aims to seek out and address clients in their natural environment, mediate regular contact with field workers, offer them conversations on various topics, convey information, and provide support in difficult life situations (Křížková et al., 2017, p.25). When reflecting on the problems in the relationship between a client at risk of radicalization and violent extremism and the natural social environment, the role of social work is primarily to determine whether the demands of this environment are commensurate (manageable) with the skills and competencies of this client. If problems are identified in this area, it is necessary to intervene in the client's social situation. The negative environmental influences causing radicalization of often very young people accentuate the importance of using

the early intervention system as part of field social work. Dealing with a crisis situation linked to both the causes and consequences of radicalization points to the need for acute help for the client through crisis intervention.

When designing social work with people at risk of radicalization, we should also address the life situation in which these clients find themselves. According to Musil and Navrátil (2000), the assessment of the client's life situation includes the state of the family, health, economic situation, social inclusion, etc. If, when assessing the client's living situation, a problem related to violent extremism is identified, social work interventions need to focus on solving this problem, or at least on eliminating the factors that caused it. According to Vukovic (2022), modern counter-terrorism strategies include, among other preventive mechanisms, an assessment of the risk of radicalization and violent extremism. Undoubtedly, this is a fundamental preventive mechanism, which should enable early identification of potentially dangerous persons against whom further measures and actions should be taken to prevent them from joining terrorist groups or organizations and carrying out a terrorist attack.

One of the critical reflections of social work in the prevention of socio-pathological phenomena is its interventions "ex-post", i.e. only after the emergence and spread of a given problem. This critical moment can also be noted in the prevention of extremism, and we therefore call for a more proactive approach to social work in this area. We would suggest the following as important starting points for social work in the field of prevention of extremism and radicalization of different groups of the population, but especially youth:

- contact work with clients,
- mapping of those potentially at risk,
- protection and assistance to victims of extremism.

The aim of contact social work with youth at risk of extremism and radicalization (Kulifaj et al., 2016, p.68) is to create space for social work to be carried out in a given moment and place. For the social worker to provide services to the client, it is necessary to establish the first contact, to find out the client's needs, and to establish and strengthen mutual boundaries and build mutual trust. To carry out social work, it is necessary to know the location and the demographic and social structure of people at risk or potentially at risk of radicalization. This is done through mapping of those at risk or potentially at risk, in which social workers can work with schools, the police, and local and regional authorities. The key task of social work after mapping is to provide protection and assistance to the victims of extremism, using the existing means at the disposal of social work or social policy.

Social work interventions to address the problems associated with radicalization and violent extremism could be divided into the following subgroups:

- information and counseling activities,
- social interventions addressing problem areas,
- exit support and social inclusion support.

Information and counseling activities when working with clients at risk of extremism and radicalization would include basic counseling, information service to the client, and the use of the mobile counseling service against extremism.

Basic counseling (Kulifaj et al., 2016, p.68) involves helping clients solve current problems and increasing their competence to solve these problems. It focuses on helping clients with self-acceptance, dealing with relationship problems, problems in the family, school or employment, sexual life, substance abuse, etc. The aim of basic counseling is to help the client find his/her way around his/her social situation, to offer him/her more options for solving the problem, and to explain the advantages and disadvantages of different solutions. The information service for a client at risk of extremism and radicalization includes the provision of specific follow-up information to the basic counseling on e.g. school, family, relationship problems, legal issues, safe sex, risks of substance abuse, etc. A specific form of counseling support is the so-called Mobile Beratung gegen Rechtstextremismus (Mobile Counselling Centre against Right-Wing Extremism) operating in Germany (Prevention in the Field of Right-Wing Extremism, 2012, p.40). The equivalent of this form of counseling in the Czech Republic is the concept of mobile counseling against extremism called MOPOPRES.

As part of their diagnostic work with clients at risk of extremism and radicalization, social workers focus on identifying problem areas in which the client needs help. Such areas are e.g. (Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.3) social marginalization, poverty, unemployment, bullying, domestic violence, racism, psychological problems, etc. The social worker's interventions then focus on addressing the specific problem area, which also has a significant preventive effect, as it contributes to moving the client away from extremism.

Interventions related to the integration or reintegration of the client into society are an essential part of social work. In the area of combating radicalization and extremism, this primarily involves the participation of social work in exit programs, which can be aimed at, for example, helping people to gain work qualifications and find employment, social assistance to refugees and migrants if they have been victims of violent crime, or social work in socially excluded localities.

In terms of the formal anchoring defined by the legislative possibilities of social work and in terms of the competencies of the social worker, it is possible to identify the objects at which social work finds its application in the field of radicalism and extremism at two levels (Patyi, 2023, p.112):

- Micro level - intervention: in the level of measures of social protection of children and social guardianship - individual, family - professional, and specialized activity in the correction of disintegration processes
- Macro level - preventive: in the level of provision of social services - community; social system - professional and specialized activity in the implementation of prevention.

The theory and practice of social work have a wide field of competence in the field of deradicalization and prevention of extremism, encompassing diverse activities. These include, for example, the development of the client's potential as part of secondary and tertiary prevention, the use of risk management and conflict management in case of the need for their acute resolution, the use of the coordinating role of social work in ensuring cooperation and networking between the various

actors, or the support of the social functioning of the victims of extremist crimes.

Given the underdeveloped anti-extremist social work in our conditions, we also emphasize the importance of adopting examples of good practice from abroad.

Conclusion

We stand on the threshold of a new era. It is not "only" about the pandemic of a new coronavirus but also about eco-social information and communication challenges or the existence of a real military conflict on the European continent. We are moving from the information age to the conceptual age, where creativity and empathy will be valued much more than the structuring of logical information and procedures. Dusan Ondrusek (In Nad', 2017, pp.37-38) emphasizes that value becomes that which cannot be stepped, automated, or precisely dosed. Value becomes creative practices that cannot be "just" derived on the basis of already existing practices, understanding the connections that will result from very unconventional connections and common discourse of people from different cultures, worldviews, and very different life practices. The second factor that will constitute civilizational literacy is the cultivation of collective intelligence. The ability to get along with others, even in the face of differing or contradictory views and interests, will be a key indicator of productivity. Equally important is deliberation, the ability to listen to each other, to listen with understanding, and to see discussion as a way of better understanding a problem and solving it, rather than as a competitive discipline with a winner and a loser.

An important part of preventing extremism is the institutionalization of a multidisciplinary approach to the issue. At the international level, this includes, for example, the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities program, which is based on the application of a new model of diversity management called intercultural integration (In Intercultural Cities program, 2015).

The cooperation of all relevant actors is a characteristic feature of radicalization prevention in Norway (Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.5), and this is especially true for cooperation within civil society as a set of voluntary civic initiatives, which assumes a high level of citizen participation in governance through non-political structures. Voluntary participation of citizens in extremism prevention will not only achieve the promotion of a multidisciplinary approach but also the extension of the activities of state bodies (e.g. police) or local authorities (e.g. municipalities) and the civic dimension. By complementing these actors with NGOs and experts from the academic sphere, we are aiming for an optimal representation of relevant actors in the development and implementation of de-radicalization and anti-extremism measures in our society. The creation of a unified anti-extremist platform will not only enable the cooperation of specialists from different sectors but will also create a space for sharing the responsibilities of different actors.

The provision of effective counseling and support services for exiting the extremist scene requires the cooperation of various actors. The media could play an important role in this process, especially as a link between policymakers, public authorities, and civil society. Through them, it is also possi-

ble to contribute to the elimination of one of the biggest problems related to the growth of radicalization and violent extremism practically all over the world: hoaxes and fake news-fuelled hating against different population groups.

Improving social awareness of extremists and increasing social cohesion is one of the key areas for preventing radicalization and violent extremism in our society. Social cohesion has been widely used as a normative concept in European debates since the late 1990s. Berner and Bertrand (2023) stress that low levels of social cohesion increase the danger of extremism. Different perceptions of safety, the importance of a 'sense of home', and residents' identification with 'their' neighborhood play an important role in terms of social cohesion for urban residents and should therefore be encouraged to prevent violent, anti-democratic radicalization. In socially marginalized neighborhoods, a sense of belonging can serve as a resource for municipal and state executives to establish a trusting relationship with residents. All of this cannot be done without a thorough understanding of our identity, and more specifically its social component. Strengthening the social component of the identity, especially of the different risk groups of the population, is one of the effective ways of preventing them from turning to extremist ideologies. In the conditions of Slovak society, the topic for such prevention activities is primarily the reduction of inter-ethnic conflicts in socially excluded localities. Work with such communities or groups threatened by social exclusion may include (Křížková, 2017, p.14) the implementation of projects, educational activities, or the promotion of community cohesion (Křížková, 2017, p.14).

In the process of creating a sense of belonging to society, the local level represented by the local government has a key role, which can both strengthen the sense of belonging to the local community among all residents, as well as strengthen local democracy (Kriglerová - Chudžíková, 2017, p.8). In the field of prevention of social exclusion, the activities of the local government can be oriented, for example, on a diverse range of leisure activities for children and youth, prevention of debt and financial literacy, technical measures to increase the safety of residents (e.g. camera systems), or the activities of the municipal or municipal police in the field of crime prevention. The causal link between crime and social exclusion emphasizes the importance of crime prevention in socially excluded localities or among persons at risk of social exclusion, such as convicts after release from prison. The effectiveness of municipal measures against social exclusion can be noted in the following indicators (In Prevention in the Field of right-wing extremism, 2012, p.34):

- Improvement of security and public order in socially excluded localities,
- reduction of socially undesirable phenomena (e.g. youth crime),
- involvement of people from socially excluded backgrounds in addressing the situation within their community or locality,
- expanding social activities and alternative forms of education.

We were able to identify the following opportunities and challenges in the field of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism:

- Developing quantitative research to capture the impact of current trends on the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism
- establishing functional links between academic and research institutions, civil society, and policymakers
- democratizing updates in the conceptual, content, and organizational aspects of the educational process
- conceiving a strategy for working with young people at risk of radicalization and violent extremism
- identification of multipliers working with youth on themes corresponding to radicalization
- shaping a proactive approach in supporting the prevention of extremist behavior in the media
- using artificial intelligence to reduce hate content and highlight the safety of the media space
- strengthening public awareness and active participation of citizens in strengthening security in society through civil society activities
- reprofiling social work interventions to address issues related to radicalization and violent extremism
- participation in social work in exit and deradicalization programs and assistance to victims of violent crime
- setting up a coordinating role for social work in ensuring cooperation and networking between the actors involved.
- the development of civic literacy through the cultivation of collective intelligence and deliberation
- institutionalizing a multidisciplinary approach to preventing extremism

- increasing social cohesion, strengthening the social component of identity, the sense of belonging to society, and the prevention of social exclusion.

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Chapter 2. Challenges in social work with disadvantaged groups

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2.1 Social counselling as part of field social work in Slovakia, focusing on marginalised groups of groups of citizens

ERIK ŠATARA

Social work in marginalized Roma communities

Social workers operate in a variety of settings where they do their work (institutional, outpatient, field). The social environment in which their clients (individuals, families, groups, and communities) live has a significant impact on their lives. It also influences how clients respond to the different situations and social problems in which they find themselves. The performance of social workers is directly influenced by this social environment. It is important for the success of their work that they understand the social and economic factors that affect the lives of their clients. At the same time, they must be able to work in these different environments, adapting their approaches and methods to respond to specific needs and demands (Mátel, A. et al., 2015; Mátel, 2022; Ondrušková & Kuli-faj, 2023). In this section, we prioritize field social work, which is a distinct field of social work. It is indispensable for effectively helping people, as it captures and solves 'problems' where they arise (Ambrózová et al., 2006). The emergence and development of field social work (including community social work) is a social policy response to address the significant so-

cio-economic disparities and inequalities in Slovak society. Primarily to address the social problems of citizens living in social exclusion, poverty, etc., regardless of their age, gender, or ethnicity. Among the population groups affected by the topic of poverty, social exclusion, and segregation are the inhabitants of marginalized Roma communities (Hunka, 2011). Field social work has emerged as a type, of practice of social work that can respond to the diverse needs of the inhabitants of these communities and come up with purposeful solutions to their social problems (characteristic in its multidimensionality and complexity). It s targeting of a specific target group of people living in poverty, and social exclusion, has become established in many municipalities, and those carrying out field social work are considered specialized experts in matters previously dealt with by state institutions, government bodies, and NGOs (NP TSP and TP MRC II., 2019). The fact that the Roma population is associated with the topic of poverty has been known for a long time. However, the fact remains that earlier studies such as *Poverty of Roma and Social Care for Roma in the Slovak Republic* (Radičová, I. et al., 2002) have already shown that the poverty rate among Roma in Slovakia is high and is higher compared to any other population group, including other social indicators such as education, health status, housing conditions and access to the labor market. Men and women who live in spatially segregated communities are the most vulnerable group (Horňák & Rochovská, 2014). The Roma are one of Europe's largest ethnic minorities and have lived in Europe since the Middle Ages. Their number is estimated at between ten and twelve million people, of whom an estimated six million live in the countries of the European Un-

ion. A more precise estimate of their number is difficult because the European Roma population is highly heterogeneous and is divided into many groups and subgroups, which differ from each other, whether in their way of life, their names (the term Roma includes several groups, e. g. nomads, Ashkali, Sinti, Vatrasi, Kalderasi, Manusha, Vlachi, Rumungri, Boyas, etc.), and finally also in their appearance. The Slovak Republic is one of the European countries with the highest absolute number, but also a relative number of Roma. The earliest records of their residence in Slovakia date back to the 14th century. They differ from other inhabitants of Slovakia by their origin, history, traditions, language, and anthropological features (Rusnáková & Pollák, *Sociálna práca v marginalizovaných rómskych komunitách*, 2016). The Roma national minority¹ is the second-largest national minority living on the territory of the Slovak Republic. In the 2021 census of population, houses, and dwellings in Slovakia, 1.2% of the population (67.2 thousand inhabitants) declared themselves to belong to the Roma national minority². In the 2021 census, for the first time in the history of the census, there was also the possibility to indicate an additional nationality, which is defined as a resident belonging to a nation or ethnic group. Out of the total

¹ The Roma national minority is one of the so-called traditional minorities on the territory of the Slovak Republic. The status of a nationality was granted to the Roma on 9 April 1991 with the adoption of Government Resolution No. 153/1991 on the principles of the government policy of the Slovak Republic towards the Roma. Roma were granted the right to identify themselves as a national minority, the right to education and information in their language, and the right to use their language in official relations (Amnesty International, 2007; Roma Encyclopedia, 2020).

For comparison, in 2021, 1.2% of the population (67.2 thousand inhabitants) declared themselves to be a Roma national minority (Ivančíková et al., 2023).

² For comparison, in 2021, 1.2% of the population (67.2 thousand inhabitants) belonged to the Roma national minority (Ivančíková et al., 2023).

population (306 thousand) that indicated an additional nationality, almost 89 thousand inhabitants (29.1%) indicated Roma nationality. The largest group that reported Roma as their next nationality were the residents who first reported Slovak nationality (86.9%; 77.3 thousand residents) and the second largest group were the residents who first reported Hungarian nationality (12.8%; 11.4 thousand residents) (Ivančíková, L. et al., 2023). Several authors agree that the above data obtained during the census do not reflect the actual total number of the Roma minority, as many Roma do not declare their Roma nationality in the official census (Matlovičová, K. et al., 2012). According to Rusnáková & Pollák (2016), the most comprehensive database on Roma settlements and their inhabitants is provided by the Atlas of Roma Communities (2004; 2013; 2019)³. The previous Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 (Mušínska, A. et al., 2014) showed that an estimated 402,840 Roma are living in Slovakia in different types of ethnically homogeneous settlement concentrations and dispersion among the majority population. The current Atlas of Roma Communities 2019 (Ravasz, Á. et al., 2020) registers 825 municipalities in its database, with an estimated 417 thousand Roma inhabitants, representing approximately 7.6% of the total population of Slovakia. If we compare these results with the data from 2013 (402 thousand), this is not a significant shift. However, this is also due to the different survey methodology. Roma communities are found in all eight regions of Slovakia (Table 1). The largest number of municipalities with Roma communities is in the Košice and Prešov regions (224 each), followed by the Banská

³ Atlas of Roma Communities 2004, 2013, and 2019 are available at: <https://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/atlas-romskych-komunit/?csr=820122902752629457>

Bystrica region (210). The smallest number of municipalities with Roma groups can be found in Žilina Region (15) and Trenčín Region (21) (Ravasz, Á. et al., 2020).

*Table 1. Number of municipalities with Roma communities by region
[Source: Ravasz, Á. et al. (2020)]*

Country	Municipalities with Roma community
Košice Region	224
Prešov Region	224
Banská Bystrica Region	210
Nitra Region	71
Tmava Region	38
Bratislava Region	22
Trenčín Region	21
Žilina Region	15

In terms of districts, the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019 registers Roma communities in 67 of Slovakia's 72 districts. The largest number of municipalities with Roma communities is in the districts of Rimavská Sobota (64), Košice-okolie (51), and Michalovce (47). On the contrary, in the districts of Bytča, Námestovo, Považská Bystrica, Turčianske Teplice, and Tvrdošín, no Roma communities are registered (Ravasz, Á. et al., 2020).

The data, official statistics, and those we have from the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, on the number of inhabitants who belong to the Roma national minority, differ. Rusnáková & Pollák (2016) explain this discrepancy by differences in methodological approaches. Official statistics are based on self-declaration of national belonging, and mapping of Roma communities is based on an estimate of the number of inhabitants of each concentration who have been living

in that concentration for a long time; it is not about the number of people who claim to belong to the Roma minority. Ravasz et al. (2020) explain that this is an estimate of the population of a location that is perceived as 'Roma', regardless of the ethnic self-identification of individual residents. When working with the inhabitants of Roma communities (especially with the inhabitants of marginalized Roma communities) it is necessary to realize, accept, and take into account the mentioned diversity of Roma. The name Roma is an umbrella term for many ethnic groups that share a common Indian origin, language, and many common cultural features (Rosinský, 2006; Rusnáková & Pollák, 2016). In the scientific environment and connection with the performance of field social work, several terms are used that need to be framed. One of the concepts is the Roma community⁴, which has no precise definition and is often used in different contexts (e. g. to refer to specific geographically defined localities or to refer to the entire Roma population). It most often refers to a settlement concentration (defined by a geographical unit) that is inhabited by Roma or predominantly Roma. The term Roma community is often used and is used to refer to diverse settlements at different socioeconomic levels (Rusnáková & Rochovská, 2016). In the lat-

⁴ The definition of the Roma community from the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2004 (Radičová, I. et al., 2004) is also used. According to it, a Roma community is any group that the majority population identifies as Roma based on their anthropological characteristics, cultural affiliation, and living space and equally subjectively perceives this group as different (positively or negatively). Rusnáková & Pollák (2016) add that this definition, in addition to the territorial definition and ethnicity, also accentuates the cultural affiliation, and lifestyle as perceived by the majority society. This is a definition and demarcation of Roma communities without the knowledge and approval of their inhabitants.

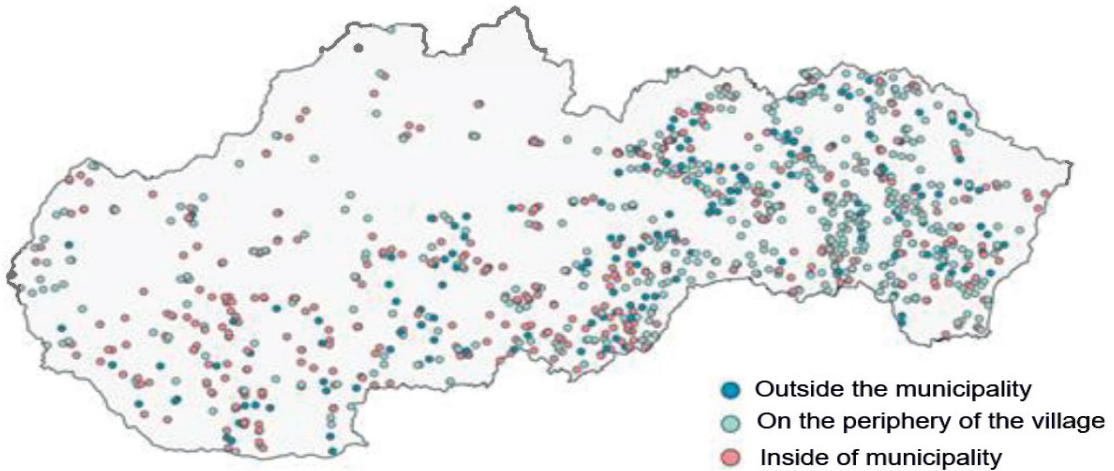
est Atlas of Roma Community 2019, the types of Roma communities have been redefined and unified based on spatial localization (geographic considerations). Specifically, on:

- **Concentrations outside the municipality:** denote e.g. Roma streets, Roma housing estates, and Roma yards, which concentrate on their territory of more than 30 inhabitants perceived through Roma ethnicity, but are still a central part (in the intervillage) of the built-up area in the municipalities,
- **Concentrations On the periphery** denote e.g. houses in the main part of the village, which are seamlessly connected to the peripheral part of the village, which is a Roma concentration (i.e. they are immediately adjacent to each other),
- **Concentrations within a village and spatially integrated housing** refers to a location at some distance from the built-up area of the respective village, mostly separated by undeveloped land, railway line, and river. Roma settlements that are spatially distant, separated by a natural or artificial barrier,
- **Spatially integrated housing:** we understand Roma dwellings that are located within the municipality among the dwellings of other majority inhabitants, without any symbolic or spatial separation of these dwellings from the dwellings of other inhabitants. Alternatively, without a concentration of dwellings within the space of the municipality (Ravasz, Á. et al., 2020).

A total of 1,102 concentrations have been identified in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019. The most frequent concentrations are those on the outskirts of the village (46%),

of which there are 502; concentrations outside the village make up only 18% (179 concentrations). For better clarity, we present the distribution of concentrations outside, on the edge, and inside the village (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1 Concentrations according to their type



Source: Ravasz, Á. et al. (2020)

Some of these concentrations are considered marginalized⁵ Roma communities. Their inhabitants have limited access to public services, resources, and participation in the life of towns and cities, and they are also socially excluded and have limited contact with people living outside the settlement (Rómska encyklopédia, 2020). According to Rusnáková & Pollák (2016), other terms that need to be distinguished include Roma settlement, Roma settlement, and Roma ghetto. All three

⁵ Balvin (2008) has drawn attention to the need to use the term marginality (marginalization) sensitively because it is associated with characteristics that evoke resentment in most of the society. At the same time, it leads to a reduction of the perception of the Roma ethnic minority to social deficiencies only and gives the impression that Roma culture is exclusively a question of a culture of poverty.

equivalents share in principle the characteristic that they denote a geographically defined locality inhabited primarily by Roma. A specific Roma settlement is any set of settlements in a given territory that are inhabited by Roma (regardless of its size, location, and socio-economic conditions). Roma settlement is most often used to refer to a rural settlement located on the outskirts of a town, village, or outside a town or village. It is associated with unfavorable living conditions.

When discussing field social work and defining the basic concepts that affect the target group of the population of "Roma settlements" or "marginalized Roma communities". Segregation is a key attribute. In the Strategy for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2030, the term segregation is characterized as the physical or social separation of members of different groups - typically a national, ethnic, racial, religious, social, or other minority group from the majority society, or members of a vulnerable group from mainstream society. Segregation occurs either under the influence of conscious (e. g. political, administrative) decisions, which constitute unlawful discrimination under the legislation, but may also be the result of economic or demographic developments.

Development and characteristics of field social work

The development of field social work in Slovakia is linked to the development of field social work programs and projects. In 2002 (by Resolution No 884 of 21 August), the Slovak Government approved the funding of a pilot project, the Social Field Workers Programme. This pilot project was implemented in 18 municipalities and towns in the east of Slovakia. Since 2005, the program has been implemented by the Social Development Fund, a contributory organization established

under the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. The program was implemented in 202 municipalities and towns. In January 2006, the program continued under the new program Support for the Development of Community Social Work in Municipalities funded by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family. A broader consensus of policymakers led to the project being brought under the European Social Fund in the new programming period. Thus, in 2008, field social work projects started to be implemented through demand-driven calls. In 2011, the national project Field Social Work in Municipalities was launched, followed by the project Field Social Work in Municipalities I (2015-2019) and the National Project Field Social Work II (2019-2023). Currently, the national project Field Social Work and Community Centres (Together for Communities) is underway (Škobla, D. et al., 2015; Ondrušková & Pružinská, 2015; Repková, 2017; Ondrušková & Kulifaj, 2023).

A fundamental feature of social outreach work in the European context is that it seeks to reach people who have limited access to resources and existing services. It focuses on target groups who need and are unlikely to use or benefit from these services and professional help. Social fieldwork has a history and a place in social work (e. g. fieldwork targeting drug users, homeless people, etc.) (Andersson, 2013; Grymonprez, H. et al., 2017). Its most striking feature and positive aspect is that it is carried out in people's natural environment, where they live their daily lives. By performing social work in the natural environment where people live or usually reside, field social workers are freed from external symbols of authority and power (e.g., office desk, door). Its importance and value

is that it reduces the distance between the worker and the client. On the other hand, it places demands on the personal safety of those who perform it. Therefore, those carrying out field social work must have access to supervision and training (Mikkonen, M. et al., 2007; Hunka, 2011).

Mikkonen et al. (2007) argue that fieldwork is primarily an attitude and only then a method. It can be seen as an umbrella term that encompasses different methods and approaches. At the heart of fieldwork is a relationship to the individual or group as 'people' that considers the person as more than just a social problem and its symptoms. The goal of social work fieldwork is to help each person realize his or her value and uniqueness as an autonomous being in control of his or her own life. Those carrying out field social work try to bring the person to the fore, as a human being, and not the status of "object" (stigma, symptoms, statistics, etc.) to which they are often reduced. Field social work is most often implemented in the form of case-based social work. In its approach to clients, it focuses on empowering clients in their social environment. It seeks to support them to understand their position and activate their potential. The challenge for outreach programs is to be as accessible as possible to people (children, young people, adults, etc.) who live in unfavorable, precarious conditions and who are multiply excluded, with the attribute of "maladjusted individuals".

The target groups with whom outreach workers work are often portrayed with negative connotations. Their behavior is framed by most of the society as inappropriate and unacceptable Fontaine et al., 2021. Several authors point out that the

image of Roma (media image, perception by the majority) portrays Roma men and women as maladjusted citizens who are paid by the majority society (especially in the context of state social assistance) (Pirohová, 2016). The maladjustment of Roma in civil cohabitation with most citizens is often justified by several negative facts in their behavior and actions. In the media and society, the problems of Roma resonate in terms of the increase in unemployment (especially unskilled), pointing to the field of education, criminality, poverty, and the receipt of benefits from the state social assistance system, or the health status of residents of marginalized Roma communities (Chovanec, 2018). Although these topics (e.g. poverty) affect a large part of the Roma population in Slovakia and are relevant social, political, and research topics, it is important to stress that the Roma population is highly heterogeneous. Linking ethnicity with social problems and poverty needs to be perceived sensitively (Rusnáková & Rochovská, 2016). State and municipal authorities often classify them as "maladjusted" citizens. Social workers working in the field are often under pressure to act as a 'control apparatus' whose task is to change or 'rehabilitate' the people they work with against their own will. This is also why many of the social services are often based on conditions that the person must meet. Field social work distances itself from these control mechanisms and the basis of their work is a holistic view of the person, respecting their autonomy and dignity without any limitations. Due to their proximity, they are often the first and last link in the chain of social assistance when all others fail (Svensson, 2003; Mátel, A. et al., 2015; Ondrušková & Pružinská, 2015; Fontaine et al., 2021; Ondrušková & Kulifaj, 2023). Field social work uses a variety of approaches and may involve different activities (e.

g. different ways of making contact). The main aim of field visits is to provide social counseling or social assistance, i.e., to accompany the individual(s) when dealing with paperwork at various offices or health facilities (Hugáňová & Chovancová, 2009; VAGUS, 2024).

Field social workers intervene in different areas, namely:

- *in the field of social security* (providing advice on benefits, the social assistance system, and state social benefits; explaining the content of documents; assisting with various types of applications to the Labor Office; preventing and advising on child neglect, etc.),
- *in the financial field* (basic advice on economic management, financial literacy; agreements on repayment schedules; assistance with enforcement proceedings, etc.),
- *cooperation with schools* (cooperation with primary schools on truancy and neglect; enrolment of children in educational establishments; advice on pre-school education, etc.),
- *in the area of health* (making appointments for medical examinations; asking the doctor for a home visit; counseling on the need for prevention and regular visits, e. g. to the pediatrician; counseling on the use of contraceptive methods, etc.),
- *housing* (assisting with housing benefit documentation; dealing with housing issues; assisting with finding accommodation for homeless people; advice on waste management; keeping the area around the home clean and tidy),

- *in the field of employment and job placement* (searching for job offers; advice and assistance in writing a job application, cover letter, CV; individual preparation of people for job interviews, etc.) (Škobla, D. et al., 2015).

Providing social counseling in the field

Field social work intervenes in various areas of life of people living in difficult living conditions. Social counseling is one of the methods and procedures used to achieve a goal for the benefit of the individual, the group, and the community. While in the field, those conducting field social work may encounter different target groups (homeless, disabled and elderly, dependent individuals, unemployed, etc.) who find themselves in adverse life situations (Škobla et al., 2015; Pandová-Lehoty, 2023). One of the options for professional assistance, for the given target groups, is social counseling. Social counseling is a process that takes place through the development of a relationship between the client and the social counselor. Social workers in the position of social counselor, use different forms and methods of counseling. They aim to increase the quality of life of the client with the help of the mobilization of his internal and external resources in his natural environment (Gabura, 2005; Lachytová & Karkošová, 2012). According to §19 of Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services in its full wording, social counseling is a professional activity aimed at helping another natural person in an unfavorable social situation. Social counseling is carried out at the level of basic and specialized social counseling. Social counseling in the field is most often carried out in the form of an interview with the client, which includes an assessment of the situation,

and offers information and solution options leading to the solution of the unfavorable life situation (Halássová & Mojtoová, 2014).

Basic and specialized social counseling can be carried out on an outpatient and field basis, e.g. by social workers and field workers. In practice, social counseling in the field is provided very frequently, often in the form of crisis intervention, and cannot be postponed. The person carrying out field social work must intervene immediately, without delay. The focus is on dealing with various adverse life situations related to finances (dealing with enforcement notices, debt counseling, repayment plans, etc.), health and lifestyle (facilitating communication with doctors, arranging hospitalization, etc.), socio-pathological phenomena (truancy, addiction, etc.), housing (loss of shelter, interpersonal conflicts, etc.), and so on. It is difficult lies in the fact that the person carrying out the field social work leaves the environment of the institution and enters the environment of the individual, family, or group (e.g. home, public space, a place where people usually stay, etc.) where they may feel uncomfortable. Another demand on the social counselor is the need for social flexibility and adaptation to the life rhythm of the community (workhouse, holidays, vacations, daily routine, etc.) and consistent respect, and knowledge of sociocultural characteristics (Mydlíková, E. et al., 2009; Oláh, 2017).

The role of the social counselor is to offer the client active participation in the solution to the unfavorable life situation in which he finds himself. The social counselor informs and supports the client, using his/her strengths (Lachytová & Karkošová, 2012). The benefit of field social work is that field

workers often accompany people, to different institutions, where they provide them with counseling services and motivate them to change (Schlesinger, 2020). In addition to working directly with the inhabitants of marginalized Roma communities, those carrying out field social work also actively cooperate with municipal and city authorities, employment offices, doctors, primary schools, etc. However, they have the highest interaction with the municipal/city authorities under which they fall, the costs for the performance of field social work are subsequently reimbursed to them from the project funds within which the field social work is implemented. The field social workers carry out advisory activities, in cooperation with the municipality, district authorities, social protection of children, and social welfare, in the field of work with individuals and families. In social work at the family level, it is mainly a matter of cooperation in the rehabilitation of the family environment in which the upbringing and development of children are disturbed. They seek to minimize the risks associated with children living in socially disadvantaged environments. The role of social workers and field workers is to work with the community and prepare it for other activities related to its development (Hunka, 2011).

The methods of direct assistance and fieldwork are more of a compensatory nature, or they compensate and eliminate internal or external obstacles that affect the solution of the social situation that has arisen. In the context of the counseling process, this can be, for example:

- **accompaniment:** it is understood as "accompanying" the client through the whole process of solving the arising adverse social situation through contact with

him/her, providing assistance, support, etc. Accompaniment in the narrower sense of the word means physically accompanying the client. There are situations where the client has to visit institutions (e. g. the Labor Office) or perform official acts as part of the solution to the adverse social situation. He or she may need physical assistance or other help (information, assistance in filling in forms, support if he or she feels insecure, etc.),

- **information:** providing and conveying direct information of various types, or indirectly, by expanding his/her skills, seeking the information needed to deal with an adverse social situation. Many clients of field social work are not familiar with the things that the majority of the population considers to be common. It is not about providing specialized, expert advice, but about orienting the person to the common options available to them,
- **distribution:** very closely linked to information. If the person carrying out the social outreach work cannot provide professional help to the client because it is beyond the scope of his/her job, or often he/she does not have the necessary competencies. In this case, the client's problem is referred to another institution, usually in the form of information provision, where the necessary professional help is provided (Ambrózová, A. et al., 2006).

Being in the field means consolidating contacts and working with the client's social network

To be as accessible and approachable as possible, the field social worker becomes part of the life of the community.

Hunka (2011) pointed out that research in the field of field social work shows that field social work practitioners have very good relationships with community residents as close relationships are formed between them. This is because the inhabitants of these communities can open up more to the persons carrying out field social work than to the workers in the local offices, who represent the traditional institutional forms of assistance. It is also interesting to note that when building relationships with members of the marginalized Roma community, it can be an advantage if the person working in the field is a member of the Roma minority. Another advantage is that they become part of the social fabric of the community with whom they can contribute to the development of individuals, groups, and the whole community. They witness the daily situation of these people; they have access to the social aspects of their lives. By meeting people more often during their daily activities, field social workers can go beyond a symptomatic perception of the situation. They can take a much deeper look at their living conditions and lifestyles, their dynamics, and social networks (Fontaine et al., 2021). Community mapping, networking, relationship analysis, and networking are among the job responsibilities of those doing field social work (Adam, P. et al., 2018). Networking is one of the standard elements of social work and involves creating a support network for the client (Solářová, 2013; Levická, 2020). It allows individuals and families to access previously untapped resources, which can be individuals, social service organizations, and other organizations, but can also be information within the family system. The work and creation of a social network is challenging because it should include all those who represent some source of support for at-risk individuals or families. Persons carrying out social work

in the field can act as coordinators of the network. Their primary role is then to ensure that the individual, the family understands what it means for individuals and organizations to join forces. To cope with and resolve the adverse situation in which they find themselves (Možný, 2002; Matoušek, 2003; Hovanová, 2021). The field social work practitioners, in their role as network coordinators, search for different options and resources that need to be made available to the individual and family. Once services and resources are located, they are faced with the task of providing guidance and directing them there. In justified cases, they may even help or accompaniment (Hardy, M. et al., 2012; Hovanová, 2021).

From the outset, field social workers enter a complex social network that contains a multitude of issues, actors, and partners:

- People who are touched by their work,
- The people in the community, the majority,
- Professionals who work in the social sphere,
- Local government (Fontaine et al., 2021).

Field social work is targeted at groups of the population who are socially excluded and live in spatial exclusion. In the case of socially excluded people, access to social networks (social relationships) and the information they can obtain through them is denied (Rochovská & Námešný, 2011). People who live in difficult living conditions (e. g. homeless people, marginalized groups) develop a social network that protects them from risks or helps them to provide for their basic needs. Individual members of such groups share their knowledge, space, and social networks. People who are marginalized and live in social

exclusion do not have enough contacts and social ties, which may prevent them from, for example, finding employment (Rochovská & Námešný, 2011; Fontaine et al., 2021). Marcinčin & Marcinčinová (2014) even speak of their non-existence. Socially excluded people who are deprived of help are then dependent on the help of formal institutions.

The topic of supervision, in the context of field social work during a pandemic

The provision of social counseling in field social work is directly related to the topic of supervision, which is primarily intended for field social workers, regional coordinators, and field workers. It represents an important source of professional support for field social workers. It contributes to their professional development, verifying the correctness of working practices, searching for new alternatives, and protecting against burnout syndrome. This directly translates into the quality of interventions of the fieldworkers and the protection of the clients of field social work, from harm or abuse (Vetor, 2015). The results of the evaluation of the National Project for Supporting and Improving the Quality of Field Social Work ("NP TSP II") show that supervision is perceived as a tool that reflects the real needs of persons working in field social work and at the same time it is provided from a central level, i.e. it can be used by all those working in the field of field social work. The evaluation showed that up to 70.7% of respondents (from among TSP/TPs) are very satisfied with the support in the form of supervision. Supervision was carried out regularly at approximately quarterly intervals within the moni-

tored project. In addition to the scheduled supervision meetings, they had the opportunity to request individual, additional meetings (Poláčková, Z. et al., 2023).

During supervision meetings, the situations that come to the fore are mostly related to cases that social workers and field workers have to deal with. Themes of workload, tension, personal growth, and coping with the fact that field social work practitioners are on the tail end of social recognition also come to the fore (Vetor, 2015). Following the 2020 pandemic outbreak, there have been changes in the delivery of social work, which have significantly affected the practice of fieldwork. The isolation of citizens necessitated an increase in the use of virtual modes of communication, rather than face-to-face contact with clients. They received telephone calls to ensure a continuous connection with people with whom they had limited opportunity for face-to-face contact. Most organizations face this challenge because of the need to ensure that they can carry out their work safely. But all of this also served to develop new practices in social interventions. Supervision even at this time still had a place and had to adapt to the needs of helping professionals. Which led to its move to the online environment (Connell, 2023; Du, 2023). Communicable disease outbreaks continue to present an urgent and important challenge that the social work profession must address locally and globally. Not to mention the risks to stigmatized groups who have experienced various forms of disproportionate measures (Park & Lee, 2016).

Those carrying out field social work have worked and continue to work in marginalized localities where they experience multiple disadvantages. The Slovak Republic and other

countries (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria) have introduced disproportionate measures targeting localities where marginalized groups live. Some of these measures have, for example, positioned Roma as a 'collective threat' to public health and safety (Matache, Bhabha, 2020). Social workers, outreach social workers, and community workers also had to cope with the pressures of the majority society and during this period even assisted in testing, not only in terms of organization (informing clients about the place and time of testing) but also in terms of physical presence. They implemented prevention activities and provided social counseling in different areas, in high-risk working conditions. Thus, they became an essential part of the critical infrastructure (Poklembová & Demjanová, 2020; Du, 2023). They were guided by various documents that sought to provide them with a framework for the safe practice of the profession (e.g., Semaphore for the Practice of Social Work and Fieldwork).

For those carrying out field social work in the challenging conditions of marginalized communities, support is very important, not only in times of pandemics. Mátel (2022) conducted research in which it was shown that it is group supervision (81%), individual supervision (51%), social-psychological training (40%), and participation in regular meetings, called meetings with the regional coordinator (32%), that are most valued by those doing field social work. During this period, several helping professionals had to adapt to virtual supervision instead of face-to-face contact. Online supervision brings with it opportunities for the development and support of social workers working in the field (Alexander, K. et al., 2022;

Vrťová & Vaska, 2022; Vito, R. et al., 2023). The online environment provides us with new opportunities that improve the accessibility and flexibility of social work and, consequently, supervision. Virtual meetings allow communication with clients or supervisees remotely, which is very beneficial for those who have limited access to traditional forms of supervision and social work. Especially for people who live in remote locations with limited mobility. However, it also brings new challenges and ethical issues (Bambúch, 2023).

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2.2 Limits and Challenges of Online Supervision in Social Work with Maladaptive Beneficiaries

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Introduction

Supervision, a vital component in the arsenal of social work professionals, has seen a significant shift with the advent of information and communication technology (ICT). This transformation, particularly during the pandemic, has made online supervision a crucial choice for social workers, especially when face-to-face contact is limited or impossible. While online supervision offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges such as losing personal contact, safety concerns, technology dependence, and health issues.

However, exploring these challenges and discussing potential solutions and strategies to improve online supervision for all involved is essential. In this chapter, we will not only identify and analyse the chosen limits and challenges of online supervision in social work with maladaptive beneficiaries but also propose potential solutions and strategies for overcoming them, instilling hope and optimism for the future of online supervision in social work.

Supervision in social work

Supervision has become an integral part of social work education and practice. However, the nature of supervision as we understand it today has a rich historical development that aligns with the evolution of social work. This historical

context, which we will delve into, helps us understand that supervision is as 'old' as social work practice (Munson, 2002; Tsui, 2005; Kadushin, Harkness, 2014). The origins of social work can be traced back to activities in charity settings, and we can find the familiar beginnings of the development of social work and supervision in the work of charities, particularly Charity Organisation Societies, where the term supervision was used as early as the 19th century (Brackett, 1904; Burns, 1958). During this period, supervision was understood in two senses. On the one hand, it was seen as work support through dialogue provided by a paid agent-supervisor to a volunteer, and on the other hand, supervision was perceived as a process of initial 'initiation' of a novice or student worker into the profession under the guidance of a more experienced worker (Havrdova, 2013).

In the relevant literature dealing with supervision in social work, we often encounter the designation of supervision as a method (see, e.g. Gould, Baldwin, 2004; Čaláuz, 2012; Lachytová, Karkošková, 2012; Mátel, 2015; Gotea, Bódi, 2017) and an educational, supervisory or supportive tool of social work (see, e.g. Baglow, 2009; Vaska, Čavojská, 2012; Howard et al., 2013; Vaska, 2014; Bartoli, Kennedy, 2015; Gabura, 2018). Supervision is an educational method of developing professional competencies, improving service quality, etc. Supervision is a systematic and structured way of providing support, professional guidance and reflection for individuals or groups in their work practice (Vaska et al., 2020). Supervision aims to provide a space for supervised social workers to explore and evaluate their professional progress, develop their abilities and skills, and enhance their self-esteem and confidence

in their abilities. In supervision, there is an open and trusting interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee or supervisee group where various aspects of the work are discussed, such as clinical cases, decision-making, client relationships, ethical issues and personal development. The supervisor provides support and feedback to help supervisees improve their effectiveness and efficiency. The supervision process emphasises reflection and a critical approach to work, where participants are encouraged to understand their thoughts, feelings, motivations, and reactions to their professional situations (Vrťová, Vaska, 2021). This introspective process can lead to a deeper understanding and better coping with professional challenges and difficulties, especially in social work with maladaptive beneficiaries. Supervision can take various forms in practice, such as individual meetings, group sessions, online consultations, or a combination of these approaches. The supervisor must be an experienced professional in the field with sufficient knowledge and skills to provide adequate support and guidance. Lastly, a trusting relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is also essential, allowing for open and authentic communication and reflection (Venglářová, 2013). Overall, supervision is a crucial tool to support professional growth, development and improvement in different social work professional practice areas.

Supervision in social work with maladjusted beneficiaries

In supervision focused on working with maladjusted beneficiaries, it is essential to consider several aspects that differentiate this work from the general beneficiary population. Working with maladjusted beneficiaries presents significant

challenges that can be psychologically demanding for supervisors and require specific approaches. Maladjusted beneficiaries are those who, for a variety of reasons, behave in ways that make it challenging to work with them. They may exhibit aggression, uncooperativeness, manipulative behaviour or unrealistic expectations (Kinman, Grant, 2022). Working with such beneficiaries is complex and requires social workers to have a high level of empathy, patience and resilience to stress. In this case, online supervision is a suitable tool for acute and quickly available help.

Working with maladjusted beneficiaries can be emotionally draining and requires more emotional support in supervision and help in coping with burdensome stress. In supervision, it is essential to create a safer environment where supervisees can openly discuss their emotions, frustrations and stresses. In turn, promoting emotional regulation and stress management techniques is critical. Maladjusted beneficiaries often require the use of specific intervention techniques. In this case, supervision could include training and development of new skills, including behavioural interventions, conflict de-escalation, and working with motivational techniques (Nkechi et al., 2021).

An essential part of supervision is the promotion of self-reflection and self-awareness in supervisees. Self-reflection allows supervisees to identify their biases and implicit preconceptions influencing their work. Self-awareness is also essential for recognising one's emotional reactions to challenging situations (Awiagah, 2024). Working with maladjusted beneficiaries may trigger feelings of frustration, anger or helplessness, and it is in supervision that there is scope for becoming

aware of these feelings, analysing their causes and finding ways to work with them effectively (Kinman, Grant, 2022). Tools and techniques such as journaling, group discussions, role-playing and other methods that promote a deeper understanding of one's reactions and behaviour can be helpful. Essential tools and techniques include case analysis and reflection work, which are necessary for supervisors working with this target group. In supervision, it is possible to dissect specific situations, identifying what worked and what did not. To look for new approaches and strategies, to set realistic expectations about beneficiaries' progress and the success of interventions, and to understand that change can be slow and that even small steps forward are significant. Working with maladjusted beneficiaries can raise complex ethical issues. Supervision provides a space to discuss these issues and focuses on the safety of all involved, including the physical and psychological safety of supervisors and their clients (Nkechi et al., 2021).

Supervisors should acknowledge supervisees' successes while providing specific advice and recommendations for improving work with this target group. This can contribute to supervisees' professional growth, improve their skills in working with maladjusted beneficiaries, and provide the necessary support for coping with a demanding workload (Awiagah, 2024).

Online supervision

Supervision taking place in an online environment is referred to by authors as internet supervision, cyber supervision, distance supervision, e-supervision, telesupervision, technology-assisted supervision, or online supervision (Inman et al., 2019). As stated by Vaska and Vrťová (2022), in the context

of supervision in the online environment, it is essential to distinguish between two primary forms of supervision, namely synchronous, which takes place "live" in real-time through an online connection via different platforms, or asynchronous, which does not require a course at the same time, for example, it is carried out through emails, etc. In this paper, we draw on Watters and Northeyo's (2020) definition of online supervision, which defines online supervision as synchronous (real-time) audio and video interaction between a supervisor and supervisee who are not in the exact physical location.

Before the global COVID-19 pandemic, online supervision was primarily used to eliminate travel time, promote employee retention, and provide professional development opportunities in more remote, mainly rural, areas. During the pandemic, however, providing supervision in an online environment proved to be the only solution. Online supervision allows professional staff to receive support and expert guidance regardless of location.

Vaska et al. (2022) provide a review of research conducted in the area of supervision in the online environment and, similar to Inman (2019), conclude, based on a content analysis of studies in the area of online supervision, that the outcomes of supervision conducted face-to-face are no different from online supervision, or the difference between the two is negligible. Brandoff & Lombardi, (2012) found that both supervisees and supervisors could develop strong working alliances in online supervision effectively. Online supervision applies the same process as traditional face-to-face supervision, which involves discussing professional issues, reflecting on work experiences, and providing professional feedback

(Vaska, Vrřová, 2022). An essential aspect of online supervision is creating a safe and confidential space for participants to openly express and discuss their professional and personal experiences.

Online supervision offers many advantages, such as flexibility, time and cost savings, increased reach to supervisees, a variety of technological options, greater anonymity, convenience, and so on. Not surprisingly, this kind is increasingly being used. Online supervision promises to solve economic pressures by being more cost-effective, offering a solution to workforce shortage problems, improving access to needed supervision across the country, which can be challenging to access, and so on (Martin et al., 2023). Other benefits of online supervision include reducing barriers to engaging in supervision by attending online meetings anonymously, increasing a sense of privacy, and gaining experience with colleagues from other facilities and across state lines. In addition, online supervision offers new opportunities for research, teaching, and supervision, enhances the informed consent process, offers new opportunities through social media, and can provide reasonable assistance in emergencies.

However, Inman (2019) points out that one of the areas that is important when providing supervision in an online setting is its effectiveness and the attitudes of the supervisor and supervisee towards this form of supervision. Indeed, one's attitude influences one's understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this form of supervision. Lowe and Speer (2019) found that personal experiences with this form of supervision

influenced attitudes towards online supervision. The more experience supervised social workers had with online supervision, the more positive their attitudes were.

In recent years, several studies have been conducted addressing selected supervision issues in the online environment, documenting various aspects of its performance (for a more detailed review, see Vaska & Vrřová, 2022; Inman et al., 2019). In the practical application of supervision, questions of its effectiveness, assumptions, advantages and disadvantages, and the ethics of providing supervision in the online environment become necessary, as well as questions of its limits and challenges and how supervisors and supervisees can effectively overcome them.

Limits and challenges of online supervision

Online supervision is becoming increasingly popular in today's digitalised society as a form of providing professional support and reflection. However, with the development of online supervision comes new challenges to consider. Technical issues such as internet connections or audio and video quality can affect the fluency and effectiveness of communication. Losing personal contact or limited non-verbal communication in an online environment can reduce the ability to delve into deeper emotional issues and disrupt mutual understanding between participants. In addition, security concerns regarding privacy and data protection can create additional problems for participants. Therefore, when implementing online supervision, it is essential to pay attention to these challenges and look for ways to overcome them and minimise their negative impact, or consider using supervision with direct participation of both supervisors and supervisees (Vaska, Vrřová,

2022; Lowe, Speer, 2019; Coker et al., 2002; Gainor, Constantine, 2002).

Loss of personal contact

The loss of personal contact in online supervision is a complex issue with multiple aspects that affect the effectiveness and quality of supervision sessions. One of the main challenges of online supervision is the limitation of opportunities for interpersonal interaction and mutual understanding. Physical absence allows us to lose the subtle nuances of non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, and voice intonation, which are essential for interpreting the emotional state and intents of the supervisees. This lack can lead to misunderstandings, increased anxiety, and decreased trust between supervision participants, which can ultimately limit the effectiveness of the supervisory relationship (Wong et al., 2018).

Another significant challenge lies in the supervisory relationship itself. Establishing and maintaining a solid therapeutic alliance is essential in social work supervision, particularly with social workers working with individuals with maladaptive behaviours. In the online setting, the absence of face-to-face interaction and the potential for technological glitches or interruptions can make it more challenging to cultivate the trust and rapport necessary for adequate supervision.

In addition, the loss of personal contact can affect group dynamics and interaction between individual members in case of group supervision. Virtual environments can reduce spontaneity and naturalness, limiting the open exchange of ideas and sense of connection among participants. Lack of personal

contact can also affect the supervisor's ability to effectively lead discussions, maintain participants' attention, and maintain a positive and supportive atmosphere within the group. Another important aspect is the loss of the ability to read the body and surroundings, which reduces the ability to identify indirect signals or needs of the supervisees (Anthony, 2015). In an offline setting, the supervisor could respond to these signals with the help of subtle gestures and support. However, this type of interaction is limited in the online environment, which can lead to a lack of understanding of supervisees' needs and reactions. Overall, losing face-to-face contact in online supervision requires a greater emphasis on actively building and maintaining relationships, communicating effectively, and supporting supervisees. Creating trust and an open atmosphere through online tools and technology is critical to ensuring a successful supervision session.

Challenges in maintaining boundaries

Online supervision can make it difficult to maintain professional boundaries. Difficulty maintaining boundaries in the online space can lead to blurring between work and personal life, as well as between professional and informal relationships. This phenomenon can have several negative consequences, including disruption of work-life balance, increased risk of burnout, and disruption of professional relationships. The lack of clear boundaries can lead to overwork, increased anxiety and a sense of constant availability, which has a potentially detrimental effect on individuals' physical and mental health. In addition, boundary disruption can lead to increased stress, privacy concerns, and reduced quality of interpersonal relationships in the work environment (Drum, Littleton, 2014).

According to the authors Stoll et al. (2020), technology-mediated interactions may appear less formal, and flexibility of location and time may lead to communication in inconvenient locations or at unusual times, as the supervisor may be tempted to communicate while on vacation, travelling, or during illness. Similarly, supervisors may also succumb to these temptations.

Limits of online communication

The quality of supervision appears to be strongly influenced by the ability or inability to see nonverbal cues (Coker et al., 2002; Gainor and Constantine, 2002;). For this reason, synchronous online supervision conducted via video call, where supervisees can be seen, appears preferable. It is the closest similarity to face-to-face supervision and better access to body language and non-verbal cues that emerge as determinants of the context of supervision in the online setting.

Communication in online space can be disrupted by poorly secured technology, such as internet signal failure and poor audio or video quality. Even if the technical security is at the highest possible level, it is still challenging to perceive non-verbal communication. In the context of online transmission, the camera mainly records the face. Thus, the non-verbal communication of the whole body is absent (Bauman, Rivers, 2015). The internet signal may even drop out with multiple participants due to congestion. Reading non-verbal communication is particularly challenging when working with a group because supervisor interactions are absent.

The limitation of nonverbal communication during online supervision creates challenges in the interaction between the supervisor and supervisor/supervisees. The lack of ability to pick up subtle nuances of nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, or tone of voice, can lead to a disruption in the flow of interaction and a decrease in understanding between participants (Gabura et al., 2015). This deficiency can cause difficulties in expressing emotions and responding quickly to the needs or concerns of the other party and ultimately can lead to an increased risk of misunderstandings, low levels of empathy, and reduced effectiveness of supervision (Coker et al., 2002; Gainor, Constantine, 2002).

Challenges in using creative techniques in supervision

Vaska et al. (2020) define creative supervision as a concept that involves the use of various expressive, sometimes expressive (therapeutic) methods, ways of presenting, processing, and addressing a topic that the actors in supervision identify with and, with the consent of both parties in supervision, work with systematically. In creative supervision, in very simplified terms, besides the "spoken word", another - creative - way of working with the supervisee is (also) used to achieve the goals of supervision. Lahad (2000) describes creative supervision as using metaphors, stories, images and similar means of expression.

Using creative supervision methods online can be difficult due to limited interaction and visual presentation space. Lack of physical presence and limited ability to use various materials and tools can limit the scope and effectiveness of cre-

ative activities. It is also essential to consider that some creative activities require face-to-face interaction and group dynamics, which can be challenging to achieve online.

Limits in intimacy and emotional connection

Intimacy and emotional aspects within supervision influence the quality of the supervision process and the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Emotion and intimacy can significantly impact the understanding of the supervision situation, the dynamics of the relationship, and the effectiveness of supervision as a tool for professional growth and development (Bauman, Rivers, 2015). Supervisors and supervisees should understand and work effectively with these aspects to achieve positive outcomes within their professional work.

The challenges associated with a lack of intimacy and emotional connectedness within online supervision can have multiple dimensions. The first is the need for more depth and complexity in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. The lack of personal contact can reduce intimate moments more common in face-to-face interaction. This lack of depth can also affect the participants' ability to express and understand their emotions, as nonverbal communication that would otherwise provide necessary signals may be limited.

Another challenge can be the loss of focus and engagement of participants. It can be easy to be more distracted online because of the possibility of multitasking, leading to a lack of focus on the supervision topic. This can reduce the level of engagement and involvement of participants, resulting in less deep and productive discussions and reflections (Fisher et al., 2023).

Specific challenges are connected with the potential loss of trust and vulnerability within the supervision relationship. The lack of personal contact and face-to-face interaction may make participants feel less comfortable sharing sensitive information or emotional experiences. This lack of trust and vulnerability can lead to shallower and less authentic interactions, which can negatively impact the effectiveness of supervision (Garms, 2020).

Lastly, the online environment may limit the supervisor's ability to capture and interpret the nuances of emotions and intimate aspects that might be evident in face-to-face interactions. This lack of emotional subtlety may lead to a lack of understanding and responsiveness to the supervisee's needs and feelings.

Security concerns

Ethical considerations and safety are particular issues discussed in both research and practice in providing supervision and other forms of intervention in the online environment. The moral aspects of online supervision are discussed in detail by Grames et al., 2022, but many of these issues are also familiar to the provision of online counselling and therapy. In this area, a detailed review of 24 ethical arguments for and 32 arguments against online treatment is provided by Stoll et al. (2020) based on an analysis of 249 publications. In particular, issues of privacy, confidentiality and security; competence and the need for special training; technology-specific communication issues; research gaps; and emergency issues emerge as ethically problematic.

Grames et al. (2022) state that online supervision, by its dependence on technology, adds a layer of ethical issues related to confidentiality, informed consent, competency, documentation and record keeping, and self-care to the moral aspects of supervision. Safety concerns in online supervision can significantly impact participants and the supervision process. One of the main aspects of these concerns is the associated risk of privacy and confidentiality. Participants may be concerned that their personal data or confidential information may be compromised or misused during an online interaction. This may lead to reduced trust between participants and more cautious information sharing, which may limit the effectiveness and efficiency of supervision (Inman et al., 2018). In addition, there is also a risk that the online environment may be vulnerable to cyber-attacks or unauthorised access by third parties. According to Palomares and Miller (2018), participants may be concerned about losing control of their data or that unauthorised parties may monitor or intercept their online communications. These concerns can lead to feelings of vulnerability and anxiety, which can affect participants' comfort during the supervision session and impair the quality of communication and interaction. The use of insecure websites or unencrypted communication tools, such as commercially available software that is easily attacked, should also be mentioned as part of concerns about privacy, confidentiality and security. Data security can also be compromised when technology fails (Fantus Mishna, 2013).

Health problems and addiction

Online supervision can hurt participants' health in several ways. One of the main aspects is physical and emotional

exhaustion. Nadan et al. (2020) highlighted the challenges associated with the extended, focused screen time of providing supervision in an online setting. For supervisors providing supervision in the online environment, intensive, divided attention was required to focus on what was being supervised, interact with supervisees as needed, observe the supervision group, and collaborate with potential co-supervisors. Supervisors and supervisees noted the high fatigue from organising all these activities.

Prolonged sitting in front of a computer and intense online interaction can cause fatigue, headaches, muscle strain and other health problems associated with poor posture and lack of exercise. In addition, the emotional strain of long hours spent online can lead to stress, anxiety, and burnout, which negatively impacts participants' overall physical and mental health (Hollis et al., 2017).

Addiction to online settings is an important aspect that requires attention as it can hurt participants' quality of life and well-being. The constant connection to online platforms and excessive use of technology can lead to a lack of balance between online and face-to-face life, resulting in loss of productivity, increased stress and anxiety, and neglect of other vital aspects of life. Excessive time spent online can harm sleep, social relationships and the overall psychological well-being of participants. This kind of addiction can lead to disengagement from the real world and overlooking essential aspects of life outside of online interactions. It is, therefore, important to monitor and manage the use of online supervision to mini-

mise the risk of dependence and to maintain a balance between participants' online and offline lives (Haas et al., 1996; Yager, 2003; Rugai, Hemilton-Eekeke, 2016).

Overcoming limits and challenges of supervision in online settings - application of knowledge to practice

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As Rambaree and Nässén (2021) note, not all social workers and supervisors advocate using digital tools in social work practice. Some social workers and supervisors view social work as an art rather than a science in solving social problems and enhancing human well-being. As an art, social work is practised through intellectual, creative intuition, and it can be argued that its digitisation risks diminishing this freedom and creative skill. From our perspective, supervision in an online environment is certainly not an appropriate approach for every supervisor or every supervisor. On the other hand, the digitalisation process also reaches into this area, and a sensitive application of diverse approaches in the online environment, reflecting their advantages and limitations, seems appropriate. As stated by Vrťová and Vaska (2020), regarding the supervisor's choice of approach and method of conducting supervision sessions, it is essential to consider whether practising supervision in an online form is appropriate.

Focus on the development of specific competencies.

The first area of recommendation for overcoming the limits and challenges of online supervision relates to competencies. As noted by several authors (e.g., Grames et al., 2022; Watters, Northey Jr., 2020), a common belief before the COVID-19 pandemic was that supervisors proficient in face-to-face supervision could also provide online supervision.

However, the competencies required in face-to-face supervision cannot be translated directly into online supervision formats.

Knowing how and when to integrate digital tools and methods into supervision practices to enrich the experience of all involved should be one of the main recommendations for supervisors. On the other hand, skills for using different information technologies and tools in online supervision are also needed by supervisees. Although the supervisor may be digitally competent, his/her skills may differ significantly from those of the supervisees. Therefore, in this context, it is also necessary to be prepared to enhance the digital competence of supervisees. It is essential to sense how experienced supervisees use different online tools, whether they are familiar with them or proficient in them, and if not, to spend time introducing them and trying to work with them so that supervisees' lack of skills does not cause barriers in supervision as Laughran & Sackett (2015) note, rigorous preparation, structure and planning are also required to support adequate supervision in the online environment.

Choosing appropriate digital platforms and tools

The second area of recommendation relates to the technologies used. Different platforms offer diverse opportunities for online supervision. When applying online supervision, it is essential to use those that:

- Are flexible, allowing for an adaptable supervision environment that facilitates the supervision process, interactivity, and relationship building.

- Are tailored to the specific needs and objectives of the supervision; different approaches may require unique technological needs, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution.
- Are simple, intuitive, and motivating for the supervisees, encouraging their active engagement.
- Are accessible, considering whether all supervisees can easily use the selected applications. In some cases, particularly within government settings, there may be restrictions on using specific online platforms or tools.
- Are inclusive, with the technology's use considering the needs and capabilities of people with various requirements.
- Are safe, enabling the application of ethical and security protocols when working online.

Furthermore, Coker and Schooley (2009) emphasise that the supervisor should have ample practice using the chosen technology to supervise online effectively.

Ethical consideration and safety measures

Ethical considerations and safety measures are discussed within research studies and practice in providing online. Grames et al. (2022) note that online supervision, by its dependence on technology, adds a layer of ethical issues to the moral aspects of supervision related to confidentiality, informed consent, competency, documentation and record keeping, and self-care. A fundamental recommendation for the ethical use of online supervision is to address the issue of confidentiality concerning supervisees or their clients. Online su-

pervision takes place in a space where there are not 100% guarantees of privacy, and therefore, there is a risk that an unauthorised person may access sensitive information. In the case of recordings of meetings, issues of secure storage also need to be considered.

Other recommendations for maintaining confidentiality in online supervision include ensuring that the physical space of the supervisor and supervisee is private, with limited potential for interference or eavesdropping, and refraining from using client-identifying information when discussing cases online or engaging in electronic communication. Issues of confidentiality and informed consent also need to be addressed in the contract, which should outline how privacy will be maintained during online supervision, policies for confidentiality, security and encryption of data, agreement on whether sessions will be recorded, how they will be securely stored, how long they will be kept, and what they will be used for.

Responsible use of technology concerning mental health and well-being

A final recommendation for overcoming the challenges of online supervision is the sensitive and responsible use of technology, focusing on supporting the mental health and well-being of both the supervisor and supervisee. Supervisors and supervisees should know the potential for fatigue and exhaustion from the prolonged screen time and intense online interactions required in this setting. It is crucial to incorporate regular breaks and offline activities into the supervision process to address this. This will help the participants effectively engage with the supervision and maintain a healthy balance between their online and offline lives.

There are also several practical recommendations to address the challenges of online supervision:

- Prevent negative health consequences caused by prolonged screen time and intensive online interactions in the supervision setting. This includes maintaining an adequate physical distance from the monitor, adopting the correct ergonomic sitting position, ensuring sufficient audio and visual quality, and limiting the time spent in front of the computer during supervision sessions.
- Promote digital hygiene practices to help supervisors and supervisees build healthy habits when using online content, communication tools, and technology. This can involve establishing clear boundaries around the use of devices, setting screen time limits, and incorporating regular breaks to disengage from the online environment.
- Encourage and correctly time the alternation of online supervision space with offline activities and face-to-face interactions. This balanced approach can help participants maintain a healthy work-life integration, reduce the risk of burnout, and foster stronger interpersonal connections crucial for the supervisory relationship.

Conclusion

Supervision becomes increasingly critical as social work professionals navigate the complexities of providing services to individuals with maladaptive behaviours. Online supervision is a potential solution in the modern digital landscape, offering remote access and flexibility. However, this approach

presents unique challenges that must be carefully navigated to ensure practical and ethical practice.

In conclusion, online supervision in social work with maladaptive beneficiaries presents significant challenges that require careful consideration to ensure this approach's effectiveness and ethical implementation. The lack of personal contact can reduce the depth and intimacy of the supervisor-supervisee relationship, hindering the ability to express and understand emotions. The loss of focus and engagement due to distractions and multitasking can lead to less productive discussions and reflections. Security concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, and data protection can impact trust and vulnerability within the supervision relationship. Furthermore, the online environment may limit the supervisor's ability to capture emotional nuances, affecting their responsiveness to the supervisee's needs. Additionally, the health implications of online supervision should not be overlooked. Longer screen time and intensive focus can result in physical and emotional exhaustion, including fatigue, headaches, and burnout. The risk of addiction to the online setting can also lead to a lack of balance between online and offline life, negatively impacting sleep, social relationships, and overall well-being.

Strategic approaches focusing on competency development, appropriate technology use, ethical practices, and well-being considerations can address the challenges and limits of online supervision. By adopting these recommendations, supervisors can enhance the effectiveness of online supervision, ensuring it meets the needs of all participants while maintaining high standards of practice and care.

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Chapter 3. An approach to the prevention of social maladaptation and integration

3.1 Social maladjustment and integration of foreigners

MAREK STACHOŃ

Social maladjustment is a problem for all of us, as each of us is to some extent in resistance to the general requirement to participate in all the important processes of society so as to be valid for its benefit and development. One of the first such requirements in a democratic society is to participate in creating a physically safe environment with primary regard to respect for other persons who also exercise that respect. Bauman, citing authors Southwood and Lorey, writes: „The society of performance is first and foremost a society of individual performance and a culture of individualism along the lines of the hop or trope, in which everyday life is unpleasant and forces the individual to remain in a state of perpetual readiness; predictable income, savings, immutable occupational categories, all belong to a different, bygone world, under a form of government that, at least since Thomas Hobbes, has been considered unattainable: a government that is no longer legitimized by the promise of protection and security” (Bauman, 2017, p. 47). Since then, a secure environment has not only been a matter of physically (militarily) protecting a country from those who wish to do it harm, but also of creating conditions and subsequent relationships in which both individuals and entire groups enter into cooperative relationships in which

they gain some benefit. This is linked to the notion of one's own position and action in achieving benefit, but the methods often do not suit everyone or do not apply for subjective and objective reasons. If we do not function in the ways currently determined, we are maladjusted. Socialization or adaptation is expected. However, we can learn them. If we reject them, or are unable to, we become maladaptive. We find ourselves in a position of injustice towards others, since on the part of the wronged party there is a desire to create a predictable and socially safe environment, that is, the ways in which he or she achieves personal and social development are not unquestioned, ignored, on the contrary, they are recognized as correct, necessary and thus creating a general good, the idea of which is reinforced by the aforementioned ways. The framework for a way of living and participating in the common good - which is also one of the principles not only of social policy and social work, but also of the principle that gives meaning to human coexistence - is law and the justice that flows from it as an object of agreement. And the general good is not at odds with the individual's idea of it, even though he thinks primarily of the good for himself. But there is another dimension to this problem, namely a structural one, which itself creates the uncertainty that we so strive for, or at least greatly expect, in our private and civil relations: „The widespread sense of existential insecurity is an unquestionable fact: it is the real bane of our society, which prides itself, through the mouths of its political leaders, on the progressive deregulation of labour markets and the "flexibilization" of work, but in doing so spreads ever greater fragility of social positions and instability of socially recognized identities - as well as inexorably expanding the ranks of the precariat (the new social categories that Guy

Standing defines as primarily those who are forced to navigate quicksand). Contrary to many views, this insecurity is not merely the product of politicians' efforts to win votes or the media's efforts to capitalize on scaremongering news; but it is true that this very real, all-too-real insecurity, compounded by the existential plight of ever-expanding segments of the population, acts as welcome grist for the mill of politicians. This fragility is now gradually becoming an important - and quite well the most important - material from which contemporary techniques of governance are emerging" (Bauman, 2017, p. 29). It turns out that social insecurity is a social phenomenon flowing through the structures of society and into people's relationships with each other. What politician would not use this social disorder of society for his political activity? Fear for social positions is a fear within society. Thus, from this perspective, the structure of social positions is unfairly shattered by fear, the sources of which are both in insecurity (even if only the feeling of insecurity) and maladjustment of various kinds and for various reasons, including the maladjustment of foreigners. Then the problem often comes down to a pragmatic question: do we need these foreigners? (Will their presence contribute to the benefit of our society? A specific group of aliens is made up of refugees, where there is a general anxiety, which, although arising from international conventions and international work, is at its core a Kantian-type question corresponding to the maxim, as a subjective principle of willing, which becomes an objective and thus practical law, and so we speak of duty as a "necessity to act out of respect for the law" as a thesis, which is covered by Kant's idea of the categorical imperative. „The problems generated by the current "migration crisis", exacerbated by the migration panic, belong

to the category of the most complex and controversial: in them, a categorical moral imperative comes into direct confrontation with the fear of the "great unknown" embodied by the masses of foreigners behind the gates. The impulsive fear provoked by the sight of strangers carrying unfathomable danger engages in a battle with the moral imperative provoked by the sight of human suffering. The moral will that seeks to persuade the will to obey its command will scarcely ever face a greater challenge; and the task of the will that plugs its ears against the commands of morality will scarcely ever be more intolerable" (Bauman, 2010, p. 79). In any case, it is also a political problem, but it is being exploited, as Z. Bauman uncompromisingly critically comments: „Governments are not interested in alleviating the fears of their citizens. On the contrary, they seek to further embitter those caused by an uncertain future and a constant and pervasive sense of insecurity - assuming that the roots of this insecurity can be anchored in places that provide ample photo opportunities for hard-working ministers, while hiding from view rulers paralysed by a task they are too weak to solve. "Securitization" is a howler's trick, and should remain so; it consists in shifting the concern from the problems that governments cannot (or will not) deal with to those that - daily and on thousands of screens - they are so eagerly and (sometimes) successfully tackling. The first type of problems include fundamental determinants of the human condition, such as the availability of quality jobs, the reliability and stability of social status, effective protection against social degradation and immunity from denial of dignity - all determinants of security and well-being to which today's governments, once promising full employment and reliable social security, are unable to commit themselves, let alone deliver. In the second type, the

fight against terrorists planning attacks on the security of ordinary people and their precious property has quickly and easily taken first fiddle - all the more so because it is able to supply and sustain the legitimisation of power and the effects of trying to garner as many electoral votes as possible for a long time to come; ultimate victory in this struggle is, after all, a very remote (and utterly doubtful) possibility" (Bauman, 2017, pp. 29-30). A widespread and, in my opinion, very common attitude of a standard-minded European is that he has nothing against foreigners themselves. However, if it is a matter of the fact that in a state that a foreigner wants to live in as a new home, he will aim to enforce his own culture, which often includes the rights and ways resulting from various religions, which have no other justification than religious, they come into direct conflict with European civilization and the Western world in general, which is built not only on the principle of respect, but also the requirement of Christian love for one's neighbor and, at the same time, the requirements of the Enlightenment as a cultural heritage that emphasizes supra-confessional and philosophically justified principles and rights that govern society. Christianity survived the confrontation with the Enlightenment, although weakened. Other religions did not get to such a confrontation in their cultural systems, and we can only imagine what it would mean.

Consider the context of Western civilization with its heritage of Christianity, through whose lens each person is our neighbor. „ It is about our fellow human beings - and therein lies the basis of every state's obligations to those who are not its citizens. No state can claim that its duties apply only to its inhabitants, just as the head of a family cannot claim that he

has duties only to his family members: to them he has special duties, but he also has duties to those whom he can influence by his actions, because, like him, he belongs to the same worldwide family of all men. By the same logic, it follows that the citizens of all countries are collectively citizens of the general society of men, and the state that represents them therefore has moral duties to other countries and to their citizens. In the section on refugees, the encyclical *Pacem in terris* proclaims the rights of economic migrants, listing among the personal rights of each individual the right "to go to a state in which he hopes to be better able to provide for himself and his family" (Dummett, 2016, p. 71). But it also implies a presumption of duty and commitment to the well-being of myself and the people entrusted to me. It is not, therefore, a unilateral benevolent attitude to do for one's neighbour whatever will do him good. Without his participation, the potential of all others will be crippled. The main question that will determine the legitimacy of pressure on an individual to participate in the common good is whether he has been enabled to do so. Following the encyclical mentioned above, Dummett states from it: „It is therefore the duty of statesmen to welcome immigrants, and, so far as the welfare of their community permits, to be accommodating to the intentions of those who may wish to integrate themselves into the new society." And he comments on the above sentence from the encyclical: „The definition of the welfare of communities by state representatives is not meant to limit the obligation to accept immigrants, but only to show how much help is needed to integrate them into society. The right of states to refuse entry to anyone cannot be absolute; their duties to the persecuted require them to accept refugees

who have applied for asylum, at least if they cannot find another country willing to offer them refuge" (Dummett, 2016, p. 71). Do we have sufficient arguments to justify barbed wire, fences and walls, behind which anyone, even the suffering, can be? Are they human rights arguments? Christian? Obviously, the developed Western world is afraid, and this fear for safety and not to disturb the notions of possible social harmony and social understanding cannot remain without activities attempting to protect not only the cultural and political but also the social identity of Western society. We can read in a New York Times article from June 2024 that both Trump and Biden are beginning to agree on much about immigration and asylum policy, with the President himself „president Biden turned to that same provision on Tuesday as he took executive action to temporarily close the border to asylum seekers, suspending longstanding guarantees that anyone who steps onto U.S. soil has the right to ask for protection in America" (Shear, M. D., 2024). A desperate situation triggers desperate actions. One has hope and tries to identify it with a solution, or at least an escape from the desperate situation. Bauman responds to Don Flynn, then director of the *Migrants Rights Network*, who says: „ But unfortunately, governments have not been thinking about immigration in this way for a long time. The resulting dysfunction has contributed to Europe now being associated in many people's minds with turmoil and threat. Desperate refugees washing up on the shores of the Greek islands; the bodies of children washed up on holiday beaches; people pushed over the border into Hungary in a brutal police action; or migrants living in the squalor of the 'jungle' in Calais - these are the memories that many will take away from the past year. While Germany has endured an extraordinary few weeks

in which hundreds of thousands of citizens have suddenly broken away from a mindset that encouraged them to fear and loathe migrants, and instead offered them open arms, the UK Prime Minister, despite the absence of any evidence that the migration of EU citizens poses a significant problem for the nation's welfare system... has decided that this is the fundamental issue that urgently needs to be addressed... [Despite the fact that] people with the right of free movement contribute to the welfare system, as many independent reports have shown. The outlook for the coming years oscillates between "immigration continues to look like a continuous guerrilla war to restrict migrants' rights and keep them in a state of insecurity and vulnerability" and "in managing migration to gain greater support for a human rights-based approach" (Bauman, 2017, s. 70). There is a need to approach the problem holistically and to see to what extent countries will solve the problem separately, in their own way, and in relation to dampening the fear of foreigners (but probably not eliminating it, as this is also not the best for the political trade) and so they will be addressing the problem of natives rather than preventing people from leaving for a variety of long-standing unaddressed reasons, or fleeing from their countries to ours (having reasons for survival but also economic gain) but also to be more purposeful and prepared for foreigners to understand and adapt to ways of life through which they will be accepted into the social bonds of the new society very quickly and so their maladjustment will not be a reason for conflict and resentment against them as some sort of asystemic entity. „It is also said that immigrants cause unemployment. But there is no evidence for this. On the contrary, it is well known that immigrants often take jobs that native workers do not want to do because they are

unpleasant, dirty, dangerous or poorly paid, even when they have no other choice. In periods of high unemployment, immigrants take such work because they are the only ones available and willing to do it; if they are heavily discriminated against, it is also the only work that is not denied them. The above accusations are part of the usual litany of complaints against foreigners that is heard in every country some time after the next group of apparently poor people arrive from somewhere else: they are dirty, they are loud, they steal, they won't work or want to live on welfare, they will fill the hospitals, they will take up places in the schools, they won't accept our customs, they live in crowded houses, they will make life worse in the neighborhoods, the government is doing more for them than it is for us. If they are rich, there are quite different complaints: they buy up everything, they raise prices, they look down on us, they think they are very good for us, the government listens to them. This is not an observation of reality: just an expression of mindless resentment" (Dummett, 2016, p. 88-89). We do not need to talk about immigrants in the conditions of the Slovak Republic. Often, work that is poorly paid, dirty, difficult, unpleasant is performed by marginalized groups, which are often represented by members of the Roma minority. The latter have also long been identified with the notion of maladjusted, abusing the social system and so on. If we were to categorise these marginalised groups more closely with regard to the nature and intensity of the social problems they face, we would discover the truth about the extent and cause of 'maladjustment' as well as their potential and will to be pro-social and economically active. Political activism in the sense of closing the borders of states, but also in the social structure because of the presence of new members of society coming from other socio-

cultural systems, can lead to the opposite effect. „ The least justifiable reason for restricting immigration, then, is contained in the slogan endlessly repeated by British politicians: 'strict but fair immigration control is the key to good race relations'. On the same principle, the Australian government refused to accept refugees before Hitler, on the grounds that they would create a "Jewish problem". We will see later that the constant tightening of immigration restrictions was not only an ineffective attempt to silence racism, but also contributed to its justification and reinforcement" (Dummett, 2016, p. 89). If we talk about employment as a socially important institute, we are talking about the production of goods and services that become the object of trade. And the strength of trade is the strength of society and the prospect of its well-being. The stronger and more global trade, the more welfare, satisfaction, security are to be achieved. If we assume global trade, we must also assume global movement and the consequent changes that nation states must process. There is even a tendency for the progress envisaged by the classics through the blurring of trade boundaries to have a peculiar development. „Already today we can point to the cosmopolitan" consequences of these changes. In the first place, there is the disintegration of the notion of "commercial exchange" (Verkehr, intercourse), which we find in Montesquieu, Smith, Kant and Marx, and which underlay the classical cosmopolitan utopia, the disintegration of the idea that the intensification of contacts between people on the basis of commercial exchanges would lead to cultural and intellectual progress and, ultimately, to the political unity of mankind. Further, it is the reproduction of a new economy of "race" (or of "settled" and "nomadic" races: it would be necessary to take up, elaborate, and historicize what I said the

other day about the category of "immigrant" as the new name of race in postcolonial society). Finally, it is the tendentious reduction of the unwanted foreigner to a social, cultural, and possibly political enemy against which new social defenses need to be constructed" (Balibar, 2011, p. 38). So what does free movement within the EU, and beyond, really mean? E. Balibar speaks of inequality in the right to free movement and mobility of people. He says that „the fate of this inequality, which should be compared with other related elements (a restriction on the right to free movement is no fairer than a restriction on the right to housing, but it is no less unfair), is that it will grow and give rise to serious consequences, as well as to security problems and social conflicts - undoubtedly mainly as a result of climate change, which is an aspect of globalisation whose consequences are as yet unpredictable. The consequences will be the destruction or destructuring of human groups, a situation of constant insecurity, conflicts leading to racial hatred" (Balibar, 2011, p. 38). Societies will and tonify, and communities, including immigrants, will integrate internally and create certainties. This can be a cause of conflict and therefore the role of social work in this regard will include mediation or better creating social discourse at the local level to prevent conflict.

And what is the meaning, both in the European and global dimension, of the words solidarity, democracy in the sense of external international relations, but also, on the other hand, what is the idea and, practically, the level of protection and identity of Western man with nation states and Western culture with the characteristic features in the form of the aforementioned words? Last but not least, it is also a matter of ex-

pectations that are on the sides of all involved, and in the absence of discourse in a common language, we will not be able to understand each other and consequently tolerate, adapt and so on. „The arrival of refugees - which must be distinguished from ordinary immigrants - cannot be foreseen; they depend on conflicts, acts of repression and disasters that occur in other countries. Therefore, there can be no policy to regulate it; however, there should be an agreement on what constitutes a legitimate request for admission, and an agreement on how those who receive asylum will be allocated to the most appropriate member countries. The influx of what we call in our own sense immigrants can be more easily regulated, and it is possible that for demographic reasons Europe will need immigration to a significant extent” (Dummett pp. 172-173). Misunderstanding to the point of undemocraticness arises when EU member states do not share the need to deploy refugees, but have different ideas on how to solve the problems due to their different (often weaker) economic strength and the resulting socially weaker state mechanisms and its social safety nets. Therefore, it is necessary to look for an intersection in who is willing to provide security guarantees in terms of physical security and how one can participate in the integration of refugees into society if they are interested in doing so, which implies being economically beneficial, as the main criterion of Western society is performance, how much one can deliver to society, but also to an institution, a company. Hence the high social recognition or criticism. Not only the presence of foreigners, but also ourselves, we have begun to evaluate ourselves economically in terms of worthwhile, not worthwhile such a person, employee, etc. The question of foreigners raises the question of the value of human beings. Dummett

thinks that „the EU, which is often the destination of many people suffering from intolerable poverty, must have a humane policy in which the right to family reunification plays a fundamental role. This is much more likely to be enforced by adopting an immigration policy for the Union as a whole than by letting each member state impose its own. There have already been a few vague attempts at a common immigration and asylum policy, but these have not produced any concrete results. The main reason for this is the attitude of politicians in various countries who are determined to leave immigration policy in the hands of national governments. Although they talk about national sovereignty, their main motive is to avoid the indulgence they fear in Union policy. A common immigration policy must be based as far as possible on objective criteria, not on the authority of officials. Too much power for officials leads to unfairness and arbitrary decisions, because they are subject to political pressure and are influenced by public opinion. The most important objective criterion is the need to preserve family unity. Another is ill-treatment in the homeland, which, although not sufficient to claim asylum, is a humanitarian reason for emigration. Other criteria are the needs of the Member States, such as a general shortage of labour or a shortage of people with particular qualifications. Ideally, these criteria should be enshrined in specific rights to which potential immigrants would be entitled” (Dummett, 2016, p. 173). It seems that if we want to constructively address this political and social confusion about the integration of foreigners and have the issue of social maladjustment within the bounds of solvability, then it is important to specify what type of foreigner it is, with what intention he or she comes, what his or her expectations, skills and capabilities are. Let us look at an

interesting in-depth characterization, further on, which was come up with in his time by E. Tassin: „The French word for stranger, *étranger*, comes from Latin and denotes an unknown coming from somewhere else (alienus, derived from alius), who does not belong to a family or a country, but is a being coming from outside (ex- traneus). From an anthropological point of view, the stranger represents someone strange because he is culturally and socially unusual. He is a potential enemy because he is outside the law, out of the ordinary and out of the set of its obligations, he is therefore extraordinary and therefore undefinable. The foreigner can only be recognized as an alter ego on condition that he is identified, correlated with affiliations and definitions (family, clan, tribe, nation, state) other than those that characterize the group of his counterpart, but of the same nature. It is not possible for him to persist in his unique singularity. His strangeness, which is incomprehensible in itself and which is unbearable as sheer difference, requires a communitarian definition: it is necessary that the one who does not belong to us be part of an established order that resembles ours and that confers on him a communitarian and therefore cultural identity, as well as a legal and political status. The other, in its unassimilable difference, must become similar by virtue of identifiable cultural difference in order to finally acquire the status that will ensure its legal-political recognition and that it will be declared fit to become part of the world” (Tassin, 2011, p. 58). Out of the unknown naturally always comes apprehension, fear, or at least caution (sometimes mistaken for prejudice). In many ways, it is also a psychologism that is created by a natural wariness of unfamiliar things and people. „In essence, a cosmopolitan point of view capable of honouring the status of the foreigner must

accept the double distance of the citizen as experienced by the migrant: a distance with respect to the native country he has left and a distance with respect to the new country, where he is made to understand that he cannot claim it. This double communitarian disconnection is at the same time a distance from oneself: deterritorialisation is a form of de-identification, whether it is accepted or endured. But this is far from implying that this de-identification should deprive the stranger of civic recognition. On the contrary, it can lead to a demand for a new and active form of political subjectivation, one that is not based on nationality but on civic engagement and responsibility. It is a lesson in cosmopolitan citizenship addressed to republicans" (Tassin, 2011, p. 61). Are we all to understand, including every foreigner, that this is a legal-political problem? The political contexts of the problem of the presence and adaptation of foreigners are also explained by E. Balibar: „However, it seems that in a globalized world in which migration has a mass and permanent character (despite its cyclical fluctuations; cf. the works of Amiya Kumar Bagchi), there is no longer a place for the foreigner as a person who is neither a commodity nor an enemy. Hence, we are witnessing the mass production of what the Algerian philosopher Sidi Mohammed Barkat calls the "corps d'exception" (corps d'exception). This has equally significant implications at the level of the legal order of nation states: The presence of foreigners as such inside and outside their borders (i.e., crossing more or less freely their borders) is in fact as necessary for the legitimacy of nation-states as the sovereignty of the people (hence, the actions of activists, which take the form of civil resistance or disobedience as appropriate and which are intended to prevent the state from reducing foreigners either to commodities or objects that can be

easily disposed of or to public enemies, are in fact actions to protect the legitimacy of the state)" (Balibar, 2011, pp. 38-39). This is a kind of paradox where the legitimate presence of foreigners reinforces the legitimacy and claims of nation-states. But when do we talk about some basic degree of adaptation (for in some ways each of us is more or less adapted to life in society) to ourselves and thus to what extent should we engage and work towards the foreigner's capacity to continue to be one of us? The formal-legal result is the acquisition of permanent residence, where the law mentions the degree of integration as follows: „In deciding on an application for permanent residence, the police department shall take into account ... the degree of integration of the third-country national into society" (Act on the Residence of Aliens, § 48, letter c). Formally, we could talk about such indicators as the length of his/her temporary residence, the nature and length of employment relationship, housing and family circumstances (background). The situation is different in terms of the rights and possibilities of operation of an alien from another member state of the European Union and his/her right of residence. The *Act on the Residence of Aliens* deals with the right of residence of an EU citizen in Slovakia, including the withdrawal of such right from him or his family member. However, the law is very sensitive to the circumstances and situations in such cases and requires the ascertainment of a number of circumstances, including the aforementioned degree of integration, in order to avoid a purposeful, discriminatory and therefore unlawful ground for administrative expulsion: „When deciding on the administrative expulsion of a Union citizen or a family member of a Union citizen, the police service

shall (a) assess each case individually, and the grounds for expulsion shall not be used for economic purposes and shall not be based on general prevention considerations, (b) it shall take into account the proportionality of the administrative expulsion with regard to the personal and family circumstances of the Union citizen or family member of a Union citizen, his/her age, state of health, family and financial situation, the length of his/her previous residence, the extent of his/her integration into society, as well as the extent of his/her ties with the country of origin" (Section 87, point 4, Act on the Residence of Aliens).

Let us now take a closer look at the practical approaches of migration policy using the example of the Slovak Republic. In the strategic document entitled *Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a View to 2025*, we read that „for the purposes of migration policy, we understand legal migration to mean in particular entry into a country with valid documents, a visa or a relevant residence permit. In recent years, the Slovak Republic has been dealing in the field of legal migration mainly with managed economic migration, labour mobility, residence for the purpose of employment, business, study and related family reunification. Managed economic migration is mainly determined by so-called megatrends, such as geopolitical factors, changes in the labour market, population development, in particular population ageing, changes in education systems, technological changes, digitalisation and the transition to a climate-neutral economy. The management of economic migration must also respond to the challenges of global competition for talent and skilled labour, in particular by actively seeking

them out and creating the conditions for their arrival and presence. In this process, creating an attractive environment for foreigners who are needed for the development of our economy and society is key. Labour mobility thus becomes a significant component of legal migration to the territory of the Slovak Republic. The aforementioned megatrends of the Slovak Republic are taken into account in the Strategy for Labour Mobility of Foreigners, which aims to streamline, accelerate and make more flexible the system regulating the entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of employment and entrepreneurship, especially in professions with an identified shortage of labour force. This task is also presented in the Economic Policy Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2030 and elaborated in more detail in the Smart Industry Action Plan. The newly established European Labour Authority, based in Bratislava, will also have a positive impact on the cooperation and coordination of EU Member States in managing economic migration and will be responsible for supervising the correct application of European labour and social security law in cross-border situations" (Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025, p. 5). It is clear from the above statements that the state positively evaluates immigration for the purpose of engaging in economic activities in the form of entering the labour market. We can say that this document asks for such an immigrant, at least it is interested in him when it talks about the attractiveness of the environment. Behind this, however, one can see an expectation of reciprocity. We have an attractive environment for you, you have economic and labour activity with us. Yet it is possible to assume from the document that if this reciprocity of the area of economic in-

tegration works, it is a good or basic precondition for developing integration in other areas up to, say, full comprehensive integration, not assimilation. The document names specific objectives - priorities of economic migration in the Slovak Republic: „The priorities of the Slovak Republic in the field of managed economic migration are in particular:

- a. „Exert all available resources to smoothly manage, control and control the arrival of foreigners for work in accordance with the absorption capacities and needs of the Slovak Republic;
- b. strengthen the security elements of managed economic migration, with a priority focus on the control of documents presented, the detection of forgeries as well as the detection of abuses of managed economic migration using legal documents;
- c. link information systems and strengthen cooperation between the institutions involved;
- d. provide information for foreigners in world languages through the creation of an information portal;
- e. Ensure effective and prompt action by the inspection services in cases of violations of the law and illegal employment;
- f. streamline and digitise the process of obtaining residence permits;
- g. continue to improve cooperation between enforcement authorities at both national and cross-border level in order to improve the detection of infringements and illegal employment;

h. to optimise the number of employees in the most exposed workplaces” (Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a View to 2025, pp. 5-6).

The Slovak Republic is itself a source country for immigrants heading to the Western states of the European Union. Interestingly, these are people across the whole stratification scheme of society, with different social statuses and also different prospects of finding a place on the labour market. It follows that there is a saturating demographic problem that is already beginning to cripple society enormously, which would still have sufficient population at the moment to provide the required professions in the economy of the Slovak Republic, but the financial opportunities in other European Union Member States are significantly better. Thus, the other side of the coin called internal migration of the European Union means a decline in the economic and demographic potential of the economically weaker members of the European Union, who also have a high level of rejection of benevolent immigration policies. „ General globalisation effects and developments in Slovak society in connection with Slovakia's membership in the EU and the Schengen area have brought, alongside positive elements, some negatives, especially in the form of increased emigration of Slovak citizens, with a noticeable outflow of skilled labour, both in the category of university-educated persons and in the category of shortage professions, or a permanent departure of university students. As a consequence, the Slovak Republic is facing a weakening of its labour market, educational potential, reproductive and working age population and consequent ageing of the population, as well

as some social challenges, highlighted by the lack of quality re-integration programmes motivating the return of Slovak citizens back to the country" (Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a View to 2025, p. 6). Some of the government's incentive measures in the past were aimed at attracting emigrants back. However, it is the subsequent prospects for the individual and his/her family that are expected from the society and economy of the state and other added values. Reintegration is all the more complicated because the Schengen area and the European Union's common labour market stand in opposition to internal reintegration, which is a national, or better, state matter. This fact causes significant negative economic but certainly also social phenomena for the weaker countries. „ Integration of foreigners who are legally residing in the territory of the Slovak Republic and who are interested in settling permanently in the territory of the Slovak Republic is an essential instrument of a successful migration policy, and it is a continuous, long-term and dynamic mutual process of mutual respect and reciprocal recognition of the rights and obligations of all residents. The Slovak Republic is committed to an integration model which, in addition to compliance with Slovak legislation, is based on respect for the cultural realities, language and traditions of the Slovak Republic by foreigners. It is expected that integration measures will lead to the existence of coordinated and interrelated instruments and measures that will enable foreigners to enter the labour market, master the national language, have access to education, health care, social services, housing, enable their participation in civic and political life, and may eventually lead to the granting of citizenship of the Slovak Republic. The aim of the Slovak Republic in the field of integration of foreigners within the

framework of migration policy is, in particular, to ensure long-term smooth coexistence of all inhabitants of the Slovak Republic. Targeted integration measures will ensure decent living conditions for foreigners, thereby preventing the emergence of possible negative social phenomena. The SR also aims to strengthen and expand the possibilities, methods and forms of financing integration measures, with an emphasis on systemic financing and efficient use of EU funds and other alternative extra-budgetary sources.

The priorities of the Slovak Republic in various areas of integration of foreigners are in particular:

- a. "Strengthen the integration of foreigners at the level of self-governing regions, towns and municipalities;
- b. to ensure quality education for children of foreigners and teaching of Slovak language as a foreign language for foreigners;
- c. Promote access to adequate housing for foreigners;
- d. to support the cultural and social integration of foreigners in the territory of the Slovak Republic;
- e. ensure systemic regulation of the integration of vulnerable groups of foreigners, in particular persons granted international protection;
- f. to introduce a professional subject in the study of social work, which would be focused on the possibilities of using social work methods and social policy in the integration of foreigners in the Slovak Republic;
- g. strengthen social inclusion and cohesion to help foreigners better integrate into their new communities;

- h. Introduce a mechanism of linguistic and cultural orientation for foreigners;
- i. support activities aimed at developing intercultural and interreligious dialogue and promoting ideas of understanding and mutual respect for cultural diversity in order to strengthen social cohesion;
- j. to streamline and digitalize the process of obtaining data on the health status of foreigners through the interconnected information system between the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic and Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic the so-called e-Health Migration;
- k. promote, implement and control the provision of adequate, evidence-based preventive and health care for foreigners and monitor the health indicators and needs of foreigners located in the Slovak Republic in accordance with standard and recommended procedures for prevention, diagnosis and treatment" (Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2025, pp. 8-9).

On the basis of experience to date, point a. appears to be the way to real, not just legislatively declared, integration. The personal approach of the stakeholders in the local context to the migrant appears to be decisive. There is thus a much greater chance of both successfully motivating them to willingly adapt to the conditions of the new society, community and to see the benefits of this adaptation. The KapaCITY project, which talks about working in the community, has also been devoted to supporting solutions to the problem of mi-

grant integration in local conditions of municipalities. „ In social work with foreigners, the most commonly used forms of social work are community, group and individual social work. In the case of the first contact, it is mainly field social work, which gradually transitions into an outpatient form. When working with foreigners, it is important to focus on community social work. In the framework of community social work, members of the majority and minority groups come into contact with each other. Learning about each other's different cultures is a way of understanding and accepting differences. This is a very important element in preventing hostile attitudes on the part of both groups involved. At the same time, it reduces the risk of social exclusion and discriminatory expressions against the foreign minority. After gaining trust within the community, the transition to individual or group social work with foreigners can be easier” (KapaCITY, 2024). The greatest of the benefits is the acceptance of foreigners and the willingness of the majority to help in integration. This is a fundamental prerequisite for the success of integration and adjustment. In the context of adjustment, we are also talking in part about lifestyle, but not about ways of household functioning, worldview or lifestyle areas such as fashion and the like. Acceptance does not mean functioning socially as I want to in any place on the planet. We are only talking about the right to be in any place and to accept the requirements there. It seems that the role of social work is not only to motivate the foreigner to integrate, but also to explain the meaning of integration. Cultural diversity cannot be a reason for refusing to adapt to social mechanisms. If we see it this way, integration will take place with difficulty, if at all, and ways of acting will be "uncaused" - without acceptance of the forms and limits

of negotiation between members of society. Acceptance of cultural difference is thus not a sufficient argument. Acceptance of elements of another culture and acculturation is a decision for society as a whole to make. „To support the integration of foreigners with legal residence at the local and regional level within their competences, especially by cooperating with local actors in the use of funds from EU funds and other alternative extra-budgetary sources. Diversified and complementary funding between the state and AMIF and ESF+ project funding can ensure the continuation of successful integration concepts, as well as expand the target group and regional representation of services, promote good practice and use synergies to mainstream it into other services provided by cities to their residents. In this way, support the creation of local support centers for the integration of foreigners in synergy with existing verified services (IOM Migration Information Centre)“ (Action Plan of Migration Policy in the Conditions of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic with a View to 2025, p. 2). Let us mention two examples of good practice from the past related to the integration of foreigners. An example of good practice from the past in the field of employment: „Facilitating Integration into Romanian Society“ – Romania, NGO Association for the Development of Society (2011-2012).

The aim of the project was to overcome these obstacles and therefore aimed to improve the language skills of the Romanian language, the values and characteristics of the country; an increase in the number of recognitions for graduates; increasing opportunities for access to the labour market through vocational training and the recognition of non-formal skills;

improving access to health services through the provision of information as well as the provision of social, legal and material assistance; awareness of the rights, obligations and opportunities for integration through advisory and information services, as well as to raise awareness among the institutions responsible for the integration of officers. The target group was third-country nationals living in the cities of Bucharest, Constanta, Suceava and other cities with a high concentration of immigrants. The project was implemented through the following activities:

- “development of thematic toolkits for individual ethnic nationalities, which enabled individual study of the Romanian language, individual toolkits contained a dictionary, phrases, definitions, dialogues on the topics of health, education, job interview, industrial relations, communication with officials, basic rights and obligations, audio material was also developed for each ethnic nationality;
- Romanian language courses and residential courses aimed at learning about Romanian culture;
- The Handbook for Third-Country Nationals has been translated from Romanian into Arabic, Turkish, Chinese and English;
- vocational education and training for the labour market;
- legal and social counselling;
- financial support;
- information on health care” (Špačková, 2014, p. 4).

An example of good practice from the past in the field of housing and health care: „Home. Pathways towards Integration and Housing Security" – Italian, Lombardy Region (2011-2013).

Access to adequate housing is a basic necessity for third-country nationals, especially single mothers from this population group. The aim of the project is to improve access to housing through the use of existing networks and the expansion of new housing offers. The programme supports the housing of immigrants through the joint public and private dissemination of information on access to the housing market, which includes the distribution of information in foreign languages. The project focused primarily on single mothers, single people and families with specific needs. The project was funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Italian Republic. The project was implemented through the following activities:

- “improving access – increasing the supply of housing at more affordable prices (looking for housing at a lower price than the market price, e.g. in Milan, Bergamo);
- reconstruction of housing units – use of abandoned houses and their reconstruction – provision of social housing;
- Strengthening housing services (helpdesk) – providing information on where these services are available;
- Promoting cooperation between immigrants and housing providers (networking) – organising meetings and discussions on the issue.
- Brochures on housing options were translated into ten languages and distributed to various municipalities in the region” (Špačková, 2014, p. 8).

It should be noted that the content of activities towards migrants should be variable and flexible with regard to the requirements and circumstances that have arisen in connection with the presence of foreigners, in order to effectively use financial resources, work with such persons and meet the targeted nature of the assistance. This is not intended to contradict the right to equal treatment, even though the legal status of a foreign national presupposes procedural legal acts with him which determine the prospects of his presence in the host or receiving country. „The EU Migration Directive establishes a set of minimum conditions for entry and residence, as well as rights to equal treatment. Already in 2016, the Commission has increased its support to Member States' efforts to improve the integration of migrants, developing an Integration Action Plan with measures to be implemented at EU level. Member States are encouraged to develop measures in their own policies to address certain areas, but these are not monitored by the Commission, they fall under the competence of the Member States. Most Member States have integration policies in place under different policy frameworks. However, they do not systematically target all groups of people in the project's target group, nor do they address all areas of integration. There is a lack of effective monitoring of integration outcomes to measure progress and adapt policies where necessary. Studies have shown that better integration of migrants leads to greater long-term economic, social and fiscal benefits for the country in which they settle. Integration requires action in many areas such as: education, employment, housing, health care and culture. In addition to designing measures, it is important to be able to assess their impact. The 2004 Princi-

ples define integration as a dynamic, long-term and continuous two-way process of mutual adjustment. It is a social process that involves both the target group and the receiving society. The earlier integration begins, the more likely it is to be successful. Equal rights and non-discrimination are important factors for successful integration" (National Project Intention for the Slovakia 2021-2027 Programme, p. 6). It is very dangerous to "pressure" the receiving society to adapt or even accept foreigners in the interest of the good of society, or even the good of the European Union. The demographic situation forces the acceptance of foreigners without consistent integration (at least the basic one) and thus becomes a matter of politics and not of society and its mechanisms. The New *Pact on Migration and Asylum* contains four main components:

1. "Secure external borders: Robust screening, Eurodac asylum and migration database, Border procedure and returns, Crisis protocols and action against instrumentalisation.
2. Fast and efficient procedures: Clear asylum rules, Guaranteeing people's rights, EU standards for refugee status qualification, Preventing abuses.
3. Effective system of solidarity and responsibility: Permanent solidarity framework, Operational and financial support, Clearer rules on responsibility for asylum applications, Preventing secondary movements.
4. Embedding migration in international partnerships: Preventing irregular departures, Fighting migrant smuggling, Cooperation on readmission, Promoting legal pathways" (Pact on Migration and Asylum, 2024).

Integration in Slovakia is specifically addressed in the *Asylum Act* No. 480/2002, where the subject of the Act is in § 1 in point e): „to regulate the initial integration of asylum seekers and foreigners who have been granted complementary protection into society”, and in point f) „to regulate the residence in asylum facilities” (*Asylum Act*, § 1). Section 26, entitled *Obligations of the Asylum Seeker*, states that „the asylum seeker is obliged to cooperate with the Ministry and the competent authorities in his integration” (*Asylum Act*, § 26, letter a) and § 27b speaks of the obligations of a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection: „A foreigner who has been granted complementary protection is obliged to cooperate with the Ministry and the competent authorities in his/her integration” (*Asylum Act*, § 27b, letter a). The fourth part of the *Asylum Act* deals with the concept of initial integration in connection with foreigners with complementary protection, which is a specific status of a foreigner requiring his or her support, and such a citizen is also categorized as a disadvantaged job seeker and at the same time a vulnerable person. Apart from this legal status of such a person, such a person is confronted with the same reality as when we talk about integration, as foreigners from third countries without complementary protection or asylum, and therefore the concept of initial integration has a more general meaning. Let's see how the state will support a foreigner with complementary protection:

„(1) The aim of initial integration shall be the integration into society of asylum seekers and foreign nationals who have been granted complementary protection, in particular the acquisition of suitable accommodation, employment and the acquisition of the Slovak language.

(2) The Ministry shall provide an asylum seeker or a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection, on the basis of his/her written application, the specimen of which is specified in Annex No. 2b, a one-off allowance in the amount of 1.5 times the amount of the subsistence minimum for one adult natural person pursuant to a special regulation; the same foreigner may be provided with such an allowance only once in the territory of the Slovak Republic.

(3) The Ministry shall provide a course in the basics of the Slovak language to an asylum seeker and a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection.

(4) An asylum seeker or a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection shall, on the basis of a written application submitted to the Ministry and the template of which is specified in Annex 2c, be provided with an integration allowance in the amount of 1.75 times the amount of the subsistence minimum pursuant to a special regulation for a period of 6 consecutive months from the delivery of the application to the Ministry. The integration allowance under the first sentence shall be provided by the Ministry if it is not provided through a non-governmental organisation. A written application under the first sentence may be submitted to the Ministry no later than 60 days after the granting of asylum or complementary protection; If the application is submitted after the expiry of that period, the integration allowance referred to in the first sentence shall not be granted. The same foreign national may be granted such an allowance only once in the territory of the Slovak Republic, after the first grant of asylum or complementary protection.

(5) The Ministry shall provide an asylum seeker and a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection, social counselling, psychological counselling or other counselling and a course of cultural orientation on the basis of his/her individual needs, as a rule, for a period of 12 months from the granting of asylum or complementary protection; in the case of a minor child, even if it is necessary for his or her favourable development.

(6) The Ministry may, on the basis of his/her written request, accommodate an asylee or a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection in an integration centre, where he/she is obliged to adequately cover the expenses associated with his/her stay.

(7) An asylum seeker or a foreigner who has been granted complementary protection shall not be granted a one-off allowance under subsection 2 and an integration allowance under subsection 4 if he/she has been granted permanent residence or temporary residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic, or if he/she has been granted temporary refuge in the territory of the Slovak Republic" (Asylum Act, Section 28).

However, the conditions for obtaining a temporary residence permit for a foreigner are important. The basic condition for ensuring social functioning and applying for temporary residence is to have gainful employment, unless there are other legal reasons such as study, family reunification and other reasons. When obtaining temporary residence, a foreigner has the right to health care, social benefits, but also the opportunity to obtain a financial loan from a bank, which is an important fact for creating a background (also with an ownership relationship, e.g. to an apartment), in which there

is a high perspective of integration and achieving the position of a responsible member of society with the motivation to work and contribute to the system such as by paying social insurance, as well as taxes. However, this does not mean that integration will take place without problems, especially if we are talking about foreigners who are from third countries, culturally different regions of the world. It turns out that the obstacle is isolating oneself in the community environment and not creating "external relationships". „In practice, the integration of persons with international protection in the Slovak Republic is primarily provided by NGOs. Currently (in 2021 - M.S. note), the integration project of the NGO *Slovak Humanitarian Council* is being implemented, within the framework of which it also provides employment counselling and assistance for asylum seekers and persons with complementary protection. The scope of services provided depends on the project and financial possibilities of the NGO currently implementing the project. In general, the most common activities consist of individual and/or group counselling, identifying the education, experience and preferences of the NGO's clients, assistance in writing CVs, searching for vacancies, preparing for interviews, communicating with employers, registering with employment offices and accompanying the clients, explaining and counter-rolling the contents of employment contracts, instructing on basic rights and obligations of employees, processing applications for retraining courses at employment offices and allowances for voluntary service, and sometimes (if there are funds in the project budget) paying for courses or remuneration for small works for NGOs. The NGO also draws up an individual integration plan for each client in the integra-

tion project. NGOs also provide assistance on an individual basis in explaining and checking the content of the employment contract, or explaining the basic rights and obligations of employees, if the clients in the integration project approach them with such a request. The scope and intensity of the above-mentioned services provided by NGOs in the framework of labour law counselling and assistance are largely dependent on the staff capacities of NGOs. A large part of their working time is taken up by project-related administration and personal assistance to clients in the field when visiting state authorities, doctors, etc. The time they have left for individual labour law counselling and assisting clients is therefore very limited. In addition to the *Slovak Humanitarian Council*, the NGO *Mareena* is also involved in the integration of persons with international protection into the labour market in the Slovak Republic to a limited extent. In the past, it has implemented career counselling for third-country nationals, in which 5 beneficiaries of international protection participated, two of whom were subsequently also provided with mentoring. Job search assistance is provided by trained volunteers from among the local population. Their help is more individualized and more intensive (one volunteer to/mentor – one refugee), but provided to a much lower extent in terms of the number of people and depending on the availability of volunteers and/or project possibilities. Although the integration of persons granted international protection into the labour market is part of integration into society as a whole, it is only one of the partial areas that NGO workers deal with in the integration project. The project possibilities of the integration project are usually significantly undersized and do not allow social workers and NGO lawyers to deal in depth with the topic of work integration

of refugees, which subsequently has negative consequences for the refugees themselves, as we had the opportunity to find out in the field research. With this situation in mind, several respondents and NGOs recommend the creation of the position of assistant/cultural mediator for persons granted international protection, which would be intensively available to them at least during the first months of their integration. This assistant/cultural mediator would accompany them and also assist them in finding a job" (Fajnorová, K., Chaloupková, M. 2021, pp. 61-62). *The Slovak Humanities Council* defines the currently implemented *Rifugio II* project (April 2024 - December 2026) as follows: „The aim of the project is to help people with asylum and complementary protection to adapt and integrate in Slovak society to such an extent that they are able to live independently and with quality here. Employees in our offices in Bratislava and Košice, as well as field workers throughout Slovakia, approach each client individually and perceptively. They offer professional assistance in several integration areas – such as social, health, school and work integration. Of course, we provide Slovak language courses, as knowledge of Slovak is the basis for successful integration. And we should not forget to help find suitable accommodation" (Slovak Humanitarian Council, 2024). Granted asylum or complementary protection is indeed a privilege that entitles a foreigner to many opportunities, rights and assistance within the framework of residence and integration, as well as the overall provision of social functioning. It is about the rehabilitation of an individual or family in their environment and the creation of relationships, both personal and institutional. This is the space for the profession of social work. „Social work is concerned with people, their social environment and their

mutual relationships. The aim of every intervention of a social worker is to improve the well-being of the individual or group and prevent social isolation and marginalization. For this target group, social work should focus in particular on:

- “overcoming emotional and psychological trauma,
- mastering the language barrier,
- making it easier to adapt to life in a new country,
- help with overcoming barriers that could lead to social isolation,
- mobilizing and strengthening one's own internal resources and ability to cope with problems, cope with life in a new social environment,
- development of the foreigner's potential,
- networking and working with volunteers” (KapaCITY, 2024).

Consider the U.S., whose society has a strong immigrant history and where the ways and importance of integrating foreigners can be viewed from a historical perspective. Having sufficiently secured integration also means taking sufficient care of the stability of society and its economic and social progress. „The U.S. is a nation of immigrants, yet immigrating to the U.S. is a complex process rife with challenges. Many immigrants, including children and families, need safety, shelter, transportation and legal counsel as they resettle and build their new lives. An immigration social worker assists immigrants in accessing the resources they need to thrive and helps them navigate the immigration process. Immigration social workers also advocate for the well-being and safety of immigrants in transition so they can establish a stable, flourishing life in the U.S. Social workers can further support immigrants by

understanding the challenges they face in coming to the U.S., particularly in navigating the school, health and legal systems. This type of support is a cornerstone of the social work profession, and social workers should strive to learn more about how they can assist clients who have immigrated to the U.S.” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2024). In order to accomplish the goals from the above areas of social worker's work, the primary need is to develop a trusting relationship between the immigrant and the social worker on how to influence the climate, the moods of immigrants as individuals, as well as groups or communities. The safety of the immigrant is also important for the majority and the safety of the majority is important for the immigrant. In a climate of fear, mistrust, prejudice on both sides, barriers will be maintained, at least relational, if not institutional. It should not be forgotten that foreigners also face the structural problems of society, just as members of the majority population do, and often much more severely than the majority population. The foreigner's difficult position lies both in his unfamiliarity with his new environment and in the stigmatization of his person. „Additionally, immigrants may experience environmental, economic and sociopolitical challenges in the process of adjusting to life in the U.S. According to Hyojin Im, an associate professor of social work at Virginia Commonwealth University, immigrants encounter many different structural barriers during the immigration process, often simultaneously. In her 2020 article published in *The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, Im explained that such challenges include the following:

- “Limited material resources and property
- Legal challenges

- Barriers to health care
- Barriers to education
- Unstable housing
- Fragmented or limited social support systems due to high mobility
- Barriers to social services due to a lack of translators
- Xenophobia, stigma, discrimination and marginalization” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023).

It is necessary to further define what in the Anglo-Saxon environment is called Immigration Social Work. This content framework of social work is in the attention of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in the U.S., although it is not defined as a specific type of social work. „NASW explains that social workers can further support immigrants by helping them access ‘immigration assistance and services to ensure their safety, permanency and well-being’.

Safety refers to adequate housing; access to clean water and nutritious food; access to health care; and dwelling in an unpolluted living environment free of health hazards.

Permanency refers to the stability of these same resources – how frequently and consistently individual immigrants and communities of immigrants can access basic resources like food, water, housing and health care. Permanence may also refer to other resources necessary for full participation in society such as access to education, banking, legal support and social services.

Well-being refers to the overall condition of communities of immigrants and the individuals who make up these communities.

From health care to housing, immigrants often need assistance in a wide range of areas to more easily acclimate to life in the U.S. Because of this, the need for social workers who support immigrants is great, particularly in the following disciplines:

- Health care social work
- Child welfare social work
- International social work
- Mental health and clinical social work
- Justice and corrections social work
- Occupational and employee assistance social work” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023)

In the position of a social worker, one sometimes finds oneself helping a target group because one is close to it. Either he or she belongs to a social service recipient with a social problem, or he or she knows the language of that group, or comes from that cultural group, etc. „The experience from practice, as well as from the above example, shows that the social worker providing the social service may himself find himself in the position of the recipient of the social service” (Bujda, 2022). What should the preparation and training of social workers to work with immigrants look like, or what competencies, skills and knowledge should be developed and strengthened in social workers when working with immigrants? „Though the NASW does not designate ‘immigration social work’ as a separate specialty, social workers and those training to become social workers can take certain steps to prepare themselves for a role supporting immigrants. Social workers who want to work with a specific immigrant population should think about developing the skills and competencies

to best support this target group. Here are some tips for preparing to become an immigration social worker:

- Learn a second or third language.
- Conduct fieldwork in settings that serve immigrant populations, such as community health centers, hospitals, bicultural centers and human rights organizations.
- Increase cultural competency by learning about the values and priorities of different communities of immigrants.

Additionally, NASW recommends the following actions for social workers who want to get involved in protecting the rights of immigrants:

Work for and with established organizations with a proven history of immigrant advocacy to continue fostering relationships with immigrant communities. Working or volunteering at these organizations can also create opportunities to connect with other social workers and advocates who have experience supporting immigrants.

Educate oneself on the policy and legal issues related to immigration status. Access to health care, child welfare and many other crucial social services can be complicated by immigration status. Social workers must become competent in the challenges immigrants face to provide culturally competent support.

Volunteer as an interpreter for immigrants. Licensed social workers who have fluency in another language can be especially helpful for immigrants who are being detained” (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023).

How Social Workers Support Immigrants



Provide mental health resources



Advocate for immigrant students



Foster job and career development



Inform immigrants about their legal rights



Guide immigrant families to resources for food, health care and housing

Source: Journal of Human Rights and Social Work

Source: (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2023)

If we want to talk about a targeted integration policy, we need to talk about organising and institutionalising it. In terms of institutionalizing an integration programme, the research study recommends the following:

„1) In the form of transformation of individual institutions and the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, we have long proposed the creation of one centralized Immigration and Naturalization Office, which will be, among other things, comprehensively cover the issue of integration of persons with international protection.

2) Comprehensive updating of the Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic, regular evaluation of the fulfilment of its goals and measures and overall institutional strengthening of the agenda at the level of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

3) The State Integration Programme for Persons Granted International Protection in the Territory of the Slovak Republic should be the main instrument for the integration of persons with international protection and introduce a standard to which persons with international protection will be entitled under all circumstances.

4) NGOs and their projects financed from EU funds should also serve to implement complementary and follow-up services for beneficiaries of international protection, including services aimed at supporting their integration into the labour market.

5) Inclusion of specific measures of employment services aimed directly at the target group of persons with international protection in projects implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family under the operational programmes of the European Social Fund Plus” (Fajnorová, K., Chaloupková, M. 2021, p. 101).

The institutionalisation and subsequent implementation of integration policies should aim to systematically ensure integration with the main objective of eliminating social maladjustment, understood as resistance or inability to function socially in the new society in a way that does not undermine its integrity and security, both social and physical. It is the prerogative of each society to decide on a model of integration policy, and it seems that this is a prerogative that states wish to exercise for the reason mentioned above. And also for the reason that, despite the many arguments for a common integration policy within the EU, these are still socially and economically inhomogeneous states, or rather societies. „Individual states choose and apply their own approaches and policies

in the integration of immigrants into society. Traditionally, 3-4 basic models of integration can be distinguished, but in practice they often overlap:

Segregation model

It allows migrants to enter mostly only one sphere of society (primarily the labour market, for which migrants were actually recruited to the respective country). Because it is expected that migrants will return home after a certain period of time, this model does not expect them to integrate into the majority society, reluctantly grants them political and civil rights, and is therefore highly discriminatory. In Europe, Germany, Austria and Switzerland have applied this model until recently, and from a global point of view, e.g. the Persian Gulf countries or Japan are excellent examples.

Assimilation model

It prefers a one-sided intensive process of adaptation of foreigners to the receiving society. Immigrants are allowed to integrate into society relatively quickly and without problems and gain formally identical rights as the natives (which seems advantageous at first glance), but at the cost of almost completely losing their own culture, values, traditions, or language and religion that they should adopt from an autochthonous society. This approach can evoke a more or less justified feeling of "uprootedness" and loss of identity, which is especially evident in the second generation of immigrants. France can serve as a typical example of the assimilation of immigrants.

Integration model in the narrow sense of the word

This model represents a kind of compromise: adaptation is two-way, migrants contribute to the formation of a common culture, and the majority society respects them and promotes diversity, but it pragmatically defines the rules of regulation. The aim of such integration is to continuously transform and strengthen the cohesion of society while preserving its values. Because of the elimination of separational isolation tendencies, this model does not emphasize the group rights of immigrants so strongly, but rather favors individual civic integration (although it is sometimes combined with the following model into one). Integration in the narrow sense of the word is characteristic of most EU countries and the U.S.

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Multicultural model

It fully accepts the group identity, differences and specific features of immigrants and their cultures, thereby developing diversity in the receiving society. Migrants remain clearly distinguishable by their attributes from an autochthonous society, which can provide them with several advantages. This model is typical, for example, for Sweden, Australia or Canada. However, the events of recent years in the world have multiplied the criticism of multiculturalism: the argument is that individual communities of immigrants are partially closed in on themselves and even by their voluntary isolation and disregard for the fundamental norms/values of the majority society or other minorities. That is why pure multiculturalism is currently mostly being abandoned" (Bargerová, Divinský, 2008, pp.19-20).

Back in 2004, the European Commission produced a document entitled *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy In The European Union*, which sets out 11 basic principles for the creation of migration policies within the EU:

„1. Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.

2. Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.

3. Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.

4. Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.

5. Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.

6. Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.

7. Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immi-

grants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.

8. The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.

9. The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.

10. Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.

11. Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective" (Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy In The European Union, 2004, pp. 19-24).

Point 4 is interesting, where it talks about the need for a basic knowledge not only of language, history, but also of institutions, let's say to understand the mechanics of the institutional system of a society, which implies an educational dimension of social work in working with the immigrant. This is related to point 6, where it is important to understand the conditions of claimability to the resources of society through its institutions. I see point 7 as the most problematic in terms of implementation and trends and practice, where it is very

difficult to work on the fact that communities of foreigners do not close in on themselves and that its members have frequent interactions with the majority and the community is open to accepting ways of acting, communicating and confronting social reality in the forms of the majority. Otherwise, there is a growing level of maladjustment on the part of foreigners and distrust or rejection on the part of the majority. This is a very challenging task for the social worker who works with the community as well as the individual. The issue of social maladjustment implies two levels which have their own special meanings. The question is whether in the process of integration a model that has more elements (goals) of adaptability or assimilation is more applied. While the first concept has a purely social meaning, the second has a political meaning in addition to the social. „Adaptation to the new society is the first step towards integration. From the perspective of the migration phenomenon, the adaptation process refers to the ability of the migrant subject to fit into the pre-existing structures of the receiving society (i.e., adapting to the rules and values that exist in the receiving society, as well as learning the mechanisms of his or her new economic, political, social, cultural, and, above all, political–institutional environment). Part of the argument for adaptation in the process of migration is that individuals who decide to migrate evaluate all available options to adapt to hazards and choose the ones that best suit their situation. Adaptation, which has a strong psycho-social component, does not necessarily imply reciprocity between the migrant and the host society, as in most cases it is a one-way process, i.e., the migrant’s own adaptation reaction triggered by changes in the new social environment. The need to change one’s way of life, the change of job, social pressures, changes

in professional status, changes in lifestyle, in fact anything that forces us to face the unknown, can trigger the adaptation reaction. The difficulties faced by migrants slow down the integration process. Many more difficulties are felt when the migrant's background is to a greater extent different from the receiving environment. Migrants leaving their countries of origin to go to the host countries, especially those from rural areas, find it difficult to get used to the activities and way of life in the country of migration, to get used to a new style of eating and dressing, to mix with a fast-paced and often even dangerous civilization, and to get used to the pace of life of a community that is different from that of their country of origin. In this way, migrants break contact with an environment from which they retain certain habits, certain ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, and follow certain steps necessary for integration into the destination environment. The function of integration is intertwined with the function of maintaining cultural patterns (existence and perpetuation of norms and values), the function of adaptation (control of relations in relation to the environment and internal components), and the function of goal attainment (dependence on the internalization of cultural patterns into personality components or disposition-needs)" (Cormoş, 2022). We have already mentioned that it is important for foreigners to have motivation for integration and a willingness to adapt. It can be seen in practice that foreigners are concentrated in larger cities for a pragmatic reason, which is the possibility of getting a job, or even the support of various organizations that work in larger settlements. In urban conditions, foreigners are not under such supervision of citizens, and as a rule, there are a large number of civil or social communities in large settlements. In such an

environment, there is much less pressure to adapt, to oversee integration and a certain social control, to which we are all exposed, compared to a rural environment. The task of social work is to focus on the rehabilitation of the relationship between the foreigner and the society or community in which he or she is located. In a sense, it is a society-wide order towards social work. „There is a close interdependence between society and personality. Norms, values, and roles, as components of society, become through internalization disposition-needs or subjective transpositions of their counterparts in society: Cultural models are internalized; they become an integrated part of the personality structure of the agent. These attitudes of value are genuine disposition-needs of the personality. Only by virtue of the internalization of institutionalized values does a genuine motivational integration of behavior into the social structure take place. In the host society, it is accepted that the way in which the individual integrates involves a reciprocal influence determined, on the one hand, by the immigrant's insertion into the native group and, on the other, by the actions that the immigrant exerts on the community: The emphasis is on maintaining cultural pluralism within a unified social group, a process that for the immigrant means an effort to adapt in order to conform to the norms in certain areas, at the same time as an effort to preserve cultural differences in other areas" (Cormos, 2022). It is very important to recognize the fact of the importance of the unity of social groups and communities in local conditions. At the same time, we speak about cultural pluralism as the possibility of cultivating one's own expressions of social functioning to such an extent that they do not disturb the stated unity of a social group or the val-

ues of a given society. However, we must realize that both foreigners and locals face the unknown. It is important that the process of integration of a foreigner is not only on a formal and legal level, because this does not mean that an individual will effectively assimilate the norms and values of society. Acceptance of norms without their internalisation can mean, if not conflicts, then barriers to the formation of social bonds as the fabric of society. It is through social workers that society should have feedback on the effectiveness of integration, including the effectiveness of the adoption of norms. If we are talking about adaptation in terms of the primary needs mentioned above, which are employment, housing, but also education, we are talking about a general social necessity in the functioning of each individual. Otherwise, everyone will create a sense of fear and danger in their communities and towards the majority, or reinforce their position in conflict with the society in which they live. Conflict can be not only cultural, social, but also physical, in the sense of dissatisfaction with the conditions of integration or integration as such. Areas of private life and spheres where there are no norms strictly requiring specific actions or other manifestations, a foreigner is not forced to abandon all his customs, traditions and language, if we are talking about the area of private civic initiatives, associations, religious communities and others.

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3.2 A community center is a place of support for children from families affected by alcohol problem, based on the example of the TPD community center in Warta

MARIANNA STYCZYŃSKA

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The topic of the article focuses on a community center that is a helpful place changing the everyday life of children suffering from alcohol problem. A pathological home often disrupts the development and proper functioning of these children. The range of their negative emotions and experiences disturbs their self-image, self-esteem and self-esteem. The author of the article tries to show the invaluable support received by the children in the community center, as evidenced by the children's statements presented here.

The issue of alcoholism is widely discussed in the literature and is the subject of interest in many scientific disciplines. And yet, the phenomenon of alcoholism and its scope is spreading, gaining new crowd of addicts. Alcoholism is often called a "family disease." This term indicates an extremely strong influence by an alcoholic on the environment in which he lives. The family is unable to ignore the problem he is struggling with or escape from the problem of addiction.

Alcoholism most impairs the sphere of behavior of the drinker, which in turn causes fear, uncertainty, embarrassment and anger in the family. (Kinney, Leaton Warszawa 1966, p. 147)

As Jerzy Melibruda emphasizes, many areas of life undergo unfavorable transformations because of addiction. Huge devastation appears in her life, in the life of this family there

is no room to satisfy the need for security, mutual trust or love. Instead, a whole package of negative emotions and feelings as well as a sense of harm and guilt begin to dominate among family members (Melibruda, 2001, p. 10) A characteristic feature of a family with an alcohol problem is that it isolates itself in its surroundings and is completely excluded from social life. This isolation causes the relaxation or even disappearance of interpersonal relationships, which often gives greater opportunities for the development of addiction in the person affected by the problem (Szcukiewicz2016, p.33). The communication system in such family is completely disrupted.

Often, we stop talking about what is happening there, or the problem is significantly minimized, especially in situations when the problem is mentioned to one of the family members.

As A. Wiśniewska rightly notes, alcoholism of one of the family members has a negative impact on the dynamics of the entire family system, causing disturbances in functioning and interpersonal relationships (Wiśniewska, 2022). Organizing life in this sick environment on a partnership basis or with a sense of sincerity is completely excluded.

Constant chaos and endless stress very often cause a huge sense of helplessness. An addicted person quickly detects and uses family members' blaming for the situation and uses it for their own interests. (Mikuła, 2006, pp. 8-12.). In such a situation, family members cease to support each other and become a source of problems. There is a streak of lies and mutual accusations in the life of this family, and the disorganization of the life of this educational environment also has negative consequences for functioning in society (Szcukiewicz, 2016, p. 33.).

The prospect of constantly having to deal with an alcohol problem makes life difficult, which results in unpleasant feelings. Living in a specific way, often with a completely disturbed emotional sphere, full of tension and an aggressive atmosphere, is not conducive to proper relationships and completely excludes functioning on any partnership basis.

The variety of negative situations in a family affected by addiction often creates the need to generate a system of cooperation in which all its members act as partners.

Everyone plays a specific role in the system that allows the system to function. This joint action often allows them to hide the problem from those around them (Ryś, 2007, pp. 241-242).

As Stanisław Kozak emphasizes, an alcoholic family is not only a closed and isolated family, but it is also a hypocritical family in which an uncomfortable topic is deprived of the light of day, and shame and fear make people lie even to themselves (Kozak, 2007, pp. 175-176).

Children from families affected by alcohol problems experience not only repeated violence, but also neglect in various areas, especially in the mental and developmental sphere. They often struggle with a deficit of love, closeness and care caused by the lack of attention paid to them. The often-occurring lack of feeling loved and needed, the lack of satisfaction of the need for security and recognition, in the future causes huge consequences manifesting themselves in problems in building proper relationships or lack of openness to others (Ryś, 2007, pp. 83-84.). The wide range of difficulties experienced by these children is often difficult to solve even by

adults. In everyday life, the child observes lies, deceit, insults, and often unfounded accusations against him, causing a constant feeling of guilt. The child also experiences endless manipulation by the parent, who benefits from it for himself.

In this type of families, children are deprived of role models for shaping their own identity or correct self-image. There is also a high probability that these children, when entering interpersonal relationships outside the home, e.g. in kindergarten, on the playground, or at school, may encounter greater difficulties than their peers.

Due to repeated disappointment with their parents, they have become convinced that they cannot trust not only their parents, but also all other people they encounter in their surroundings (Melibruda, 1993, pp. 35-35).

The three rules: don't talk, don't trust, don't feel, which are learned in the family, become determinants of life and have a very negative impact, especially on emotional development and further dysfunctional finding one's place in the environment.

Conducted research shows that children often adopt certain ways of adapting to the situation they find themselves in and try to cope with the problem of alcoholism in the family or even support it.

The rich literature on the issue, considering the model of the family as a system, distinguishes several different characteristic patterns of children's adaptation. One of these patterns is the role of Responsible, most often assigned to a child who is an only child or the oldest among siblings.

The responsibility assumed for oneself, but also for other siblings, also comes down to accepting many daily, tiring responsibilities. It also involves constant vigilance to compensate for deficiencies so that such a family can maintain balance and stability.

In such situations, one can often observe the phenomenon of parentification accompanying the role of the Responsible Person, which involves role reversal.

The second pattern of child adaptation is adopting the role of the Adapter.

A child in this role does not make himself/herself responsible in any way for dealing with family matters, but carefully tries to follow all instructions received without any reservations. It adapts easily to changing conditions.

Another role model that a child in a family suffering from an alcohol problem adopts is the role of the Relief Bringer. In contrast to the role of the Responsible Person, who primarily meets the material needs of the family.

The Relief Bringer most often takes responsibility for meeting emotional needs. Instead of adults and parents tuning in to the child, the child is tuning in to them and others, showing them a whole range of positive feelings, concern, attention and sensitivity. Children taking on this role very quickly change their interest, sometimes directing it towards the alcoholic parent and sometimes towards the other parent. This behavior is an attempt to alleviate or minimize the hostility between them.

As can be seen from the above theoretical analyses, the roles presented are strategies for adapting to the situations

they face in their families, they are also specific ways of surviving and gaining approval from people outside the family environment. Another typology of roles assumed by children in families with alcohol problems distinguishes: Family Hero, Lost Child, Family Mascot and Scapegoat. The first three of the above have a lot in common with the roles of Responsible, Adaptable and Relief-Bringer discussed earlier (Kinney, Leaton, 1996, pp. 157-159).

The complex and difficult situation of a child in a family with an alcohol problem causes enormous devastation in his or her internal life. Patterns acquired through assumed roles pose a danger that may result in the consolidation of one of these roles. Totally adopting role mechanisms can become a sustainable way of life.

What is helpful and helps you survive in childhood is not necessarily useful in adult life. Often, these previously learned methods constitute great suffering in the future, bringing with them many unpleasant consequences in the form of problems in finding one's way in the dimension of social functioning or in interpersonal relationships (Skowrońska-Pućka, Cieślińska, 2014, p. 11).

Help for children from families affected by alcohol problems should include various forms. These children are in the so-called high-risk group; hence the nature of the activities should be broad due to the scale of problems occurring in their lives and the environment in which they function. As part of forms of support, you should create space for these children to get rid of defense mechanisms, i.e. accepted ways of distorting reality to make it so painful and help them survive this difficult time. We should also bear in mind the fact that what

allowed them to survive their childhood may make their adult life much more difficult. (Pilch,2024, p.69).

When organizing help for children from families affected by alcohol problems, great attention is paid to the key role of schools and the educational system. Broadly understood health education conducted in schools should equip young people with the skills to cope with stress and develop awareness of the risks associated with alcohol and other addictions. These approaches will emphasize the role of mental health pedagogy and the need to use it in the prevention of alcoholism through education proposing a healthy lifestyle and developing skills in coping with emotional difficulties.

Barbara Jelińska (2021) devotes a lot of attention to educational strategies and various work methods aimed at organizing support for children in the problem discussed in the above analyses.

The forms of help for children from families struggling with alcohol problems include self-help groups operating on similar principles as the Allateen and All-anon Alcoholics Anonymous groups. They are addressed to children up to eighteen years of age.

The main and guiding idea of their activities and organized meetings is to create a mutual support network, to help each other in the difficulties they experience and in dealing with problems resulting from living and functioning in alcoholic environments. These groups give you the opportunity to share your experiences, create the opportunity to externalize your worries, express your feelings and negative emotions. They thus contribute to mutual support.

Participants in these groups become aware of the mechanisms of their own behavior, get to know themselves, their strengths and limitations, but also the possibilities they have here and now. These groups give children with alcohol problems the opportunity to devote time to their own development, to meet the need for coexistence and closeness, and to build a sense of belonging (Cierpiałkowska, Ziarko, 2010, pp. 349-350).

In organizing support, much attention is increasingly paid to the need for cooperation between various institutions, which include schools, psychological and pedagogical counseling centers, social welfare centers, free time facilities, and cleaning organizations.

Only unified influence and integrated approaches of various entities in the local environment can provide comprehensive support for children and adolescents from alcoholic families (Borkowska, 2021).

Community centers located in local communities are a very friendly and extremely helpful form of support.

In Poland, community centers were initially established in the second half of the 17th century.

At that time, a more organized form of care for the youngest population began. However, you date specific assistance to children from the poorest social classes to the 18th century. The deepening phenomenon of poverty and child abandonment were an incentive to establish orphanages, which were the first institutions aimed at caring for children.

An important role in creating support was played by the oratorios organized by Fr. John Bosco.

Educational centers constituting care and education facilities also began to be established within the social welfare system. Community centers are classified as care and educational facilities. Their task is, among other things, to organize learning assistance, attractive and constructive use of free time by proposing a wide range of activities and games conducive to developing the interests and various skills of the students.

These day support facilities often undertake therapeutic activities aimed at minimizing psychological problems. Often, a community center becomes a friendly place for children from alcoholic families, compensating for deficiencies in family care. It provides what they lack in the family environment. (Ganiger, 2011, p. 29) It is here, in the community center, that a child has the opportunity to experience closeness, safety and kindness. It is in the community center that the child receives a substitute for a functional home through the implementation of the pedagogy of co-being and the pedagogy of the heart.

Through various forms of activity, he learns how to deal with difficult situations and many problems resulting from life in his pathological family. Lack of acceptance, fear, sadness, constant feeling of guilt related to unpredictability and chaos in a family in which alcohol ruled life, often only in the community center allow you to assess your situation from many different perspectives, determine the strength and willingness to fight for yourself and your future, and help change your view of yourself or the world around you (Chrzastek, 2024, p.53)

If caregivers in a community center take care of this expected closeness and authentic presence, they will help children develop the so-called secure attachment style, which

is necessary for optimal, healthy development that determines the achievement of success to the best of the abilities of the children in this community center.

Direct contacts with these children in the facility described allowed us to observe many beneficial changes in their development and mutual relationships. They have become more open and willing to talk about themselves, as evidenced by their randomly selected statements below.

12-year-old Wojtek

I come to the community center every day. I've been here for 4 hours. I like all the ladies who are here. And I like Mrs. Grażynka the most. She, like my grandmother, always has time for me. He always explains to me something I don't know until I understand it. And no one will help me at home. They are shouting and talking loudly and my head hurts.

9-year-old Staś

I like being at the common room. I will always eat something and drink something. I like classes at the community center more than sitting at home. Everyone likes to sleep during the day, I feel sad and scared at home because my dad often shouts when he has a headache.

9-year-old Martyna

I don't like my house. Mom always has friends; I must make tea and clean up glasses and cups. I don't have any friend to come to me. Mom doesn't allow it. I like coming to the community center, even though my mother tells me not to go. In the common room I can play with my friends, paint, and read

a book. I like Mrs. Kasia very much because I can talk to her for a long time. It 's clean and nice here.

8-year-old Paulina

This is my home; I have my cup in which Mrs. Grażynka makes me tea because I am always thirsty. I have toys, I play with Madzia and Ela. These are my best friends. I can live here. It 's light here, I'm not afraid of anyone here. Mrs. Grażynka also plays with me and hugs me. I say I love her, and she loves me.

11-year-old Gabryś

The community center is better than my home. The ladies are good, they play with us. We go out together, no one hits anyone. Ladies don't shout at me; they don't call me "you stupid fat man". We have various holidays in the common room, we had Easter breakfast. The bunny brought sweets for everyone. There is shouting in my house, and I feel sad because my mother often cries and is very angry with my father because I drink a lot of beer.

The examples given indicate the climate of family life and how such an atmosphere influences the development of negative feelings in children. In the statements you can clearly see how much joy it brings to be in the community center. Creating this type of support for children from families affected by alcohol problems is not only a need of modern times, but also a necessity. The existence of such a facility gives children a chance to get to know a new and better world, which shows them that life can be interesting and beautiful.

Thanks to this type of institutions, Lavransa Brammer's thesis can be implemented: let's do everything, let's create such

space, such conditions that people would want to help themselves.

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3.3 Trends in the social rehabilitation of various groups of convicted women

DOMINIKA TEMIAKOVÁ

In his work, the prominent Slovak philosopher Teodor Munz reflects on man and the good and bad in him. He writes inspiringly that good and evil are balanced in a person because if they were not, we would not survive evolution. The man also does evil for his good. One cannot exist without the other, they intertwine, but man is much more sensitive to evil, avoids it, and wants to get rid of it, while he perceives good as self-evident. (Munz, 2019). Perhaps for no other target group of the theory and practice of the sciences of human education is the issue of educability and related re-education more pressing than those sentenced to imprisonment. Regardless of the general and professional opinion about the possibility of re-education of adults, the narrative of the insignificance or even purposefulness of the education of convicts cannot find its place in any modern society of the 21st century.

Population of female convicts

Imprisoned women are a much smaller group than imprisoned men worldwide. The reasons try to explain the theories of women's crime. Women and girls make up an average of 5.5% of the global prison population (versus 94.5% of convicted men).

The lowest proportion of women in the total prison population is in the Caribbean and African countries (approximately 3.5%), on the contrary, the most convicted women are in North America (9%), Asia (7.5%), and Europe (4%). The top

country with the world's highest proportion of imprisoned women - up to every fifth person in prison is a woman - is the administrative region of China, Hong Kong (21%). The second country with the highest rate of convicted women worldwide is the special administrative region of the People's Republic of China Macau (15.4%), followed by Monaco (14.3%), Greenland (Denmark, 13.8%), and the Southeast Asian country of Laos (13.7%). Other countries among the top 10 are already 12.3-11.9% (approximately one in ten imprisoned persons is a woman) (World Prison Brief Data, 2024).

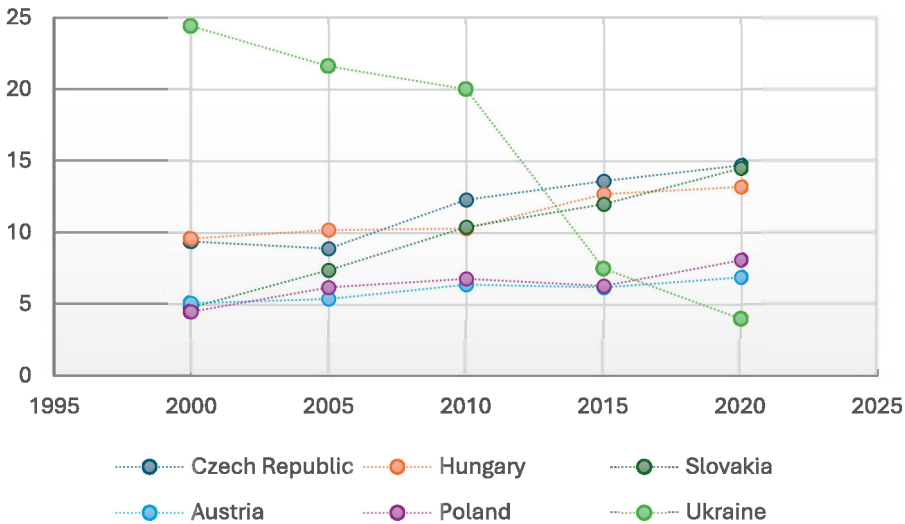
Naturally, the trend of the number of imprisoned women in individual countries changes over time - while somewhere it has grown sharply in recent years (e.g. in Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, Turkey), elsewhere it has significantly decreased (for example in Mexico, the Russian Federation, Thailand, and Vietnam). Therefore, long-term trends in the horizon of several years to decades are more authoritative.

Such statistics show that since 2000, the number of women incarcerated has grown much faster than men - the female population has increased by more than 50%, while the male population has increased by 18%. However, this fact cannot be explained by the increase in the female population, since it increased by only 21% in the same period. The number of imprisoned women has risen since 2000 on all continents. In Africa, the increase was slightly less than the increase in the continent's general population, in Europe, the increase in the number of prisoners was similar to the general population increase, and, conversely, in the Americas, Asia, and Oceania, the increase since the turn of the millennium was roughly three, four and five times the increase in the general population, on these

continents. The number of women in prison has grown particularly sharply since 2000 in some countries, for example especially in El Salvador (tenfold), Cambodia and Indonesia (sixfold), Guatemala (fivefold), and Brazil (fourfold) (World Prison Brief Data, 2024).

It can be assumed that the global trend of increasing female incarceration may be rising at a faster rate than the worldwide population of incarcerated men, since from 2000 to 2015 there was an increase of 50% of incarcerated women and 18% of incarcerated men. As of 2017, it is approximately 53% and 20%.

Figure 1 The trend of female prison population rate (per 100,000 of the national population) Source: World Prison Brief Data, 2024



The growth trend of the female prison population in the last two decades is also evident in the Central European area (Slovak Republic and its directly neighboring states, Figure 1). Since 2000, we have observed the most marked increase in the number of convicted women in the Slovak Republic, up

to twice as much, in the Czech Republic the growth has been significant since 2005 and in Hungary since 2010. The most positive trend is maintained by Austria and Poland, where the increase in the number of convicted women in the last twenty years has been not so dramatically but gradually.

In the Central European area (Table 1), the country with the largest share of convicted women is the Czech Republic (in the global ranking, it is in 24th place with a share of 8.6%). Among these six countries, Slovakia is in third place at the 36th position, and in Slovak penitentiary facilities there are 7.8% of convicted women. Ukraine has the lowest share of convicted women with 3.9% (however, the statistics do not include data for all geopolitical areas).

*Table 1: Imprisoned women - Central European area in 2024
(Slovakia and neighboring states)*

Ranking¹	Country	Number of female prisoners	Percentage of total prison population	Female prison population rate (per 100,000 of the national population)
24.	Czech Republic	1 711	8.6%	15.6
27.	Hungary ²	1 526	8.4%	16
36.	Slovakia	754	7.8%	13.9
51.	Austria	657	6.9%	7.2
83.	Poland	3 793	5.1%	10.1

¹ from 221 countries

² data from 2023

128.	Ukraine ³	1 219	3.9%	3.1
Average		1 610	6.78	10.98

Source: World Prison Brief Data, 2024

A significant proportion of female offenders in prisons throughout the country are convicted mainly for petty crimes related to poverty (theft, fraud, and less serious offenses related to drug crime). Only a small proportion of women are convicted of violent crimes, while most of them are victims of violence itself. (UN Bangkok Rules on Women Offenders and Prisoners: a short guide, 2013).

The described trend also applies, for example, in the conditions of the Slovak Republic - the structure of female criminality is also diverse in Slovakia, but not primarily violent. Women most often commit crimes against property; (the most numerous crimes are theft, fraud, and unauthorized production and use of a means of payment), then crimes against the family and youth (endangering the moral education of youth and neglecting compulsory nutrition), crimes against life and health (harm to health, illegal production of narcotics and psychotropic substances, poisons or precursors, their possession or trade in them) and generally dangerous crimes and crimes against the environment (endangerment under the influence of an addictive substance). Women are the least likely to commit crimes against other rights and freedoms (riotousness, dangerous persecution), against the order in public affairs (obstructing the execution of a public decision), economic crimes

³ data from 2022 are only the totals of convicted adult females in prison colonies and they do not include those in Crimea and Sebastopol and areas of Donetsk and Luhansk that are not under the control of the Ukrainian authorities

(failure to pay taxes and insurance premiums), and, finally, crimes against freedom and human dignity (violation of domestic freedom) (Statistical Yearbook 2022, 2023). Therefore, women in the Slovak Republic most often commit and are convicted of financial crimes, then for crimes related to their social role as mothers.

On some selected theories of women's crime

We have already written about theories of crime but without gender conditioning.⁴ Even if no universal theory would clarify the causes of the origin and development of crime, criminological theories nevertheless have their justification. It is a pervasive and comprehensive field - explaining the emergence of any phenomenon, not excluding crime, perhaps always based on many factors. Although it is impossible to include all forms of criminal acts and justify their occurrence in general and all valid, theories of crime can be used to develop preventive and rehabilitative measures.

For a long time, women and prison were perceived as two unrelated entities, opposite poles, words not connected by the preposition *vo*. The share of women in criminal activity appeared to be so small and their offenses so minor that dealing with women in this regard was considered a waste of time (Nedbáľková, 2003). For a long time, criminology did not reflect, and even now a significant part of it does not reflect female criminality. Still, few social phenomena are so characterized by a differentiated modality of human behavior (Lubelcová & Dzambazovič, 2006). In the history of human

⁴ for more details, see Kadlubeková, *Penitenciárna a postpenitenciárna edukácia dospělých* (2015)

knowledge, criminology has long focused on masculine theories of deviance. Female criminality was overlooked and when female perpetrators were mentioned in the literature, they were demonized or sexualized. The breakthrough came after the second wave of feminism in the 1960s and 1970s, with the emergence and introduction of feminist criminology (Chesney-Lind, 2006). It brought a perspective in the field of theories of social deviance, which until then had been underestimated or neglected. C. Smart (*Women, Crime and Criminology*, 1976), F. Heidensohn (*A Deviance of Woman: A Critique and Inquiry*, 1968; *Woman and Crime*, 1985), F. Adler (*Sisters in Crime*, 1975), M. Millman (*She Did It All For Love: A Feminist View Of The Sociology Of Deviance*, 1975), R. Rodmell (*Men, Women And Sexuality: A Feminist Critique Of The Sociology Of Deviance*) and K. Daley, M. Chesney-Lind (*Feminism and Criminology*, 1988). Despite the inclusion of women in criminological literature, the emphasis is still placed on women as victims and not as perpetrators. Since the turn of the century, women's criminality has been the subject of debates and several theories have emerged that try to explain it (Chesney-Lind, 2006). Naturally, these theories are still subject to criticism, but we will mention an overview of the most famous ones⁵:

- biological and biosocial – they explain crime through anthropometry and innate physical attributes (Lombroso), socially induced pathology (Thomas, Pollak), or heredity (Row, Osgood, van der Dennen), but today's biological theories emphasize more biosocial causes than innate ones,

⁵ for more details, see Temiaková, *Vzdelávanie žien v penitenciárnych podmienkach* (2021)

- social - here gender comes to the fore as an explanatory variable, there are two lines of these theories - one emphasizes the different power positions of women in society (limited opportunities, including those for committing a crime, various positions of women in the public and working space), the other a greater inclination women towards conforming behavior as a product of gender-differentiated socialization and increased informal control of women (over socialization of women and primary action in the family sphere) (Lubelcová & Džambazovič, 2006),
- labeling theories - their essence lies in the fact that wrongdoing does not exist - it is only a social construction created by society determining which actions are criminal (Becker, Harris),
- psychological - according to them, as a rule, there is no difference between the causes of criminality of men and women. They explain criminality through the psyche of the perpetrator (psychopathy).

These theories have four main currents that explain aggression:

- biological: aggression is innate, there are two main streams here – psychoanalytic (Freud) and ethological (Lorenz),
- theories of frustration: aggression is the answer or reaction to the non-fulfillment of biological, psychological, and social needs (Dollard),
- cognitive-behavioral theories: aggression is a learned behavior (Bandura),

- integrative: aggressive behavior has such a multidimensional nature that it cannot be explained by one universal theory (Fromm) (Petlák, Škoviera, & Siváková, 2019).

A few decades ago, it was believed that crime was a predominantly male phenomenon, and female crime was a neglected phenomenon. Although a feminist perspective is useful, the prism of gender cannot reduce other variables such as status or ethnicity. Therefore, the categorization of crime theories in today's form has primarily a historical and didactic purpose.

Women behind prison walls

Penitentiaries are total institutions, special types of organizations creating an environment fundamentally different from the ordinary world. These places serve as residences and workplaces for many individuals isolated for a long time from the outside society, who together lead a closed and managed way of life (Keller, 2007). Total institutions include not only prisons but also, for example, residential social facilities (for seniors, mothers with children, foreigners, disadvantaged persons, boarding schools or monasteries, etc.). Simply put, we can call total institutions any institutions that aim to change a person's personality, they are often symbolically separated from the outside world by a barrier in the form of walls, barbed wire, or a body of water.

Punishment is the basic principle of the social response to crime, and its core is to create a balance between the harm caused by the offender and the harm that will be caused to the offender by restricting his rights and isolating him (Lubelcová, 2005). As one of the eleven types of criminal sanctions in the Slovak Republic, imprisonment represents the most severe and

universal type of punishment, which is also the most serious form of interference with civil rights and freedoms. The court can impose a prison sentence on the offender as a sentence, the execution of which is conditionally suspended, or as an unconditional prison sentence. Imprisonment mainly fulfills three basic functions:

- repressive (punitive) – its goal is to punish a person for a committed act and to eliminate his further such actions,
- preventive (protective) – the punishment acts as a prevention of the further commission of a crime by the perpetrator, protects and at the same time deters society,
- re-educational – emphasizes the resocialization of the convicted.

We understand the execution of a prison sentence as the deprivation of the personal freedom of an individual for a certain time (exceptionally even for life), who significantly violated the applicable legal norms of the given society and committed an illegal act dangerous to society, for which he was legally convicted. In the literature, we most often find three theories of punishment:

- absolute theories - they do not associate any other goals with the punishment, the punishment itself has the purpose of fair and necessary retribution. This retribution is focused on the past, it is not interested in correction, the future behavior of the offender in society, or the possibility of his resocialization. These theories are based on the idea of *punitur, quia peccatum est* (one is punished because evil has been committed),

- relative theories – they associate certain goals beneficial to society with punishment. Their essence could be expressed as *punitur, necetur peccetur* (one punishes so that evil is not committed). These theories emphasize the future, on the continued coexistence of the offender in the society to which he will once return. If, for example, the financial situation, position in the social group, social status or education of the offender, or his personality do not change, there is a high probability that the situation will repeat. It is in the interest of society to change these conditions, because this is how it protects itself (Jelínek, 2004),
- mixed theories emphasize different starting points and goals of punishment, which are usually dependent on the given country's legal, social, and political situation.

Imprisoned women are different from men in many ways, yet prison is a space designed, built, and managed predominantly by men, even though incarceration has a different impact and impact on women than it does on men.

A prison is typically a male-coded space, while a female-coded space is, for example, a hospital with female caregivers and addicted patients. The deprivation of men and women in prison is very different, which is related to the difference in the status of men and women in the wider society. While a man's social status depends on his work role, a woman's social status is built mainly through her family role, by participating in supportive and emotional relationships (Nedbálková, 2003). The differences lie, for example, in the lower number of imprisoned women, the different nature of their crimes, assumptions about the special psyche of women, or in the majority's ideas about femininity, but

mainly in their social status and obligations. These commitments and relationships are essential in the process of their rehabilitation. Imprisoned women also often come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds often affected by domestic violence, many of them are illiterate or low-skilled compared to the general female population. Therefore, the treatment of imprisoned women should be different from that of imprisoned men.

Trends in social rehabilitation and education of various groups of imprisoned women in the world and Slovakia

An intense need for love, reciprocity, and mutual help characterizes a human person. If these relational dimensions fail, they become a serious reason for her maladjustment, and the process of resocialization or social rehabilitation begins.

Resocialization is a specific form of socialization and refers to situations where socialization either did not reach the expected level or after it was achieved, such social failures occurred in the individual's functioning that is not acceptable in society. Social disturbance⁶ can be defined as a range of behavioral manifestations that not only contradict accepted social norms but cause problems for the individual as well as for other people (Škoviera, 2018).

Education is the cornerstone of the resocialization of convicts. In both Slovak and world conditions, priority

⁶ according to the author, an alternative to the term social maladjustment: the term does not have a negative connotation and covers not only socialization deviations in the sense of negative integration, but also "non-inclusion", or a low level of integration (for example, after a long-term illness)

is given to education that qualifies (in Slovak andragogical terminology, this is the so-called second chance and further professional education). Education about employability and applicability in the labor market after dismissal is critical. However, the imprisoned person cannot be reduced only to a future worker, a human resource beneficial to the economy of society, he is also an individual unique personality that is subject to his self-development.

"Adult education, regardless of the conditions in which it takes place and the target group, should also have broader, not just instrumental, goals aimed at developing skills for employability. Education does not only involve the formation of skills; it also has a personal, social, and economic dimension, which applies especially to educational programs in prisons, in which the process of social rehabilitation is most important." (Lukáčová, Lukáč, Pirohová, & Hartmannová, 2018, p. 65). Prison education should develop skills necessary to increase potential, which is one of the pillars of effective resocialization. It should build social capital and also consist of personal and social development, including re-education programs, family and partner education, and practical skills (e.g., parenting, finances).

Prisons and their regimes – from architecture and security to health care practices, family contact, and educational opportunities – are typically designed for men. There were also gaps on an international scale – there were no standards regarding addressing the needs of women in the criminal justice system. Existing international standards in the field of treatment of prisoners (for example Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, 1995, Principles for the Protection of All Persons in Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, 1988 or Basic

Principles of the Treatment of Prisoners, 1990) are inherently non-discriminatory, but the main emphasis is in them it does not focus on the needs of women, which are different from the needs of men. Because convicted women constitute a much smaller group than men, the general rules in international standards cannot be applicable in all cases.

The United Nations also took these specifics into account, and on December 22, 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders. (also known as Bangkok Rules). It is a set of seventy rules that are of fundamental importance for protecting the rights of female offenders and prisoners. They characterize the specificity of women's different needs and situations they come from. They are also the first international document addressing the needs of children who grow up in prison with their parents. The 193 signatory countries, members of the UN, recognized that women have gender-specific characteristics and needs, and at the same time, by adopting the document, they agreed to respect and satisfy them (UN Bangkok Rules on Women Offenders and Prisoners: a short guide, 2013).

While women have different rehabilitation needs than men and face gender-specific challenges, they also have different personality traits and are influenced by other situational circumstances that affect their rehabilitation (resocialization) process. For the effectiveness of these processes, penitentiary institutions must offer programs that reflect the diversity of the country's prison population. The existence and availability of special programs should therefore be regularly reviewed to ensure these needs (for example, an increase in the number of female foreign convicts, elderly convicts, etc.). The following

section presents specific groups of convicted women with concrete specific needs, as well as trends and examples of good practices in resocialization and education programs from abroad.

Juvenile convicts

The issue of incarceration of juvenile offenders is particularly broad. Briefly, it can be stated that the UN document known as the Havana Rules includes persons under the age of 18 in this category while recommending that no child under this age limit should be deprived of their liberty. (United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty, 1990)

Under Slovak conditions, juveniles serve their sentence in a juvenile institution (it is in Sučany in the north of the country near the city of Martin), while the conditions for fulfilling compulsory school attendance are created. Treatment is aimed at ensuring work qualifications, preparing for an independent way of life, and preventing the influence of the prison environment. Participation in activities within the treatment program (education, cultural-educational, and sports activities) is mandatory (Act No. 475/2005 on the execution of prison sentences, 2005). The purpose of punishment for a juvenile is to raise him to be a proper citizen, while the punishment is also intended to prevent illegal acts and adequately protect society; the imposed punishment should simultaneously lead to the restoration of disturbed social relations and the integration of the juvenile into the family and social environment (Act No. 300/2005, Criminal Code, 2005).

There are four Bangkok rules governing the treatment of these juvenile female prisoners (36-39). In addition to this document, this area is also not overlooked by UN Rule 26.4

of the Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules), which states that young women placed in institutions deserve special attention regarding their personal needs and problems. In no case shall they receive less care, protection, assistance, treatment, and education than juvenile offenders. Fair treatment should be ensured for them. The Beijing Rules point out that the problems of female juveniles compared to males are even more acute due to their very small numbers in most prison systems. They do not have to be separated from adult female inmates, for example also due to the lack of specialized facilities, which may jeopardize their safety. The Bangkok Rules further state that juvenile offenders are unlikely to have access to gender-sensitive health care or counseling regarding physical or sexual abuse before incarceration. Pregnant teens are one of the most vulnerable groups due to social stigma, lack of experience with pregnancy, and lack of adequate facilities for pregnant teens (The Bangkok Rules, 2011).

According to the UN report, most juveniles return to their communities after imprisonment, but more than two-thirds do not return to school after release. Many young people no longer complete formal education or have never attended school. Juvenile convicts show much higher rates of learning disabilities, moreover, in most countries the number of adolescent girls is so low that the options available to them are extremely limited – state systems do not have the resources or expertise to care for such a group, because of the low numbers they are often placed with adults without access to age-appropriate programs or activities. Young people often come from particularly difficult backgrounds, including violence and

abuse, many of whom may have significant barriers to education. Their successful rehabilitation also depends on the situation in which they are released. Therefore, prisons should provide incarcerated juveniles with educational opportunities that they would not normally have access to. There are different models of juvenile education in the world - in some places they can attend regular schools during the day, in others there are specific prison education courses - but in all models, the curriculum and the level of education must be the same as in society and accessible to all. For example, in Spain, there are 22 centers with a total capacity of 815 juveniles, which support and assist in reintegrating young people into families and communities. An individual plan is drawn up for each juvenile by a multidisciplinary team consisting of pedagogues, psychologists, social workers, and teachers. They also participate in group meetings, the plan is regularly evaluated and modified by the development and needs of the juvenile (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

Pregnant convicts and mothers

Pregnant women and women with children who live with them in prison can undoubtedly be considered the most vulnerable target group. Likewise, their rehabilitation or resocialization needs. Pregnant women must be provided with support, information, and basic conditions for a healthy pregnancy and motherhood. Pregnant women, mothers, and their children have specific health and dietary requirements, which are often not adequately met in prisons, and their psychological well-being is a particularly big challenge. They may suffer especially in the area of contact with friends, families, and communities; therefore, it is important for these women not

only to reduce their isolation as much as possible but also to prepare them for release, of course, also about the practical needs of childcare.

The long-term exclusion of women from their primary social structures can also fundamentally impact their value preference for family - our research (Temiaková, 2021; Temiaková, 2020) showed that older convicts perceive family as one of the least important values. This can be explained by the assumed older age of the children, who are no longer so dependent on their imprisoned mothers, but also by the ongoing isolation and weakening of extramural ties.

In prisons, women are oriented towards creating relationships, while the so-called pseudo-families, which is the point of view of sociology "... can be seen as an effort to bring everyday life in a total institution closer to the structures of wider society, so that it becomes more livable. ...total institutions radically interrupted, while providing a multiplicity of close relationships, thereby mitigating the pains of prison everyday life. However, these relations are not reducible only to friendly ties. Friendships are perceived as different from family ties and take place mostly in the circle of peers." (Nedbálková, 2003, p. 481).

Around the world, pregnant women and women with children are often excluded from rehabilitation programs - it is assumed that they would not be interested, or it is not possible to provide alternative care for children at a time when mothers would participate in the programs (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

The prison regime should respond flexibly to the needs of pregnant women, nursing mothers, and women with children. Wards should be established in prisons or adjustments should be implemented that will enable such convicts to take care of themselves and their children. It is also necessary to provide them with appropriate programs, as many leave penitentiary institutions with little or no family support, which can make it difficult for them to further their education or find employment and suitable housing. Helping women, and children, and the physical and psychological impact of prison on them to support adaptation to life in society is also an important topic (The Bangkok Rules, 2011). The possibility of creating a special environment for convicted mothers who have children is also enshrined in Slovak legislation. The accommodation area for a woman is at least 4 m², but it cannot be reduced for a pregnant woman. The Minister of Justice can approve the establishment of a specialized department in which a convicted woman can have a child older than one year, usually up to three years of age, exceptionally up to five years of age. However, this does not apply if the court entrusted the child to care for another person (Act No. 475/2005 on the execution of a sentence of imprisonment, 2005).

An example of the implementation of programs abroad for such a group is the prenatal yoga course at the Washington Correctional Center for Women (WCCW), where a three-day program was held in cooperation with the organization "Yoga behind Bars and Childbirth Behind Bars", which included not only exercise but also a space for sharing feelings condemned to isolation, fear, and depression. Not only women before childbirth but also mothers were involved, sharing information about pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum needs

(The Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Women Prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

Recidivists, long-term and life convicts

The success of resocialization can also be evaluated according to the rate of recidivism. There is a theory that a third of incarcerated people are incorrigible, a third will never return to prison, and a third are resocializable. In the ideal case, this would assume a natural recurrence at the level of approx. 30-35%.

However, it is not easy to establish strict data on recidivism, because the data are collected differently in individual countries and then statistically processed (Veteška & Fischer, S., 2020)⁷. By recidivism, we understand the re-commitment of a criminal offense after a valid conviction. A basic tool for preventing recidivism is maintaining family ties, which can be particularly problematic for incarcerated women. The prevention of recidivism depends on the quality of management during incarceration, especially partnerships with social assistance companies and facilities, as well as monitoring and professional social assistance after release.

A specific group in prison is long-term or persons sentenced to life. In a rare study, they looked at men and women who had been convicted of murder and were serving life sentences in England and Wales. Among other things, they found out the most significant sorrows that life convicts face in prison. Fairly significant differences between men and

⁷ for 2017, the recidivism rate was estimated to be, for example, 70% in the USA, Germany 48%, England 46%, Sweden 43%, Finland 36%, Denmark 29%, Norway 20% (Veteška & Fischer, S., 2020, p. 156)

women were shown, but the ranking of the most important concerns of women was as follows:

1. The necessity to follow other people's rules and orders
 2. Missing someone
 3. Worries about people outside
 4. Inability to trust someone in prison
 5. Thoughts about the crime committed
 6. Lack of privacy
 7. Losing contact with family and friends
 8. Feeling anxious about the length of the sentence
 9. Feeling that life has been wasted
 10. Feeling that the length of the sentence is unfair
- (Crewe, Hulley, & Wright, 2017, p. 1635).

Almost all respondents had suffered some form of trauma before their conviction. Imprisonment and the crimes themselves compounded women's feelings of low self-worth and shame, which they also experienced in pathological relationships. The emotional deprivations of women consisted of the fact that loved ones abandoned them, relationships were broken, and they lost trust. In prison, they suffer mainly from a loss of autonomy, which makes them perceive imprisonment as particularly painful, especially because of its impact on their relationships with children, the helplessness they have already experienced, and the loss of control over everyday life. For female convicts, power, control, and trust have different meanings than for men. Trying to understand how women experience life is not possible without understanding their multiple abuses and deprivations, which most of them experience, or without acknowledging their emotional connections – but this does not mean that women are reducible to emotions alone, or that they are passive victims of power and circumstances,

whether in society or in prison itself (Crewe, Hulley, & Wright, 2017).

In the Slovak Republic, long-term sentences range from 15 to 25 years, the imposition of a sentence of imprisonment for life is permissible if it is required by the effective protection of society, and at the same time there is no hope that the offender could be corrected by a sentence of up to 25 years (Act no. 300/2005, Criminal Code, 2005). Life imprisonment is imposed in the case of the most serious crimes committed by offenders with more pronounced negative personality traits, where the general upper limit of imprisonment would not be sufficient to achieve these goals. Criminal acts of extraordinary seriousness are characterized either by a particularly reprehensible way of carrying out the act (extraordinary cruelty, brutality, insidiousness, or depravity, which deviates from the normal image of an equally qualified criminal activity), by a particularly reprehensible motive (which indicates extraordinary callousness, depravity, selfishness and contempt for human rights and freedoms) or a particularly difficult or difficult to remedy consequence (in the case of premeditated murder, e.g. the death of several persons or a person with a significant social status). In addition to protecting society, the purpose of a life sentence is to guide behavior by good morals and stabilize the physical and psychological state (Act No. 475/2005 on the execution of a sentence of imprisonment, 2005), but a life sentence is placed separately from others, it is not included in the constitutional activities, he does the work in the cell.

For these target groups, the question of the effectiveness of resocialization programs and the importance of the exist-

ence of programs of a maintenance nature (physical, psychological, or social condition of convicts) is raised. In the case of life convicts, any inclusion in activities in the prisons of the Slovak Republic is not allowed, and it is to be considered whether the psychological stabilization of the life convict is achieved by significantly limiting contact with fellow prisoners. The meaningful use of free time and the meaningfulness of being become problematic, something that the Slovak prison system has long drawn attention to, even the Committee of the CPT, which already stated in its report in 2018 that we treat those sentenced to life in the Slovak Republic too repressively because they are forever considered a permanent threat to society and are denied any hope of parole. The CPT Committee reasons that no one can reasonably claim that all lifers will forever remain a danger to society, the imprisonment of persons who have no hope of release to freedom presents serious problems for prison management in terms of creating incentives for cooperation and solving problem behavior. designing a personal development program, organizing a treatment and safety program. The committee also points out that the longer a person is imprisoned, the more educational and leisure activities should be offered to him, not the other way around (Report to the Slovak Government on the visit to the Slovak Republic carried out by the CPT, 2019).

Transnational documents, recommendations, and rules, for some unknown reason, do not reflect these target groups of convicted women, yet we are convinced that it is necessary to pay attention to them and create resocialization or maintenance programs for them.

Convicted with health problems

All prisoners must have equal access to health care. Many incarcerated women have or have had addictions to drugs or other substances that can cause psychological and behavioral disorders, and these women therefore require treatment as well as adequate social and psychological support within the prison health policy. In the past, imprisoned women were often victims of violence, sexual abuse, and abuse in the family and within a partner relationship, many of these women are economically and psychologically dependent.

In the Bangkok Rules, several recommendations are devoted to the field of health care for convicts - from personal hygiene, and health care services for the mentally and physically disadvantaged, to preventive programs aimed at HIV or suicidal behavior. Rule 6 states that on admission to prison it is essential that convicts undergo an individual medical examination and medical check-up so that, if necessary, prompt and appropriate treatment is provided for any medical problems. Female prisoners, usually from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, suffer from various health problems that may not be treated in the community they come from. In many countries, women face further discrimination, they may even face barriers in accessing health care services, and their primary care needs may therefore be greater than men's (The Bangkok Rules, 2011).

A disproportionate number of imprisoned women have psychological problems - they are a particularly vulnerable group and have complex rehabilitation needs. Such convicts are vulnerable to abuse, discrimination, and stigmatization. Their rehabilitation depends, as with other groups, on individ-

ualized and adequate health screenings and regular monitoring. However, many prisons in the world are not equipped in this way, or they do not provide adequate care in the field of mental health. Where a prison does not have qualified mental health professionals, staff should be trained to identify signs of emotional or psychological distress and know how to respond. Planning the reintegration into society of this target group is crucial - after release, they face difficulties in finding employment and housing, and their conditions are likely to worsen if they are not provided with continuous care. Prison is best, and community mental health services work closely together to ensure appropriate post-release arrangements are in place. The situation is similar for convicts with physical disabilities. These individuals also face problems in their communities, and they can be even more significant in a prison environment. Such convicts must be placed in an adapted environment, including accommodation capacities, and in such a way that appropriate health care services are available for them. Another international document governing the penitentiary environment called the Nelson Mandela Rules clearly states that prison institutions must take all reasonable measures and adjustments to ensure that prisoners with physical disabilities have full and effective access to prison life based on the principle of justice. In addition, it is essential that convicts with a medical handicap participate in rehabilitation activities and services - if existing services are not accessible to them, available alternative measures should be ensured (for example, accessibility in Braille, audio recordings, etc.). For reintegration planning and subsequent effective reintegration into society after release, the coordination of penitentiary authorities with community organizations is also important, the aim of which

is to assist in the preparation of health-impaired convicts for release and ensure continuous care (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex convicts

Groups of convicted women characterized by their sexual otherness are, according to international documents, extremely vulnerable to discrimination and abuse in prisons (including violence and sexual abuse). According to one of the studies, up to a quarter of imprisoned women in three prisons in the USA were of bisexual or lesbian orientation (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

According to research, roughly every second woman in prison has direct experience with some form of homosexual partnership. Even here, however, these relationships can be divided into so-called true and false; true homosexuality or true lesbianism is represented by a woman who has gone through a coming out, established relationships exclusively with women before her imprisonment, and will return to homosexual relationships after her release. Such women are a minority in the prison population. A false lesbian is considered a woman who establishes partnerships with women, but does not consider herself homosexual, did not seek lesbian relationships before her imprisonment, and for her, these are a temporary adaptation to an exceptional situation and environment. In addition to these groups, there are also cases in prisons where women are introduced to lesbian relationships only upon arrival but continue in them even after leaving the institution. "The number of lesbian partnerships in prison should not tempt us to think of prison as a homosexual-friendly

space, because research shows that true or open homosexuality if exposed in prison, is not very popular", while the results of research from 1994 (Hensley, 2000) in the state of Mississippi in the USA showed that women, prisoners of African-American origin and those who participate in such relationships are more tolerant of homosexuality in prison than men, and prisoners with longer sentences are less tolerant (Nedbálková, 2003, p. 478-479).

The implementation documents of the Bangkok Rules point out that such convicts may be riskier, for example in terms of HIV/AIDS morbidity, drug use, or mental illness. Lesbian or bisexual prisoners may also be sanctioned for open displays of affection, and transgender women may have special health needs, including access to hormone treatment. Many such convicted women were ostracized from their communities, including their families. Lack of contact with family or partners combined with isolation can harm their mental health and subsequent reintegration into society. In many countries, the lack of community services for these groups is also a problem, making their transition from prison to society even more difficult. Discrimination and stigma can also make it difficult for them to find accommodation and employment. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the cooperation of prison institutions with community organizations to better understand the rehabilitation needs of such convicted women. One example of practice in working with such target groups is the Thai prisons, where as part of the rehabilitation of convicts in Chanthaburi province, the prison authorities decided to implement a talent show for "ladyboys", and some of the contestants secured jobs as in-house artists after release in a local entertainment industry. The goal of these competitions

is the opportunity to present the talent of convicts in a way that suits their identity preferences, increasing public engagement and acceptance of convicts into the community (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019).

Convicted foreign women

Many convicts come from different religious and cultural backgrounds, resulting in different needs, so there is a need to ensure comprehensive programs and services that address these needs, as well as available post-release services (The Bangkok Rules, 2011). Special attention should be paid to them, especially at the level of language and cultural differences, enabling the maintenance of contact with family members, ensuring the possibility of contacting the relevant consulate, and enabling access to the resources and programs of prison facilities, as well as comprehensible information.

Convicted foreigners can be considered those who do not hold the passport of the country in which they are imprisoned. This is a minority target group that has special rehabilitation needs, as language is one of the most obvious barriers, not only in terms of education and training. It can be more challenging for penitentiary institutions to ascertain the personal and educational background of convicted aliens and to understand their situation after release, with many facing deportation from the country of detention. As a result, aliens are often excluded from rehabilitation programs and prisons are unable to satisfy their needs, including assistance in preparing for release. Depending on the country of detention, some may receive support from their embassies or consuls, but many do not have access to even that form of assistance. For-

foreign women who are imprisoned for drug crimes for long sentences deserve special attention, while a large part of them are mothers and come from socially and economically marginalized communities. Any rehabilitation programs for foreign women must take into account their life situations, including the reason they were in the country of detention (for example, the needs of those who smuggled drugs will differ significantly from the needs of women who lived in the country legally as migrants). They are particularly at risk of stigma and ostracism from their communities and may face barriers to rehabilitation after release, with existing support services not being responsive to their specific cultural needs. They are also likely to face discrimination in finding accommodation, employment, and social support. The basic ways of supporting such female prisoners include enabling access to consultations with representatives of the convicts' countries of origin, basic language courses, the availability of foreign language literature, and e-learning courses. Activities of an artistic, sports, or musical nature, which require less use of verbal means, are also of particular importance. Several programs for such a target group have been implemented in various prisons, an example is the two-year Foriner project funded by the European Commission, which was based on distance education of US convicts imprisoned in Europe. In penitentiary practice, there are also institutions designed exclusively for foreign communities. An example is the prison for women in Canada (Okimaw Ohci) located on the original territory of the original Nekaneeet Indian reservation, which was opened in 1985, or another prison, Buffalo Sage. Indigenous women are incarcerated in these facilities, and they were created because educational,

resocialization, and social programs are implemented in a culturally sensitive environment. (The rehabilitation and social reintegration of women prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019)

Under Slovak conditions, the group of foreign women serving prison sentences is not large: as of 31 December 2023, 17 foreign women⁸ were imprisoned in Slovakia (Yearbook of the Prison and Judicial Guard Corps for 2023, 2024).

Older convicts (61+)

The number of older convicts in many countries is growing rapidly, but most prison systems are not adapted to this – programs and services are designed for younger convicts. Older convicts have specific needs, for example, in the field of health care (for example, dementia and other degenerative diseases, anxiety states, depression, menopause, cardiovascular diseases, and many others). For most older convicts, vocational training and work programs may not be relevant, as many will not seek employment after release. Reduced mobility or other physical problems can also prevent them from participating in sports activities. However, older convicts have special needs in the field of therapy, counseling, and in terms of preparation for release, especially in countries where there is insufficient community support for them. Rehabilitation programs should be adjusted and adapted to the individual needs of such women, considering their state of health and the length of their sentence (The Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Women Prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019). In Slovakia, approximately 3% of convicted women are over 61 years old.

⁸ Belgium (1), Belarus (2), Czech Republic (6), Hungary (2), Poland (1), Serbia (1), Ukraine (4)

Principles of creation of rehabilitation programs for imprisoned women

International efforts for a gender-sensitive approach to women convicts have led to the creation of ten key principles that provide a framework for the design and implementation of rehabilitation programs for women convicts, while they can be used as a starting point for the creation of new or improvement of existing programs.

1. Part of the strategy

Rehabilitation programs are enshrined in relevant laws, policies, and regulations. They are based on national rehabilitation strategies and are fully supported by politicians and policymakers. Alternative methods of confinement are used whenever possible and appropriate, especially for pregnant women and mothers. Adequate resources, including finances, equipment, and personnel, are allocated to the implementation of rehabilitation programs to ensure their long-term sustainability.

2. Community

The programs are based on consultations with convicts, released persons, and experts, considering their opinions to improve existing or developing new programs. The educational offer reflects the educational offer in society and, if possible, convicts can participate in education and vocational training in the community, rehabilitation programs also include contact with family or colleagues to ensure a smooth transition of the convict into society.

3. Support by employees and management

Prison staff are carefully selected, appropriately, and continuously trained to address the special rehabilitation

needs of women and girls. They actively support the participation of women and girls in the programs, but they too are supported by the management of institutions to cooperate with convicts. There are enough female staff working in prisons.

4. Gender sensitivity

Opportunities for education, work, and training are available to all without distinction. The programs reflect the needs of women and girls, they are specially designed for them, but they are comparable to those that exist for men and boys. The range of opportunities available to female convicts is as wide and flexible as that of male convicts.

5. Individualism

Rehabilitation programs are established and adapted to the individual needs of incarcerated women. They consider the previous education and the current level of skills of the convict, considering the family situation, physical or mental health problems, and abuse. Rehabilitation programs consider the likely situation of the convict upon release in terms of family, housing, employment prospects, health needs, and availability of services in society. Convicts are provided with preparation for and support after release.

6. Holistic approach

Rehabilitation programs are aimed at solving the causes of criminal activity and developing convicts' knowledge, abilities, and skills. The programs combine support in different areas, such as mental health, housing, relationships, and addiction treatment. Such integrated programs provide women convicts with practical life skills to prepare for release, which are aimed at increasing their confidence and self-esteem and helping them deal with other problems such as poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse.

7. Labor market needs

Job opportunities and vocational training opportunities for imprisoned women are based on the needs of the labor market. Prison institutions regularly evaluate the work programs offered to determine whether they correspond to the profile of the prison population and whether they are relevant to the labor market.

8. Continuity

There are links between programs offered in prison and those in the community. Discharged women are allowed to continue or complete training programs after discharge, ensuring a smooth transition into society. Educational, work, or other activities are interrupted for reasons of relocation and security measures only in necessary cases.

9. Quality

Professionals working with convicts are qualified and trained in the same way as professionals in society. Prison educators undergo specialized training in working with women and girls. Convicts participating in education, work, and vocational training programs are safe, they are not abused or exploited, and health and safety standards at work are observed by international standards.

10. Facts

Rehabilitation programs are based on a detailed analysis of the profile of convicted women, their needs, resources, and the labor market. Structures are in place to oversee the implementation of rehabilitation strategies, programs are regularly monitored and evaluated. Independent observers have access to information to check whether it is applied fairly, consistently, and by international standards in the field of human rights (The Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Women

Prisoners, Implementation of the Bangkok Rules, 2019, pp. 48-49).

The importance of informal learning, which also leads to the development of an individual's personality, has been recognized in education for a long time. A person's education cannot be limited only to obtaining or increasing qualifications with the aim of employability.

Many competencies or characteristics, the importance of which we appreciate in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, self-confidence, self-esteem, or change of perspective, can be developed precisely through self-directed educational opportunities or activities outside formal or informal frameworks. Such learning, informal learning, can have an individual or group character, this process is highly unintentional, often unconscious, without externally determined criteria (in the form of goals or contents), without an institutionally determined professional (educator, lecturer, instructor, etc.). This kind of learning is relatively difficult to grasp, and describe and therefore also researchable, but at the same time we consider it to be the most effective because, among the three types of learning activities/activities, informal learning is the most based on the interests and needs of learners.

In total institutions or other closed, or excluded environments, informal learning takes on a double importance. It is known that the individuals of such communities (convicts, marginalized Roma communities, but also other social groups, such as the elderly or the disadvantaged) do not aspire to continue their education, or they are not aware of the importance of education and do not consider it to be of significant value, nor do they have the motivation to participate

in formal or informal education. However, informal learning is unstoppable, even in the process of social rehabilitation.

It is characteristic of imprisoned people that the idea of formal or informal education, which is eventually imposed on them, is not effective - such an approach can strengthen the already negative perception of education or the attitude that many imprisoned people may have (research proves that the primary cause is the negative experience of the formal education system: see, for example, Irwin, 2008; Farley, Pike, 2016). In particular, the inflexibility of education is subject to criticism, where negative experiences from the previous learning process, which are rooted in the identity of the incarcerated person, are replicated. It is the informal and flexible educational environment that has the potential to change these negative experiences and contribute to the rehabilitation and return of the imprisoned person to society.

Ideally, the prison should offer a space where inmates can voluntarily engage in various forms of learning, at their own pace and in the time and situations they choose.

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3.4 Selected aspects of social readaptation in penitentiary and post-penitentiary activities

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In the literature on the subject, we find many definitions of social readaptation, which clearly indicate its main goals, i.e. the process of returning to society. It should be noted that social readaptation is related to social integration and is an element and effect of both proper penitentiary social resocialization and a well-paced process of social readaptation after release from prison. According to Henryk Machel, social readaptation means a process whose essence is readaptation to society and to the social standards in force in it. (Machel, 2012 s.42).

There is no doubt that the process of readaptation of people sentenced to imprisonment has a very important social significance. The analysis of many studies indicates that a long-term stay in prison may result in, among others: the process of adapting to life in isolation, the breakdown of family ties, the loss of the former place of residence, the loss of competences and professional skills, as well as social skills that can only be implemented in an open environment.

Effective influence on convicts in prisons as part of the social rehabilitation process contributes to preventing these people from entering into conflict with the law again. This also has a direct impact on increasing the level of social security of prisoners themselves and preventing their social exclusion, as well as the security of the entire society. It should also be emphasized that in the economic dimension, effective social

and professional readaptation of prisoners reduces the costs of maintaining the penitentiary system and social assistance.

The main goals of social readaptation are:

- preparing convicts for responsible life in society after leaving prison,
- developing the habit of work and responsibility for oneself and the social environment,
- teaching how to spend free time in an appropriate way and counteracting exclusion from society.

Without a doubt, the social readaptation of convicts is an important factor supporting the return to social, professional and family life after a (in many cases long) period of isolation.

In accordance with Polish law - the Executive Penal Code - defines a number of measures that can help in the social readaptation of convicts and prevent them from returning to crime. According to art. 67 of the Executive Penal Code (§ 1), the execution of a custodial sentence is intended to arouse in the convict the will to cooperate in shaping his or her socially desirable attitudes, in particular the sense of responsibility and the need to comply with the legal order and thus refrain from returning to crime. However, § 2 of this article states that in order to achieve the goal specified in § 1, individualized influence on convicts is carried out within the framework of penalty execution systems specified in the Act, in various types and types of prisons. In turn, in § 3 of Art. 67 of the Penal Code the legislator specifies a catalog of means and methods of penitentiary influence on the convict within a specific system

of serving a sentence. It stipulates that in influencing convicts, while respecting their rights and requiring them to fulfill their duties, work should be taken into account, in particular, work, especially conducive to acquiring appropriate professional qualifications, education, cultural, educational and sports activities, as well as maintaining contacts with family and the world. external and therapeutic measures, rewards, disciplinary penalties, post-penitentiary assistance. What is important here is an effective system of programmatic influence, which includes measures to activate convicts and determine the status of the convict by indicating the rights and instruments for their enforcement and his/her obligations.

There is no doubt that the above-mentioned goals of imprisonment constitute a very serious and responsible task facing all penitentiary entities, and in particular the penitentiary staff of these units, as well as all state and social entities cooperating in the process of social resocialization and social readaptation. It is also a very difficult and complex challenge for the convicts themselves and their families. The responsibility of a prison to prepare convicts for life in freedom after serving their sentence requires creating the possibility of a proper readaptation process both in the prison itself and after leaving it - as part of post-penitentiary activities. The most important goals and tasks of currently implemented readaptation programs addressed to convicts include:

- best possible preparation of convicts for responsible life in society,
- preventing re-entry into conflict with the law (recidivism),

- education of convicts with skills enabling them to perform various social roles accepted in society,
- counteracting exclusion from society,
- counteracting stigmatization,
- teaching a constructive way to spend free time,
- counteracting social pathologies (alcoholism, drug addiction, various forms of violence, gambling and others)
- increasing the level of social and economic security
- conducting effective social and professional readaptation, which will significantly reduce the costs of maintaining the penitentiary system and social assistance and minimize dependence on assistance systems (an important economic and social dimension of readaptation).

Many different resocialization programs are conducted in penitentiary units to support social readaptation. They are addressed to groups of convicts, selected based on common needs, including: in the field of counteracting aggression and domestic violence, various addictions, professional activation and employment promotion, as well as family integration, especially for convicts serving long-term prison sentences. It is worth emphasizing, however, that readaptation activities and programs for convicts, in order to be effective, must be highly individualized and the forms of penitentiary influence implemented by well-prepared and systematically trained staff.

Among the ongoing readaptation programs currently carried out in the Polish penitentiary system, we can mention the following:

Educational program for social readaptation of convicts through psychoeducation in the field of alcohol prevention.

Educational program for social readaptation of convicts through psychoeducation in the field of drug addiction prevention.

Professional development program for social readaptation of convicts through course training in specific professions.

Computer improvement programs.

Program of creative activity of convicts through editing and publishing a prison newspaper and educational and information television channels.

Program preparing convicts to take up employment while serving their sentences, as well as after leaving prison. Convicts are trained, among others, in the following professions: cook, painter or floor layer, or trained to operate a computer or cash registers.

Active job search workshop program (professional activation of convicts).

Educational program of social readaptation for convicted perpetrators of road offenses while under the influence of alcohol through psycho - education in the field of alcohol prevention and learning how to provide first aid and rescue.

The "Anti-Virus" program is a program for developing social and cognitive skills. During the implementation of the program, inmates are enabled to acquire basic knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes, above all, knowledge about the ways in which the infection spreads and how to prevent it.

Various readaptation programs implemented through volunteering, e.g. working with disabled and elderly people in social welfare homes. The aim of such programs is to acquire social competence skills.

Despite the large offer of social rehabilitation programs, it should be noted that there are many factors that may significantly impede the process of social readaptation of convicts. Such factors may be: (Szymanowska, 2016, p.190)

- neurotic disorders manifested by low self-esteem,
- lack of ability to resist environmental pressure, as well as high level of anxiety,
- identifying with the norms and behavioral patterns of the criminal subculture,
- prisonization, adaptation to prison life,
- inability to control one's reactions and emotions (impulsiveness and tendency to aggression),
- tendency towards alcohol and other addictions,
- no learned profession,
- lack of education,
- lack of family support,
- tendency to exploit others,
- incompetent behavior in difficult situations,
- low level of sense of coherence (components of coherence: feeling of comprehensibility, resourcefulness and meaningfulness of actions).

On the individual factors side, what is emphasized here is the sense of one's own agency and the appropriate motivation to change. Former convicts often emphasize that the pro-

cess of change took place in them not under the influence of social rehabilitation activities to which they were subjected in prison, but rather was the result of analyzing their destructive actions and a conscious desire to break away from the criminal world. Individuals were undergoing something of an identity transformation, changing the way they perceived deviant behavior or life style (Muskala,2016,p.14).

It is worth emphasizing that the mere fact of the existence of various instruments of social readaptation and various programs is not a sufficient premise to acknowledge that there is a complete, effective, praxeological system facilitating the social readaptation of convicts. As emphasized by the prison services as well as the probation service, social welfare centers, labor market institutions and non-governmental organizations dealing with the process of readaptation of convicts, the system requires much greater coordination of activities and even better developed forms of cooperation from all entities than before. Depending on the stage at which various activities of social readaptation of convicts are carried out, there must be a smooth, praxeological system of taking over the implementation of activities by subsequent entities established for this purpose, e.g. already in freedom conditions. This is necessary to achieve the goals of social readaptation.

It should also be emphasized that in the last months of serving a sentence of imprisonment ((if there is an appropriate decision of the penitentiary commission or the penitentiary court), an inmate in a prison can count on certain privileges, which he will be able to use, of course, as far as possible and necessary. These include: among others:

- serving the last months of the prison sentence in the prison closest to the future place of residence;
- obtaining permission to leave prison, for a total period of up to 14 days, in order to find a job and a flat, if the required conditions in this respect are met and the granting of the permission justifies the preparations made earlier;
- before release, the post-penitentiary assistance educator is obliged to provide information enabling contact with relevant institutions and non-governmental organizations in order to obtain appropriate assistance after release and to carry out further social readaptation activities in the conditions of freedom
- a person leaving prison may receive financial or material assistance as an equivalent of cash assistance.

If the convict does not have an identity document, the prison administration takes the steps necessary to obtain such a document. The convict is obliged to cooperate in this respect.

A convict released from a prison or detention center who has not sufficient own funds and is not assured of freedom, sufficient means of subsistence, the director of the prison may provide financial assistance upon release in the amount of up to 1/3 of the average employees' monthly remuneration or its equivalent (Article 166 § 3 of the Executive Penal Code).

Assistance from the Assistance Fund Post-penitentiary

An extremely important financial instrument helpful in the process of social reintegration is the Post-penitentiary Assistance Fund, which serves to provide assistance to people deprived of liberty, released from prisons and their families.

The rules for providing assistance to convicts leaving prisons and detention centers are regulated by the Regulation of the Minister of Justice of September 29, 2015 on the Victims' Assistance Fund and Post-penitentiary Assistance. (Journal of Laws of 2015, item 1544) - hereinafter referred to as the "Regulation".

Assistance from the Fund is granted ex officio or at the request of an interested person. Pursuant to § 30 section 1 of the regulation when acting a convict may apply for post-penitentiary assistance mainly about:

- covering the costs of temporary accommodation or providing shelter in a center for the homeless;
- periodic subsidy to the costs of maintaining a flat or house single-family property to which he has legal title, i.e. current liabilities rent and fees for heat and electricity as well as gas, water, fuel;
- collection of solid and liquid waste;
- obtaining legal advice, as well as advice on employment promotion and activation professional;
- participation in courses and training to improve professional qualifications and covering the costs of an examination confirming professional qualifications;
- participating in programs that improve social competences, aimed at counteracting criminogenic factors, especially violence, including domestic violence and addictions;
- covering the costs of purchasing materials, tools, equipment and devices necessary to implement the programs listed in point;

- coverage of costs related to specialized treatment or rehabilitation treatment and obtaining certificates on disability, its degree and inability to work;
- covering special transport costs, as indicated medical or transport to the place of stay, study, therapy, work, especially performed free of charge;
- covering costs related to obtaining an ID card and other costs documents necessary to obtain assistance;
- material assistance in the form of: food or food stamps, clothing, underwear, footwear, cleaning and personal hygiene products or vouchers freight, public transport tickets, medicines, dressings and sanitary products, medical devices, , orthopedic items and aids, scientific and teaching aids, books and office supplies, necessary household items or other items personal use facilitating social functioning in the place residence or stay, especially for disabled people, materials, tools and equipment necessary to participate in the training professional practice, performing a learned profession or running a business on your own account.

The above-mentioned assistance is provided for the period necessary to achieve its objectives. This time however, it may not exceed 3 months from the date of release from prison. In exceptional cases, such as illness or temporary incapacity work, may be extended to 6 months. With regard to assistance provided to families of persons deprived of liberty these periods are counted from the moment the family member is placed in prison.

The role of social welfare institutions in the readaptation process

Social welfare institutions play an extremely important role in the system of social readaptation for people leaving penitentiary units in contemporary Poland. Their role and tasks in this regard concern in particular:

- counteracting the deepening phenomenon of isolation and social exclusion of people leaving prisons and detention centers;
- coordination of activities of institutions and bodies operating in the field of social assistance within the framework of social assistance benefits and post-penitentiary assistance to persons leaving prisons and their families;
- defining the rules of cooperation by way of an agreement concluded between the prison and the social welfare center competent for the seat of the prison.

The entities of social welfare institutions include - *Social Welfare Centers* whose statutory competences include: cash benefits, material and service assistance, social work, providing shelter - referral to shelters and 24-hour facilities, providing meals and clothes, support for a family assistant, professional activation - socially useful work, activities of Social Integration Centers.

Another important entity is the *District Family Assistance Centers* - which perform, among others, such tasks as: crisis intervention, specialist counseling, provision of sheltered housing. Of course, the role and tasks of non-governmental organizations operating in the field of social assistance should be emphasized here, which successfully implement: correctional and educational programs, food assistance, supporting activities

aimed at escaping poverty, support groups, psychological/therapeutic support for people at risk of social exclusion, and other programs .

Social readaptation after leaving prison - examples of good practices

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A good example of readaptation initiatives are projects involving the establishment of a partnership to create a model of professional activation of people leaving prisons. The initiator of the partnership is the Central Board of the Prison Service and various institutions and social organizations dealing with post-penitentiary assistance in Poland, invited to cooperate. The activities offered under this project are intended to increase the chances of former prisoners to find employment and thus support them in the process of social readaptation. It should be emphasized that, apart from the often very complex and difficult process of readaptation of this group of people, we are also dealing with many additional, complex social and professional problems that significantly eliminate people leaving prisons from the labor market.

The most important of them include: employers' still little interest in this group of people, stigmatization of former convicts, in some cases lack of interest in legal work resulting in a tendency to continue criminal activity (lack of the habit of legal work), reluctance to change lifestyle, and also in many cases low level of education or lack of professional qualifications.

Another example of an entity that plays an important role in the process of social readaptation, among others, in relation to people who have left prisons and become homeless,

is the Barka Cooperation Network Organization Association. The association brings together approximately 30 entities. These include various associations, foundations, social economy entities - social cooperatives and non-profit companies. The initiator of the movement is the Barka Mutual Aid Foundation, founded in 1989 by Barbara and Tomasz Sadowski. An extremely important basis for Barka work with people at risk of social exclusion is building a "culture of solidarity". It is based on mutual help and interpersonal and social relations. Over nearly 30 years of Barka existence, a complementary and effective system of assistance to marginalized and socially excluded people has been developed. It includes many innovative projects and programs, including: an educational and reintegration program on the basis of which - what is worth emphasizing - the Social Employment Act was created. A program to create new jobs and social cooperatives for the long-term unemployed is also being implemented. Thanks to innovative methods of working with the excluded and the complementarity of actions undertaken by Barka, it is possible not only to fully social and professional reintegration, to overcome homelessness of former prisoners, but also to create opportunities for them to regain self-esteem and self-confidence.

Conclusions

Nearly 80,000 people leave prisons and detention centers in Poland every year. It is worth and should be determined to take action in search of effective methods of readapting convicts to the capital, especially in preventing their social exclusion and secondary crime. Despite many very interesting readaptation programs implemented throughout Poland, the activities of individual entities dealing with the reintegration

of convicts should be coordinated more than before. It is also worth investing in the preparation and training of staff: prison services, court and social probation officers, social workers and representatives of social organizations working for the social reintegration of convicts.

There is a need for increasingly better coordination of cooperation between all institutions, in particular in the field of preventive, social rehabilitation, therapeutic and educational activities both within the prison and while the convict remains free (conditional - early release), as well as towards people who leave prison and require comprehensive help (including their families). Such activities are an opportunity to minimize the social exclusion of former convicts and strengthen the social rehabilitation process. It should also be remembered that modern resocialization (as a process) to be effective must be focused on the development of social and professional competences.

It should also be emphasized that among people sentenced to imprisonment there are people whose criminal history resulted from social maladjustment and

which was the cause of violation of social and legal norms. Social readaptation is a way to learn how to build proper and deep social relationships and function in a network of social contacts. How to respect socially acceptable norms and behaviors in a given culture and society. It is also extremely important to learn how to control emotions that generate conflicts and pathological social contacts. It must be remembered that each case is different and requires a reliable diagnosis and, based on it, the development of an assistance plan

for a given entity. Social readaptation is a process that requires the cooperation of many state and social entities.

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3.5 Preventing social maladjustment of children with color blindness in the school environment. The Use of Drawing and Graphic Techniques as an Adaptation of Artistic Activities for Children with Color Vision Deficiency

ANNA SOBCZYK-GĄSIOREK

Introduction

The vast majority of people perceive the world in its full spectrum of colors. They appreciate the colors of a sunset, plants, minerals, sky, and water. Colors play a significant role in the visual arts, in paintings, and they constitute an important element of symbolic culture.

Color perception

In children's artistic expression, color holds considerable importance, developing progressively with age. A child's earliest drawings are typically executed in a single color, often chosen at random. In the preschool years, children begin to use lines and patches of color more confidently, learning to name colors and to associate them with various objects. According to Popek, by the age of four, children are capable of distinguishing between different colors, although they may still struggle to identify distinguishing features. By age five, they are generally able to indicate qualities such as brightness and temperature of colors (Popek, 2010, s. 257). Children in the early school years begin to use a broad color palette. In Popek's (2010, s. 280) view, the use of color in the artwork of early school-aged children serves an expressive function – reflecting their emotional experiences and attitudes toward their environment – as well as a symbolic function.

However, not everyone perceives colors in the same way. As Popek (2008, s. 30) notes, individuals vary significantly in their ability to perceive color. Some are able to distinguish between dozens of shades of a single color (e.g., different hues of blue or red), while others experience various degrees of color vision deficiency, up to complete color blindness (Arnheim, 2004, s. 351).

Color vision disorders, referred to as daltonism and named after the scientist John Dalton, are characterized by an inability to differentiate between hues, with perception limited to variations in brightness. According to Popek (2008), color blindness is, in most cases, congenital and occurs significantly more frequently in males (6%) than in females (0.003%).

The literature identifies three main types of color blindness: monochromatism, dichromatism, and trichromatism (Popek, 2008, s. 31). Monochromatism involves a total inability to perceive color, resulting in the visual perception of the world exclusively in shades of gray, black, and white. Dichromatism, manifested as red-green or blue-yellow color blindness, refers to the inability to distinguish between one of these specific color pairs. Red-green color blindness is the more common form. The most prevalent condition, however, is trichromatism, which is characterized by a mild impairment in the perception of red and green hues without a complete loss of color recognition or response (Wyburn & Pickford, 1970, s. 121).

Daltonism tends to be an overlooked issue, likely due to the lack of diagnosis and limited awareness of color vision deficiencies in children. Vision-related support is predomi-

nantly directed at children with low visual acuity, with significantly less attention given to difficulties in color perception (Każmierczak, 2020). Standard vision screenings in children rarely include color vision testing, particularly for those who exhibit no apparent reading difficulties or visual complaints.

Color vision assessment is typically conducted using photo-optical methods. The most widely used diagnostic tool is the Ishihara color test, which consists of plates composed of color dots that differ in hue but are equal in saturation, forming recognizable numbers or letters (Popek, 2008, s. 32). These plates allow for the evaluation of color vision accuracy and the identification of specific types of color vision deficiencies.

The individuals most likely to first observe problems in a child's color recognition are parents and teachers. However, such observation requires a fundamental awareness of color vision issues and the ability to apply appropriate color-based tasks to assess the child's color discrimination. Professional evaluation and diagnosis are conducted by ophthalmologists and optometrists.

Consequences of Color Blindness

Color vision deficiencies can lead to a range of serious consequences, including difficulties in everyday functioning, academic challenges, and professional limitations in adulthood. The first signs of color vision difficulties often become apparent in the school environment, particularly during tasks that require the use of color, such as art assignments. However, they may also manifest during the reading of charts, maps, and the analysis of paintings. Incorrect use of color in artistic projects or misinterpretation of maps and graphs can

hinder learning, negatively affect academic performance, and – especially in cases of undiagnosed and unrecognized color blindness – have a detrimental impact on a child's self-esteem. Impaired color perception may also influence social interactions, particularly in contexts where color carries symbolic meaning.

Color blindness is frequently identified during vision tests required for obtaining a driver's license. The inability to accurately perceive traffic lights and road signs can present a serious obstacle to safe driving and significantly increase the risk of traffic accidents.

Color vision deficiency can restrict or entirely exclude individuals from professions where accurate color discrimination is essential. These include occupations such as pilot, air traffic controller, electrician, visual artist, graphic designer, industrial designer, photographer, and chemist. The ability to discern subtle color differences is also important for primary school teachers, hairdressers, chefs, and retail workers handling products where color is a key feature, such as paint.

In daily life, individuals with color blindness may experience various difficulties – for example, distinguishing color-coded electrical wires, assessing the freshness of food, or selecting coordinated clothing and interior decorations. The inability to perceive color can diminish one's overall quality of life by limiting aesthetic experiences. While most people can admire the vibrant colors of a sunset or the diverse hues of gardens and landscapes, such experiences are often inaccessible to those with color vision deficiencies.

Adapting Art Assignments for Students with Color Vision Deficiency

Assessing color sensitivity in students requires specific competencies on the part of the teacher. Exercises such as identifying the color palette within an artwork, recognizing all the colors used, and constructing color compositions based on selected tonal schemes may prove particularly useful in this context. Increased awareness among parents and educators can facilitate the early detection of difficulties in color discrimination and lead to appropriate adaptations of learning tasks for children with color vision deficiencies. Professional diagnosis and assessment, however, remain the responsibility of ophthalmologists.

Although many individuals adapt to their visual limitations and function well in everyday tasks, it is important to incorporate inclusive strategies in school-based visual education. Art activities and instructional materials should be carefully selected to avoid imposing additional difficulties or frustrations on students with color blindness.

Such adaptations should extend beyond the arts and be considered across subjects – particularly in disciplines that involve interpreting color-coded information, such as maps and charts. Nevertheless, the most critical modifications are likely to be found in visual arts education, where color is traditionally a primary expressive medium. It is essential to consider the types of tasks that can be offered to children with color vision deficiencies so that their creative engagement is not hindered by their difficulty in distinguishing colors.

Artistic activity plays a crucial role in supporting children's development. It enhances not only fine motor skills and manual dexterity but also serves as a gateway to understanding visual culture. Artistic expression fosters creative and

abstract thinking, encourages emotional expression, and helps children articulate personal experiences, emotions, and inner states through visual forms. Activities such as drawing, painting, and sculpting also support cognitive development by training perception, classification, naming, and planning skills (Sienkiewicz-Wilowska, 2011, s. 14, 17).

Therefore, art education should be designed in a way that continues to fulfill its developmental functions, even when color-based expression is limited.

Particularly effective are techniques in which the primary modes of expression are line, tonal value, texture, or tactile impressions. Sculpture, modeling, and various printmaking techniques are especially valuable in this regard.

There are numerous artistic techniques that do not rely on color, far too many to cover comprehensively in this discussion. Selected examples will be presented as a demonstration of the creative opportunities available to individuals with color vision deficiencies. These techniques aim to enable meaningful and satisfying artistic engagement, allowing for a sense of success and personal fulfillment.

Application of Drawing and Graphic Techniques

Without the Use of Color

Drawing represents a child's earliest form of visual expression. Through lines and strokes, children depict their understanding of the world, conveying impressions and emotions derived from everyday experiences (Marcinkowska & Michejda-Kowalska, 1995, s. 6).

Drawing tools that leave a dry trace include pencils, crayons, chalk, and charcoal. Wet traces can be produced using markers or sticks dipped in ink. Pencils can be used on almost

any surface, including papers of various thicknesses and textures, both white and gray. Soft pencils are particularly suited for drawing.

Crayons offer extensive expressive potential: matte crayons known as pastels, wax crayons, and standard colored pencils. In the case of individuals with visual impairments, selected colors can be used with particular attention to shape, tonal contrast, and tactile effects. In such work, the handling of the tool, the nature of the line produced, the compositional arrangement, and the resulting expressive quality of the artwork are of critical importance. Wax crayons, depending on how they are sharpened, angled, and the applied pressure, can produce a variety of visual effects. Wax crayons create drawings with soft, varied lines, whereas pencil crayons allow for precise rendering of fine details (Marcinkowska, Michejda-Kowalska, 1995, s. 25).

Markers, depending on their thickness, enable the drawing of lines with highly diverse qualities: thick, thin, continuous, dashed, straight, wavy, or spiral. This variety allows for the creation of interesting effects but requires deliberate execution, as each contact with the paper leaves a mark.

Charcoal is a very soft, blendable medium that allows for expressive chiaroscuro effects and the creation of a specific mood (Marcinkowska, Michejda-Kowalska, 1995, s. 37).

Chalk allows for quick and impactful drawing. It is also easy to erase parts of the drawing and make corrections. White chalk contrasts best with dark or black cardboard, though it can also be used on asphalt or concrete surfaces for large-scale drawings.

Ink drawing produces compelling achromatic effects. Tools such as sticks, nib pens, and steel quills are used to create

lines with varied qualities. With sustained, meticulous effort, this technique allows for the production of highly detailed and refined drawings, including intricate ornaments (Marcinkowska, Michejda-Kowalska, 1995, s. 69).

Ink can also be diluted with water and applied in washes. This wash technique enables the creation of tonal gradations and chiaroscuro effects that help evoke a mood.

Drawing can also be done with a brush using a single dark color (black, dark blue, or dark green) on a light background such as bristol board or gray paper. The specific color is less significant than the expressive brushstrokes that define form. Additionally, a semi-dry brush can be used to achieve effects such as scumbling and gradual tonal transitions. This approach is especially effective on large formats, allowing for expressive gestures and a stronger impact (Marcinkowska, Michejda-Kowalska, 1995).

Equally effective is the use of white paint on a black background, applied with either a broad brush on large surfaces or a fine tool on smaller formats. The paint can be applied through brushstrokes or by building up small dots, with denser dotting creating the impression of light within the image.

On dark cardboard, white crayon or chalk also performs well, particularly on textured surfaces.

As noted by Marcinkowska and Michejda-Kowalska (1995, s. 121): „Drawing is a higher form of childhood play. It activates intellectual potential and can play a significant role in overall cognitive development”.

In the absence of color perception, a wide range of expressive possibilities is offered by various reproduced and im-

printed graphic techniques. These techniques, due to their engaging processes and the aesthetic satisfaction derived from the results, serve as strong motivation for continued artistic activity and formal exploration.

Black prints created using materials with varied textures can yield particularly interesting visual effects. A variety of materials may be used for imprinting, including leaves, lace, coarse-weave fabrics, and bird feathers. For this purpose, printing ink is applied to a glass surface using a roller and then transferred onto leaves or other textured materials. These inked objects are then arranged into a composition. The viscosity of printing ink allows for the capture of intricate structural details, especially in leaf textures. [Textural, leaf printing]



Leaves may be arranged into diverse compositions using whole forms or cut fragments. The freedom to use any segment of the leaf allows for creative expression. For young children, the act of imprinting individual plant elements or feathers provides an engaging experience and a sense of accomplishment. Similarly, fabric can be used in printing – either as a surface for applying designs or as a compositional element in itself.

Monotype printing can also be executed without placing textured elements under the paper. Instead, a drawing is created directly on the surface, and variations in tool pressure

produce lines and tonal patches of differing intensity and texture.

Printing can also be done using cotton thread or string soaked in paint. This method is especially effective in activities that encourage imagination, where abstract or accidental forms are later interpreted and assigned meaning (Daszyńska, 1992, s. 25). In such processes, color is not essential – the significance lies in the shapes and their interpretive value.

For children with color vision deficiencies, techniques involving the imprinting of textural matrices may be especially suitable. One such method is *kalkografia* (carbon paper printing), which involves covering a matrix with carbon paper and then pressing or ironing it to transfer the image. This technique effectively reproduces compositions made from cardboard, fabric, leaves, feathers, or threads. Despite its simplicity, this method can produce highly compelling results due to the tonal gradations of black and white it enables (Karny, 2005).

Matrices constructed from cardboard or other textured materials can also be used in frottage, a technique in which the paper is placed over the matrix and rubbed with a crayon or graphite.

Another form of structural printing is a collagraph, where a matrix made from cardboard and textured materials is coated with ink and used as a relief print.

Graphic techniques can be freely combined, such as layering one technique over another to create an underprint. According to Boguszewska, such methods possess significant educational, developmental, and therapeutic value (Boguszewska, 2013, s. 123).

Summary

Awareness of the existence of color vision deficiencies is of considerable pedagogical importance and necessitates both specific diagnostic measures and subsequent adaptation of educational tasks to align with the student's color perception abilities.

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Such adaptations may be required across various disciplines and school subjects – wherever color-coded materials and educational aids are used – particularly in the case of maps, charts, and visual representations.

However, color assumes its greatest significance in the context of visual arts activities. Given the multiple developmental functions served by artistic expression, it is crucial that the selection and use of colors be tailored to the individual capabilities of the child.

The proposed drawing and graphic techniques can provide an opportunity for artistic activity for children who are unable to correctly complete color tasks, exposing them to lower grades in the subject, reduced self-esteem, stigma from peers, and a certain kind of social exclusion.

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Chapter 4. Volunteering as prevention of social maladaptation

4.1. Specifics of volunteering with beneficiaries in community centers

JANA ŠOLCOVÁ

Supporting the development of volunteering in social work and its social services is currently one of the available options for solving social problems in society. In contrast, in the field of professional activity, the role of the social worker remains key (Matulayová, 2011). Organizations and facilities in the social services sector often suffer from a shortage of employees due to the number of clients. In this situation, cooperation with volunteers is an excellent opportunity to better respond to the needs of clients that may not be directly related to professional care (Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová & Frimmerová, 2019). Volunteering activities and programs in social service facilities create space to meet the needs of clients and volunteers who want to participate actively in life in their communities.

An international expert in social work theories, Payne (2020), states that contemporary social work must reflect current paradigms in the perception of the client and the social worker and current conceptualizations of the social reality that the discipline of social work confronts. This adaptation is necessary to effectively implement social work in the context of dynamically changing social conditions and theoretical

foundations of the field. In its gradual formation, social work as a discipline fills the place that arises from the atomization of social sciences and human sciences, thereby bringing the study of social problems closer to the reality of everyday life and, at the same time, drawing attention to and raising the issues discovered and relationships in natural form. The starting point for the inclusion of volunteering in the informal social service providers system is also the social work paradigm, which emphasizes social equality in various dimensions of social life. Its representatives believe that promoting cooperation and solidarity within a particular social group will help the oppressed gain influence over their lives (Žiaková et al. 2012).

The question of the solvability of social problems is thus linked to social structures and policy issues, especially social justice, solidarity, and participation (Levická et al. 2016). Volunteering in the social services field has changed significantly, from the traditional model of predominantly humanitarian and material assistance to more diverse forms (Wilson et al., 2001). While volunteering has a long history in American social welfare (Karl, 1984), in the context of European society, it is mainly associated with the need for professionalization of volunteer management (Wilson et al., 2001). Today, volunteers contribute to various aspects of social services, including advocacy, administration, and consultation (Rizkiawati et al., 2017). Volunteer programs in social service facilities, community centers, or low-threshold centers can provide a valuable extension of services (Fedorov, 2023). Volunteering is an effective mechanism for social inclusion for individuals from disad-

vantaged backgrounds, marginalized groups, parents on parental leave, or unemployed people. Volunteering initiatives develop the potential to support democratic principles, facilitate retraining citizens, and effectively use the skills of unemployed people while providing them with certain benefits. Support for volunteering currently seems to be one of the options for supporting and alleviating social problems today (Skyba, 2016; Payne, 2020; Kuzyšin & Schavel, 2021).

The importance of volunteering in social work is linked to the various functions that volunteering fulfills. The essential functions of volunteering in social work include the innovative function, closely related to the continuously increasing demands for the quality of social services and the professionalization of volunteering. Volunteering is managed through specialized volunteer management (Fedorov, 2023). This approach significantly contributes to meeting the growing demands for the quality of social services and, at the same time, supports the development of networking in the field of social work (Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová & Frimmerová, 2019). The service function is based on the fact that volunteering is carried out in many areas and manifests through diverse forms. Providing service in the context of diverse services is linked to volunteering, especially in connection with its fundamental characteristics: orientation to the benefit of others and society as a whole. One of the crucial spheres in which volunteering is carried out is social work and social services (Lešková, 2013). The advocacy function represents the process of defending the rights and interests of individuals and vulnerable groups, as well as recipients of social services and other

clients in the field of social work. Volunteer activities often include campaigns, petitions, and demonstrations, which are a manifestation of civic engagement. In the context of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, a frequent barrier is their limited ability to defend their rights independently. In these cases, advocacy carried out by volunteers plays a key role. It should be emphasized that many legislative changes in social work have been achieved precisely by advocating relevant topics and social problems (Kuzyšin & Schavel, 2021). The expressive function is related to social work implemented within institutions established by state and regional authorities and faces significant procedural obstacles. These organizations are limited by excessive administrative burdens when initiating and promoting changes and by a rigid legislative framework that strictly determines the scope and nature of their activities. In this context, through its expressive function, volunteering creates space for a flexible response to the required changes. It simultaneously provides a platform for presenting and accepting diversity in language, culture, and ethnicity (Lešková, 2013). The personal development function represents the multidimensional benefits of volunteering. These positive effects are manifested not only in the target group of volunteers (recipients of social services) but also in the volunteers themselves. In the process of participating in volunteering activities, volunteers support their personal development. This development includes the identification of new competencies, an increase in the level of self-confidence, as well as other diverse benefits in the area of personal growth (Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová, Frimmerová, 2019) – the function of community building. Volunteering has a specific function that integrally

connects social work in its general sense and a particular community, thereby developing community work. Interpersonal ties are spontaneously formed within volunteer activities (between volunteers and clients, as well as between volunteers and social workers). The motivation of volunteers to participate in volunteer activities is determined not only by these relational aspects but also by other multifactorial influences. The natural evolution of community life, of which social workers, clients, and volunteers are integral, generates the potential to create an effective network of help and support (Lešková, 2013).

Individual functions of volunteering open up opportunities for volunteering with marginalized communities. In the context of innovative approaches, empowerment is increasingly used in Slovakia. Volunteering and volunteer projects implemented in communities were pilot projects aimed at developing the empowerment of people from marginalized communities. The dominant one was the national project Building Professional Capacities at the Community Level (Šolcová, Holíková, 2023), as well as smaller local initiatives of non-profit organizations, such as the Community Organizing Center (Nowak et al., 2022). The community building function supports attention to the development of volunteering in community centers. The personal development function points to the benefits and impacts of volunteering for volunteers and communities. Repková (2019), together with Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová, and Frimmerová (2019), based on the latest empirical findings in the context of social services, also reflecting the experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic, identify volun-

teering in social services as a significant source for: a) complementing the provided social services through practical and emotional support; b) optimizing the time capacities of employees; c) implementing innovative ideas, knowledge and experiences; d) facilitating diversity in facilities and creating informal interpersonal ties; e) developing the empowerment of disadvantaged social groups. It follows from the above that paying attention to the increasingly developing type of volunteering in the community center and its specificities is essential.

Specifics of volunteering in community centers

Community center services in the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic Coll. No. 448/2008 Act on Social Services No. 448/2008 Coll. in the third chapter in paragraph 24 is characterized as crisis intervention services that are easily accessible to a natural person, especially about where the natural person resides. Social services are provided anonymously, without proving the identity of this natural person using an identity document and regardless of signs of substance abuse. A social worker and other helping workers support the client in his competence to solve the problem so that he can actively and constructively involve his strengths and abilities and use the potential of natural relationships (Španteková, 2017).

Social work uses various approaches to solving crises. Each area and institution of social work has its specific methods and forms of intervention (Kuzyšin, Schavel, 2021). One of the essential methods of social work is community work. Its main goal is to strengthen and motivate the community

to solve problems independently (Šiňanská, Šlosár, 2020). According to the National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No. 448/2008 on social services, community work is carried out in special community centers. The Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 448/2008 on social services regulates the activities of a community center. According to Section 2, paragraph 2, letter h) of this Act, a community center provides persons in a difficult social situation with: 1. Basic social counseling; 2. Assistance in exercising rights; 3. Support in the education of children, and 4. It carries out community work and community rehabilitation.

The community center also organizes preventive and hobby activities and conducts community work and rehabilitation. Services can be provided on an outpatient or field basis. Section 82 connects community development with solving local social problems – and section 15 deals with various activities in social services, including volunteering. Act No. 406/2011 on volunteering defines a volunteer as a person who performs an activity based on their skills and knowledge without any right to remuneration. The above characteristics of community center services also create the specifics of volunteering in community centers and the key factors that must be worked with when managing volunteers. An essential aspect of working with volunteers is their search (recruitment) and involvement in the activities of the community center or volunteer programs. In recent years, community work in community centers in Slovakia has been trying to apply a new approach to residents of municipalities and marginalized groups. It is based on the concept of empowerment, with volunteering being one of the possible ways of implementing and

developing personal and community empowerment (Šolcová, Holíková, 2023). This approach can benefit community centers, bringing new strengths and activity opportunities (Rusnáková, 2020). One of the main characteristics of volunteering in community centers is its potential for discovering internal capacities and resources for solving problems in the community. This approach represents a specific feature of volunteering in the context of community centers.

The connection between community work and volunteering is also mentioned in the National Standards of Community Centers, which include various methods of social work in community work: social counseling, working with groups, advocating for the rights and interests of clients, coordinating volunteers, creating cooperation networks, etc. (Gojová, Gojová, Stanková, 2020).

Community work through volunteering helps increase people's interest in public affairs. It supports their willingness and responsibility to participate in events in municipalities and cities. People can join working groups, solve crises (for example, problems with water outages), and make decisions about matters related to their community (Rusnáková, 2020). In the context of the refugee crisis related to the war in Ukraine, in addition to community work, community protection has also begun to develop in Slovakia. Community protection focuses on the protection of human and refugee rights, with an emphasis on connecting local communities and the refugees themselves. The aim is to support the development of their cooperation, help identify the main challenges both groups face in the new coexistence, and seek and co-create solutions that concern them. One of the community protection

tools is community volunteers' involvement in mapping needs and providing information in the community (UHCR, 2022). Community work relies on the willingness and ability of people to actively engage in solving problems in their community (Šolcová, Holíková, 2023). The aim of community work with a connection to volunteering is therefore:

- 1) encourage people to participate and engage in community life;
- 2) strengthen their abilities to solve common problems and thereby strengthen the potential for change;
- 3) give people more control over the circumstances that affect their lives;
- 4) strengthen the sense of ownership and the need to engage in community life.

Volunteering is one of the ways people can get involved in solving community problems. It represents a practical form of civic engagement, allowing people to actively participate in improving life in their community. Of the above goals, volunteering is therefore perceived as one of the methods supporting the development of the volunteers themselves and the community as a whole.

Within the individual models of community work, volunteering is most closely linked to the Community Development model. Community Development is one of the models of community work that emphasizes self-help and support for volunteer groups within the community and relies on community empowerment and activation (Rusnáková, 2020). Community development is the targeted activity of community members when they come together to achieve common goals

and changes that improve their collective economic, social, cultural, and ecological situation (Grundělová et al., 2022). Community development in the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services is defined as community rehabilitation being part of community development and a community plan providing social services. The Act states that local government should create conditions to support community development, community work, and community rehabilitation to prevent the emergence or worsening of adverse social situations and solve local social problems. The purpose and goal of community development are paradoxically best explained by the well-known Chinese proverb: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish, and you will feed him for life." (Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu www.citatyslavych.sk) The concept of volunteering as a potential for community development of a disadvantaged community creates another specific feature of volunteering in community centers.

Another specific feature of volunteering in community centers is the ambiguous position of the volunteer that volunteering creates. To mobilize and empower the community, the client and recipient become volunteers (Rusnáková, 2020). Despite the above connection, even in this specific case, the three main components of volunteering must be observed: 1) performing an unpaid activity, 2) performing an activity based on free will, 3) for the benefit of others (outside their family) (Brozmanová Gregorová, Frimmerová, Šolcová, 2019). Within the volunteer management framework, a social or community worker has a challenging situation, especially in distinguishing the approach to the volunteer. It is evident that the

worker knows the volunteer's situation and his positive and negative qualities, but in the context of volunteering, he is not focused on the problematic situation of the individual volunteer; the orientation focuses on community problems concerning the majority or solving a social problem (Šolcová, Holíková, 2023). When working with a volunteer among clients, it is essential to separate the client's and the volunteer's needs. A problem can also arise within the client's unreasonable expectations of the volunteer. An example of such a situation is the volunteer position in a food bank. A recipient of aid from a food bank can also be a volunteer. Based on the fact that he helps with the distribution of food aid, he may feel that he is entitled to more food (Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová and Frimmerová, 2019).

From the above, it also follows that within volunteering in community centers, we can work with various volunteer positions (Rusnáková, 2020; Grundělová et al., 2022; Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová, and Frimmerová, 2019):

a) long-term volunteer - they are often a long-term part of volunteer programs of community centers; their volunteer activity is connected with regular activities (at least once a month) over a more extended period (at least 1 year),

b) short-term volunteers - they are often part of volunteer campaigns and actions of the community center when it is a one-off event or activity,

c) expert volunteer - they have the necessary qualifications and profiling; an example is if the volunteer is a health professional or a lawyer and as a volunteer, they help out at the activity of the community center, in the given area

in which they are an expert. These are usually professionals who, outside of their jobs, help the community center with professional assistance,

d) occasional volunteer - volunteering is mainly associated with occasional activities and crises that need to be resolved,

e) external volunteer - is the name for a volunteer who is a volunteer of the community center but is not its client/recipient of social services,

f) Internal volunteer: A volunteer who, in addition to performing volunteer activities, is also a client of the community center. The internal characteristic can also be associated with the fact that it is a volunteer who comes from the community.

The specifics of volunteering in a community center bring volunteer opportunities. Authors Gallo Kriglerová, Holka Chudžíková, Kadlečíková, and Píšová (2023) created a categorization of specific activities of community volunteers:

A) Organization and implementation of community events and actions – these can be regular or irregular events (children's day, community days, etc.), and volunteers help to varying degrees and frequencies.

B) Community projects are usually based on the community's needs to solve a long-standing problem; for a successful solution, community members are involved in the solution to varying degrees and frequencies as volunteers.

C) Creating community spaces: Participation in the planning and reconstruction of spaces (external, internal, etc.), creation of community gardens, and their care.

D) Self-help groups – an example is when a more experienced volunteer helps a less experienced one or when a client who is no longer dealing with a crisis helps another client manage his current situation.

E) Interest groups – creating a program during free time for mothers, children, or other community groups, volunteer lecturers, etc.

F) Joint volunteer activities - participation in environmental topics, local garbage collection, etc.

G) Mentoring projects - when volunteers are mentors for other community members.

H) Volunteer advisory bodies – An example is the establishment of a community council in a community center, where the members are volunteers.

The common denominator for volunteering in community centers is the possibility of calling this type of volunteering community volunteering, as also declared by the authors Rusnáková (2020), Gallo Kriglerová, Holka Chudžíková, Kadlečíková and Píšová (2023), and the Mareena organization (working with defectors).

Volunteer opportunities in community centers expand the benefits and the impact of community work itself:

1. Expanding and enriching the range of activities and activities of the community center for users - thanks to volunteers who have different skills and are willing to dedicate their

time, community centers can implement a variety of educational, counseling, leisure, hobby, and community activities that they could not implement without their involvement (e.g., they do not have sufficient personnel, time or professional capacities) (Rusnáková, 2020).

2. Supporting the building of self-help capacities - the participation of members of excluded groups or residents of an excluded location, but also ordinary residents of a municipality, city district, or city in the planning and implementation of community center activities strengthen people's sense of responsibility for independent and active problem-solving. It helps build the community. This aspect of their activities is critical, especially in the case of community centers. It creates the potential for the community center's activities or its part to be fully taken over by members of the local community in the future, which is one of the primary long-term goals of community centers. Community centers should directly, as part of their regular activities, provide space and support for community members to implement their ideas (Cintulová et al., 2022).

3. Personal development of volunteers - an important aspect of volunteering is that it benefits the organization or community and the volunteers themselves. Active involvement in activities and activities in the community center or other organizations supports the activation and motivation of volunteers, allowing them to acquire new knowledge, skills, and experiences that they can use in their personal or professional lives. Especially in the case of community centers that work with youth at risk of unemployment, demonstrating volunteer experience and providing a reference from the community

center can be a critical moment in finding a job in the future (Brozmanová et al., 2019).

4. Obtaining feedback on the functioning of the community center – volunteers can be a valuable source of information about the setting of the community center's activities, whether the activities meet the needs of target groups and the (non-)functioning of the team. On the basis of this information, the KC can reassess and improve its activities (Rusnáková, 2020).

We could talk about several critical approaches applied to this cooperation within the framework of linking community work and volunteering. The community worker may perceive volunteering as one of the other ways and methods for developing both the volunteer himself and the development of the community as such. Volunteers contribute to solving local problems and improving the quality of life of their fellow citizens. Their work can lead to better access to education, healthcare, and social services. Community projects focused on the environment and sustainability contribute to local communities' ecological balance and aesthetics. Volunteer activities often connect people from different social and cultural backgrounds, which promotes mutual understanding and cooperation. Community events organized by volunteers create opportunities to build friendships and strengthen social networks (Hapalová, 2017). Volunteering significantly contributes to the development of communities and society as a whole. It helps solve local problems, supports social cohesion, and stimulates personal and social growth. Examples of exciting projects from Slovakia and abroad demonstrate

how volunteer activities bring about positive changes and improve the quality of life. Therefore, Supporting and participating in volunteer projects is an investment in the future of our communities and society as a whole.

Methods and research sample

As part of the research findings, we summarize the partial conclusions. The primary purpose of our research was to answer the specifics of volunteering in marginalized communities in community centers. In the presented part of the results, we focus on the partial research questions: What are people's experiences with volunteering in a community center? And what are the benefits of volunteering from the perspective of community center volunteers?

We conducted research using a qualitative research design. According to Daher et al. (2017), qualitative research provides the opportunity to examine phenomena from an individual's perspective while considering the context in which these phenomena appear. In our case, we focused on studying the volunteering of volunteers working in a community center. To achieve a deeper understanding, experience, and meaning appear to be fundamental concepts that allow for a better understanding of social phenomena. We chose a qualitative approach primarily because of its advantages in this research type.

The primary research method was semi-structured interviews. The interviews took place on the premises of the community center and lasted approximately 20-30 minutes. We recorded the interview and created an audio recording. Subsequently, we transcribed all the data verbatim and prepared it for analysis. The process of analyzing qualitative data included

coding and categorization of the data. Our open coding was based on the author Kember et al. (2008), who uses a protocol that can serve as an aid in dividing the analysis into four categories: routine action/without reflection, understanding, reflection, and critical reflection. Transitional categories can also be used. As part of the further analytical process, detailed characteristics of each category are provided. This is an effort to point out the necessity of volunteering not only from the perspective of meeting the needs of the community center and the recipients of volunteering but especially in the context of the subjective perception of the volunteers themselves.

The research sample consisted of volunteers from two community centers operating in community centers within the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region. As part of the selection criteria, we chose an accessible sample, a type of non-random sampling where members of the basic set are included for research purposes. Regarding accessibility, we agree with the author Gavor (2010), who adds that an accessible set meets specific practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate. In our case, this characteristic of the selected research set was observed.

The sample set consisted of volunteers in the community center who responded that they were willing to participate and answer our questions. The research took place in the community center.

In our research, the research set consisted of the following participants:

- six volunteers, working as community center volunteers for more than 1 year;

- four volunteers, working as community center volunteers for more than 6 months but less than 1 year.

Of these, six women and four men participated in the research.

For personal data protection, we have started to label participants using letters according to the alphabet. For easier orientation and research purposes, participants were assigned letters according to the alphabet sequence according to the numbers P1 - P6. The anonymity of the participants was maintained in the research, which they were informed about before the start of the study; they were also told that their statements would serve only for research purposes.

P1 18 years old, female, bachelor's degree student: social work, volunteer 24 months,

P2 68 years old, female, widow, retired, high school education, worked as an economist, volunteer 13 months,

P3 77 years old, female, widow, retired, high school education, former kindergarten teacher, volunteer 8 years any help, volunteer program 13 months,

P4 52 years old, female, widow, elementary education, unemployed, never worked anywhere, raised five children, volunteered 5 years,

P5 51 years old, male, single, high school education - apprenticeship certificate, unemployed, only has occasional jobs, volunteer 3 years,

P6 39 years old, male, lives in a relationship, achieved education, employed, volunteer 4 years,

P7 is 41 years old, male, receiving a severely disabled person's allowance, and has volunteered for 8 months.

P8 36 years old, male, has partner, unemployed, completed primary education, never worked anywhere, volunteer 9 months,

P9 20 years old, female, completed secondary education without a high school diploma, tried several jobs, volunteered 8 months,

P10 is 54 years old, female, has completed secondary education with a high school diploma, has already been employed several times, and has volunteered for 7 months.

Results

The following chapter presents the results of the analysis of qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with community center volunteers. In the context of the qualitative research results, we identified the specific experiences of participants and their subjective perceptions of the benefits and impact of community center activities.

Personal experiences of community center volunteers

Participants in our research have diverse experiences with volunteering in a community center related to the length of volunteering, the type of volunteering activities, and motivation for volunteering.

Table 1 Subjective perception of the experiences gained by volunteers

Category	Illustrative quote
Long-term and repeated engagement	<i>P5: "It's been about three years since I was laid off from work since Corona came, and I can't find a job, so since then, I haven't been working. I didn't think it would last this long, and I would be here for so long. I also thought I would get bored of it, or something like that, or it wasn't for me... But I enjoy it here..."</i>
Relationship to community center and community	<i>P4: "I've been coming here as a volunteer for five years now... when I'm not there for a long time, I miss it. It 's ours and for all of us, for both the children and the women who work there."</i>
Personal change and positive impact of volunteering	<i>P9: "I wasn't like that; I couldn't tell when I would do what. I always just sat and dozed. Now, I know and feel like going and want to go. I've gained experience in this."</i>

Source: own processing

Many volunteers are involved for a long time, often for several years, with some stating that they have been volunteers their whole lives. They return to the community center repeatedly and do not see their activity as something that should end (P1, P3, P4, P6). Volunteers express a strong emotional connection to the place and people in the community center. They see the center as an essential part of their lives and feel the need to be part of this community (P4, P5). The volunteering experience leads to changes in attitudes and self-perception for many. Volunteers feel personal enrichment that motivates them to continue the activities and see volunteering fulfilling their lives (P1, P5, P9).

As part of the experience, we also focused on determining volunteers' specific activities for the community center. These activities will allow us to understand better the benefits described, as we can connect how the benefits could have

arisen. Among the volunteer opportunities, volunteers could be involved in: 1) Donations and humanitarian aid; 2) Assistance with occasional actions and events; 3) Work with target groups: a) Volunteer activities aimed at children, b) Volunteer activities aimed at adults; 4) Assistance in the field of information and communication technologies; 5) Administrative assistance and lay advice; 6) Work in the community garden and physical labor.

P3: "Back then, I helped out more materially and financially."

P4: "I helped with distributing food and ensuring drinking water."

P10: "I helped out at events and activities as an assistant to the organizers."

P1: "My work as a volunteer at the community center consists of working with children, especially kindergarteners."

P2: "With retirees, but I'm also a retiree.."

P9: "I prepare various creative workshops for children."

P5: "Yeah, and I also help them with various technical things, around computers.....and even from afar, I'm on the phone when they need help with the internet, computers, and the like."

P2: "I help the community center workers with administration; I help with preparing tax returns for community center users who request it."

P6: "I also go to the community garden in the summer. I help plant vegetables, care for the garden, water it, and pull weeds there. Then, I helped harvest the crop, distribute it, and divide it among everyone according to merit. But I will tell you that the vegetables from our community garden taste the best."

The identified areas and activities of volunteering experiences are very diverse. They focus on direct work with people

and on supporting the functioning of the community center. These interpretations indicate that community centers, based on their activities defined by applicable legislation, can offer opportunities for diverse types of volunteer work, effectively responding to potential volunteers' various needs.

As part of the experiences, we focused on identifying the motivation that led them to volunteer in the community center. Volunteers report an internal need to help and be helpful. Motives are based on personal values, such as helping others, faith, or an inner sense of fulfillment (P1, P2). Some also mention the need for connection and meaning in their lives (P5). Volunteers' statements show a deep personal commitment and willingness to sacrifice their own time, energy, and even comfort for the benefit of others. There is a strong desire to help without expectation of reward (P2, P3).

Table 2 Volunteers' motivation for volunteering

Category	Illustrative quote
Altruism and the need to help	<p>P1: "It was me, and when I saw the opportunity to help here at the community center, I didn't hesitate to speak up. I always needed to save something, to help someone."</p> <p>P3: "We need to help others because if we don't help ourselves, who will? When I help others, someone will help me too; we spread goodness."</p>
Social interaction	<p>P4: "I was very motivated when I saw that there were people there. Other people with whom I could spend time and talk."</p>
Skill development	<p>P7: "Well, I've learned all sorts of things, and I'm still learning, and that's what I like the most; for example, I know how to write on a computer, I know how to plan what we need when we go to solve, say, the water problem."</p>

<p>Initiation and trust from other people</p>	<p>P6: "The volunteer coordinator approached me from the community center, and since I knew she would always come up with something to help others, I didn't hesitate."</p> <p>P8: "So Pišta, my friend, came to me, saying that I knew how to plan and they needed this help, so I knew how to plan, but I wouldn't go myself. But that way, he knew that I was good at it."</p>
<p>Need for meaningful activity and use of free time</p>	<p>P5: "I lost my job, so I got involved to make better use of my free time because I was just sitting around anyway, and this way, I helped a good cause."</p>

Source: own processing

Within the qualitative statements, we identified that participants perceive faith as a significant motivational factor for volunteering. The following statement illustrates this fact:

P2: "Yes, I am a believer, and faith has influenced me quite strongly. I think it is precisely because my upbringing always led me to help others that volunteering comes naturally to me. And I also see it as a service to my neighbor."

Benefits of volunteering in the area of fulfilling interests and meaning in the life of volunteers

Despite our assumption that the topic of fulfilling one's interests and meaning in life would receive only minimal attention in qualitative statements, volunteers spontaneously expressed themselves on this dimension of personal life. Notably, the participants emphasized the benefits in this sphere, although it is their private domain of life.

Based on the analysis of the qualitative statements of the participants, we identified the following categories and subcategories from the thematic analysis: 1. Personal satisfaction from volunteering: unwinding from worries, feeling of joy

from volunteering, long-term, and stability thanks to volunteering; 2. Continuity of life interests: continuing in favorite activities, following up on professional career, using existing experiences; 3. Self-realization: applying one's abilities, using one's strengths, and space for personal development; 4. Meaningfulness of work: visible results, feeling of usefulness, fulfillment from the job.

Table 3 Benefits of volunteering in the personal lives of volunteers

Category	Illustrative quote
Personal satisfaction from volunteering	<i>P2: "When I work with children, I completely switch off from other mayors; even though it is quite demanding volunteering, I feel like I have relaxed from those other worries.."</i>
Continuity of life interests	<i>P3: "For me, it is a place and an opportunity where you can just come, talk, engage in various activities that I like and want to continue doing....."</i>
Self-realization	<i>8: "I am finally doing what I enjoy, too." P14: "I like creating and inventing, and I have the space and resources for it here, as well as children who want it."</i>
Meaningfulness of work	<i>P4: I feel that someone needs me, and that makes me feel very good. My children also enjoy going there, and they like me there."</i>

Source: own processing

Within the meaning of life, the volunteer found his lifestyle and his life story. Volunteering became an integral part of the participant's life journey, where it is not just an ordinary activity but a deeper connection with personal identity. As the participant's statement illustrates, volunteering grew from a one-time activity into a long-term commitment that shapes his life story. This "anchoring" in volunteering indicates that the participant found something more than a meaningful activity in this service - he found his life's mission and direction in it. Volunteering thus became a significant shaping element

of his personal story and identity, which points to the profound transformative potential of volunteering in an individual's life.

P6: *"I finally settled there. I'm still there today, but that's a long story, a kind of my life story connected with this volunteering..."*

The analysis of qualitative statements also demonstrated the fact that volunteering significantly contributes to fulfilling the higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, especially in the area of social needs, self-esteem and self-realization: the need to belong somewhere (*"cooperation and being part of the community center's work team"; "I feel like I belong among them."*); the need for social relationships (*"certainly the fact that I have gained new relationships with people", "I am with people, I can solve things with them, communicate.."*); the need for recognition and self-esteem (*"I feel that I am useful", "what I do during those few hours has meaning"; "I feel, I actually know that children need me.."*); the need for inner satisfaction (*"I feel good about helping others"*); the need for self-realization (*"I really like to create, invent, and I have the space to do that here"*); the need for personal growth (*"I wouldn't have gotten those experiences anywhere else"*); the need for emotional fulfillment (*"I'm always happy when I can help", "I also meet people here, I have someone to talk to."*).

Benefits of volunteering in the area of self-development and work

Professional and personal development dimensions represent a complex sphere that integrates several aspects of individual growth. This multidimensional area includes the systematic cultivation of personal potential, the acquisition of new knowledge, and the progressive development of competencies. This is about professional competencies relevant to the labor market and practical skills essential for everyday

life. These include competencies in self-service activities and abilities associated with household management and providing care for family members. This holistic perspective of development thus reflects the interconnectedness of an individual's life's professional, personal, and family spheres.

Table 4 Benefits of volunteering in the area of self-development and work

Category	Illustrative quote
<p>Personal development (expanding life experiences, building self-confidence, overcoming personal challenges, gaining new perspectives)</p>	<p>P1: "... I connected what I studied with practice." P9: "Gradually, however, I discovered I could handle increasingly demanding tasks; I overcame my inhibitions and fears. Today, I look at the world and people completely differently. Every new experience allows me to move forward..."</p>
<p>Practical and technical skills (construction and maintenance work, information technology skills, work habits and routines)</p>	<p>P6: "True; since I have helped here with everything from repairing windows to building shelters, I have gained valuable experience that I can use in the next similar construction projects." P5: "Even though I lost my job, I became a volunteer. I have not lost my work habits, like getting up, assigning myself a job, thinking about how I will proceed."</p>
<p>Skills and competencies (time management, self-organization, working with children and specific groups, project management, organizational skills, event planning, and administrative skills).</p>	<p>P4: "...I have never /have/ done anything, I have never had a proper, normal job, I can still do something. That does me a lot of good here. I will learn to organize my time to get things done. Also, being with people, I will learn something from them." P3: "But I also learned other things, such as developing a project to get financial support for a good idea." P4: "I have to know how to organize an event, and volunteering and especially experience helped me to identify shortcomings."</p>
<p>Institutional knowledge (understanding the functioning of a community center, community perception, understanding of social structures).</p>	<p>P5: "Now I know what a community center is about, what services it provides, what crisis intervention is, etc." P10: "I learned that, in my opinion, a community center greatly influences and reaches the entire community. It s influence also extends beyond the borders of the municipality."</p>

<p>Social and intercultural competencies (understanding different communities (Roma, long-term unemployed, disabled, etc., working with a group, communication skills).</p>	<p><i>P1: "I will learn much about working with a group and the Roma community."</i> <i>P9: "Volunteering taught me how to prepare a program for children; for example, I now know how to be of interest to them."</i></p>
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Source: own processing

Benefits of volunteering in the area of community participation

The benefits of volunteering in the context of community life represent an important dimension that reflects the mutual interactions between volunteers and the local community. Volunteers' perspective on the benefits of their activities in the community brings valuable knowledge about the transformative potential of volunteer service in the local environment. This area includes not only direct impacts on the quality of life in the community but also broader social implications, manifesting in the form of strengthening social cohesion, building intergenerational relationships, and developing civic participation. Volunteers gain a unique insight into community dynamics and become active co-creators of positive changes in the local environment through their activities. Their experiences and reflections provide valuable testimony about the importance of volunteering for the vital development of the community and strengthening social capital in a given location. In this context, an exciting aspect of volunteering is that volunteers often come from the local community and receive the community center's services. This fact creates unique specificities of volunteer work because volunteers are familiar with the needs and challenges their fellow citizens face. Their connection to the community and experience of the services provided by the center strengthens empathy and motivation, which leads to more effective and relevant assistance. Such mutual

interaction between volunteers and service recipients strengthens community relationships and creates a sense of community where everyone feels important and involved.

Within the identified categories, we described individual findings because we consider them the most important from the point of view of the results. The first identified category, Mutual ties in the community, is specific in the context of community work in that volunteers not only create new relationships, but these ties arise between people who already share a common space, life experiences, or culture. Volunteers thus become not only providers of assistance but also recipients, which deepens their sense of belonging. These ties are often more robust and authentic because they are formed based on a shared understanding of the local context and the community's needs. In this way, social contacts turn into a network of mutual support in which volunteers become active participants in the community's everyday life. Their participation brings real benefits not only for themselves but for the entire local community (P6: "*... I met a lot of new people, new acquaintances.*"; P1 "*In my opinion, not only I, but we as a whole already know what we can do, what we can do, what we as a community can do and be active in.*"). We called the subsequent category Participation and Engagement. This specific feature of volunteer participation in community work is that volunteers, as members of the local community, are naturally more connected to the environment in which they operate. Their engagement is, therefore, often based on a deeper understanding of local needs and relationship dynamics. This type of involvement allows volunteers to respond more effectively to current problems, adapt to changing needs, and strengthen trust between

residents, thereby contributing to long-term community cohesion and supporting community empowerment (P2: *"I realized that it is necessary to get involved in the things that are happening around me and that it is good to be an active person."*; P4: *"There was talk about it in the village. When it started to be arranged, my children went to watch, talk, and meet friends. They liked it, and somehow they started not only talking but also getting involved more and more."*). Reciprocal benefit is the benefit to the community and the benefit to the volunteer, who is also a community member. The results of his work directly impact the environment he is a part of. This dual role of the volunteer as a provider (through volunteering) and a recipient (as a client of the community center) of help leads to personal commitment and a deeper connection with the community. Volunteering thus supports the development of the community and, at the same time, enriches the volunteer himself, who improves his activity directly and shares it with others (P8: *"But now I see the benefit of what we as volunteers will do for everyone in our poor village."*; P10: *"Ultimately, I am also more independent, and I already know how to do some things without the social worker having to advise me."*).

Flexibility The specifics of flexibility in community work, where the volunteer is also a member of the community, lies in his ability to respond sensitively to changing needs that he knows intimately. Since he is an active part of the community, he can quickly adapt activities to specific situations that satisfy the needs of other members, thereby deepening his sense of meaning and personal meaning. This approach also supports the effectiveness of volunteer work because the volunteer understands the nuances of the local environment and naturally contributes to its harmonious development (P3 *"so*

you can directly see what happened because you can remember it, and you can see the real need to help," P7: "even the social worker herself did not know why it could not be agreed since I know both families. I had a feeling what it would be like.."). Strengthening the meaning of community work is one of the specifics of volunteering for people who are also clients of the community center. It is a mutual strengthening of trust in the meaning and mission of community work from the perspective of social workers and volunteers. These volunteers directly experience how social services are provided and, at the same time, actively contribute to solving the problems of other clients, which creates a unique relationship of trust towards these social interventions. This type of volunteering supports an atmosphere of mutual respect and a sense of belonging because volunteers and clients in one person better understand the challenges and needs that their community center solves, and therefore, often bring solutions that are deeply rooted in the real needs of their community (P3: *"I see that what a social worker solves and how she helps is relevant, and I also contribute to such help as a volunteer, it's just good that we have a community center here and workers in it, I now understand why some things were solved with me the way they were solved"*). The feeling of co-ownership in the process of community work aims to develop the potential of clients so that I can currently solve social problems using my resources and help. One approach is the right to acquire a sense of co-ownership of the solutions themselves; we also reflected this approach with this specific group of volunteers (P8: *"Well, it's not for us, for them, but it's us, me"*; P1: *"since I'm devoting so much time to it, it matters to me"*).

Summary of Research Findings and Discussion

The implemented research project and presentation of the results focused on exploring the phenomenon of volunteering in the context of community centers, with a primary focus on identifying and analyzing the benefits of the volunteering actors who are clients of the given community centers. Within the identified results, we perceive the conditionality of the benefits of volunteering, as indicated by the high degree of individualization of benefits depending on the specific context of volunteer participation. The analysis of the subjective statements of the participants proves that volunteering has an impact on the individuals who participate in it, as well as on the community itself, of which they are members. We can present possible suggestions and recommendations for further research and social work practice based on the findings obtained by analyzing our results. As the results showed us, we can describe what benefits volunteering brings to volunteers in community centers. The assumptions form the basis for further scientific research on volunteering in community centers, with the possibility of modifying and specifying the research objective. We prepare the above proposal based on the results obtained. In our research, we managed to identify benefits in three different dimensions of the volunteers' lives from the subjective statements of the participants: 1) the dimension in the area of fulfilling hobbies and the meaning of life, 2) the dimension in the area of self-development and the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for work, and 3) the dimension related to supporting the community life of both volunteers and recipients of volunteering. In the context of volunteering in community work, we identified

findings related to other experts' conclusions. Within the identified benefits in the area of personal development and skills development, several Slovak and foreign researchers point out (Brozmanová Gregorová, Heinzová, & Sujová, 2020; Brozmanová Gregorová, Šolcová & Frimmerová, 2019 and others). Volunteering can also support the development and protection of the community (Guiney, H., & Machado, L. (2017)), as well as the development of personality, skills, and values throughout life (Kelly, 2023). The specifics of the benefits identified by us, mutual ties in the community and strengthening the meaning of community work, were also identified in his research by Kabonga (2020), who claims that volunteers play a crucial role in community development by acting as intermediaries between organizations and communities (Kabonga, 2020).

Within the limits of the research, we present a critical reflection on the research procedure we chose and possible limits. We consider the small number of the research sample to be one of the limitations of our research. In the context of a qualitative design, we still perceive the potential to expand the number of participants and thus obtain additional information. At the same time, we perceive the advantage of a qualitative research design, where the sample available to us was as diverse as possible (given the characteristics of the research sample and work with two community centers), which could have brought about a diversity of subjective perceptions instead of generalizations. We perceive the inexperience of participation in research as a limitation. The participants were participants in such research for the first time. Although the atmosphere was positive during the interviews, we believe that the more experience they had, the more they could complete the atmosphere and the statements. We tried to mitigate this

limitation by creating valuable tips for further participant interviews.

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4.2 Motivation to volunteering in the Duke of Edinburgh International Award programme

IVANA HAČKOVÁ

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In the context of social work, it is important to pay attention to youth volunteering for the reason that the youth group represents the target and vulnerable group of social work, and volunteering is an area representing the subject of social work research. Through volunteering, youth have the opportunity to develop their skills, engage in solving problems of society, be part of change and shape their personal as well as professional growth, while volunteering is a tool for social work to fulfil its mission, thus addressing various challenges and problems of contemporary society. It is therefore important for researchers to focus on what motivates young people to volunteer. These findings, supported by scientific arguments, can provide a closer understanding of the issue under study and thus bring us closer to a group of young people with whom we can work adequately on the basis of these findings.

Motivation to volunteering

Motivation is a fundamental factor that influences human behaviour. The term motivation, originally from the Latin "movere" (to move), can be understood as a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic stimuli that induce an individual to perform certain activities. It is a key determinant of an individual's decision-making, the main goal of which is to satisfy needs at the individual level (Fisherova, 2009; Hačková, 2023). In the field of volunteer motivation, it is possible to encounter different approaches to this issue. Based on a study of the present literature, it can be argued that this issue has been addressed

by authors as early as 1981, namely Gerrard and Frisch , and this issue is also a scientific question for many current authors. Motivation for volunteering is a subject of interest for disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics and social work, which are also interested in volunteering. These two fields are historically linked also in the practical level of implementation. Volunteering is an effective tool to address social work challenges such as social inclusion, i.e. the involvement of youth or other target groups of social work in society, and an argument pointing to the relationship between these fields is the fact that one of the most widespread areas of volunteer activity are also social services (Brozmanová Gregorová et al., 2011). It is therefore in the interest of social work to find out what motivates young people to volunteer and to design effective ways of working with young people to ensure that they remain in volunteering activities for the long term and that they have a formative impact on them.

Psychology has explored the impact of individual needs on volunteer activity, arguing that human behaviour is often related to the satisfaction of these needs. This perspective emphasizes that volunteering can be driven by altruistic desires representing values and emotional motivations manifested in empathy, solidarity, and love. From a sociological lens, motivation to volunteer is socially conditioned. Authors mention selfish motives of a person to volunteer activity, which, however, should not be perceived negatively (Doležel, Jurníčková, Matulayová, 2016; Dekker, Halman, 2003).

Gerrard and Frisch (1981), one of the first authors dealing with motivation to volunteer, confirm this claim. They

view motivation at the level of altruism, explaining the motivation to volunteer in an effort to build well-being for others, or egoism, explaining the motivation to volunteer for personal gain.

The literature offers many other divisions of motivation to volunteer, such as implicit and explicit (McClelland, Koestner, & Weinberger, 1989) or intrinsic and extrinsic (Gidron, 1984; Beehr et. al, 2010).

Another optic is the third pillar of motivation to volunteer by Musick and Wilson (2008). The first pillar is generalized reciprocity, the second is the pillar of justice, and the third is social responsibility. Jančaitytė and Kurapkaitienė (2012) argue that not only altruism but also social exchange or norms can motivate volunteers.

There are many approaches to exploring the issue of motivation to volunteer. In addition, there are also many methods, both quantitative and qualitative, designed to identify the motivational factors of volunteers. Among the most widely used Chacón et. al. al (2017) mention for example the Bales Volunteerism-Activism Scale" (Bales, 1996); the "Attitudes towards Helping Others Scale" (Webb, Green, Brashear, 2000) or the "Volunteer Function Inventory" (VFI) authored by Clary et. al. al, (1998)

In the research, the objectives and results of which are presented in the following sections of the thesis, the backbone research instrument is the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) tool developed by Clary et. al in 1998. Through the Volunteer Function Inventory it is possible to identify six factors motivating volunteers to volunteer. Specifically, these are the value

factor, the understanding factor, the social factor, the career factor, the protection factor, and the personal development factor. As this method is the main research instrument of the present research, a more detailed presentation of this method in the form of theoretical frameworks as well as the authors' arguments for its selection are presented in the methods section.

Volunteering as part of the DofE programme

The youth group is a specific developmental period of a person during which it is possible to grow physically, mentally and socially. During this period, a young person prepares for his/her professional future and develops his/her moral and value potential. (Siňanská, 2020) During this period, many opportunities arise for a young person and the formation of his/her personality, and volunteering represents one of these opportunities. Volunteering in general has a positive impact on young people, with benefits for the beneficiary, the community, various organisations and wider society. For young people, volunteering is an opportunity for personal and social development that influences a young person's identity. Through volunteering, young people shape their values, attitudes and perspectives, reassess their lifestyles, discover their inner potential and acquire or develop a range of skills, abilities and knowledge. However, volunteering also benefits the volunteer's psychological health, provides a pathway to self-realisation or to gaining contacts (Brozmanová Gregorová et. al. al, 2018; EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, General Declaration on Volunteering)

As Brozmanová Gregorová (2013) and Králiková (2006) argue, young people are specific in volunteering because

of their originality, creativity and curiosity, which leads them to be active and take initiative. This group has plenty of free time and energy, which is a huge advantage. On the other hand, there are also possible shortcomings in the form of responsibility, indifference or indiscretion. Young people get enthusiastic about volunteering more quickly and then this enthusiasm fades, which may cause them not to engage in volunteering activities in the long term. For this reason, young people require a specific approach from the people who work with them. (Brozmanová Gregorová, 2013; Králiková, 2006)

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a programme aimed at the development of young people aged 14 to 24, founded in 1956 and operating in Slovakia since 2007. The programme focuses on youth development in the areas of volunteering, sport, talent and adventurous expedition. Youth are engaged in these activities for 6-18 months, depending on what level the participant graduates from. There are three different levels to develop in the programme. Bronze, Silver and Gold levels, which have their own specific duration and also an expedition. (Official DofE website, 2024; Baren, Meelen and Meijs, 2015)

Volunteering in the DofE programme represents activities carried out by young people for the benefit of others, without financial reward. Volunteers in DofE provide help to people in need, to the community or to the environment that benefits from the volunteering activity, but it is also important that the benefits are also perceived by the programme participant (Official DofE website, 2024; Baren, Meelen and Meijs, 2015; Nemcová et al., 2020).

The DofE Volunteering Programme has set itself the goal of bringing young people to understand the value of helping others through hands-on experiences and learning experiences. Volunteering enables young people to see the environment and the world around them, to become aware of their role in the community and to take responsibility. (Official DofE website, 2024; Baren, Meelen and Meijs, 2015; Nemcová et al., 2020).

Research problem

Finding answers to the question of what exactly motivates young people to volunteer is an ongoing challenge for many authors, organisations and other stakeholders. In the context of the DofE's programme for the development of young individuals, the question of what factors drive and motivate the participants in this specific programme in their volunteering activities has been raised.

The current status of the issue of volunteer motivation is unclear as it has not yet been empirically explored by any author in the context of the DofE programme. In our view, the DofE's development programme should know the motivational factors of the individuals involved in the programme. This knowledge can help DofE programme managers and leaders to understand the motivations of volunteers, which can contribute to effective work with programme participants.

Objectives of the work

The aim of this thesis is to use the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI) method to identify the motivational factors driving DofE participants to volunteer and analyse them in relation to selected characteristics.

Research questions and hypotheses

Considering the stated aim of the thesis, we formulated the main and secondary research questions along with hypotheses:

RQ1: What are the motivating factors for DofE participants to volunteer?

RQ2: What is the association between motivation to volunteer in the DofE and selected socio-demographic characteristics of DofE programme participants?

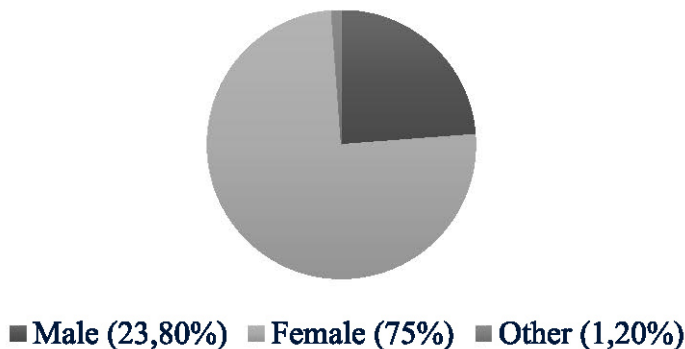
H1: Motivation to volunteer within the DofE programme varies by gender.

H2: Motivation to volunteer on a programme in the DofE varies with age.

Research sample

Of the 168 respondents who participated in the research, 126 respondents were female (75%), 40 were male (23.80%), and two respondents identified as other (1.20%). The relative representation of the number of respondents in the research by gender is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 Survey respondents by gender [Source: own research, 2024]



The age of the respondents ranged from 17 to 26 years. The mean age of the sample was 21 years, with a standard deviation of 1,54.

Research methods

The Volunteer Function Inventory method is the main method for obtaining empirical data. According to Chacón et al. (2017), the VFI method has a good theoretical basis and has properties that are indicative of the quality of the test, allowing the method to be used in different volunteer settings. The authors of the Volunteer Function Inventory method are Clary, Ridge, and Snyder (1998). The method was developed as an output from the statistical method of factor analysis, which has the task of classifying a large number of variables into factors. The output represents six motivational factors: the value factor, the understanding factor, the social factor, the career factor, the protection factor, and the personal development factor.

The value factor is based on altruism and humanism. In this case, the volunteer is motivated by his or her values, which are also the source of a genuine concern for others. The understanding factor expresses the motivation to volunteer based on the need to learn about one's surroundings or the world. The social factor represents the need to create new social relationships. The career factor expresses the need to undertake volunteering activities for professional development and in securing a job in the future. The protection factor expresses the protection of the volunteer's ego. By making the volunteer feel guilty for various reasons, he performs volunteering. The personal development factor, as its name implies, motivates the volunteer's activity to satisfy the need for personal development,

which includes enriching his/her skills, knowledge and abilities (Meijeren, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2023; Chacón et. al. al, 2017; Jančaitytė, Kurapkaitienė, 2012).

Each of the six factors is accompanied by 5 statements of agreement on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important). The survey was supplemented with questions on gender and age. To obtain the data, the paper used an interrogative method in the form of an online questionnaire survey. In accordance with ethical standards, the questionnaire included an informed consent form in which the respondents were informed about the purpose and conduct of the research as well as the privacy policy. This informed consent was sent along with the questionnaire itself via email.

Statistical and mathematical methods were used to process the results. Specifically, these were descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and statistical induction done in IBM SPSS Statistics (version 25). In validating the research questions, the significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$, which means that the results are interpreted with 95% confidence.

Results

Motivational factors of DofE graduates

The results of Friedman's test show that respondents who participated in the research are motivated to volunteer in the DofE programme in descending order by the understanding factor, the values factor, the personal development factor, the career factor, the protection factor and least by the social factor. Table 1 shows the Friedman test scores.

*Table 1 Motivational factors of DofE graduates (Friedman test)
[Source: own research, 2024]*

Understanding factor	5,08
Values factor	4,95
Personal development factor	3,92
Career factor	2,88
Protective factor	2,15
Social factor	2,01

In Table 2, we report the results of the comparison of the individual factors using Wilcoxon test. The respondents who participated in the research are motivated to their volunteer activities by the factors of understanding and values in the first place, as there is no statistically significant difference between them, and then the personal development factor, the career factor, the protection factor and least of all the social factor.

*Table 2 Motivational factors of DofE graduates (Wilcoxon test)
[Source: own research, 2024]*

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Sig. ⁹
Values factor – Understanding factor	Negative Ranks	75 ^a	71,33	5350,00	0,094
	Positive Ranks	60 ^b	63,83	3830,00	
	Ties	33 ^c			
	Total	168			
Personal development	Negative Ranks	116 ^d	82,75	9599,50	0,000
	Positive Ranks	35 ^e	53,61	1876,50	
	Ties	17 ^f			

⁹ If the Sig. value is less than 0.05, it means that there is no statistically significant difference between the factors.

factor - Values factor	Total	168			
Career factor - Personal development factor	Negative Ranks	112 ^g	81,55	9133,50	0,000
	Positive Ranks	44 ^h	70,74	3112,50	
	Ties	12 ⁱ			
	Total	168			
Protective factor - Career factor	Negative Ranks	98 ^j	80,40	7879,50	0,000
	Positive Ranks	51 ^k	64,62	3295,50	
	Ties	19 ^l			
	Total	168			
Social factor - Protective factor	Negative Ranks	81 ^m	78,02	6320,00	0,011
	Positive Ranks	61 ⁿ	62,84	3833,00	
	Ties	26 ^o			
	Total	168			

Motivational factors of DofE graduates by gender and age

Testing the differences between male and female motivational factors is captured in Table 3.¹⁰ Female respondents are most motivated to volunteer by the factors of understanding, values, personal development, career, protectiveness, and least motivated by the social factor. The same is true for males, but for them the social and protective factors differ in the last two places. The protective factor motivates men the least.

Table 3 Motivational factors by gender [Source: own research, 2024]

Female		Male	
Understanding factor	5,1	Understanding factor	5,05
Values factor	5,04	Values factor	4,63
Personal development factor	3,94	Personal development factor	3,93

¹⁰ In testing Hypothesis 1, "Motivation to volunteer within the DofE programme varies by gender." Respondents who identified themselves as gender 'other' were excluded in favour of improving the interpretation of the results.

Career factor	2,88	Career factor	2,86
Protective factor	2,15	Social factor	2,34
Social factor	1,9	Protective factor	2,2

In order to accept or reject Hypothesis 2, it was necessary to test it using the Mann-Whitney test. Referring to this test, it can be argued that the protective factor and the value factor differ with respect to gender, namely, it is more represented in women than in men. Table 4 shows the Sig. value of specific factors. If the value is less than 0.05 it means that the specific factors differ with respect to the characteristic, i.e. gender. It can be inferred that it is in favour of females as the mean is higher for females. Therefore, hypothesis 2 can be accepted because motivation differs two motivational factors out of six.

Table 4 Differences in motivational factors by gender

Factor	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Sig.
Protective factor	Female	126	88,75	11182,50	,006^b
	Male	40	66,96	2678,50	
	Together	166			
Values factor	Female	126	88,24	11118,50	,013^b
	Male	40	68,56	2742,50	
	Together	166			
Career factor	Female	126	85,70	10798,00	,150^b
	Male	40	76,58	3063,00	
	Together	166			
Social factor	Female	126	85,41	10761,50	,185^b
	Male	40	77,49	3099,50	
	Together	166			

Under- standing factor	Female	126	85,87	10820,00	,133^b
	Male	40	76,03	3041,00	
	Together	166			
Personal develop- ment fac- tor	Female	126	84,92	10700,50	,249^b
	Male	40	79,01	3160,50	
	Together	166			

Source: own research, 2024

The results of the Spearman correlation coefficient suggest that motivation to volunteer within the DofE programme does not vary with age. As documented in Table 5 the Sig. value is greater than 0.05, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 2.

*Table 5 Relationship between motivational factors and age
[Source: own research, 2024]*

Factor	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.(2-tailed)	N
Protective factor	0,021	0,787	168
Values factor	-0,076	0,326	168
Career factor	-0,029	0,705	168
Social factor	-0,1	0,197	168
Understanding factor	-0,008	0,913	168
Personal development fac- tor	0,013	0,871	168

Discussion

We found that DofE graduates were most motivated to volunteer by the understanding factor and the values factor. This means that graduates of the DofE programme carried out their volunteering activity on the basis of values from which they derived altruistic and humanitarian concern for people in need of help (the values factor), but also that graduates felt a desire to learn about the world or to connect different knowledge and information, or to understand different areas more deeply.

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Our results are consistent with the results of several studies on motivation. Kang and Kahar (2022) found that volunteers were most motivated by the understanding factor; Lanaca, Albor, and Recto (2022) identified the same understanding factor as the most motivating, with the values factor coming in second. Niebuur et al. (2019) found the values factor to be the most prevalent motivating factor, followed by the understanding factor, similar to the research by Kim, Zhang, and Connaughton, 2010. Brozmanová Gregorová et al. (2011, 2017), through their research, found that volunteers are most motivated by the values factor, or altruistic motive.

The results of the present research on the least motivating factors (in our case, the protective and social factors) are not consistent with the above researches Lanaca, Albor and Recto (2022), Kang and Kahar (2022), Niebuur et al. (2019) and Kim, Zhang, and Connaughton (2010) found that participants in their studies were least motivated by the career factor. On the contrary, the results of our research indicate the career factor ranked third.

This finding may be indicative of a trend towards selfish volunteering, but also the context of the DofE programme in which volunteering is developed . The DofE programme presents its programme as a helpful addition to CVs in job searches, claiming that schools, companies and organisations take into account if an applicant has completed a DofE programme. This is probably why volunteers in the DofE programme are more motivated by the career factor than the research mentioned above found.

The positioning of the protective and social factors is consistent with the results of the research conducted by Kang, Kahar, (2022). However, it should be noted that although these factors were not ranked last in the comparative research, in all of them, the protective factor and the social factor were ranked fourth or fifth.

We find that motivation does not differ with respect to age, but does differ with respect to gender. The value factor and the protective factor motivate women more than men. Brozmanová Gregorová et al. (2011) identified gender differences for the social interaction factor, with men scoring higher on average than women. In our research, however, there was no such difference; on the contrary, statistically significant differences emerged for the values factor and the protectiveness factor, which motivate women more. This difference may suggest that gender differences in volunteer motivation are not universal, but may vary depending on the context in which motivation to volunteer is studied.

The differences found may be influenced by different social, cultural and historical contexts that shape individuals'

perceptions and attitudes towards volunteering. These may include societal expectations of gender roles and care that have historical roots. In the past, women often fulfilled caring roles in the family and community, which may have influenced their tendency to engage in this activity today.

Brozmanová Gregorová (2011) noted statistically significant differences in relation to age on value factor, with the highest scores appearing in the 50-59 age group. However, our results suggest that this factor is also crucial for younger volunteers (17-26 years), for whom it emerged as one of the most significant motivational factors along with the understanding factor. This may suggest that altruistic motivation is not only significant for older volunteers, but is also important for young people involved in the DofE programme.

The findings presented in this thesis can help DofE programme management, particularly in choosing appropriate communications with programme participants and in recruiting new participants. Brozmanová Gregorová (2020) points out that the motivation of volunteers poses a challenge for volunteer management, as the question arises of how to respond to their needs. This implies that volunteering has become a product that can be 'sold' to potential participants.

Based on our findings that programme graduates are most motivated to volunteer by the values and understanding factor, and that the career factor is ranked higher for these graduates than in other research, the DofE programme can present the benefits of volunteering to potential programme participants as being mainly the opportunity to learn new things, the volunteer's sense of importance to his or her com-

munity, and the fact that graduating from the DofE programme is accepted and welcomed by a number of large or small employers. In this way, the programme can stimulate the motivating factors for potential, future participants to join the DofE programme.

Volunteer coordinators should also focus on campaigns that highlight the meaningfulness of volunteering activities, opportunities for personal development and improving professional CVs. In the process of retaining participants, they should create an environment in which young people feel supported and motivated to continue their involvement. It is important that participants have the opportunity to choose activities that are aligned with their values, which can influence their long-term commitment to the programme.

Because participants are also motivated by personal development and learning new things, coordinators can organise sessions where participants identify what they want to learn and then reflect on how these skills can help them in the future. The facilitator should play a mentoring role in this process, supporting participants in self-reflection and personal growth.

Finally, volunteer coordinators can support participants in linking volunteer activities to their career goals, which can improve their orientation towards professional development.

In future, it would be interesting to examine the motivation to volunteer in the DofE programme in the countries where the programme is implemented. This would provide valuable information on the impact of cultural, social and his-

torical factors on youth motivation and could suggest adaptations to the programme according to the specific needs of young people in different countries.

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Chapter 5. Technology and modern challenges in the prevention and resolution of social maladaptation

5.1 Storytelling as a tool for education for social responsibility

LUCIA GALKOVÁ, KATARÍNA KURČÍKOVÁ

Stories have been a part of our society since its inception. Initially, people spread their stories and experiences through paintings in caves. Later, with the development of language and writing, they spread stories and experiences by telling them around the fire, writing them down, and oral transmission. A significant milestone in the development of society was the printing press, radio, and television, through which stories spread even faster. Stories accompany our lives from childhood to old age, but we also encounter them in different areas of life and work. In childhood, we encounter stories in fairy tales, but we also encounter stories told by our grandparents, thus spreading the experience to the next generation. We know many forms of stories, from fables, legends, religious stories, advertisements, and films to educational stories. Storytelling connects theory with practice, fostering imagination, creativity, and creative thinking. In addition to expressing emotions, the stories promote the development of empathy, humanity and other social competencies essential for our lives.

Among the essential personality traits of helping professionals, we include the qualities that should be a natural part

of a person who works with people. Above all, these are humanity, responsibility, critical thinking, civic engagement, and social responsibility. One of the most essential needs is to draw attention to the formation of social responsibility, which we need to work on together and guide students and future helping professionals towards it. However, to shape social responsibility, we need to start developing ourselves and, later, the community in which we live. If we want to develop ourselves, we must first know our inner selves and understand our emotions, attitudes, experiences or behaviour because only if we can analyse our experiences can we then shape our behaviour. (Galková, Kurčíková, Ivanová, 2020)

In developing a community, knowing the values and norms of community, school, work, village, etc is necessary. If one learns to perceive a given community's stereotypes, principles and emotions, one can prepare it more appropriately for its formation. Education in the themes of humanity should be focused on emotional learning, the formation of critical thinking, social responsibility and the introduction of inclusive practices in society. To achieve this, we use, for example, story work - storytelling (online/digital living library, contact living library or written storytelling), project-based learning, case studies, and feedback.

Our intention is primarily to highlight the potential of storytelling not only as an educational tool for social responsibility but also as a tool for social work practice and in the education of future social workers.

With the increasing demands on helping professionals, the demands on the quality of their training are also increasing.

The personality of a helping professional is made up of personal and professional equipment. The personality equipment consists of qualities that should be a natural part of a person who works with people. Above all, these are humanity, responsibility, critical thinking, civic engagement, and social responsibility.

The storytelling method consists of telling stories through which we can get to know reality and empathise with the feelings of the person telling the story. Given the new communication and information technologies developed in our society recently, storytelling is something exceptional or specific. However, it is a natural human activity that has been an inherent part of our lives, traditions and values for many years. Interviewing is one of the easiest ways to learn more about someone and their life.

Therefore, we see storytelling in social work practice as particularly relevant to the narrative approach to working with clients. The narrative approach is based on the story, representing a kind of discourse, a specific genre containing a narrative value for the individual himself and his surroundings. (Bačová, 2000) It is based on the assumption that people's lives are shaped by the stories they tell themselves (other people). (Matoušek, 2003) In helping professions such as social work, narrative interviewing and analysis serve as a "healing process" for the client, as a form of intervention and assistance. We each have our own story, but at the same time we are surrounded by others' stories of events that have happened, stories that explain the world around us. Storytelling can itself be healing, therapeutic, because stories can give us orientation and meaning in life. (Balogová & Žiaková, 2018)

On the other hand, we see the significant potential of storytelling in preparing future professionals, using different alternatives to story work in our teaching. These are mainly case methods, narrative methods, problem-based methods and storytelling. Case-based instruction is a story in which the problem and its solution have a fixed structure and are more factual. The student is an independent observer of a past event, which he/she is then asked to comment on, analyse, etc. (Andrews, Hull, & Donahue, 2009).

Narrative-based instruction also works with a fixed problem and solution, but in contrast to the case-based method, it relies mainly on the emotional involvement of students, stimulating emotions and authentic experience of the story alongside the description of events and facts. The story in this case does not have to have a linear chronological structure, it is the emotional line that stimulates the connection of the story. (Andrews et al., 2009)

The problem-based instruction (PBI) method works with a story in which a problem is stated, but the solution or criteria for the solution are not fixed. The student thus becomes the "director" of the story. According to the authors (Andrews et al., 2009), this type of story best stimulates the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice, the linking of declarative and procedural knowledge, and the development of professional skills.

In the context of higher education of students in social work, we see the importance of focusing the educational process on developing critical thinking and working with prejudices and stereotypes. Storytelling serves as a tool for promot-

ing humanity and sensitisation. Storytelling is one of the traditional forms of sharing knowledge, traditions, values, professional knowledge, and skills. At the same time, it offers us a space to develop and discuss professional values and attitudes, especially by bringing objective facts, emotional atonement, attitudes, personal perspective, and, last but not least, learner activation.

Storytelling leaves a physical and emotional trace in the brain, offering deep engagement and better attention than more didactic information sharing (Zak, 2014). In this way, leveraging the innate ability of a story to connect with and influence students makes the intentional use of storytelling an effective teaching tool. (Fatin Shabbar, Aidan Cornelius-Bell & Tania Hall (2024)

Storytelling is considered the art of storytelling, which would be meaningless without listeners. (Heathfield, 2014) Today, it is one of the traditional forms of sharing knowledge, traditions, values, professional knowledge and skills. In addition to developing professional knowledge and skills, the authors highlight the space for developing and discussing professional values and attitudes. (Hensel - Rasco, 1992) Cases, stories or narratives bring emotional atonement, attitudes and personal perspectives to teaching in addition to objective facts. (Moezzi - Janda - Rotmann, 2017) In addition, emotional involvement and empathic identification with story characters contribute to learner activation, lead to faster information recall and stimulate verbal sharing of information in the group. Another significant benefit of using stories is the formation of attitudes and prejudices.

Stories allow learning to be linked to the learner's previous experiences, knowledge and skills; stories also put information into context. They tell us why topics such as racial intolerance, ethnic differences, migration and others are essential to us. Furthermore, that is what learners are interested in in the first place. The stories also show us the consequences of our decisions. Through storytelling, students also encounter a range of negative emotions such as sadness, fear, hopelessness and others, so care must be taken to dose them sensitively and not to saturate the story unnecessarily emotionally. On the other hand, innovative and creatively presented stories awaken students' imagination. Opening minds, showing a different perspective and stimulating the imagination are much more critical than students' knowledge. (Galkova, Kurčíková, Ivanová, 2020)

Storytelling is also taking new forms in higher education and has a growing number of adherents, mainly because of its wide range of benefits and student engagement. The most common forms are contact storytelling (living library) and digital storytelling (online storytelling).

Contact storytelling (living and human libraries) is the most "emotive" experience. If we want to work with storytelling, it is ideal to provide a gradual gradation. Start with written storytelling, continue through the online living library and finish with contact storytelling. An even more interesting next stage can be "self-storytelling", which means creating your own story - "me as a living book". Living libraries in education can shape attitudes concerning themes of difference, diversity, promotion of humanity and social responsibility. In teaching,

there are advantages in linking the campus with other organisations (primary schools, NGOs, international organisations in the field of global education), activating students, and involving them in the learning process. In this way, we can also shape their competencies in design and other key competencies needed for practice. Another strength of living libraries is that they provide a space for creating constructive dialogue between people who do not have the opportunity to meet and talk in the ordinary world. Living libraries allow people to interact privately and personally with strangers in a structured, protected and completely free space - without any further obligation. The loose structure is probably one of the reasons why living libraries are prevalent and often organised abroad. (Hajtmánková - Maziniová, 2008)

The use of contact storytelling in education has several benefits - from emotional atonement, active learning, and faster information handling to working with stereotypes and prejudices. In such a design of education, we can emphasise in particular personal experience, awareness of diversity in society, and innovation of teaching, which will bring a change in the traditional way of teaching and, thus, a more significant connection between theory and practice (Galkova et al., 2020).

Digital storytelling or online living library is a tool where we can introduce others to the otherness around us through people's stories (living books) and encourage them to think, form their own opinions and, most importantly, think critically. It is not always possible to realise a contact living library at a university, which is why through an online living library, we can think together about how to find solutions, how to start talking to each other, stop pointing out differences and

reduce prejudices between us. At the same time, even during the Covid 19 crisis in the educational environment, online storytelling had a growing number of adherents because of the spectrum of benefits of engaging students in distance education.

The primary objective of digital storytelling in education is to merge the benefit of traditional learning through storytelling with modern digital learning methods to enhance accessibility and versatility (Palioura & Dimoulas, 2022).

Through the story of the online living library, students can understand through concrete stories how our fears and prejudices arise and how our emotions work. In this way, we can also experience how to effectively contribute to making society more sensitive to people with barriers through an online story and understand why emotional learning is more conducive to raising important social issues and why it is important to teach critical thinking in education. Such thinking is also essential to learning social responsibility. Online living libraries are now a standard part of formal education in several countries. It is an interactive form of the learning process.

In educational settings at the university, digital storytelling continues to take on new forms. It has many adherents for the wide-ranging benefits of engaging students in purposive educational stories with audio-visual supplements. Digital storytelling transforms narrative into a digital production using various media resources, including 2D images, 3D animations, videos, photographs and audio production (Clarke & Adam, 2012). Accordingly, digital storytelling has become integral to social media, education, and social change advocacy over the last 30 years (Sunderland & Robinson et al., 2020).

We can conclude that all forms of storytelling are used among students to openly discuss overcoming obstacles in society. Also, through stories, we learn about listening with understanding, reflecting on social events, developing critical thinking, shaping our own biases, engaging with communities, and being socially responsible. We see storytelling as an indispensable aid to the practical preparation of social work and helping professional students. Storytelling offers a space to use stories in regular classroom instruction while creating inspiring suggestions for student projects or activities in the community.

Social background of storytelling

Today, we live in a globalised world where a wide range of processes beyond the control of nation-states are spontaneous, uncontrolled and uncoordinated, leading to higher-level integrations (Kosová, 2014). Globalisation is a complex, contradictory and ambivalent process that brings society several positive and equally negative consequences. One of the most significant challenges is the unequal distribution of wealth globally and the widening gap between the rich and the poor, with the so-called middle class disappearing altogether. In a society where there has been the possibility of transition between layers of the population, changes are taking place that are leading to the emergence of an elite and the declassed. This situation is thus fuelling the emergence of social problems more than ever before. Another inherent negative is the disintegration of natural local and national communities. Traditional communities were based on immediate interpersonal contact, cooperation and mutual trust since it was impossible to survive without them. On the other hand, global society does not seem

to know such a form of human cooperation, and life for people in big cities is becoming increasingly anonymous, and trust itself is disappearing. In the wake of globalisation processes, there is also a growing irresponsibility of multinational companies for causing local environmental problems. All these problems of contemporary society raise issues that need to be discussed.

Storytelling, in particular, seems to be a good choice for so-called 'sensitising' young people to the risks of contemporary society. However, in addition to the risks and the aforementioned negative consequences of globalisation, many positives are worth mentioning and discussing. No generation before us had such good access to food, clothing, technology and healthcare as we have today. These benefits are felt by individuals but also by families. Easier importation and distribution of products brings us more choice and lower prices. In addition, we can travel to the various countries where our fellow citizens often work, study or live and communicate on the web, through which we exchange ideas and expand education, cultural values and experiences with people, even from the other side of the Earth. A current problem on the Internet is the publication of statuses, comments, remarks, videos, animations, and the like that are critical or even defamatory towards, for example, Roma, Jews, migrants, LGBT groups, or various other minorities, as well as people living on the margins of society. Collectively, we refer to such behaviour as 'heckling' - hateful behaviour towards someone or something. According to a survey by the Institute for Public Affairs, up to 84% of respondents have experience with heckling, 25% encounter it very often, and 59% relatively rarely. 1.083 respondents aged 18-39

took part in the survey. (Velšić, 2016) The risk of hating is mainly due to its strong connection with extremism or extremist speech on the Internet.

The rise of extremism and radicalism as a basis for the use of storytelling

Extremism in our context is described as a social, political, legal, psychological and philosophical phenomenon. However, the term extremism encompasses a range of phenomena that differ significantly regarding social danger. The dangerous forms of society can be criminal activity or socio-pathological phenomena. Among the most risky of these are racial and xenophobic extremism and terrorism (Mlýnek, 2014). One of the reasons we list the manifestations of extremism is that at the developmental stage of the emergence of behaviour that does not accept socially approved norms of behaviour, radicalism and extremism stand side by side, and their manifestations overlap.

Activism → Radicalism → Extremism → Terrorism

The concept of extremism is unclear. By the very nature of the term extreme, it should be something that is fringe - i.e. something that is outside the standard and acceptable deviations from it. However, the attempt at a universally valid definition of extremism fails at the very attempt to delineate what all can be classified as 'still acceptable' deviations. Nonetheless, the consensus in political science has settled that extremism-as a set of certain political approaches and ideas about governance and statecraft- falls at the extreme poles of the left and right of the political spectrum. On this basis, it is divided into 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' extremism. (Bihárióvá, 2011, p.7)

The concept of countering radicalisation and extremism understands extremism as "actions and manifestations based on the attitudes of an extreme ideology hostile to the democratic system, which, directly or over a certain period, have a destructive effect on the existing democratic system and its basic attributes. The second characteristic feature of extremism and its associated activities is that it attacks the system of fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and international human rights documents or seeks to make exercising these rights more difficult or impossible through their activities. Other characteristic features of extremism are considered to be efforts to restrict, suppress or prevent the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms for certain groups of the population defined by their gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, colour, religion, language, sexual orientation, membership of a social class, property, as well as the use of physical violence or the threat to use violence against opponents of opinion or political opponents or their property. Extremism is divided into right-wing, left-wing, religious and single-issue extremism (ecological, separatism, etc.). (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Concept for Countering Radicalisation and Extremism 2024)

The Criminal Law of the Slovak Republic uses the term extremism concerning extremist offences, extremist groups and extremist material. "The offences of extremism are the offence of founding, supporting and promoting a movement aimed at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms, expressing sympathy for a movement aimed at the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms, producing extremist

materials, disseminating extremist materials, possession of extremist materials, denial and approval of the Holocaust, crimes committed by political regimes and crimes against humanity, defamation of nation, race and beliefs, incitement to national, racial and ethnic hatred, apartheid and discrimination against a group of persons." (§ 140 a), Criminal Act No. 300/2005 Coll.).

Another concept that is related to extremism is radicalism. *The Concept for Countering Radicalisation and Extremism 2024* defines radicalism as: 'the process of increasing acceptance of an ideology that contradicts the democratic rule of law, its constitutional and legislative norms, the system of fundamental rights and freedoms, the separation of state powers, an independent judiciary, freedom of the press, free elections, equality before the law, the plurality of political parties, and the free and legitimate functioning of the opposition (hereafter referred to as the 'rule of law')'. In the process, individuals or groups under the influence of some form of political or religious extremism adopt a new system of 'values' which are incompatible with the democratic rule of law and which, among other things, enshrine equality before the law and the dignity of every human being. With the adoption of a particular form of political or religious extremism, an individual or movement 'departs' from the democratic rule of law, thereby gradually increasing the level of identification with a particular form of extremist ideology and increasing its determination to put that form of political or religious extremism into practice, including through the use of violence and, in the final

stage of radicalisation, through the use of the means of terrorism' (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Concept of Countering Radicalisation and Extremism until 2024, p. 9).

It is important to say, however, that an individual who adopts a new system of values does not automatically have to put them into practice in a violent way. This depends on which stage of radicalisation he or she is in, and intervention is essential. As Grigory Meseznikov (2017) points out, there is a relatively favourable social background in Slovakia concerning radicalism and extremism, which is closely related to the multiethnic composition of the population, complicated relations between the Slovak majority and various minorities, attempts to mythologise historical consciousness, the negative impact of economic reforms on particular social groups of the population, the persistence of racial prejudices, etc. All this has been recently joined by revived conspiracy theories, which are gaining space for dissemination via the Internet, social networks and modern media.

One of the authentic analytical methods to determine support for extremism is DEREK (Demand For Right-Wing Extremism) - an index of support for extremism. The Political Capital Institute, a think-tank in Budapest, developed it. It is an international comparative project that evaluates data from the European Social Survey (ESS), a longitudinal sociological survey, based on an original theoretical model.

To develop the DEREK index, Political Capital's experts divided the 29 research questions asked of respondents in the European Social Survey into four categories: prejudice and social chauvinism (anti-minority and anti-immigrant sentiment, support for restricting immigration, etc.), anti-establishment

sentiments (distrust towards power and democratic institutions - national and international, towards the judiciary and the police, general dissatisfaction with the existing political system), right-wing value orientations (strong need for social order and its observance, devotion to traditional values, religiosity, political self-definition as a supporter of right-wing forces), fears, mistrust and pessimism (general dissatisfaction with one's own life and with the economic situation, mistrust of other people, feeling of insecurity). The first three categories are ideological. Their content reflects the natural undercurrent of opinion for right-wing extremist ideology and politics. The fourth category focuses on emotional factors and supplements the ideological elements with a psychological element. Following the DEREK methodology, an individual is considered a potential supporter of right-wing-extremist politics if he or she responds positively to questions related to attitudes and values meeting the criteria of at least three of the four categories (Velsic, 2017, p.6).

Within the two-year research cycles, the DEREK index in Slovakia varied. A relatively dynamic increase is observed in pro-minority and anti-immigrant sentiment. While in 2004-2005, they affected 27% of the population, in 2012-2013, it was already 39%. It can also be concluded from the above graph that over the last few years, we have seen more robust support for value factors, e.g. prejudice and social chauvinism. Regarding comparison, potential support for extremism in Slovakia reached the relatively highest values in 2013, together with Hungary - 12%. Compared with other V4 countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, this support was at 8%. Compared with other European countries, the DEREK in Austria and

France is 5%, in Germany 2% and in Sweden 1% (Velsic, 2017, p.6).

For young people, cyberspace is a natural place where they express their personality and form their identity, but also where they shape general and socio-political issues and themes, as demonstrated by representative research 2016. The stereotype that was based on the opinion that young people are apathetic and uninterested in current events in society is undermined by this very research, which was conducted in 2016 by the Institute for Public Affairs, the results of which showed that up to 45% of young people follow information about current events in society regularly, and 51% follow it occasionally. (Velšic, 2017, p.7).

In 2022, Pétiová carried out a research entitled Manifestations of extremism, xenophobia, anti-Roma racism and terrorism and the view of primary and secondary school pupils on persons who differ from the majority population. The aim was to find out the views, attitudes, awareness and personal experiences of primary and secondary school pupils with manifestations of extremism, racism, discrimination and terrorism. The task built on the work on intolerance, violence and extremism in children and young people aged 12 to 18 was carried out in 2010, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 so that the findings could be compared. The exciting findings of this research can be considered the following: Since 2016, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils surveyed who have encountered extremism and its manifestations not only on the internet and social media but also at school, in peer groups and at home. The number of respondents who had experienced it on the street or seen it on TV has decreased. The

number of respondents who did not have these negative experiences decreased, although the number of pupils who could not recall these unpleasant situations increased significantly.

Between 2016 and 2018, the most common source of these negative experiences was television broadcasting. From 2019 to 2021, the internet and social media gained priority, but in 2022, primary and secondary school pupils experienced this negative phenomenon in the school environment. Since 2021, the number of respondents who have experienced extremist speech in a peer group has increased significantly. It is clear from the above that the spread of extremist ideas has largely moved out of the virtual world into schools, families and peer groups, and children and young people are much more at risk from them than before. These findings may be due to Slovakia's negative social and political situation caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, rising inflation and large price increases, which have also caused considerable insecurity and dissatisfaction among citizens. As far as specific areas of interest are concerned, it is mainly world events and environmental issues that are followed by 70% of young people, with another two-thirds following the current topic of migration and the related topic of human rights, the fight against racism or discrimination. Internal politics and the activities of political parties in Slovakia are followed by up to 60% of young people. The research was conducted within the long-term analytical and monitoring project Digital Literacy in Slovakia on a sample of 1083 Internet respondents (Velšic, 2016, p. 2).

In 2017, the Institute for Public Affairs conducted a representative survey of public opinion on the topic "*Active Citizenship and Civic Participation in Slovakia and the V4 Countries*". The research was conducted within the framework of the international project Strengthening Citizenship in the V4 Countries, which the International Visegrad Fund supported with the participation of partner organisations STEM (Prague), Instytut Spraw Publicznych (Warsaw), Political Capital Institute (Budapest) and the Institute for Public Affairs (Bratislava). The research looked at several areas, but an interesting finding was that most Slovak and Czech residents do not trust other people, compared to residents of Poland and Hungary.

In psychology, attitudes are regarded as relatively enduring sets of positive or negative evaluations, emotional feelings, and tendencies to act for or against society. These attitudes express a position on a certain area of reality; they express a value system, which means that a person has a certain attitude towards all things, phenomena, and persons but also towards himself, which strongly influences the individual's behaviour. It is crucial for the formation of attitudes that attitudes are a learned dimension of personality, which is acquired during socialisation learning, always in a particular culture under social pressures, and leads to the formation of certain cultural attitudes about the environment in which the individual finds himself. This learning takes place through other people, where the influence of those members with whom the children have a close relationship or who are authority figures, role models and with whom they are in daily contact is decisive. This often includes the child's parents, but the teacher is also a strong influence. Attitudes are essential

in everyone's psyche, contributing to maintaining psychological balance, not least because they reduce anxiety and reinforce self-worth. They serve both as a justification for hostility and an acceptable rationale for culturally unacceptable patterns of behaviour, helping to justify and explain selfishness. According to Freud (in Oravcova, 2004), attitudes also protect one's ego. Especially dangerous are attitudes like prejudices, i.e. strongly emotionally tinged irrational attitudes that harm an individual's behaviour towards members of other nationalities. Attitudes towards other ethnic groups are currently receiving particular attention because they are formed in a social environment and reflect our society. Attitudes associated with prejudice against ethnically different groups are linked by several concepts, such as:

(Oravcová, 2004) defines ethnic attitude as an attitude towards ethnic and racially identified individuals or groups where the relational, affective – evaluative aspect of the attitude prevails. In other words, it is a racist attitude that is the basis for discrimination against ethnic groups in various spheres, such as the economic, political, interpersonal, or civil-legal spheres.

Ethnic stereotypes are characterised by template-like perception and judgment. They are opinions about classes of individuals, groups, and objects that are not a product of direct experience but are taken over and maintained by tradition. Ethnic stereotypes belong to the components of attitudes; they are ideas, beliefs, opinions, and information related to an ethnic group. They are a schema of a cognitive category.

In contemporary intercultural psychology, prejudice is perceived as a particular bias or rigidity of opinion, characterised by emotionally charged and critically unassessed judgment and the resulting attitude of the individual or group. Prejudice can refer to anything formed based on a given religious belief or ideological conviction, does not depend on the immediate situation and is not based on understanding. Prejudice is a model of hostility in interpersonal relations, directed against the whole group, against its members; for its bearer it fulfils a specific irrational function. Prejudice can also be related to the attribution of specific characteristics to certain individuals, not only negative but also positive (Čeněk, Smolík, Vykoukalová 2016).

Ethnocentrism is characterized by a tendency to evaluate, know and interpret others only from the perspective of one's own culture or community, it is related to nationalism and individual attitudes, from which arises a biased preference for one's own ethnicity and condemnation of other ethnicities.

Racism is the belief that some people are superior to others because of their membership of a particular race. The superior race displays aggressive behaviour; here, we are already talking about brutal racism, which manifests itself directly in verbal or physical attacks.

Xenophobia is one of the socio-pathological phenomena, it is characterised as disgust, hostility, distrust and fear of everything foreign. Čeněk, Smolík, Vykoukalová 2016).

Anti-Semitism is another form of prejudice, but in this case, focusing on discrimination against Jews. It is based on negative beliefs about faith and negative stereotypes about the

nature and behaviour of Jews. (Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Concept of Countering Radicalisation and Extremism until 2024, p. 4).

Discrimination is the adverse treatment of people based on characteristics such as skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, social class or ethnicity. A person who judges in this way does not recognise the equality of others and denies or restricts the rights of others. We also attribute a soft form of racism to discrimination because it condemns, based on meaningless characteristics, people who have a different colour, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. It manifests itself in dismissive behaviour, ignorant attitudes, non-acceptance and exclusion. (Ondrušek, 2007, p.75)

Intolerance is a lack of respect and regard for other beliefs or faiths. Individuals do not accept different opinions, religious beliefs, sexual orientations or appearances of others (Ondrušek, 2007). Experts are not unanimous on at what age ethnic attitudes are formed. However, the research cited by Oravcova (2004) on the issue to date states that attitudes are formed as early as preschool age. However, experts tend to agree that it is the formation of ethnic differences. Research also highlights the importance of the influence of the socio-cultural environment in which the child lives and also the influence of socio-economic status.

In a society that nurtures diverse, interdependent and unequal communities, it is necessary to understand and learn from repeated historical mistakes, to acknowledge co-responsibility for the problems that arise and to expand knowledge. In conclusion, storytelling is one of the innovative methods that have the potential to link theory with practice. Through

storytelling we can provide a space for creating a constructive dialogue between people who do not have the opportunity to meet and talk in ordinary reality. In the context of education, they also shape the attitudes of individuals and increase tolerance. Storytelling and working with stories contribute to the development of emotional intimacy and stimulate receptivity and a kind of acceptance of diversity within a community or society.

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5.2. Social exclusion in the age of the information society

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Introduction

The information society is characterised by the production, collection, and dissemination of information, which serves as a fundamental prerequisite for its operation. For its members, computers, the Internet, and digital technologies in general have become central to both everyday life and professional activity (Golka, 2007, p. 169). Today, few spheres of human activity remain untouched by the interconnected processes of technological expansion and mediatisation. These processes are multidimensional, transforming organisational structures, introducing new dynamics into social systems, and significantly affecting individual health and well-being.

These phenomena can be examined from various perspectives, including sociological, psychological, pedagogical, political, economic, philosophical, and – particularly – ethical and axiological viewpoints, with special emphasis on social exclusion. The pace of these transformations and individuals' ability to adapt to them depend crucially on their cultural capital and geographical location – factors that largely shape the development of cultural competences. In contemporary societies, such competences are increasingly equated with digital competences. Digital competence, in turn, includes media literacy, which is developed through both formal, institutionalised education and informal, community-based learning (Ogonowska, 2013, p. 36).

Against this backdrop, a central question emerges: does the development of the information society reduce the scope and intensity of negatively evaluated social phenomena, including those that lead to exclusion? According to Marian Golka, the information society creates a superficial impression of equality and egalitarianism while remaining profoundly unequal, though the forms and mechanisms of this inequality differ substantially from those of earlier historical periods (Golka, 2008, p. 143).

The present article examines selected concepts of social exclusion arising from pre-existing social inequalities and clarifies the mechanisms by which these inequalities are reproduced and intensified in the information society. The second part focuses specifically on manifestations of exclusion within the information society, using the situation of older adults as a case study.

The Concept of Social Exclusion

The concept of social exclusion originated in French sociology and was popularised in the 1970s by René Lenoir (1927–2017), who described the excluded as those denied access to essential social resources and services (Lenoir, 1974). Since then, the concept has evolved into a multidimensional analytical framework encompassing deprivation in areas such as education, employment, healthcare, housing, and social participation. Exclusion is increasingly understood as a dynamic process involving the cumulative rupture of social bonds and institutional affiliations.

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) deepened this understanding by linking exclusion to the reproductive mechanisms of social inequality. Dominant groups, he argued, maintain their privilege through the mobilisation of cultural capital – defined as socially legitimised mastery of cultural codes, practices, and dispositions (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 165). Cultural capital takes three main forms: (1) embodied (*habitus*), consisting of durable, largely unconscious dispositions and perceptual schemas; (2) objectified, manifested in material cultural goods; and (3) institutionalised, represented by formally recognised credentials. These forms function as instruments of distinction, enabling upward mobility for those who possess them while systematically disadvantaging those who do not, thus reinforcing class boundaries.

In the Polish context, these dynamics are reflected in persistent regional disparities. Poverty and social exclusion remain significantly higher in certain counties of the Kuyavian-Pomeranian and Masovian voivodeships (Mikuła, 2016, pp. 448–451).

Historically, exclusionary practices were institutionalised in feudal estates, where hereditary status rigidly limited mobility. Under industrial capitalism, they shifted to class-based alienation from the means of production – a process Karl Marx (1844) theorised as workers' estrangement from their labour and its products. In contemporary societies, exclusion operates through more diffuse and intersectional mechanisms, including discrimination based on age, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Older adults frequently experience labour-market marginalisation and consequent social isolation,

while women and ethnic minorities encounter persistent structural barriers to advancement, often described as “glass ceilings” (OECD, 2023). In the United States, African American and Hispanic populations continue to have 20–30% less access to high-quality education than their White counterparts, perpetuating intergenerational disadvantage (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2024; The Education Trust, 2022).

These processes are inseparable from broader patterns of social stratification. Ralf Dahrendorf’s (1929–2009) conflict-theoretic model emphasises the role of authority relations and resource competition in producing multidimensional class divisions (Dahrendorf, 1959). Under globalisation, stratification has taken on a transnational dimension: nations in the Global South face neocolonial forms of exclusion mediated by unequal trade, debt regimes, and the economic dominance of wealthier states, thereby sustaining global asymmetries.

Mechanisms of Inequality and Stratification

The mechanisms of social inequality and stratification can be analysed through Amartya Sen’s capability approach. Sen maintains that genuine equality consists not in the equal distribution of resources but in ensuring that individuals have the substantive freedoms to achieve the functionings they value (Sen, 1999, p. 74). Accordingly, social progress should be assessed not only by economic indicators such as GDP but also by the expansion of capabilities in domains such as education, health, and political participation. These dimensions are essential for a comprehensive understanding of inequality. The capability approach highlights how discrimination on grounds of gender or ethnicity limits the conversion of resources into valued achievements by women and minority groups, thus

framing development as the expansion of freedom. For example, the enduring caste system in India illustrates how structural barriers hinder capability development among lower castes (Sen, 1999, p. 39). In contemporary Europe, recent data show that individuals of lower socioeconomic status have health and educational outcomes 15–25% below the population average, reinforcing processes of social stratification (Eurostat, 2025).

Philosophical perspectives further enrich this analysis. John Rawls's theory of justice as fairness proposes that social institutions should be arranged to guarantee fair equality of opportunity and to allow economic inequalities only when they benefit the least advantaged members of society (Rawls, 1971, p. 302). Rawls famously declared that "justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought" (Rawls, 1971, p. 3). In contrast, Robert Nozick's libertarian entitlement theory defends inequalities arising from voluntary exchanges and respect for property rights, rejecting patterned redistribution as a violation of individual liberty (Nozick, 1974, pp. 150–161). Nozick argued that any coercive redistribution in the name of equality constitutes injustice. Contemporary critiques point out the limitations of both positions: Rawls's difference principle permits inequalities only when they improve the position of the worst-off, yet it may not adequately address entrenched structural disadvantages; Nozick's framework, while prioritising individual entitlement, largely overlooks systemic inequalities rooted in historical injustice (Hwang, 2025, p. 2).

From an axiological perspective, social inequalities undermine core ethical values, particularly equality and human

dignity. Axiology, as the study of values, holds that human dignity – an intrinsic worth inherent in every person – requires equal opportunities and protection from discrimination (Kant, 1785/2006). In social contexts, persistent inequality erodes solidarity and justice, fostering conflict. The United Nations declares that equality is the normative foundation of human rights and that discrimination on grounds of age, ethnicity, or other characteristics violates human dignity (UN, 1948). Empirical evidence from highly stratified societies, such as Brazil, shows that ethnic discrimination against indigenous populations exacerbates poverty and raises serious concerns for intergenerational justice (World Bank, 2025). More recent axiological scholarship advances a conception of dignity grounded in equality, demanding protection from exploitative transactional relations (Anderson-Meger, 2016). Some contemporary approaches further propose extending the notion of dignity to entities possessing intrinsic value, thereby challenging anthropocentric boundaries and broadening the ethical scope of inequality analysis (Perry, 2023, p. 12).

The perspectives provided by Sen, Rawls, Nozick, and axiological theory collectively demonstrate that inequalities are not merely economic phenomena but profoundly ethical ones, implicating the freedoms that enable individuals to lead lives they have reason to value.

Social Inequalities and the Idea of Justice

In examining theoretical models of social inequalities, it is essential to consider the relationship between this concept and the principle of justice (Domański, 2004; Kwieciński, 2007). Within this framework, three distinct models of equality can

be identified: equality before the law, equality of opportunity, and equality of outcome.

The model of equality before the law rests on the premise that demographic characteristics – such as gender, age, religion, place of residence, and social origin – should not influence the operation of the judicial system or the administration of justice. The equality of opportunity model asserts that individuals' social positions and statuses should be determined by their own efforts and achievements rather than by ascribed characteristics, such as birth into a privileged family. Finally, the equality of outcome model emphasises the need for societal interventions to provide support for individuals and groups at risk of social exclusion, thereby reducing disparities in starting points and life circumstances.

Social Exclusion in the Information Society

Manuel Castells (1996) conceptualises the information society as a networked era in which knowledge and digital technologies become primary resources, while inequalities take new forms. Digital exclusion – defined as limited or absent access to the Internet and digital competences – intensifies social stratification, producing what is commonly termed the “digital divide.” Analogous processes occurred during the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when access to machinery largely determined class position. Contemporary data reveal persistent disparities: in developing regions, particularly among disadvantaged ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa, Internet penetration remains below 30%, compared with approximately 90% in Europe (ITU, 2025). In the United States, individuals aged 65 and older show digital technology adoption rates roughly 40% lower than those of

younger cohorts, contributing to increased social isolation (Faverio, 2022). Women in many Asian countries face a gendered digital divide, with access rates 15–20% lower than those of men, constraining their educational and economic opportunities (UNESCO, 2024). In Poland, unequal access to digital resources similarly promotes exclusion and reinforces marginalisation through deficits in communicative competence (Klebański, 2025, p. 1).

From Amartya Sen's capability approach, the information society requires the cultivation of digital capabilities as a substantive freedom to prevent the exacerbation of inequalities. John Rawls's theory of justice implies that equitable access to technology should be institutionalised as a basic liberty within the framework of fair equality of opportunity, whereas Robert Nozick's entitlement theory permits digital inequalities provided they arise without coercion. From an axiological standpoint, restricted access undermines human dignity, transforming technology from a means of emancipation into an instrument of exclusion.

The foregoing analysis demonstrates that mechanisms of social exclusion, inequality, and stratification permeate the information society, inevitably generating digital exclusion. Within the domain of media literacy, exclusion extends beyond mere absence of equipment to include deficiencies in skills, which Bourdieu would interpret as a lack of digital cultural capital.

Older Adults in the Information Society: Opportunity or Exclusion?

Social exclusion among older adults is most commonly conceptualised as either a state or a process (Jaworska, 2013).

The static conceptualisation emphasises the condition of being excluded across multiple dimensions of individual or collective functioning. This condition can be examined through several analytical lenses: (1) biological factors, such as advanced age and health-related disabilities; (2) biographical circumstances that predispose particular individuals or groups to exclusion or self-exclusion; (3) environmental contexts, including social support networks and institutional frameworks that may facilitate or hinder adaptive capacities; (4) attitudinal and value orientations that enable or impede participation in social life; and (5) the subjective experience of feeling excluded.

When conceptualised dynamically as a process, social exclusion unfolds through sequential stages: (1) deterioration in living conditions arising from adverse circumstances; (2) consequent restrictions on participation in social life; (3) deprivation of needs across multiple domains; (4) progression toward social isolation; and (5) restricted access to social goods.

The primary causes of social exclusion among older adults can be grouped into three broad categories (Jaworska, 2013). The first involves dysfunctional state policies that fail to provide adequate support for disadvantaged individuals and groups. The second pertains to self-exclusion, stemming from objective limitations or subjective perceptions of inadequate competence for active societal engagement. The third arises from perceived otherness and its objective and subjective consequences, including stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination.

In developed societies, digital exclusion has traditionally been understood as unequal physical access to computers and

the Internet – a disparity that remains pronounced in developing contexts. Increasingly, however, divisions rooted in digital skills and patterns of new media usage affect growing segments of the population and are deepening in significance. As van Dijk (2005, p. 264) observes:

In developed societies, digital exclusion is understood as a difference in physical access to computers and the Internet. In developing societies, it continues to grow. Meanwhile, divisions related to digital skills and the use of new media are affecting an increasing proportion of the population and are becoming more pronounced. When it comes to the use of new technologies, there is a division between people who benefit from the advanced functions of new media (helping them in their professional careers or education, in exercising power and in political relations) and those who use simple functions: entertainment, e-commerce, and instant messaging.

Older adults who successfully navigated the analogue era may face difficulties adapting to the demands of the digital environment due to entrenched competence structures formed through socialisation processes markedly different from those experienced by digital natives. This mismatch can foster negative attitudes toward new media, reluctance to integrate them into lifelong development, or, conversely, uncritical enthusiasm that increases vulnerability to cybercrime.

Digital marginalisation among older adults is shaped by multiple factors, including: (1) general knowledge and proficiency in operating electronic devices, particularly screen-based technologies; (2) receptivity to enhancing digital competences through media education; (3) limited proficiency in Eng-

lish; and (4) self-exclusion alongside other psychological barriers (Polańska, 2012, p. 238). Golka (2008, p. 143) identifies several groups as particularly vulnerable to digital exclusion: (1) low-income individuals unable to afford computers and associated infrastructure; (2) those with low educational attainment that impedes basic usage; (3) individuals with certain disabilities; (4) persons exhibiting technophobia; and (5) those lacking understanding of information-society dynamics.

Building on van Dijk's (2005, 2010) framework of access barriers, several distinct dimensions can be delineated. The motivational barrier concerns the perceived relevance of digital engagement for meeting professional, educational, social, recreational, or other needs; among older adults, low motivation often reflects limited awareness of potential benefits. The skills barrier relates to the capacity for purposeful utilisation of digital tools, which, for seniors, typically emerges through deliberate learning or self-education rather than the immersive necessity characteristic of younger generations' native digital environments. Material barriers encompass lack of equipment or, more commonly, reliable broadband connectivity. Finally, the usage barrier involves the practical application of technologies in goal-oriented contexts to enhance individual functioning within the social environment.

Conclusion

According to Atkinson (1998, as cited in Jaworska, 2013), social exclusion can be conceptualised in terms of three inter-related dimensions. The first dimension is relativity, which emphasises that exclusion is always contextualised within specific historical and cultural conditions. In the contemporary in-

formation society, rapid technological advancement has profoundly transformed the structure of social life, accelerating changes in the hierarchies of competences required for effective societal participation. Demographic ageing across Europe, coupled with declining intergenerational replacement, represents a historically novel challenge to social systems. At the same time, global improvements in health awareness, living standards, and institutional support for older adults – facilitated by social policy and healthcare systems – have reached unprecedented levels, despite persistent stratification. Cultural contexts shape social integration at multiple levels, from individual values and norms to family microstructures, local environments, organisational practices, and macro-structural and global processes. In the information society, culture has increasingly become mediated culture. For older adults, the acquisition of cultural competences – now largely synonymous with media competences – emerges as a critical protective factor against social exclusion.

The second dimension is dynamism, which refers not primarily to the current circumstances of older adults but to the absence of realistic prospects for improvement over time. This dimension encompasses both objective conditions (e.g., low income, limited social support networks, chronic illness, or disability) and subjective experiences of powerlessness that may foster fatalism and reduce agency in efforts to improve one's situation. A particularly significant aspect concerns shifts in older adults' self-perception regarding their sense of being valued and needed, especially among those living alone. Such shifts have direct implications for holistic health, understood as bio-psycho-social well-being.

The third dimension involves agency – the role of individuals and institutions that either contribute to exclusion or counteract it. Certain actors may perpetuate exclusion through discriminatory practices, while others perform an inclusive function by facilitating older adults' integration into mainstream social life. Notable examples include social welfare organisations and non-governmental organisations that promote active ageing, such as the expanding network of Universities of the Third Age in Poland.

Digital exclusion among older adults is closely intertwined with broader processes of social marginalisation affecting a growing demographic group. This phenomenon risks widening an "information gap" (Goban-Klas, 1999, p. 302), with detrimental consequences not only for excluded individuals but for the vitality of civil society as a whole.

In the long term, education represents an effective strategy for reducing digital exclusion among older adults (Nierenberg, 2011, p. 104). Tomczyk (2009) proposes that such educational efforts should encompass the following objectives: (1) reducing digital exclusion by enabling older adults to engage with e-services as a prerequisite for full participation in the information society; (2) supporting initiatives that equip older adults with information technology skills; (3) deepening understanding of educational processes specific to this age group; (4) preparing andragogues to work effectively with older learners; (5) developing tailored methodological approaches for designing courses for older adults; (6) promoting lifelong learning through e-learning platforms; and (7) strengthening organisations dedicated to the education of older adults.

The ultimate goal of media education (including media-digital self-education) for older adults is to cultivate a level of media competence that enables conscious, critical, and autonomous engagement within the information society.

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Conclusion

This edited volume has provided a comprehensive and multidisciplinary examination of social maladjustment as one of the most pressing challenges confronting contemporary societies. Across its thematic sections, the book has demonstrated that social maladjustment cannot be understood as an individual deficit or isolated behavioral deviation, but rather as a complex, dynamic, and structurally embedded phenomenon shaped by social exclusion, inequality, rapid technological change, demographic transformations, and shifting political and economic conditions. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical insights and practice-oriented analyses, the volume contributes meaningfully to the ongoing scholarly and professional discourse on the role of social work in addressing these interconnected challenges.

A central contribution of this book lies in its consistent emphasis on the relationship between social maladjustment and broader processes of social exclusion. The chapters collectively show that maladjustment emerges not only through personal vulnerability but also through systemic failures in access to education, employment, healthcare, housing, and meaningful social participation. This perspective reinforces the foundational assumption of social work as a profession committed to social justice, human rights, and the dignity of all individuals. Rather than framing maladjusted behavior solely as a matter of control or correction, the volume underscores the importance of empowerment, inclusion, and structural change as core principles guiding effective social work interventions.

The book also highlights the growing complexity of social work practice in a dynamically changing world. Several

chapters illustrate how globalization, digitalization, and technological innovation simultaneously create new opportunities and new risks. On the one hand, digital tools, online supervision, and innovative educational methods can expand access to services and support marginalized populations. On the other hand, these developments introduce ethical, legal, and professional challenges related to privacy, digital exclusion, unequal access, and the potential depersonalization of helping relationships. The volume thus calls for a critically reflective approach to technology in social work—one that embraces innovation while remaining firmly anchored in professional ethics and human-centered practice.

An important strength of this publication is its focus on prevention and integration across the life course and across social contexts. Whether addressing children at risk, marginalized families, migrants, incarcerated and post-incarcerated individuals, or volunteers as agents of social inclusion, the contributions demonstrate that preventive strategies are most effective when they are community-based, participatory, and culturally sensitive. The emphasis on volunteering, community centers, and interdisciplinary collaboration illustrates that preventing social maladjustment is not the sole responsibility of social work professionals, but a shared societal task requiring cooperation among institutions, civil society, and policy-makers.

Equally significant is the book's attention to education and professional development in social work. The analyses presented make clear that the capacity of social workers to respond effectively to social maladjustment depends on the qual-

ity of their education, supervision, and continuous professional training. The volume advocates for curricula that integrate critical thinking, ethical reasoning, cultural competence, and evidence-based practice, while also preparing practitioners to engage in policy advocacy and systemic change. In this sense, the book positions social work not merely as a reactive profession, but as a proactive force capable of shaping social policies and contributing to more inclusive and resilient societies.

In conclusion, *Social Work and Social Maladjustment: Opportunities and Challenges in a Dynamically Changing World* offers a timely and substantive contribution to both academic scholarship and professional practice. It affirms that addressing social maladjustment requires a holistic, value-driven, and interdisciplinary approach that recognizes the interplay between individual experiences and structural conditions. By combining theoretical depth with practical relevance, the volume provides a strong foundation for future research, policy development, and innovative social work practice aimed at reducing exclusion, strengthening social cohesion, and promoting human dignity in an increasingly complex world.

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