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CONTENTS

DYADIC PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOCIAL PATHOLOGY: THE RESEARCH, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

The phenomenon of inclusion whose framework includes the contents of social inclusion, introduces many interesting, new and, of course, also often hidden challenges into the whole of human society. Inclusion expands the horizons of our perception, our actions, our whole lives. In many places, not only in professional publications, forums, and meetings, but also at communication platforms among the laypeople and general communication in general public, the phenomenon of inclusion is thematized rather strongly and resonates more intensely than ever in recent years.

Discussions of this phenomenon feature content which evinces certain expectations, whose context at least outlines definitions of challenges, but also of some pitfalls and concerns that snowball onto the processes associated with the implementation of inclusive policies, bringing with them ultimately very specific and real risks. One such aspect which is contextually confronted with the issue of inclusion is presented and interpreted in the contribution by the author Hana Vykopalová.

Another contribution connected to the issue of addiction and its consequences in the realm of health in the broader sense, which can be sometimes more, sometimes less connected with inclusion, but always is connected with socially pathological phenomena and the related preventive activities, is brought by Roman Adamczyk.

Focus on the child and its family context precisely in a family with an addicted person where this phenomenon occurs is brought by Tatiana Dubayová who in her contribution concentrates and lays emphasis on parental approach to children and their early socialization. Another author, Irena Mudrecka, contributes with her paper in the context of social pathologies.

This issue of the Social Pathology and Prevention journal is in terms of its substantive content enriched by the review opinion of Kamil Janiš dealing with the publication by authors V. Bělík and S. Hoferková. As part of this issue, Martin Kaleja prepared a report pertaining to the topic of inclusion on the implementation of the project plan to introduce inclusive tools to education of marginalized groups and another report on the organized and successfully evaluated international scientific and professional conference which was hosted by the Research Centre for Social Inclusion of the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava, Silesian University in Opava. Gwendolyn Albert, a member of the Work Group for Roma Education under the Government Office of the Czech Republic, offers a somewhat different perspective in her report on the equally important activity for inclusion and the related processes and mechanisms which are part of the work group's agenda.

I believe that the content of this issue will at least in a small part contribute to the debate, knowledge and critical, objective confrontation of the topic of the dyad of inclusion and social pathology which is discussed in this extended issue; despite the fact that the very perception of both of these concepts by each one of us, in terms of what they comprise, who agrees with what in regard to their domain, or what who of us sees differently in their context, can vary, sometimes even greatly.

Martin Kaleja

ARTICLES

URBANISM AND SECURITY ASPECTS OF INCLUSION AND REGIONAL MIGRATION

Hana Vykopalová

Abstract

The submitted contribution responds to the current global migration and integration issues. It presents a comparison of the knowledge in areas of social inclusion, social exclusion and social cohesion and their interrelations. It points to basic theoretical starting points and concepts solving social exclusion, to the dimensions of social inclusion from the perspective of including marginal groups in the majority society, and to the importance of social capital. It provides a basic analytical and comparative orientation in the field of social inclusion from the perspective of immigration and those socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion. It provides basic information on basic initiatives in the field of social inclusion within the EU, presents a practical project aimed at solving the social integration of people excluded or at risk of social exclusion at the regional level as innovative solutions and aspect of originality. Practical applications in different countries are related to public and social politics. Comparative analysis and research reports have provided an adequate level of knowledge about the problem.

Keywords

social inclusion, social exclusion, integration, integration policy, social integration programs at regional level

Introduction

Individuals as well as the society as a whole understand the process of social inclusion as an attempt to share the same values and equal access to the qualities of life. Processes of social inclusion have been a permanent part of the existence of human society, they closely relate to the social order. Historically, social inclusion processes have been closely linked to migration. In almost every society, marginal social groups emerged in certain periods and situations, unable to use all social opportunities on an equal footing with others. Development of democracy, the declaration of freedoms and equal opportunities, and the emergence of social order, brought about a more intense perception of social inclusion issues. The aim of the contribution is to point out the basic aspects of social

exclusion, cohesion and social inclusion and their mutual conditionality. Social inclusion issues are not only relevant in the context of the global migration crisis, as almost every country addresses the problem of social inclusion in the context of so-called cultural exclusion, in the case of socially excluded groups. A number of well-known authors deal with these issues, for example: Kelsey, 2019; Bucheli, Fontenla, & Waddell, 2019; Yagmur, 2019; Pajnik, 2019; Pūraitė, Seniutienė, & Greičius 2017; Reslow, 2019; Valenta et al., 2019; Bartram, 2019 and others.

Social exclusion as a fundamental starting point. Basic theoretical background and description of the problem.

The starting point for addressing social inclusion issues lies in the lessons learned from the solution of social exclusion, the essence of which lies in the inability of the society to integrate all its members. The current concept of social exclusion builds on the concept of poverty as material deprivation causing social disadvantage and structured inequality. From this perspective, social exclusion is perceived as a multidimensional and dynamic phenomenon (Room, 1999). However, issues of social exclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon may also include relational aspects, within social interactions and communication through which the social exclusion process interferes, as well as social aspects of socially excluded persons due to disadvantageous social situations and conditions, referred to as social disadvantages (Sirovátka, 2003; Navrátil & Šimíková, 2002). Many other researches have a similar view on social exclusion. For example, Kolibová (2008) emphasizes the constructivist aspect, focusing on the social, economic and political criteria. The need to integrate socially excluded people into the society intensified in Europe at the end of the last century, with more attention paid to the unequal or limited access to economic assets, but also to the citizenship in terms of insufficient participation in the field of justice, security, education and representation (Atkinson, 2000; Rodgers, 1995).

Although there is still a strong correlation between social exclusion and poverty, the dominant problem today is the exclusion of personal relationships, the so-called strength of the bond that binds individuals and groups as a whole. An example of this is the increasing proportion of immigrants from non-European cultures, accompanied by the reluctance of the majority in European countries to integrate the immigrants, as well as the reluctance of an increasing number of immigrants to integrate. Their aim is rather to colonize the occupied space by transmission and preservation of their own culture (Sartori, 2005). Some Czech researchers point to a similar issue in their studies of social exclusion and excluded localities, with an emphasis on the social dimension of exclusion – when social exclusion is related to membership in organizations, interpersonal and institutional trust, anomic attitudes, social capital, or ethnicity. Other factors of social exclusion, such as housing, finance, consumption, etc., are addressed systemically (Topinka, 2015). Through interactive maps, we can see almost immediately information on the nature of the locations, their size, sources of funding and involvement in support projects.

Therefore, Drbohlav (2016), who in the context of the migration crisis talks about a new form of integration and the need for social inclusion, speaks of a new integration model

called the "model of civic integration" based on the possibility of preserving one's own cultural specificity, but otherwise fully participating in economic self-sufficiency, as well as language, legislative and civic integrity in the majority society.

However, the issues of social exclusion and inclusion also have a formal and informal level. The formal area includes the public and legislative layer, governing relations with the state and society. The informal area is marked by a purely private relationship, based on unenforceable facts, such as sharing values, traditions, social ties. Both these aspects of social exclusion are of great importance when developing inclusive measures for the society and their subsequent effectiveness.

Dimensions of Social Inclusion – the question of the importance of social capital for society – comparative basis

Social inclusion is understood as inclusion of a marginal group into the majority society in situations where basic social parameters are known: delimitation of territory (borders), nationality, age, education, etc. Social inclusion is therefore always a specific individual situation that has its intensity, quality and degrees. In terms of formal inclusion, we distinguish between "inclusion-cum-entry" and "inclusion-cum-citizenship" (Goodin, 1996). The so-called inclusion-cum-entry allows living on a given territory, but with the restriction of other civil and social rights. Inclusion-cum-citizenship is considered as a higher level of inclusion, where active participation in social life and participation in the life of the majority society is possible, including the need to comply with the country's legislation. Another type of inclusion is so-called "parcel inclusion", where individuals have access to certain areas of action, but because their inclusion is not complete, they do not have enough influence to achieve a more significant effect, which is seen as an alienation of the system. The opposite example is a monological inclusion that indicates the overall assimilation of the individual (Mouzelis, 1995). The dimensions of social inclusion significantly affect social capital. The concept of social capital has different representations in the works of many authors. Putnam understands social capital as a macro-sociological phenomenon and a community issue. According to him, social capital is not primarily related to an individual, but to higher social units and to the society as a whole (Putnam, 1995; Coleman, 1988). Social capital in the form of social networks, standards, social trust, co-ordination and co-operation represents a positive mutual benefit for the participating parties and the social environment in which they live (Putnam, 1995). The social capital has several levels in which it takes place, including the micro-level of interpersonal relations, the mezzo-level of societies and organizations and the macro-level of social institutions (Falk & Kilpatric, 1999). At present, the highest importance is attributed to the level of interpersonal relations that is based on the structure of social relations networks related to group membership. "Social capital also involves the transformation of relationships, such as neighborhoods or working groups, which are both necessary and voluntary, and which result in a subjective feeling of duty, gratitude, respect, friendship, etc." (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 248).

The manifestations of social capital at the level of social groups are subject to intensive discussions. Narayan (1999) perceives social capital as a connecting factor influencing both formal and informal groups and institutions. However, strong social capital in a group does not have to have a positive effect on the society if the shared values and standards are dangerous (Gambetta, 1988).

Social capital and social cohesion are closely related phenomena, having formal and informal forms, manifested in a cross-sectional manner, at the level of a group and a state, or other large units. As an example, the concept of social cohesion in EU Reporting is based on the following dimensions: a) reduction of inequalities and social exclusion, b) strengthening of social relations, interactions and bonds, which closely relates to the social capital of the society (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). In the EU's policy, the cohesion strategy is an important policy objective that is implemented through the process of socio-economic convergence and the creation of joint institutions at European level (Leonardi, 2005). The occurrence of unemployment, the risk of poverty and the aging population represent a significant risk and barrier to social cohesion, which is eliminated by mutual regional cooperation, with an emphasis on economic, social and territorial cohesion. One of the key initiatives for addressing social inclusion in the EU is the so-called Lisbon Strategy (2004) aiming to make Europe one of the most dynamic and competitive economies based on knowledge, sustainable growth and a high-quality labor market, promoting social cohesion and combating exclusion with the aim of modernizing the European social model and investing in people. On the basis of these documents, the so called NAPs on Social Inclusion were published, with the objective to structure social policy in individual member countries based on structural indicators. Social exclusion, social inclusion, and social cohesion are concepts involving broad discourse on many levels, with a number of widely differing views. Social cohesion is seen as a condition for the stability of the political system and security; it influences the quality of political institutions and contributes to economic growth, it facilitates the application of social reforms (Easterly, Ritzen, & Woolcock, 2006). On the other hand, many authors perceive social exclusion as a social evil, since it is in many ways unfair and it disturbs social cohesion (Lister, 2003).

Social inclusion – concept definitiv

At present, social inclusion is one of the most discussed issues in the society. It relates to the integration of immigrants into the majority society. Factors strongly influencing this process are closely monitored. In the context of studying social integration of immigrants in Europe since 1960s, individual generations of immigrants and the process of their integration have been monitored. However, the integration process is also influenced by the differences in integration policy and its concepts, which differ by country. Integration theories supported by empirical research have identified factors that have a significant impact on the integration of immigrants into mainstream society. According to these theories, integration increases with the length of stay, which is connected with an effort to learn, to build relationships, to discover cultural specifics and learn the language. Studies focusing on the integration of foreigners point to the importance of primary socialization

in the host country, which is also related to age. The lower the immigrant's age, the higher the integration. Immigrants arriving in the country as children are likely to be more integrated than their parents. They will attend school in the host country as well as spend the most formative years shaping their personal identity (Simon, 2003). Researches point to another criterion of integration, which is the influence of education and the employment status of immigrants before leaving their home country (Gang & Stuart, 2000; Fokkema & de Haas, 2011), as well as gender roles that can influence integration processes from the viewpoint of evaluating social opportunities and establishing relationships and cultural integration. The housing arrangement proves to be a significant criterion of integration as it implies certain social anchorage. Joint housing with other family members assumes a higher degree of integration than housing with non-family members or living single. Preferring "residential" housing also shows a certain level of integration, living close to one's compatriots with the possibility of maintaining social ties, which strengthens the integrity of the ethnic group but weakens integration into the majority society (Massey & Denton, 1985). Some researches consider the presence of children to be a positive integration element, too. Children develop relations with their peers much more easy and naturally, and through the peers also with the adults, thus forming the basis for social facilitation and making social inclusion easier (Sampson, 1988; Völker, Flap, & Lindenberg, 2007).

The concept of "underclass" appears in the context of the migration crisis or social exclusion accompanied by social concentration. This concept represents the so-called cultural concentration, exclusion known as "the culture of poverty" (Lewis, 1969) in the form of slums, where, along with the classic social policy tools, social work and community projects are being put into practice. This form of social exclusion has a number of contradictory adaptation mechanisms aimed at the mode of survival accompanied by isolation from the rest of the society, with the absence of traditional social institutions such as civil society, churches or political parties. The character of this environment, along with specific adaptation mechanisms, reduces the likelihood of escape and, on the contrary, creates a lifestyle of chronic dependence on the welfare state reducing the possibilities for inclusion in the majority society.

Ways and strategies for inclusion are chosen depending on the consideration of the causes of social exclusion. However, due to the complexity of this phenomenon, these strategies mutually intertwine. In practice, we distinguish between individual (moral) failure and the accumulation of objective causes of disadvantage (Layte & Whelan, 2003).

Based on an assessment of the causes of social exclusion, various social policy instruments are implemented: a) a re-distributive approach aimed at the eradication of poverty mainly through social security benefits; b) an integrative approach where the basic mechanism of social inclusion is paid employment, community inclusion and overcoming social isolation; and c) a patronizing approach when the reason for social exclusion of certain persons is in their pathological, moral and cultural characteristics, and the fundamental mechanism for their inclusion is their re-socialization through social work intervention, crisis social intervention or repressive public policies (Levitas, 2000).

Questions about methodology and research

With the help of specialized literature and research papers by leading specialists, a descriptive comparative and analytical conceptual part was prepared. The case study "Implementation of a social inclusion program at the regional level – Ostrava, Czech Republic" is based on comparative, quantitative and qualitative findings and data processed within the framework of regional and national statistical records of inhabitants and documents of the Statutory City of Ostrava and using secondary data sources from existing materials and surveys that were conducted in Ostrava. The theoretical-analytical descriptive part dealing with the comparison of individual approaches and opinions has provided answers to questions in the area of implementation of questions related to the clarification and description of the development of social exclusion and social segregation as an accompanying phenomenon of a number of other social phenomena, such as deindustrialisation, decline in economic growth and demographic regressive changes. Regional migration is thus becoming an integral part of urban development known as shrinking cities. Due to their topicality, these issues are constantly being discussed in various forums, workshops and discussions, where possible tools are constantly being sought to strengthen the inclusion of marginalized groups in society and to strengthen its social stability. Qualitative knowledge focused on the assessment of group links and social cohesion in minority groups, as another element leading to greater social integrity, also bring significant information.

Implementation of a social inclusion program (socially excluded groups) at the regional level – Ostrava, Czech Republic, case study

Given that the Czech Republic is not a target country for migration and there has been no increase in the number of asylum seekers in recent decades, attention is paid to the inclusion of individuals and groups of citizens socially excluded and at risk of social exclusion, living mostly in excluded localities. As a result of social exclusion, problematic behavior and the occurrence of crime with these groups. The Moravian-Silesian region is one of the most critical regions in terms of unemployment and the occurrence of excluded localities, with Ostrava as the largest city.
In the 15 socially excluded localities in Ostrava live up to 6,520 people, there are also 42 hostels with approved rules of operation for 7,231 beds. There are 12 shelters in Ostrava with a total capacity of 412 people. There are three dormitories in Ostrava with a total capacity of 120 beds. The network of social services for people in need is also formed by two low-threshold day centers, which are for men and women with a total of 125 seats. (Source: Labor Office of the Czech Republic – regional branch in Ostrava, contact office Ostrava, June 2017)
The situation for people at risk of social exclusion, people living in socially excluded localities and homeless people seems to be critical from the social assistance point of view. High unemployment, an aging population, an increase in the post-productive age

population and changes in labor market requirements contribute to the high dependence of the population on various forms of social assistance, which are additional charges for housing, benefits in material need and housing benefit. Long-term measures such as the Concept of Social Housing of the Czech Republic 2015–2025 and the Strategic Plan for Social Inclusion Ostrava 2015–2018 are adopted to improve the situation.

Chart 1 Recipients of social assistance and housing benefits to the total population of the city
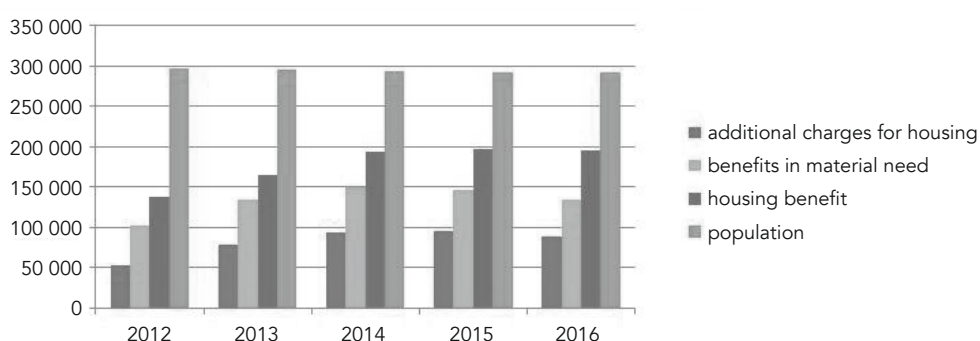
Source: Labor Office of the Czech Republic (n.d.)

Ostrava is the third largest city in the Czech Republic in terms of size and population. It used to be a major center of coal mining and metallurgy, and has undergone significant changes since 1989. As a result of the restructuring of the industry, mining activity gradually declined and Ostrava transforms into a city with other functions. Industrial restructuring brings along different labor requirements, which is accompanied by relatively high unemployment, with all accompanying phenomena, including a change in population composition.

From 1991 to the present, Ostrava registered a systematic decline in the number of people, this decline was most significant in 2010. Inhabitants and people moving out of the city are mainly those in pre-productive and productive age, thus the rise in the age index in Ostrava is 50 % higher than in other comparable cities. Demographic forecasts suggest a significant decline in the number of people up to 34 years of age, and the largest population group will be people aged 50–54 and older. The average unemployment rate in 2005–2012 was 150 % of the Czech Republic's level and it is significantly higher than in the reference cities and this trend continues. These negative effects do not provide positive prognostic assumptions for improving the situation. Given the historical development and traditional structure of industry in the region, the structure of the education of the population is lower compared to the reference cities. Ostrava offers fewer work opportunities and unemployment is expanding.

The current level of crime in Ostrava is among the highest in the Czech Republic (Czech Statistical Office).

Based on these facts, the city of Ostrava presented since 2011 long-term comprehensive social inclusion program, with an aim to improve the coexistence of the city's inhabitants. The program included 12 integrated projects and was based on three main pillars: employment, education and housing. The target group consisted of individuals, groups of individuals, larger groups or communities that had a difficult or restricted access to resources and opportunities to engage in the social, economic and political activities of the majority society.

The program was implemented in two phases, the first stage took place in 2012–2013, when the program was launched, first families joined, the program's functionality was tested and partners were selected. The second stage was set for the period 2014–2020 and includes a number of specific objectives such as: raising the educational level and reducing long-term unemployment of the inhabitants living in excluded localities, increasing the quality of housing and many more (Statutory City of Ostrava, n.d.).

The trend of decreasing urban population, deepening social inequality and social segregation is leading to the emergence of the so-called "urban shrinkage" (Großmann et al., 2008, p. 85–87) concept of shrinking cities, which is due to deinstustrialization and economic downturn and leads to interregional migration.

Chart 2 Critical indicators of shrinking city (urban shrikage)
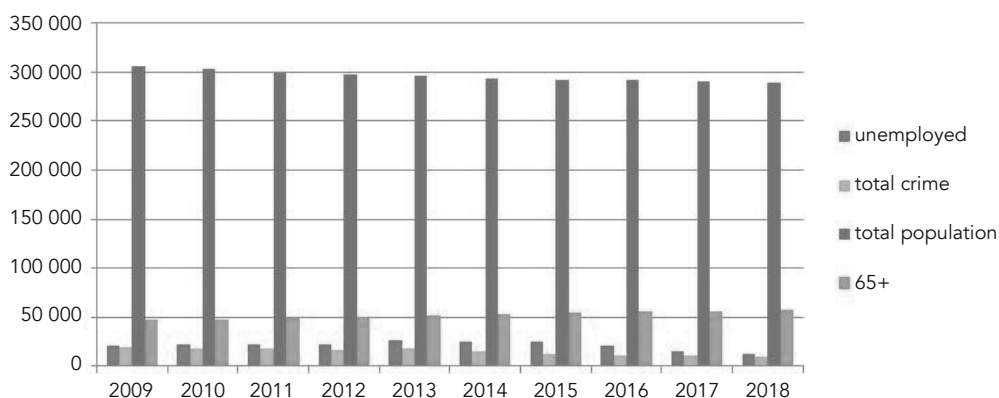
Source: ČSÚ. Český statistický úřad [Czech Statistical Office]. (n.d.)

Based on the analysis of statistical data on the population, procedures are being developed to identify residential segregation sites. However, in many cases, these practices are ineffective because they are influenced by more dominant factors such as natural demographic effects (aging of the population, reduced birth rates), deindustrialisation, reduced economic growth and the negative effects of suburbanization (urban sprawl). This trend is characterized by a number of large European cities that have undergone industrial transformation, and will gradually become an expected social trend. Only the evaluation of the implementation of long-term programs of social inclusion will provide an answer to the effectiveness of this idea.

Summary

Social inclusion appears to be a rather complex, multidimensional, all-society problem with a number of other social contexts, such as social exclusion, social cohesion and social capital. The course of social inclusion is influenced by the integration policy of each country, but also by other standards adopted at EU level. With the development of globalization trends and advancing democracy, this issue has become the center of attention and is deliberated at a large number of national and global fora, searching for additional mechanisms and instruments. The aim of this study was to point out some contexts related to the issue of social inclusion in the field of social exclusion, which is associated with the emergence of excluded localities as a source of other negative social manifestations. The case study aims to present an example of solving internal social inclusion of socially excluded persons, who have problems to adapt, with the aim to point to the temporal, spatial and financial demands of the project, it highlights the causes, course and processes, which influence these integration efforts. Existing research and interpretation of the results of ongoing projects can bring significant benefits from the perspective of other applications and awareness of the professional public.

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NON-SUBSTANCE ADDICTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH

Roman Adamczyk

Abstract

The article deals with present-day non-substance-related (behavioral, process) addictions that interfere with the complex of individual and social health. Selected impacts of addiction onto the physical, mental and social level are discussed along with the interplay of addiction factors and health.

Keywords

non-substance addictions, behavioral addictions, individual health, social health

Introduction and background

Implementation of electronic communication and mobile technologies results in restructuring of social relationships and poses a new challenge in the form of emergence of previously unknown addictions and psychosocial phenomena, such as netholism (internet addiction) or nomophobia (the fear of mobile phone or coverage being unavailable). Therefore, new – behavioral-type – addictions accede to the "traditional" body of substance-related addictions that possess defined effects on the organism as desired by the user, e.g., euphoria, stimulation, sedation etc. The term 'new' addictions is to be understood as a relative one, since the category of non-substance addictions has been represented in the field across several decades, being exemplified by such entities as work addiction (workaholism), shopping addiction (shopaholism) or television addiction – Grant et al., 2010; Karim & Chaudhri, 2012.

While the domain of substance addictions has been widely studied and elaborated in great detail in both academic and clinical settings for a number of decades and has been meticulously classified from the perspective of the substances used, non-substance (behavioral, process) addictions only won widespread nosological attention and became the topic of intense discussion in recent years. This expansion was conditioned by the development of infrastructures that constitute its prerequisites in the form of respective stimuli (easily accessible slot machines, computer networks, large-scale shopping centers etc.). Non-substance addictions not directly linked to technology and infrastructure,

such as sexual addiction or the aforementioned work addiction, analogically constitute a part of the complex scope of addictive behavior (addiction disorders) that stem from immanent psychological impulses and needs irrespective of the material environs. Food addiction or addiction to a certain type of eating or dieting then represents a specific transition between non-substance-related addictive behavior and chemical stimulation as exerted by certain types of food within the frame of their psychoactive properties hand in hand with related symbolic and social status and other factors (chocolate, for instance, is a social symbol of relish and, simultaneously, a chemically active psychostimulant deriving its properties from caffeine, theobromine and phenylethylamine) – Smit, Gaffan, & Rogers, 2004.

Both substance addictions and behavioral-type addictions influence the functioning of each individual per se and his/her quality of life, nevertheless, they combine with a significant outreach to the social environment of the person, his/her relationships and social health. Social health is defined as co-operative relations of an individual with his/her relatives and other persons in adjacent settings, the quality and intensity of relationships with other individuals, groups and institutions, the level of social support available, meaningful interactions with the social environment in various contexts, as well as the capacity to cope in typical social situations (Hahn et al., 2010). In her didactic concept of social health, Weare (2002) considers even a wider scope of implications in terms of maximization of life potential in a social setting that contributes to happiness, vigor and prevention of interpersonal conflicts. As Larkin (2011) emphasizes, the social dimension of health becomes increasingly important in recent decades and it is apparent that many health disturbances have social causes or co-factors on the one hand, and social impacts on the other hand.

Classification, mechanisms and health/social aspects of non-substance addictions

Classification of non-substance addictions is, to a certain extent, covered in current taxonomies, including the ICD (International Classification of Diseases in its 10th version, with 11th version under way – ÚZIS, 2008) and DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, currently in its 5th revision – Raboch et al., 2015). However, it can be expected that existing taxonomies will be subject to further analysis, re-evaluations and expansions, based on changing conceptualizations along with the development of new technologies, such as virtual reality or artificial intelligence, that have the potential to evoke novel types of behavioral addiction. Current arrangement offers a limited number of possibilities to clinicians in terms of covering particular non-substance addictions. In DSM-V, the category of non-substance-related addictions comprises only a single explicit entity, namely, gambling disorder, i.e., pathological wagering (code 312.31). Annex to the DSM-V (Conditions for Further Study) mentions the proposed 'internet gaming disorder' warranting more research and it is likely that behavioral/process addictions will be subject to a more detailed taxonomy with multiple clinical units in the oncoming years (Raboch et al., 2015, p. 838–840). A separate coding category for on-line and off-line gaming disorder, distinct from gambling, is to be expected in ICD-11 in 2022.

Non-substance addictions are reciprocally linked with the health status of the individual. Impaired health can act as an initiator or co-factor of addiction, possibly due to frustration of specific needs of the disabled or diseased person. Chemical changes in brain tissue may also participate in the etiology of addiction, necessitating broader considerations of not only psychological and social factors, but also biological variables. On the contrary, persisting addiction can disrupt the physical and mental health of a given individual, as well as his/her social health embedded in functioning relationships, job career and leisure activities. For addictive behavior to be fully understood, it is imperative to reflect both directions of the interactive mechanism between health and addiction.

The mechanisms of the negative impact of addiction on individual health can further be specified relative to the area of health being most significantly afflicted.

Firstly, the domain of physical (physiological and anatomical) health can be impacted by behavioral addictions. This can be documented by the recent Anglo-Saxon coinage 'text neck', referring to a form of strain syndrome related to prolonged forward flexion and alteration of the natural cervical lordosis, as caused by mobile phone overuse. Muscle imbalances also result from sustained use of computers, although the evidence for a direct relationship between the carpal tunnel syndrome and one-sided use of the computer mouse is weak (Shiri & Falah-Hassani, 2015). The fear of a mobile phone or mobile phone network coverage being unavailable is semi-officially termed 'nomophobia' in clinical practice (etymologically derived from 'no mobile phone phobia'). In some cases, the technological addiction related to phones can take the shape of unreal, almost hallucinatory perceptions with the phone owner supposing there was a ring or vibration despite the objective absence of the latter stimulus (Stone, 2014). This type of technological addiction predominantly affects young persons aged 30 or less. The prevalence of mobile phone (smartphone) overuse ranks between 10–44 % in the 11–14 teenage group in various countries (Davey & Davey, 2014; Ong & Tan, 2014). Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) report a range of internet addiction prevalence rates in European and American populations between 1.5 and 8.2 %, depending on the scales and criteria applied.

The ravages of technological and non-technological behavioral addictions on physical health depend on the nature of viscose (clinging) behavior and on the nature of the stimulus. Computer gaming addiction, either in its online or offline form, has been widely documented in, e.g., Japanese and Tchaiwanese youth and is accompanied by an increased risk of thrombotic events, impaired body posture, starving and dehydration, with the subjects being unable to stop or interrupt long-lasting engagement in playing (Yen et al., 2007; Park, Kim, & Cho, 2008). In extreme cases, gaming records with uninterrupted, sustained play with no food intake have been reported with a duration of up to 40 hours or more, including fatal cases (Douglas, 2012). According to Ječmenová, whose empirical surveys focused on the time spent handling a computer among Czech junior high school students, approximately 1/3 of boys and 15 % of girls face the computer screen for three hours or more a day (Ječmenová, 2011).

Musculoskeletal disorders that emerge as sequelae of digital addictions include the repetitive strain injury, radial stenosing tendosynovitis (De Quervain syndrome) or

impaired body posture (Ilyas et al., 2007). In food addiction and addiction to certain types of treats, short-term effects like nausea or hyperacidity can be expected, along with long-term effects connected with elevated saccharide or fat levels (cariogenesis, tendency to overweight, atherosclerosis). In shopaholism-like behavioral addictions, no such direct physical consequences would be anticipated, yet, they can have a marked impact in the economic and psychosocial domain (financial difficulties, hoarding as a source of conflict in the household etc.).

The effect of physical sequelae of behavioral addiction on social functioning and on the adjacent social environment, especially the family, is partly different from the effects of substance addictions and can involve temporary incapacity for work (a phenomenon otherwise occurring as a natural consequence of prolonged use of workplace technology, especially when incorrect postural stereotypes are present), functional limitations resulting from pain syndromes with possible curbing of activities of daily living (ADL's), self-sufficiency and social activities, and, finally, long-term disability in severe cases. In all the aforementioned instances, compensation of monotonous exertion is indicated, along with rehabilitation or physical therapy, as well as psychological support focusing on motivation and remodeling of existing stereotypes, e.g., in the form of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT).

Psychological sequelae of non-substance addictions constitute the second category of impacts of this type of addictive behavior and they can encompass the affective domain (mood changes when the addiction-provoking stimulus is unavailable), the anxiety disorder domain (increasing anxiety when the addiction-provoking stimulus is unavailable) and the personality domain (with alterations in volitional characteristics, shifts on the introversion-extraversion axis or restructuring of values and attitudes) – Dong et al., 2011. One of the less studied areas is that of emotional sequelae taking the shape of remorse and guilt. Since disturbances of autoregulation and impulse control are the common denominators of various types of addiction, specific compulsive phenomena may be observed. These could, however, had been a part of the pre-morbid personality (before the development of addiction sensu stricto), and, therefore, might have been one of the predisposing factors for the development of addiction and a part of its symptomatology, rather than a specific sequel.

As Marazziti et al. (2014) state, non-substance/behavioral addictions are, analogically to substance addictions, accompanied by significant social corrolaries. Investigation into social evaluation of behavioral addictions compared to substance addictions indicates that, despite certain similar social impacts, the respective two types of addiction are perceived differently. For example, Konkolÿ et al. (2015) surveyed a representative sample of 4,000 Canadian respondents and concluded that attributions of substance addictions (alcohol, tobacco, cocaine) are mostly oriented toward the robust biochemical potential of the substance causing addiction, while the etiology of process addictions (gambling, shopaholism, videogaming, workaholism etc.) is predominantly interpreted as related to the moral profile and character (suspected flaws of the character) of the addicted person. Unfortunately, this kind of attribution leads to stigmatization of the behaviorally addicted and, possibly, poses an obstacle to treatment seeking. Since

Konkolÿ et al. realized their survey on a macro-level in the general population, it is arguable to what extent can their findings be applied to the level of the family as a small social group with tight interpersonal bonds. In close relationships, the stigmatizing labelling of a process addiction can be replaced by the phenomenon of benevolence, a well-known occurrence among alcohol addicts, whose relatives are often inclined to overt tolerance or justification of drinking and related antisocial phenomena despite the obvious negative psychosocial consequences of abuse.

The impact of behavioral addictions usually extends beyond the individual. In some instances, they may result in social withdrawal, in other cases they may initiate new social connections, many of which, however, do not foster social health (gangs, virtualized relationships in on-line gaming and social network overuse, volatile or harmful relationships). Apart from social withdrawal, social disinhibition with promiscuous behavior can become problematic. Besides, economic implications present a challenge in those addictions that entail major financial expenditures and the burden of poverty and debts is often carried by the whole family.

Contemporary mobile and computer technologies represent a crucial factor of peer relationships, being largely used especially by younger generations for prompt interaction with classmates or workmates. Despite undoubted benefits of this type of communication there exist a number of risks linked to the urge for 'being on-line all the time', resulting in tension and excessive stress levels – such as in the case of the aforementioned nomophobia. Further, there exist risks connected with the ousting of other activities when the majority of time is invested in on-line chatting, messaging (communication programs), telephoning or texting (SMS). Also, social networks and messengers are gradually taking the role of a new bullying platform that can disrupt peer relationships, as well as teacher-pupil or parent-child relationships. The parent-child dyad involves basic trust by the parent toward the child and vice versa. Once the child's or adolescent's electronic communication with peers, listening to recordings or other technology-related activities reach the level of addiction, the parent is edged out of the relationship territory and, hence, loses one of his/her fundamental emotional bonds.

Technological addictions can foster sibling rivalry, e.g., competing for computer time when the number of computers in the household is lower than the number of siblings. At the same time, siblings may mutually facilitate their addictive behaviors by simultaneous (shared) playing of on-line games or overusing communication software and hardware. To mitigate the negative image of technology, we should concurrently be aware of its potential for social health support and for the maintenance of parental or sibling relationships, e.g., in prolonged periods of separation due to job or study in places distant from home. Additionally, the internet is a source of information about itself, offering certain knowledge of technological addictions and, thus, providing opportunities for endangered individuals to become aware of the need for change and to find basic recommendations on how to handle situations indicative of detrimental physical, psychological and/or social impacts related to a particular stereotypical behavior, including internet addiction.

Conclusion

Non-substance (behavioral, process) addictions constitute an undesirable element of current developments related to changes in the society at large and to widespread availability of modern technology. They share certain features with substance-related addictions, yet, simultaneously, evince a number of specific properties. A subset of sequelae in social health and individual health, either physical or mental/emotional, are fairly comparable. Nevertheless, to date, non-substance-related addictions are only marginally categorized in existing major classification systems (ICD, DSM). Further refinements of this issue can be expected in the future.

Both individuals and the society as such should strive to comprehend the mechanisms of behavioral addiction and make effort to reduce its impact on the individual level (physical health, prevention of affective and anxiety disorders), relationship level and societal macro-level (incapacity for work, financial burden placed on the health care system, social pathology). Strategies available for tackling this issue include addiction therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, social work and, to a limited extent, certain types of medication. Moreover, brand new approaches and interventions can be developed to better accommodate for the specific characteristics of emerging technological and non-technological addictions.

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CHILD OF ADDICTED PARENTS – THE OVERLOOKED MEMBER IN A FAMILY

Tatiana Dubayová

Abstract

Children of addicted parents often escape professional interventions and the social system, because their needs and the responses resulting from the failure to fulfil them are not diagnosed correctly. Although they are not typical recipients of special education interventions, we may take them as children with special needs in the emotional area even if though their symptoms are not necessarily evident. The aim of the paper is to help to understand the perception and behaviour of a child from a family with an addicted parent. Based on analyses of foreign research projects, we have summed up the specific features of such children, their most frequent responses and coping with difficulties. At the same time, we will try to outline the opportunities and challenges of the work with such children and the assistance that may help them compensate for the traumatic experiences from their childhood when they grow up.

Keywords

addicted individual, child at risk, child of an addicted parent, mental vulnerability

Introduction

Childhood free of violence, traumatic experiences and lived in a safe environment should be the priority number one of each society. Unfortunately, many children are currently growing up in conditions coming close to trauma even here, in peaceful and relatively conflict-free Europe. What is more, some of the children living with an addicted parents have been observed to show symptoms similar to those which are observed in soldiers when they witness war crimes – sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, flashbacks of traumatic experiences (AAETS, 2014).

Current estimates of children growing up with a parent addicted to alcohol or other addictive substances in European countries range from 5–30 % (EMCDDA, 2010). The Columbia University's report states that nearly one quarter of child population in the United States of America lives in a household where at least one parent drinks alcohol or uses illegal drugs (CASA, 2005). However, the above statistics are not accurate, they

were generated as an expert estimate rather than obtained based on actual research work. The number of children who have an experience with parental substance abuse is believed to be much bigger.

Vašek (2011) and other authors believe that these children are a part of the so-called risk group and if not provided specialised care in time, their development may be seriously impaired. But what does this classification mean and which interventions are relevant in such case? This is not that clear. I dare say that these children escape system solution and are omitted from all kinds of protective measures, if the parental abuse is within the boundaries that the people in their neighbourhood are willing to tolerate or if it is not also connected with violence that they can actually see.

For the purposes of this paper, child means an individual aged less than 18 years. Specialised literature terms the adults who grow up in such a family as adult children of addicted parents. This term encompasses the explanation that the early childhood experience has such an impact on those children that their lives would continue to always relate to this experience to some extent. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic, we have solid publications which make use of case studies and describe the feelings of such children when they grow up (Woititzová, 1998; Uehlinger & Tschui, 2009).

Within the *KIDS STRENGTHS project: Kids in the Context of Mental Vulnerability* (2009-1-AT-LEO05-01199), that was implemented on an international basis from 2008–2011, we focused on children in the context of a parental mental disorder which also included parental substance abuse. The project focused on the development of the theoretical background important to understand the topic and on the development of interventions by various experts. Documents for teachers, special teachers, social workers, therapeutic teachers and other experts are available on the web site of the project in several languages, including in the Slovak language (www.strong-kids.eu).

Description of a family with an addicted parent

Multiple research works have identified certain common features of families with an addicted parent that may be generalised and considered to be typical. Even though they may not necessarily be equally found in all families, such features (CASA, 2005) include:

- stress caused by frequent conflicts;
- inconsistent, poor up to neglectful parenting;
- unclear rules;
- unclear definition of roles and constant changes of rituals.

In their review of specialised literature, Solis et al. (2012) found other features which supplement the above list:

- addicted mothers show less warmth, apply harsher parenting style, shows less physical and verbal engagement in communication with the child than non-addicted mothers;
- addicted fathers are less sensitive to child's needs and less engaged in parenting;
- parental substance abuse, whether on the side of the mother or the father, is associated with higher risk of child abuse or neglect.

Similar findings have also been identified by the experts of the AAETS organisation (2014). The behaviour of addicted parents is often unpredictable for the child, there are no rules of conduct in the family or the rules are inconsistent and depend on the quantity of alcohol drunk, which pre-school children are unable to understand, and if the parent behaves so, it confuses or scares them.

Children of addicted parents find themselves in situations in which they see their parent lying helpless and unable of any movement or communication. They happen to be forgot or dumped by a parent with another person, or parents leave the house and children are left at home alone to their fate for a long time (Modul 2, 2010). Therefore, exposure of a child to these situations that the child is unable to understand at certain age or interpret them correctly affects their development and compels children to cope with them in their own way.

Roles in these families are not clearly defined, the life of the family is often chaotic, disorganised and difficult to predict. Many families fall into poverty both due to the cost of the addictive substance and due to the inability of parents to keep their job and behave appropriately at work. Disrupted relations often continue when the child grows up, and some children even cut off all contact with the addicted parent for good (Schäfer, 2011).

Features of a child of an addicted parent

Solis et al. (2012) note that compared to the intact children, the children of addicted parents have worse school results, have problems in emotional and social area and behaviour, and rarely have the so-called secure parental attachment. This is sometimes believed to stem from poverty or poorly stimulating environment in which they are raised and which is typical for worse parental skills. The CASA report (2005) states that grandparents or other persons in child's neighbourhood often take up an important role in the life of a child of addicted parent, because the parent is unable to make the child feel safe and take care of him or her.

Considering the medical, family and social history of the child, children growing up in a family with an addicted individual can be classified as the so-called mentally vulnerable children. The concept of mental vulnerability emerged in the 1960s in response to the question whether it is possible to identify individuals who are more predisposed to mental health problems. It can hence be taken as the predictor of mental health or mental illness, as the case may be (Eplov et al., 2010). The higher the scores, the higher the risk of mental disorder prevalence. Rutter (1979) identified 6 risk factors which lead to the development of the so-called mentally vulnerable child:

- major marriage problems;
- low social and economic status;
- father engaging in criminal behaviour;
- large family/overcrowded household;
- mental disorder in mother;
- child placement in foster care.

The category of children showing high probability of mental health problems includes children with mostly negative experiences in life – originally children with behavioural disorders, learning disorders, and with a long-term illness, but also children growing up in foster care who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect, poverty, malnutrition, or children exposed to violence in war conflicts (Green & Solnit, 1964). Our prior research work showed that this category also includes children with ADHD and other special education needs (Dubayová, 2015; Dubayová & Chovanová, 2017). Mental vulnerability in children can be observed through a great variety of behaviours which can be so specific for this or that child that their diversity makes the diagnostic process more difficult. Symptoms that may be observed in a mentally vulnerable child include, for example, disobedience, engagement in fights, stealing, but also anxiety, shyness, eating disorders, tearfulness. Some may suffer from anger fits, bizarre manners or self-injury (Kožárová & Podhájecká, 2014). The longitudinal research work of Drake and Vaillant (1988) confirmed that children of alcoholic parents are more likely to become patients of psychiatric hospitals, because they are exposed to a bigger risk of mental disorder as, for example, depressions or personality disorders, than the intact children.

Research studies of US researchers also point out that these children are more likely to become victims of violent crimes than the other children. Such violence stems from high-conflict and, from the perspective of relations, dysfunctional environment, or the children witness violence. In their adult life, they are at the threat of re-victimisation. Even though they matured and left their primary environments, they are very probable to establish partnerships copying the patterns in which they were growing up and become victims again (AAETS, 2014). The consequences of life with an addicted adult have various impacts on further development of the child. As Pretis and Dimova (2004) provide, this particularly depends on

- the age at which the child was exposed to violence;
- intensity of symptoms (addiction) in the parent;
- sex of the parent (alcoholism in mothers has a stronger impact on child's development).

They also more often suffer from health problems on a psychosomatic basis, e.g. headaches, stomach aches, sleeping disorders, etc. Conners et al. (2003) made a comparison between intact children and 4,089 children of addicted mothers, and found differences in the area of health difficulties. Children of addicted mothers were twice as common as intact children diagnosed asthma, hearing issues were three times as common as in their intact peers, and vision issues were seven times as common (Conners et al., 2003).

Specific features in these children have also been observed in the social area. AAETS (2014) assert that these children are more socially shy than the intact population. They have difficulty to make friends both because they lack social skills and because they are unable to confide and share information about parents, which makes them be on guard. The Christoffersen's and Soothill's research work (2003) confirmed that father's alcoholism

is a factor playing role in child mortality and mother's alcoholism is associated with child neglect and abuse, and increases the probability that the child commits a violent crime at older age.

Such a dramatic impact on a child has not been observed in every single family. The impact on the child strongly depends on the degree of parental addiction and compensatory effects of other family members or neighbourhood (e.g. if only one parent drinks, if the parent is able to compensate for the time when he or she is drunk with more attentive care for the child when sober, if the child has enough social contacts, etc.).

Recommendations for practice and intervention

Help to children of addicted parents at special teacher's offices takes place in the context of a formal and official framework of help which is defined by expert activities within his or her profession: diagnostics, counselling, prevention, rearing and education, special pedagogy intervention, re-education and rehabilitation. Experts' contacts with the child may also be informal, e.g. he or she may be a neighbour of such a family, or can meet the child at informal events, etc.

System solutions aiming to help children at risk in each developed society exist, for example, in the form of crisis centres, foster care system, professional parenting, family recovery efforts, monitoring by the Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, etc. The question, however, is how efficient these system measures are and which of the child's needs they satisfy. This paper rather focuses on the methods which are based on personal engagement of helping individuals and sometimes also become formal taking the form of civic activities or associations.

Support groups which bring together people who have gone through similar experiences constitute a method which helps them to cope with the experiences of life with an addicted parent. The support from people who have faced similar problems has a particularly strong therapeutic effect. They apply the principles of group dynamics and professional therapeutic leadership. The Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA) in the United States of America is one of the support groups with a solid and long history. The USA have a quite extensive and differentiated network of support groups, e.g. Families Anonymous (support of families and individuals close to addicted people), Alateen (for adolescents of addicted parents), National Association for the Children of Alcoholics (NACOA), etc. For more information about individual support groups, refer to the list of Adfam organisation which helps families with an addicted individual (http://www.adfam.org.uk/families/useful_organisations).

Recommendations for experts have been drawn within the Kids Strengths project (Module 2, 2010) which should be remembered in contact and when helping a child with an addicted parent:
- need to create a safe zone or background that will satisfy the child's basic needs. Contact with other individuals and preventing social isolation of the child will help him or her to gain healthy social habits and reduce the feelings of loneliness.

- creation of a social network of stable and healthy individuals who would listen to child's worries. The role of these individuals also is to be a role model for healthy behaviour, to provide emotional support to the child, take care of the development of healthy self-assessment, point out child's successes and allow the child to be a child.
- if necessary, arrange for foster care in the place of child's residence, if possible. This measure is important particularly when the child's basic needs are at risk; these include, for example, nutrition, safety, school attendance, etc. Breaking close relationships with peers and school or teachers that the child has already established may cause another trauma, and therefore, if it's only possible, these ties should be kept.
- create clear boundaries for behaviour in the event of contact with a parent when intoxicated. Establishment of the rules for contact, taking care of child's safety in such moment and their consistent observance are supportive for the child, be cause they clearly define his or her rights, obligations and expected behaviour. They also take off the burden of responsibility from the child with regard to the care for intoxicated parent.

The rule that has been mentioned only marginally, but which should be taken into consideration at any intervention during work with a child of an addicted parent, is that the child should not be presented as the one who is responsible for the parent's addiction or abstinence. On one hand, this rule protects the child from assuming responsibility for a condition that the child cannot influence, and also helps the addicted individual to realise the responsibility for his or her own conduct and not transfer it to other people.

Just like certain factors, such as mental health of parent, intensity of deprivation or exposure of the child to violence, are associated with mental vulnerability, so other factors have protective function and help to build resilience, i.e. mental strength in a child. Protective factors preventing development of issues in a child include (Rutter, 1990; Massad et al., 2009; Solis et al., 2012):

- mother's education – higher education is associated with higher ability to cope with distress;
- good relationship between the mother and the child;
- good relationships in the family;
- key event in life, some important decision, e.g. staying at school, keeping unwanted child;
- supporting positive self-esteem and self-confidence;
- safe and supporting social contacts with other individuals;
- ability to complete duties – feeling good about it;
- strong positive experience that gives strength to the child and positive self-esteem;
- open future – existence of the opportunities for development, work, career;
- good relationship to another individual, e.g. parent who is not addicted, grandparents or teachers is helpful for children raised by one addicted parent.

The last point relates to an effective form of mentoring assistance. The mentor's function is to provide emotional and psychological support to the mentee and help him / her feel welcome, accepted and integrated (Hobson, 2012; Dubayová & Kochová, 2016). The professionalization of volunteer activities, availability and awareness raising about the problem is the common denominator for the above options and recommendation. In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that personal engagement of the neighbourhood that notices and helps the child is more worthwhile than all system solutions together. We need to realise that these children are all around us, that we meet them in our personal lives and often do not have the slightest idea about what they have gone through – all this forms the foundations for assuming personal accountability for the phenomena happening around us and that we as individuals, and not just as experts, can help to change the life of another human for the better.

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DEVELOPING THE SENSE OF THE MEANING OF LIFE IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS A GOAL OF CREATIVE PROPHYLAXIS

Irena Mudrecka

Abstract

This article complies with the belief that in social prophylaxis it is necessary to shift the center of gravity from "fighting" pathologies and negative deviations onto forming and strengthening positive factors which protect the individual and social groups against pathologies. Formation of a constructive feeling of the meaning of life, among others through development towards higher values, is such a procedure that realizes the aims of contemporary creative prophylaxis and – at the same time – addresses the goals of rearing. Supporting emotional, cognitive and social development of the young makes it possible to develop their potentials understood as abilities, predispositions, talents, skills and competences which are a guarantee that they will find the meaning of life and make this feeling real. In a satisfying life there is no room for social pathologies.

Keywords

social pathologies, creative prophylaxis, positive prophylaxis, sense of the meaning of life, values

Introduction

The notion of social pathology, etymologically, is a combination of two words: *patos*, meaning 'suffering' and *logos*, meaning 'science/study of'. It is then possible to say, in short, that pathology is a study of suffering, while social pathology is a study of social suffering, thus being of the supra-individual character. Social pathology is defined by Szpringer (2004, p. 23) as "phenomena relating to social behavior of the individual and defined groups, as well as functioning of institutions that contradict values and principles currently accepted by the given society, like criminality, drunkenness, alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, pathology of organizational structures such as cliques, nepotism, incompetence, unclear division of duties and responsibility." Therefore, phenomena of social pathology are always connected with not respecting universal values, which is the source of wrong, injustice and suffering. Their range exceeds the scope of those

traditionally described (individual pathology or group pathology). Moreover, they run over a number of levels and ranges of social evil (e.g., institutional pathology), yet are always linked to people's behaviors (Nowak & Wysocka, 2001).

The phenomena which are counted into social pathology evidently contradict values of a given culture, since they violate social norms that safeguard the basic values such as human life, health, man's dignity, freedom, responsibility, love, truth. These values are replaced by anti-values (substitutes of values), the realization of which leads to destruction of oneself and other people. As a result, the line between good and evil becomes blurred, while the process of evaluation is disturbed as there is no unambiguous compass to indicate what things are the most important in life, what is worth accomplishing and making efforts, what brings satisfaction and the sense of fulfilment – in consequence – what enables to experience happiness. Man's natural endeavors to find the meaning of life is threatened, which only winds up the spiral of social pathology. It is values that invest our lives with a sense and as regards this – the lack of the skill of evaluating – causes the meaning of life to be lost or to be found in such substitutes as: alcohol, abuse of authority, power, violence, money, instant pleasures (hedonistic values), nihilism. They are, however, merely short-term substitutes which are not capable of filling in the gap of the lack of universal values. This is an open road to satisfying psychic needs at the expense of one's own health (alcohol, drugs) or at the expense of other people.

Creative prophylaxis, as a system of actions directed towards prevention of phenomena of social pathology, means such actions that aim at strengthening behaviors which are pro-social, creative and worthy of imitation. Creative prophylaxis consists in concentrating on the strong sides that each individual holds, their developmental potentials and auto-creative inclinations. The goal of creative prophylaxis is to develop new desired features in the individual, which make him/her resistant to negative impacts of the environment (Mudrecka, 2012, p. 273–284). The prophylaxis understood in this way appears more and more often in the literature on the subject under the name of positive prophylaxis (Kowalski, Kania, & Śliwa, 2018), whose aim is to equip young people with such traits and competences that make them resistant to threats and protect them against pathologies, thus ones which prepare them better to living in contemporary world in which there are increasingly more risk factors. It is undoubtedly development of a constructive feeling of the meaning of life that promotes this feature and predisposition.

The sense of the meaning of life

Recognition and understanding of oneself, other people and regularities that govern this world are meant to develop the skill of foreseeing events so that the individual should be able to take the most optimal life decisions. Effective orientation in the world is not complete, though, without holding a view on our own place in the world, what we are living for, or what reasons justify our living. Subjective understanding of the meaning of one's life is connected with the problem area of recognized values, crystallized life goals, mortality and needs. Whatever is valuable and, as a result, becomes the object of people's efforts and the source of man's motivation – is reasonable.

Kazimierz Popielski, a follower and propagator of the ideas of Victor E. Frankl – the founder of logotheory and logotherapy – deals with considerations on ways of experiencing the meaning of life. He believes that the term "feeling" points to the fact that this notion is relativized to the subject who experiences it. The feeling of the sense of life means thus "certain general conviction of the individual, which supports their motivation and force necessary to live, make endeavors and references. It is connected with such content of life as: reflection, hope, trust, life prospects, love, good, sense. The feeling arising in their context and in connection with their content is the force that mobilizes and directs man's existence" (Popielski, 1994, p. 170). The same author links the sense of the meaning of life with the noetic, spiritual dimension of human existence, which is the effect of selecting individual fundamental goals of life that direct further actions.

The notion of the meaning of life is a construct consisting of the following three components:

- cognitive – which refers to the process of creating and investing life experiences with meanings; this is a set of views and beliefs through which the individual explains and interprets his/her own meaning of life;
- emotional – which refers to such feelings and experiences as satisfaction, content, happiness, fulfillment; realization of the meaning of life always connects with positive emotional states;
- motivational – which is linked to needs, goals and systems of values; here, the very process of selection of life goals itself is vital, as well as their carrying out; achievement of aims invests the individual's existence with a sense (Klamut, 2002, p. 25–26).

The research conducted by Porczyńska-Ciszewska (2013, p. 23) points to the fact that the sense of the meaning of life is conditioned by subjective variables and not situational ones. To the highest degree it is correlated with such personality traits as extraversion, neuroticism (negative correlation), amicability, conscientiousness, the sense of location of (internal) control and openness. Upon analyzing the paths, relations between the sense of the meaning of life and personality traits from the model of the Great Five were revealed and, additionally, the variable – Behavior Model type A (in comparison with type B). There was also found an inclination towards undertaking risk behaviors (a negative relation). On the other hand, the model does not include the sense of control location. At the same time, the author noticed a high positive statistical relation between the sense of the meaning of life and experiencing happiness. She concluded that this sense performs the function of an intermediate variable in experiencing happiness.

The meaning of life is thus a tendency which motivates man towards undertaking specific actions that invest the life with a value exceeding the very existence of man itself. This activity manifests itself in particular in the course of development and realization of psychic needs. Kazimierz Obuchowski underlines that learning about the world is of a dual nature: beside the intellectual orientation within the real world, it is indispensable to develop emotional orientation as well, since the two manners of recognizing the world are inseparably connected with each other. Therefore, apart from the cognitive need and

one for emotional contacts, the author includes striving for the meaning of life in the group of orientational ones, as well. Moreover, he defines the need for the meaning of life as a man's personality trait which "makes it impossible for man to function properly without the existence of such values in his life activity that are or may be regarded by him as investing his life with the sense of living. This means, in practice, that his life activity is too weak in relation to the possibilities offering themselves, not directed or evaluated negatively by himself" (Obuchowski, 1983, p. 210). The author claims also that without finding one's own meaning of life, man is not capable of developing his personality to its full extent. The sense of living is a factor conditioning the motivational stability of the individual, his resistance to obstacles, satisfaction with life and becoming a better and better person. The meaning of life should be a creation of one's own reflection on himself/herself and the reasons of it have to be clearly determined so that a chance of modifying it ought to exist along with the appearance of changes in living conditions, acquisition of new knowledge, a new understanding of the world. When the meaning of life is imposed from outside, when it results from the regulations of the role, from the system of values or a situation imposed from outside, its impact on man's fate is limited (Obuchowski, 2000, p. 282). Moreover, Obuchowski is convinced that finding the meaning of one's own life protects man from neurosis, pathologies, deviations, helplessness, objectivization. Thanks to it, man develops into a subject, an intentional being.

Katarzyna Skrzypińska has provided a synthesis of knowledge on the role played by the meaning of life by means of acknowledging its functions. Consequently, she listed the following functions:

- satisfying man's basic needs – primarily the need for safety and that for contact with others, the fulfilment of which makes development and satisfaction of higher level needs possible. This, in turn, builds and solidifies the sense of self-worth; finding the meaning of life gives rise to a subjective sense of satisfaction;
- influencing the personality development – fulfilling the need for the sense of life
- makes it possible to approve of one's own actions and allows engaging in one's
- personal development, in discovering and realizing one's own possibilities and potentials;
- directing life activity – the meaning of life enables to mark out the given aim by man himself, while endeavoring to realize it invests the life with a sense, permits to reach the level of goals which are pro-social and go beyond personal ones;
- facilitating orientation in the world – recognition of the world of values and establishment of the clear personal hierarchy of values make it possible for man to choose what is the most important to him/her, in this respect – values which make life sensible and offer a 'guide post' performing an important regulatory function (Skrzypińska, 2002, p. 96–99).

The lack of the sense of the meaning of life poses a drama to human beings, since it is not only a source of negative emotional states, but also one of an existential emptiness entailing crises and psychic breakdowns, a feeling of penetrating sadness, the sense of being lost. There ensue depression, escaping into addictions and compulsions. An increase in negative emotional states gives rise to entering into interpersonal conflicts,

not reckoning with feelings and rights of other people, thus it opens the road to criminality. It follows from the studies carried out by Jan Szałański and Paweł Nowak that "socially-maladjusted youth are characterized by a considerably lower level of the sense of the meaning of life than the young who do not display any characteristics of social maladjustment. The former are therefore exposed to existential frustration to a greater degree and – on the other hand – the symptoms of social maladjustment can partially be a consequence of this frustration" (Szałański & Nowak, 1995, p. 68).

Supporting the development of the sense of the meaning of life in the young as a goal of creative prophylaxis

Obuchowski states that formation of the concept of oneself is a complex process and consists of three phases: identification, 'cosmic' and the mature need for the meaning of life. The phase of identification is especially significant in the process of personality development, since identifying with others (first with the parents, then with friends and members of groups which the individual is a member of) is not only a kind of fulfilling emotional contacts, but also a way of investing life with a meaning. Man's identification with somebody who seems 'reasonable' and worthy, is connected with copying superficial features and/or ways of reacting in different situations. Thus, identification enriches the repertoire of behaviors and broadens the spectrum of possibilities of solving problems as well as satisfying individual needs. In the period of adolescence, this is a particularly important mechanism and therefore identification with a reference group (subculture, group of fans) is so strong that a young person is readily capable of sacrificing his/her contacts with parents for its sake. This phase is a natural one in humans' development. Still, there are individuals who stop at this stage, which prevents them from attaining psychic maturity. Obuchowski claims further that hardships encountered in life, like divorcing of parents, illness or the necessity of coping with problems of life, accelerate exiting this phase. Problems incline towards pondering over oneself, as well as generate the beginning of making attempts to look for the sense of living in a different form (Obuchowski, 2000, p. 307).

The 'cosmic' phase is connected with searching for something that will provide the meaning of life and what exists outside man, that is in the Cosmos. A variety of philosophical conceptions are available here. They supply knowledge on the order of this world, man's place in it and his struggling against life. Power is sought for in the Cosmos, which determines the fate of man and determines his destination. Tarot, numerology or horoscopes are strongly relied on. This is an important stage in humans' development, since it facilitates formation of the *Weltanschaaung* and makes a form of search for one's own subjectivity. Nevertheless, stopping at this level prevents the individual from formulating long-term personal tasks and ridding of the dependence on external factors. The mature person's need for finding the meaning of life is the phase thanks to which human beings find the meaning in themselves, in the internalized values and in their own actions, hence nobody can take it away from them, steal or destroy it any longer. In this sense the need gives man the greatest feeling of safety. The mature need for the

meaning of life results from the feeling of responsibility for one's own life and "includes the individual's contribution to what he/she exists in, what he/she is active in and what his/her future will be realized in" (Obuchowski, 2000, p. 314). It is then a way to fulfill his/her being in the world that is constantly changing.

Therefore, the sense of the meaning of life is formed beginning with human being's birth and it is from this very moment itself that we should take care of its proper development. Comprehending the dynamics of the development of the need for the meaning of life, the young have to be supported by satisfying the conditions that are indispensable for their development. At the first stage of development, each child must have the basic need for safety and emotional contacts satisfied by its parents or a permanent guardian in order that it could identify with them. Then, it needs taking care of that each child should be a member of a peer group who are carriers of accepted social norms. A peer group performs a significant socializing function by impacting the consciousness-moral sphere of its members, which follows through exchanging opinions and establishing group-based norms. Inside their groups, the members have the possibility of fulfilling their relevant psychic needs (acceptance, security, belonging, social appreciation), as well as verifying the experience derived from their homes. It is not until the individual 'grows out of' the peer group which he/she identifies himself/herself with, that he/she can find the meaning of life in ideologies, religions or other values existing in the Cosmos, that is outside himself/herself. And this indeed is what opens to the person his/her individual path to further search for values which will become interiorized and will serve as indicators of the mature person's meaning of life.

Barbara Kaja mentions possible influences which favor formation of the sense of the meaning of life in children. They are listed below as follows:

- teaching values which invest life with a meaning through elevating contacts with worthy and influential people and also co-experiencing events. The person of the teacher, because of who he/she is and what he/she does (his/her own system of values), is a model of giving meanings to objects, ideas, people in everyday life. Thus, he/she forms an offer, but it is the young who choose these values which suit them by attributing individual significance to them;
- shaping biographical competences – discovering the meaning of life requires subjective orientation in one's own life, which means that the young one must possess, among others, knowledge about himself/herself, about the world, as well as the skills of biographical thinking and managing one's own life and development;
- the model of partner-based formation of life and meaning-generating values – the teacher is a moderator and not a person who knows better what is good and what is bad; the young are not treated as less competent; conversation is given priority to instruction;
- the model of creative hypotheses and their critique – the model of guesses and refutations; with the use of Socratic dialogue the young themselves arrive at finding solutions to moral, civilization or religious problems (Kaja, 2001, p. 104–107).

The sense of the meaning of life is a subjectively felt, positive psychic state connected with the awareness of making values real, through which an individual goal of life is realized. In its content, this goal holds the highest value (higher than life itself) to the given human being. Hence the strong inner need for its carrying out and the agreement to subordinate to it many actions that are defined and are extended over time and by means of this – over the whole of one's life. Subjecting these actions to a life goal makes a meaning-generating influence on the life, that is all these actions become reasonable (take on a value as a means indispensable for realization of the main aim).

The sense of the meaning of life, together with the state of happiness accompanying it, does not depend on – as it might seem – prosperity. In the "Introduction" to *Psychologia pozytywna [Positive Psychology]*, Janusz Czapiński stated that "along with a rise in affluence […] the epidemics of depression in young generations expands, the number of divorces grows, the social capital of mutual trust diminishes, materialistic and consumerism-oriented attitudes grow stronger, the threat of sexual harassment of children increases, customs deteriorate, the number of suicides and crime against life and health goes up," while "people feel more and more clearly the lack of 'instruction' how to live in order to preserve sound senses and be able to die with the conviction that they did not waste the chance which they were given on the day of their birth, that they did what they were supposed to in the best way they could, that they did not take the wrong way, that their stay on Earth had a deep sense" (Czapiński, 2004, p. 7).

The significance of the sense of meaning in the life of man can hardly be overestimated, since man's psychic condition largely depends on it. Moreover, it also conditions the kind of emotions that are to be dominant in man's life, the skill of coping with adversities of fate, experiencing satisfaction and the general content with one's own life. The process of rearing of young generations should thus be directed at supporting children and youth in finding the meaning of their lives and in preparing them to living with the recognition of its significance. The latter is defined as a value and, therefore, as rearing towards values. This is the type of rearing expected to guarantee that the young will find right values which will invest their lives with a meaning. Values, however, exist solely inside human beings, and outside them – become an intellectual construct. Therefore, values need to be experienced, which necessitates "experiencing determined impressions/experiences by the subject, mainly via active participation and engagement, as recognition by means of a personal and direct contact" (Ostrowska, 2001, p. 54). Consequently, without contacts with other human beings who are carriers of positive values there is no rearing towards values. Socially maladjusted people who suffer from an existential emptiness, only too often used to experience negative emotions in their contacts with adults, including aggression, violence, derision, psychic oppression, humiliation – that is effects of having been perceived not as a value themselves and almost exclusively having been exposed to anti-values.

It can be concluded that it is personality models that are of paramount importance to discovering the meaning of life, since a young person, who is growing up, has an opportunity to observe them on his/her path of life. Another relevant factor of great

significance here is the quality of the experiences in interpersonal contacts, during which these values turn into reality.

Values represent personally and socially desired versions of individual needs and social requirements. Research proves that adolescents do not differ in any basic way from the general population of the young as regards the hierarchy of accepted values, whereas the outlined differences are primarily connected with the selection of means to attain them (Ostrowska, 2008). That is why the adolescent must be aided in the process of mentalization of their own psychic needs and in discovering such modes of their fulfillment that do not contradict social requirements. A condition behind the positive development is balancing and achieving a consensus between values that serve the needs of one's own 'I' and those of others. Here, a barrier is posed by the fact that the majority of minors are characterized by egocentric motivation, which results in that only values relating to the well-being of the individual are taken care of at the expense of the social ones. Limiting the egoism and teaching the young the skill of decentration have for a long time now been the goal of resocialization-related actions.

It also needs emphasizing that it is indispensable to support the emotional, cognitive and social development of the young via making it possible for them to develop their potentials which are understood as abilities, predispositions, talents, skills and social competences. Then, the probability is greatly increased that the sense of the meaning of life in children and youth, and next in adults, will be characterized by proper dynamics of development and, consequently, will become a source of psychic well-being.

Conclusions

The essence of humans' proper functioning is investing our existence with a meaning, a sense – including the meaning of our own lives. It is this construct and the role of the meaning of life that our resistance to hardships and difficulties which cross the paths of our lives depend on. When we know what we really want, we treat these obstacles as challenges. On the other hand, man who does not know what he wants and what he is living for limits himself to pleasures and resorts to escaping from problems and avoiding discomforts.

Thus, the individual system of values performs a vital function in our lives, since it allows obtaining orientation in the external and internal worlds, as well as permits to differentiate between good and evil, between things that are precious and those which pose a threat to us. Individual values are indispensable to understand the reality and to execute rational actions in it. They mark out our path of life. The values which are internalized and acknowledged by the individual in this sense make the person resistant to negative risk factors, since they set a clear direction of our activity, bringing satisfaction through inner gratification. It is in them where the individual can find the meaning of his/her life. Values are deciding about the power of motivation to act in order to implement the meaning of life, as well as make the individual fight for what he/she desires. Additionally, they generate mechanisms of self-control by triggering off moral feelings in the situation in which the individual departs from his/her values.

Educating towards acquisition of values and formation of the constructive feeling of finding the meaning of life in young generations is such a rearing-prophylactic activity that guards the young against participating in various pathological phenomena in the individual and social dimensions (Cekiera, 2001). However, regarding this delicate matter, adults cannot impose anything on the young; they can only offer, indicate, facilitate, activate, etc. Concluding, I would like to recall the well-known statement of Cekiera (1993) that development towards higher values, ones that invest people's lives with the meaning, is the highest form of prophylaxis, since this is a shield defending the young generation against deviations, pathologies, illnesses and all sorts of threats to the development.

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	REPORT	

INTERNATIONAL PROJECT CONFERENCE FOCUSING ON SCHOOL INCLUSION TAKING PART AT SILESIAN UNIVERSITY IN OPAVA

Martin Kaleja

The International professional and scientific conference which was organized by Research Center for Social Inclusion of the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava on 11 April 2019, opened with greetings by the dean of the Faculty, prof. PhDr. Rudolf Žáček, Dr. The guests and colleagues were welcomed by vice-dean for study and social affairs Mgr. et Mgr. Marta Kolaříková, Ph.D. The presenter who announced the cultural performance by the children's choir DOMINO who were accompanied by their conductor PaedDr. Ivana Kleinová from the partner I. Hurník Elementary School in Opava, was the director of one of the partner schools of the project Mgr. Monika Jarošová.

The conference, entitled **"Family, School and Friends: Towards a Quality Joint Education"**, which was one of the outputs of the development project implemented by a team of researchers mainly from the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava and was attended by professionals, workers and educational experts. Also present were experts from various relevant lines of profession, parents, students and the general public who are involved in school education. The joint meeting of the project implementers, educators and academics in the field took place in the historical building of the Faculty of Public Policies in Opava of the Silesian University in Opava. Conference languages were Czech, Polish and Slovak. The event was attended by 95 participants.

The international dimension of the conference consisted in the participation of foreign partners and allied institutions which not only participated in this event, but also contributed to the coordination and participation on the entire event. There were representatives of Polish universities, for example from Czestochowa, Warsaw, Opole, Katowice, Lodz and Szeczyn and representatives from universities in Slovakia – from Prešov, Bratislava, Ružomberok, Banska Bystrica. Domestic academic institutions were represented by Charles University, Masaryk University, Palacky University in Olomouc and Ostrava University. The issue of quality and inclusive education were also the interest of representatives of public administration and social policy, for example representatives from the Government Office, the civic association ROMEO, the office of Ombudsman, Czech School Inspectorate, Regional Office of the Moravian-Silesian Region, and representatives and the City of Ostrava, Opava and Bruntal.

The important event was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of plenary lectures which made for some interesting contributions. The first lecture on "Mental Health as One of the Indicators of the Quality of Life of Pupils with Special Educational Needs in an Inclusive School" by prof. PaedDr. Miroslava Bartoňová, Ph.D. from Charles University. Next came a lecture by PhDr. Hana Slaná, Director of the Moravian-Silesian office of the Czech School

Inspection named "Czech School Inspection – Selected Aspects of the Implementation of Joint Education". An interesting concept of inclusion was presented by Gwendolyn Albert, an expert consultant at tackling the issue at several world and national platforms, who is also active in the Romea association. The plenary part was concluded by the head of the Research Centre for Social Inclusion and the principal project implementer, doc. PhDr. et. PhDr. Martin Kaleja, Ph.D., who spoke on *"Implementation of Project Plans, Goals and Problems on the Example of an Inclusive School-Oriented Project of the Silesian University in Opava"*.

The second part of the conference consisted of topical discussion blocks. In the first section, moderated by colleagues from the University of Ostrava, doc. Mgr. et Mgr. Alena Seberová, Ph.D. and Mgr. Taťána Göbelová, Ph.D., contributions were made which related to two topical aspects of inclusive pupil education: education of pupils and competence of teachers. The presented topics of inclusive education of pupils were primarily concerned with values, learning support, internet danger issues and the pupils' healthy way of life. The field of development of teaching competencies was represented by contributions concerning the possibilities of teaching staff mentoring and professional teacher training system. Each presented paper was followed by a discussion which was enriched by the participation of representatives of various institutions in the field of inclusive education and also, of course, by the opportunity to share experience on the Czech-Polish international level. The second section contributions, which were moderated by members of the Research Centre for Social Inclusion, prof. PhDr. Pavel Mühlpachr, Ph.D. and Ing. Eva Nyklová, focused on social issues, affecting the relations and relationships of children, pupils and teachers. The participants of this section discussed with passion, tackling current challenges not only in primary education, but also in the pre-graduate training of future pedagogical staff. The third section was moderated by prof. PaedDr. Miroslava Bartoňová, Ph.D., in tandem with prof. PhDr. Marie Vítková, Ph.D., who work at the Research Centre for Social Inclusion at the Silesian University in Opava. The section's topical focus was in current issues of education of pupils with special educational needs jointly with intact classmates in an inclusive class of a mainstream school. Inclusion was targeted at the topics of education, teaching and didactics. Individualisation and differentiation in the teaching process using adequate strategies, methods and forms were also born in mind. At the end of individual sections, discussions were held on the presented papers.

The implementation team and the conference evaluated the event even in its course as successful.

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CZECH GOVERNMENT COUNCIL ON ROMANI MINORITY AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION FOCUSES ON PREVENTING EXCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Gwendolyn Albert

The issue of exclusion in education, whether on the basis of disability, ethnicity or social status, is one that has long exercised policy designers in the Czech Republic. While access to education is declared to be a public good to which all should have equal access, at the level of practice it remains a fact that the Czech school system displays a high degree of segregation on an ethnic basis.

The Council on Romani Minority Affairs, which advises the Government on issues affecting the Romani minority, has been convening a Working Group on Education for several years now to advise the council on what they should recommend to the Government in this area. The current chair of the Working Group is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martin Kaleja, Ph.D., Head of the Research Centre for Social Inclusion at the Faculty of Public Policies, Silesian University in Opava.

While at present none of the documentation of the meetings of this group is available through the official website of the Council, it is one of the Working Groups that has met the most consistently over the years with a rather stable constellation of experts from academia, civil society, and various state bodies. With respect to issues of social pathology and its prevention, the Working Group has focused *inter alia* on bullying and on how educators can be prepared for the challenge of ethnic diversity in the classroom specifically with respect to Romani children. Monitoring the impact of recently introduced changes to the financing of measures to address children's special needs ("inclusion") on Romani children, as well as the introduction of a compulsory year of preschool, has also been on the Working Group's agenda.

One of the biggest challenges to greater Romani community involvement in the everyday life of schools throughout the Czech Republic is the fact that intergenerationally, low levels of educational attainment have been the norm for the country's largest minority. As a result, the number of educationalists who are themselves Romani community members able to provide insight into crucial issues impacting Romani participation in education (such as the language of instruction differing from a child's home language) is very small, and the impact of such professionals on how the schools themselves function has been minimal to date. Romani community members who might be interested in working in the schools, whether as educators or paraprofessionals, tend not to be among those members of the workforce with the strongest qualifications for either managing schools or teaching in them. As a result, even well-intentioned policy proposals regarding early childhood education and support for the

Romanes language tend to fail to involve the very people who potentially have the most to contribute to them and to gain from them – Romani parents – because strict conditions about educational attainment tend to be established for those meant to implement the policies.

Over the years, some Working Group members have presented the opinion to the Council that the allocation of resources to the issue of preventing ethnic and racist bullying in particular in the schools has been too low. Prevention of such behavior in the schools is crucial to the creation of an environment where all feel safe and able to learn. Anti-bias education is a closely related area that has also been discussed by the Working Group. The various modalities employed to reach the education profession with such content – one-off conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. – are probably among the least impactful in terms of their potential to change behavior, but as starting points for discussion in the field they have probably served their purpose. One past member of the Working Group on Education advising the Council was also involved for a time with a Working Group on Racial Bullying at the National Education Institute.

After a Romani schoolgirl attempted suicide because of racist bullying and her story was reported by the media in 2018, the Working Group asked experts on combating this phenomenon to brief them on their experiences of attempting to impact how schools approach this issue and on what needs to be done further to prevent bullying. Compared to other issues related to the implementation of the recent legislative changes designed to bring resources for special needs into mainstream educational settings, this particular social pathology remains relatively undiscussed by the public.

Recently the Working Group has decided to refine its own procedures in order to hopefully improve its own impact on the advice it gives the Council and thereby on the expertise the Council is able to provide to the Government. Given the completely voluntary nature of membership in the Working Group and the relative lack of resources and staff at the Office of the Government who are tasked with handling the extremely extensive agenda of Romani affairs, this is a challenging endeavor. It is clear from the process of providing commentary on the current development of the Government's strategic documents on the inclusion of Romani people that one of the basic struggles includes making sure the experts and those they are advising are working with the same concepts when approaching what needs to be prevented in school environments and what needs to be promoted there so that access to a quality education will expand for all.

Those interested in learning more or in providing expertise on any of these issue should feel free to contact the Office of the Council on Romani Minority Affairs at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (https://www.vlada.cz/en/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/the-council-for-roma-community-affairs--50634/).

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BOOK REVIEW

PREVENTION OF RISK BEHAVIOUR IN PUPILS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PEDAGOGUES

Kamil Janiš

Bělík, V., & Hoferková, S. (2018). *Prevence rizikového chování žáků z pohledu pedagogů [Prevention of Risk Behaviour in Pupils from the Perspective of Pedagogues].* Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus.

Every day, we hear about various criminal cases in the media and, children (under 15 years) and adolescents (15–18 years) have their share in the statistics, of course. Although overall statistics point to a rising trend, according to Tab. 2*: (Development of the number of prosecuted and investigated persons in the Czech Republic with a focus on the number and proportion of offenders – children and adolescents*; p. 22), decline can be seen in recent times. This data could make it seem that prevention is sufficient. However, everyday encounters with reality point to fact that this is not true (since only detected actions are recorded), and therefore it is necessary to keep primary prevention activities in the environments of schools and educational institutions permanent. The authors compare this fact with the findings of other authors. The finding (p. 23) that *"The prevalence of child and youth delinquency is decreasing, especially in property crime ... On the other hand, there is a significant increase in the proportion of delinquent girls – the data show a gradual reduction of differences in delinquency in boys and girls over time. Delinquency slightly increases with age."*
The contents of the monograph are divided into four chapters:
1. Current Prevalence of Risk Behaviour Among Children and the Youth;
2. Theoretical Definition of Risk Behaviour in the Context of the Czech Education System;
3. Primary-School Teachers' View on Risk Behaviour and Its Prevention;
4. Conclusions and Recommendations for Educational Work.

The first chapter of the monograph, **Current Prevalence of Risk Behaviour Among Children and the Youth**, consists of two relatively independent sub-chapters, the first of which deal with redefining the concept of "risk behaviour" and the second of which is devoted to risk behaviour in current Czech research.
From a multitude of different research results on selected manifestations of risk behaviour, one is worth paying special attention to, i.e. 1.2.4. *Risk Behaviour in Cyberspace* (p. 24–27). The presented results, especially findings of the adopted research (Kopecký et al. *Risk Behaviour Forms in Czech and Slovak Children on the Internet.* Olomouc: Palacky University of Olomouc, 2015) point out one interesting trend, namely, *"that children show risk behaviour despite the fact that their awareness in this area is relatively satisfactory."* (p. 22). The presents conclusions can be applied to other risk behaviour.

This issue is closely related to the possible risks of sexting which is spreading among children, but also among the youth, on an unprecedented scale, and one can logically assume that it will expand even among adults in the near future. This is to some extent confirmed by the authors, as they report: *"Sexting appears to be dangerous risk behaviour. Czech and Slovak children – more often girls – place intimate photos or videos of themselves on the internet (about 10 %). Also, nearly three-quarters of respondents are aware of the risks of sexting."* (p. 26). The possibilities of abuse are apparent at first glance. In addition, it is not possible to decipher the age, gender or nationality of the person who is part of the communication early on. In in this regard, it is indeed a very complex, complicated and dangerous phenomenon that carries many risks.

The authors do not drown in a multitude of research presented or among their conclusions. They aim to generalize the lessons learned, particularly in relation to the school environment. In this regard, they arrive at several conclusions:

- A marked decrease in the incidence of risk behaviour among Czech youth which may be one of the likely consequences of the positive impact of the implementation of preventive programs. Children and adolescents are beginning to prefer interest in healthy lifestyle and effective use of leisure time (p. 33).
- Risks are not found in the actual *"world out there"* but in the virtual one (p. 33).
- *"Balancing of experience between the sexes"* (p. 34). As the authors state: *"Generally, boys exhibit more aggressive behaviour against other persons or property. In contrast, these manifestations take the form of auto-aggression, such as self-harm and eating disorders, in girls"* (p. 34). From the above findings, it can subsequently be concluded that primary prevention programs must respect gender differences in their individualized form (p. 34).

The second chapter monograph, ***Theoretical Definition of Risk Behaviour in the Context of the Czech Education System***, includes a total of seven sub-chapters.

In this chapter, the authors point to the fact that prevention requires the use of a multidisciplinary approach. It might be worth considering to also include legal disciplines in the entire spectrum, as they define certain limits which may not be crossed. The next section devotes deeper attention to the legislative side of the matter (sub-chapter *2.2 Legislative and Strategic Documents Related to the Prevention of Risk Behaviour in Children and the Youth*, p. 39).

It mentions a very interesting and stimulating idea which refers to the experience of other countries in creating the new field of preventology (p. 37). It would certainly be appropriate to state an approximate outline of its contents. Maybe the authors are contemplating a possible implementation, which would be only commendable. Similarly, a more detailed elaboration of the two approaches to coordination of prevention, horizontal and vertical, would be worth considering (p. 43–44).

One of the most inspiring outputs of the authors is their concept of an act on prevention, which *"however, should establish some (albeit – as it often happens in our conditions –*

undervalued) quota of workers who are to tackle these issues professionally as part of their full-time employment" (p. 46).

The third chapter of the monograph, **Primary-School Teachers' View of Risk Behaviour and Its Prevention**, is dedicated (as per the title) to the view the implementers themselves have on prevention. Various studies are mainly concerned with the impact of prevention activities, the frequency of individual risk behaviour instances, etc.
The first sub-chapter focuses on school counselling workplaces (p. 64–65). The following sub-chapter has a very interesting content *"The Views of Teachers on the Incidence of Risk Behaviour and Its Prevention"* (p. 66). In Tab. no. 9 *"Risk behaviour among primary school pupils from the perspective of teachers – frequent phenomena"* (p. 67), both expected and unexpected phenomena are listed, as pedagogues rank among the most common ones the following: – aggressive behaviour, including bullying, cyber-bullying and self-harm, as well as addictive behaviour, including Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD) and last but not least, truancy and lazy lifestyle (p. 67). In the other category, then, appear: smoking in girls, negativism, lack of motivation, hatefullness, cheating and lying (p. 67). The above data concern risk behaviour instances which pedagogues encounter the most at school. In this context, their view of the most serious manifestations of risk behaviour is noteworthy (Tab. no. 10, p. 69), as in addition to the above manifestations, *"risk phenomena associated with social networks and excessive use of IT and PCs, including games,"* stand our significantly (p. 69).
Risk behaviour is closely related to prevention. Based on investigations, two trends are surfacing, the first of which concerns the increase of phenomena, the second of which concerns the interest of schools in finding solutions and prevention. Conversely, alarming phenomena include disinterest among parents of children and poor parental communication with school (p. 73).

The fourth chapter of the monograph **Conclusions and Recommendations for Educational Work**, presents summary findings which include primarily:
- Supporting efforts to promote the position of social pedagogue into the Act on Educational Staff.
- Strengthening the position of school counselling departments.
- Charting trends related to risk behaviour prevention issues.
- Improving higher education of teachers, including lifelong-learning centres in the area of prevention.
- Implementing research focused on the application of the prevention.

Conclusions and recommendations stated are considerably more numerous (p. 115–117) and represent interesting suggestions for further scientific work.
Overall, the presented monograph is another contribution to a better understanding of the school environment in relation to the prevention of risk behaviour in children and the youth. The authors have been dealing with these issues in the long term and they have the ability to present their views in clear language, which is not always the case.

One can fully concur with the authors when they state: *"The teacher enters their input into the school environment which is a very complicated one from the perspective of risk behaviour."* One finds nothing but full agreement with this observation. Therefore, it is exactly this complexity, this "first" encounter of children with risk behaviour manifestations, this lack of preparedness for the reality at hand, but also the lack of professional preparedness on the part of the pedagogues, etc., that can and often becomes determining for the children's further development.

Both interested professionals and the general public may benefit from the fact that the text is accompanied by a whole range of comprehensible diagrams which will undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of the issue, not only by pedagogues and other professionals, but also by the parents themselves and, finally, by students of prevention-oriented study programs.

One can fully agree with the view of both authors, defined in the annotation (back cover of the publication): *"This scientific monograph introduces into the current research in the issue of risk behaviour in children and the youth. In particular, we focus on the results of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children: A WHO Cross-National Study (HBSC), but also on issues of current research in cyber-threats to children and the youth, and other studies. The book further defines the issues of risk behaviour prevention with special attention to children and adolescents in the school environment."*

Although the title of the publication refers to "the perspective of pedagogues", the text itself is mostly focused on primary schools. One can therefore expect that further natural continuation of the monograph will be a similar material focused on secondary school environment. It is an environment that is, indeed, in many respects different from what preventive approaches to pupils at the primary school level are designed for.

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