

Social problems in Europe:
Dilemmas and possible solutions

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INTRODUCTION

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"Social problems in Europe: Dilemmas and possible solutions" is a significant work. Its realization was at the initiative of Dr. Edyta Januszewska of the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw and Dr. Stéphane Rullac of BUC Ressources (Paris region), and it is the expression of several years cooperation between the social workers and pedagogues of these centers. The editors of the volume did not restrict themselves to the circle of their own institutions. They also invited input from members of well known academic centers in Poland, Russia, the Netherlands and Italy.

The result of this, is a work that represents a meeting of European academics and professionals who are close to the social problems of modern Europe, who know these issues, and who examine and deal with them in practice. Their studies clearly show that the social problems in today's Europe are of a similar nature, resulting from crises and shortages as well as from the ethnic, political, religious and cultural conflicts plaguing Europe and the world. They also highlight that the spread of these problems transcends the boundaries of place and time, and the delineations of poverty, unemployment, homelessness and domestic violence which embrace Europe at present.

"Social problems in Europe: Dilemmas and possible solutions" reveals and presents a little-known picture of a dual natured European community. It is a community of social problems which affect people in different countries. It's also an ideological and professional community of social workers, educators, public policy makers and everyone involved in social care, the support and building of better conditions for development, for improving the quality of life and the observance of human rights, including the rights of children, the disabled and of ethnic and social minorities.

On the one hand - the authors treat Europe as a shared endeavor, a social project encompassed by the slogans of freedom, equality, justice and democracy. On the other hand, they point to today's nagging problems of economic, political and social crisis. They reveal the dangers and shortcomings afflicting various social groups and unmask the failures of social services in different countries.

The myth of universal abundance has been shattered and faith in the efficacy of the welfare state and in its willingness and effectiveness to solve social problems has also collapsed. The winners and losers of the transformations are

become increasingly easier to recognize. Before our eyes a group is growing that was described Zygmunt Bauman as people for the rubbish tip.

Among these are refugees, immigrants, orphans, street children, the homeless, and women and children experiencing violence. These are people ejected from mainstream society that end up stigmatized and marginalized. This group includes European and North African migrants as well as those fleeing war and violence from various parts of the world. Many make their way to Italy and France, but also to Denmark and Poland, in the hope of finding better living conditions. However, they often find that legal, political, and economic realities soon dispel the myth of finding easy opportunities to settle in another country and of an untroubled life.

"Social problems in Europe: Dilemmas and possible solutions" is centered around three themes. The first involves the presentation of selected social problems with refugees and migration at the fore. This theme is illustrated by the works: "The arrival of North African migrants in the South of Italy: Practices of sustainable welfare within a non-welcoming system" (Dr. Anna Elia); "Child refugees and immigrants in Denmark: A researcher's reflections" (Dr. Edyta Januszewska); "Determinants of social work with refugees and immigrants" (Prof. Krystyna M. Błeszyńska). This section also includes the article "The paradox of religious diversity and human rights in Europe" (Dr. Anna Odrowąż-Coates). These works examine the overall legal, political, and cultural regulation of the migration and refugee problems in the world today. They are completed by a pedagogical analysis of the situation of refugee and immigrant children presently in Denmark. In general, the above studies show a diverse, multi-faceted and differentiated picture of migration and of the situation of migrants in Europe, be it in Italy, which is taking in Africans that land in Calabria and Sicily, or in France, which is experiencing a variety of religious and cultural entanglements with its significant Muslim population.

The second thematic area raised by the authors focuses on social work practices. Here, in "Processual models of biographies of women experiencing domestic violence: An analysis of human strengths in the context of an action plan" (Dr. Katarzyna Gajek), theoretical and methodological material shows social work both as a discipline and a research process, while the works "Actions on Behalf of <street children>: Challenges, opportunities, dangers" (M.A. Ewelina Cazottes); "Social orphanhood in Russia" (Prof. Roza Valeeva); "Social assistance for the foster family in Russia" (Dr. Gulnara Biktagirova); "Psycho-pedagogic prevention of suicidal risks among collegiate young people" (Dr. Nadezhda Kostyunina); "Where do children learn democracy? (a voice from The Netherlands)" (Ing. Theo Cappon) and "Social situation of older

people in Poland" (Dr. Maria Łuszczynska), describe the development of social and welfare practices for the benefit of children, women, families, youth, and the elderly.

The last two papers cover the final and third theme of homelessness: "Paths to Homelessness: Reconstruction of the process based on research into biographies of the homeless" (M.A. Małgorzata Kostrzyńska) and "The emergence of a state-aided aberration? The case of the homeless in France" (Dr. Stéphane Rullac). They share common subject but present completely different insights. The first looks at the life paths that can lead to this phenomenon. In the second, the author looks at the problem of homelessness in a broader historical context, examining the changing legal status and the variety of system solutions in France that are adopted by social services.

These concluding works also give insights into the broad field of research and study that is contemporary social work. They present what is common, and to some extent universal, in the sphere of the individual and show the differences in approach to social solutions. In Poland, as well as in France, Russia, Italy and the Netherlands, the problems of poverty, displacement, orphanhood and homelessness of both children and adults are a difficult fate that marks and excludes. However, each country has differing regulations, traditions and capacities with which to address the problems before them. Individual countries are therefore having to build their own systems and care institutions, their own support networks, and they are mobilizing different social and cultural capital.

"Social problems in Europe: Dilemmas and possible solutions" is an important and necessary read for social workers, educators and public policy makers. It reveals what unites and what differentiates us in Europe today, as well as teaching us how to identify, define, and understand the social problems of individuals and of social groups. The works within help us to reflect on the essence, meaning, power and, in some cases, the powerlessness of social work. Not only we are presented with the possibilities that exist, including institutional standard solutions, but we are also compelled at the same time to seek our own paths to the better understanding of social work and to the improvement of the profession itself.

I. REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

“Determinants of social work with refugees and immigrants”

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1. Social integration of migrants as a challenge for social work

Among the hot topics being discussed in modern Europe are cross-cultural migration, migration policy and the ability to absorb people from outside our circle of civilization. The debate taking place in the media regarding the crisis of multiculturalism is in fact not so much a discussion on the phenomenon of multiculturalism (which, as an objectively existing social phenomenon, is not open to crisis) but rather an articulation of anxieties associated with both atavistic reflexes of xenophobia¹ and the inadequacy of political and practical policies to deal with immigrants coming into Europe from non-European cultures. A subject of particularly hot dispute is the possibility of their social integration.

Since the dawn of its history migrations are phenomena that have been, and continue to be, a part of human existence. At the moment they are increasing in intensity due to the processes of globalization, demographic change (uneven population growth in different parts of the world), the development of communication technology and of effective mechanisms for protecting refugees and immigrants. As a result countries that have often remained closed, or in relative cultural homogeneity, are going through a diversity culture shock. Countries with more experience and a long tradition of multiculturalism are reviewing existing immigration policy together with the resulting paradigms affecting social work practices. In both cases each must respect certain realities that affect the problems and opportunities that determine the social integration of people coming to their country. These immigrants come from countries with different cultures and social structures, often experiencing psychological and physical traumas along the way. Many of them have experienced discrimination, exclusion and violence. All, or almost all of them, have to face the hardships of adapting to new conditions and of finding their place in an unfamiliar society.

Supporting the process of integration is one of the most important tasks of modern social work. The implementation of related operations is determined by both ethical and humanitarian premises as well as utilitarian considerations. Developing an effective model of concerted action requires not only the

¹ G. Sorman, *W oczekiwaniu barbarzyńców*, Acana, Kraków 1997.

clarification of the principles of immigration policy but also that the resulting settlement practices be based on knowledge and experience.

The concept of integration denotes the process of combining two or more elements into a relatively consistent and structured whole. However, the rules governing this process of union are not always consistent and may result from differing paradigms: emerging or additive. Additive paradigm components are adapted to existing structures while maintaining the existing quality of these structures. In the logic of the emerging paradigm integration results in the emergence of a new harmonic, this is brought about by the changes that take place within all the elements that form the new structure.

The adoption of the additive paradigm steers migration policy to models that are assimilative or segregationist in character. The assimilation model is characterized by its emphasis on migrants abandoning their own culture to assimilate into the culture and traditions of the host country. In the segregation model immigrants can retain cultural autonomy at the cost of social exclusion. The aim of an emerging paradigm is to achieve a policy of integration or multiculturalism. Here multiculturalism attempts to transform the socio-cultural shape of the community through the recognition of diversity, cultural relativism, and the equal status of cultures represented in the country's population, while maintaining their independence. Integration policy on the other hand is expressed through actions that stimulate an environment in which members of the community accept and respect each other's diversity, while transforming some elements and content of their cultural ethnicity to create a supra-ethnic civic community. Every country has the right, within existing legislative obligations, to run their own immigration policy. The possibilities and methods of integrating refugees and immigrants depend not only on the politics of a given country, but also on the characteristics of both the immigrants and the host society².

2. Processes of adaptation, acculturation and integration

The process of putting down roots into a new society is long, difficult and painful. It happens through adaptation, acculturation and integration. Each of these concepts reflects a different aspect of the phenomenon under analysis. The category of adaptation refers to the processes of adjustment that occur in response to changes in the subject's environment and the circumstances.

In the case of cross-cultural migration these are the changes in the natural, technological, cultural and social environment.

² J. Zamojski (ed.), *Imigranci i społeczeństwa przyjmujące*, Neriton, Warszawa 2000.

The multidimensionality of the challenges that emerge means that adaptive behaviours must include the reconstruction of an immigrant's livelihood (finding a new home, work, medical care, schools for children), the development of the capacity to cope with the physical requirements of the new environment (differing climate, techno sphere, diseases, plants and animals) and the ability to function adequately in the community with differing cultural and social structures. At the same time the volatility of change in an immigrant's life situation determines the effectiveness of their efforts.

Effective acculturation is an important factor influencing the ability to adapt to a new society. It is the basis for a new culture of learning requires not only the diagnosis, but also to more or less extensive transformation in the structure and content of the cultural identity of the migrant. The changes referred to; include both the assimilation of certain foreign cultural content, as well as modification or departure from the selected elements of their own culture. Structure of the acculturation process is a phase and proceeds from short-term delight by. Discover the difference of culture shock and the associated feelings of confusion, inadequacy, hostility and rejection of that diversity to increase the capacity of understanding, acceptance and a sense of competence and adjustment to the new conditions of the migrant³. The Berry distinguished by the four basic patterns of acculturation : a) integration (accommodation consisting of a partial adoption of the culture of the new country and the transformation of existing cultural identity), b) assimilation (previous rejection of cultural identity and cultural takeover of the country of settlement), c) separation (rejection of the culture of the host society and the closure in the culture of their own), d)marginalizing (rejection of both the current cultural identity and culture of the host country)⁴. It should be noted that in terms of Berry concept of integration refers primarily to the consolidation of cultural content. Doing so, in addition to assimilation is one of the strategies for the integration of a social nature. At the same within the countries of the European community time we can identify several models of integration.

Accepting the integration strategy criteria, as per Carrera, we can distinguish : 1) the multicultural model, as practiced for example in the UK (the formal acceptance of the right to the coexistence of different immigrant cultures in the structure of the host country and of their inclusion in society), 2) the assimilationist model, popular for example in Germany (inclusion of foreigners

³ K. Oberg, *Culture shock. Adjustment to new cultural environments*, "Practical Anthropology", No. 7/1960, pp. 177-182.

⁴ J. W. Berry, *Acculturation and adaptation. A general framework*, [In:] W. H. Holtzman, T. H. Bornemann (ed.), *Mental health of immigrants and refugees*, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Austin 1990, pp. 90-102.

to native society, provided that they take over the customs of the host country and will respect its laws and constitutional responsibilities), and 3) the exclusive model (based on exclusivity rules governing the acquisition of citizenship through inheritance) practiced in Switzerland and Belgium until almost the end of the twentieth century⁵.

Rinus Penninx⁶ guided by the conditions determining the position of a migrant in a given society, distinguishes two models of integration: 1) the immigrant is seen as an outsider, which results in a lack of systematic integration combined with ad hoc responses to emerging issues, 2) the immigrant is seen as a fully-fledged member of the host society and included in it through naturalization (citizenship), however immigrant communities are either acknowledged (Anglo-American model), or not acknowledged (e.g. France), as equal political actors.

Yet another criterion – the aim of achieving a culturally diverse society – leads A. Rudiger and S. Spencer to identify three models of integration: 1) the absorption into the national community of citizens model (France), 2) the functional assimilation to an ethnically defined nation-state model (Germany, Austria, Denmark, Italy, Greece), and 3) a multicultural and communitarian model relating to local communities (e.g. implemented in the UK, the Netherlands and Sweden)⁷.

Despite the diversity of accepted descriptive criteria and of analytical perspectives, all of researchers highlight a community approach by European countries to solving the problems of the integration of migrants: namely, it is seen as a process should be steered with the help of such tools as community policy and social work as a result of negligence in these areas non-integrated immigrants and their descendants could become a threat to the social cohesion of individual countries, as well as to the whole of Europe⁸.

Social integration is a multidimensional process and is done at four levels: normative, cultural, communicational and functional⁹. Normative integration is

⁵ S. Carrera, *A Comparison of Integration Programmes in the EU. Trends and Weaknesses*, CEPS Challenge Papers 1, Center for European Policy Studies, Brussels 2006.

⁶ R. Penninx, *Integration policies for Europe's immigrants. Performance, conditions and challenges*, An expert paper for the Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration, 2004.

⁷ A. Rudiger, S. Spencer, *Social Integration of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities. Policies to Combat Discrimination*, paper for the conference "The Economic and Social Aspects of Migration", January 21-22, 2003, European Commission and the OECD, Brussels 2003.

⁸ A. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration. Immigration and the idea of citizenship in France and Britain*, Antony Rowe Ltd., Great Britain 2003.

⁹ W. Landecker, *Types of Integration and Their Measurement*, "American Journal of Sociology", No. 56/1951, pp. 332-340.

derived from a sense of community norms and values. Axiological systems in culturally homogeneous communities, being the product of a relatively uniform culture, are assimilated in the course of socialization. The behaviour of members of the cultural community is included in a coherent framework of formal rules and tradition. In culturally heterogeneous societies, formed by representatives of different civilizations, a multiplicity of such frameworks coexists and a sense of community develops on the basis of universal and civil values. In such communities formal regulations become fundamentally important while tradition is shifted to the private sphere and can often clash with accepted legal norms (vide: arranged under-age marriages or honour killings).

Cultural integration is based on the synchronization of the lifestyles and behaviour patterns of members of the society. In multicultural societies synchronization can be achieved by assimilation or by accommodation to the dominant model, by the partial or total adaptation of migrant behaviour to that of the new community, especially within public sphere. Communicational integration is mediated by the common system of communication within the society (above all language) which enables cooperation and social participation by members of different ethnic groups. In mono-cultural communities it is facilitated by the language absorbed by children in the family home and developed in the process of education, by participation in culture and access to the media. However in multi-cultural societies it becomes necessary to establish the predominance of a language system which is foreign to people coming from other cultures. Accepting intermediate solutions (such as teaching in a minority groups language and treating the official language as secondary) threatens marginalization and the continued low status of people from minority groups.

The aforementioned cooperation and participation in the life of society form a system of interdependence which underlies functional integration. Its realisation depends on the development of a common system of communication, of qualification and behaviour standards, and of rules governing the life of person in the public sphere. Intrinsic to this is the equality and the non-discrimination of participants due to any criteria unrelated to ability.

According to research, Ward the extent and degree of integration capabilities are determined by three types of factors¹⁰. The first of these are external factors connected with a migrant's specific country of origin. The second - external factors stemming from the nature of the host country. The third are the individual characteristics of the migrant and his situation.

¹⁰ C. Ward, *The ABC's of acculturation*, [In:] D. Matsumoto (ed.), *The handbook of culture and psychology*, Oxford University Press, New York 2001, pp. 411-441.

3. The importance of the specificity of the country of origin and the conditions of migration

In describing the determinants relating to the country of origin of immigrants, it is important to emphasise the role of ethnic and cultural distances between the country of origin and the host country. They are expressed by the scope and degree of similarities and differences that exist between them. Indicators of ethnic distance are physical characteristics, area of origin, and the languages of immigrants and the host society. The category of cultural distance meanwhile involves ideological and axiological systems, the organization of institutions and social structures, socialisation styles, role models and interpersonal relationships, as well as lifestyles, infrastructure and techno sphere, customs, incentive systems and the organization of cognitive and communicative processes. Smaller distances favour the processes of acculturation and growth into a new society. Increased distances exacerbate the problems and pressures experienced by a migrant resulting from the far greater changes ideological and behavioural adjustments required. The large range and depth of the necessary transformations at the same time makes these processes more difficult to accept and implement¹¹.

The origin of a country with a different culture does not generate cultural distance automatically. Modern society is characterized by high inequality and internal cultural diversity resulting from both historical factors and the uneven socio-economic development. Recognition of the cultural characteristics of the migrant must therefore take into account the individuality of an environmental nature.

Lastly, an important role is played by the history of relations between members of the immigrants' society and that of the host country. Often it can be a story of mutual animosity, conflict, violence and oppression, and this makes it difficult to find oneself and to cooperate with the newly encountered community. Due to the post memory phenomenon these experiences need not have affected the immigrants directly but may be transferred in the course of ethnic socialization¹².

4. Factors associated with the host country

Factors associated with the host country that play a fundamental role, along with the earlier noted similarity to an immigrant's country of origin, include

¹¹ H. Malewska-Peyre (ed.), *Swojskość i obcość. O akulturacji imigrantów w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Psychologii PAN i SWPS, Warszawa 2001.

¹² M. Hirsch, *Family Frames. Photography, Narrative, and Post memory*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1997.

social migration policy, the economy and the labour market situation, the attitude of the host society towards newcomers, the scope and organization of actions supporting the integration process and the substance of the preparation of personnel responsible for work with migrants¹³.

As mentioned earlier, every state has the right to run their own immigration policy. Factors limiting this right include prevailing international regulations, obligations and treaties, especially the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and the Protection of Refugees. Policy adopted towards immigrants establishes the opportunities and conditions for their settlement as well their access to the labour market and to social welfare. By establishing limits and incentives it either supports the integration processor or promotes marginalization and social exclusion¹⁴. Some of the promoted solutions, despite their apparent benevolence at the time of inception, can have negative consequences that only become apparent later (excessive care shapes the attitude of learned dependence, affirmative actions, also known as positive discrimination, violate the prohibition of discrimination and lead to the perpetuation of racial and ethnic divisions, to the emergence of tensions in intergroup relations, and insult or demoralize the representatives of the privileged group; bilingual teaching in the language of a minority promotes marginalization and perpetuates their low status resulting from poor knowledge of the official language; the policy of family reunification results in polygamy appearing in western culture and an increase in the social burden, while the implementation of the principle of political correctness and protection of religious feelings interferes with the right to freedom of expression). On the other hand, overly restrictive and rigid policy can jeopardize social and economic development needs, contribute to the growth of poverty and social exclusion, stimulate crime and encourage the development of social conflicts and pathologies.

The process of settling into a new society is rich with problems and crises while their solution largely depends on the migrant's social support system. One of the quarters able to ensure this means support is the representatives of the local diaspora. Their number, accessibility, social status, solidarity, method of organisation, and nature of settlement can provide a safe haven which could ease the initial period of adaptation and provide assistance and support in later periods of crisis. Communities centred around religious institutions can help

¹³ S. Łodziński, A. Grzymała-Kozłowska (ed.), *Problemy integracji imigrantów*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa 2009.

¹⁴ A. Gutkowska (ed.), *Uchodźcy w Polsce. Kulturowo-prawne bariery w procesie adaptacji*, Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej, Warszawa 2007.

redefine the immigration situation and give a new sense to emerging challenges¹⁵. Involving immigrants in actions can also stimulate citizen like behaviour¹⁶.

In some cases, the involvement of immigrants in the local ethnic community can, however, create barriers and constraints to their further integration. This especially happens in situations where there is a strong social depreciation of a specific group, containment and self-sufficiency of the enclave, and attitudes promoted within the enclave of exclusion, self-marginalisation and isolation. Excessively strong bonds to this diaspora can also lead to an immigrant focusing their activity and social relations within the boundaries of their own ethnic group.

Opportunities for a migrant to get out of their diaspora and involve themselves in the life of the wider community are also determined by the economic situation of the country. The primary role is not dependent on the wealth of the welfare system, but the ability of migrants to be involved in the labour market. Gaining economic independence, the opportunity to lead active and independent lives and the taking on of responsibility for yourself and your family is the most important condition for the reconstruction of life in a new country. It initiates and at the same time lays the foundations for active integration.

Economic and labour market conditions shape the relationship of migrants with the host society. Research carried out by S. Olzak¹⁷ indicates that periods of economic prosperity, reflected in the availability of financial income and a high demand for workers, foster harmonious intergroup relations. Periods of recession and rising unemployment generate strategies of ethnic competitive which result in intergroup conflicts, especially with other minority groups of a similar status.

The aforementioned economic factors are also a significant, though not the sole, determinant of public attitudes towards refugees and immigrants. Political and historical circumstances play a big role in shaping these as do experiences of first contact, education and the media. Generally speaking, the attitude of Poles towards migrants is characterized by ambivalence shaped by European xenophobia, many years of isolation from the world and historical experiences

¹⁵ K. Błeszyńska, M. Szopski, *Intercultural Education and Trust Culture*, conference paper at "Intercultural Education. Paideia, Polity, Demoi", I.A.I.E., Athens, Greece 22-26.06.2009.

¹⁶ M.W. Foley, D.R. Hoge, *Religion and The New Immigrants. How Faith Communities Form Our Newest Citizens*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York 2007.

¹⁷ S. Olzak, *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition & Conflict*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto 1994.

mixed up with positive attitudes towards harmed communities, traditional hospitality, curiosity of the world and other people, and a sympathetic approach to those seeking refuge from pursuers. Victims of hostile behaviour above all are those of an apparent racial difference, mostly Africans. This phenomenon, however, need not be associated with racism resulting from historical conditioning. In countries that to a greater extent do not have the history of racial conflict, it seems to be the result of transferred aggression resulting from a high level of social frustration. As a result manifestations of racist behaviour do not meet with the approval of the general public¹⁸.

The means and ways of manifesting negative attitudes towards foreigners are also moderated at the legislative level. Although these regulations are not in a position to order the manifestation of positive attitudes, they do however form a barrier to the promotion of hostile and threatening behaviour towards representatives of other races and ethnic groups through restrictions limiting the possibility of discrimination, public incitement to hatred or the establishing of organizations promoting racist ideology.

Education is also a highly important factor in the shaping of attitudes towards people of different culture. Its content can and should prepare for contact with other cultures by shaping openness, tolerance, respect for dignity and human rights, the ability to find universal values, a sense of general human solidarity, inter-cultural competences, readiness for cooperation and contact, as well as the ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. Conversely, it can also promote ethnic stereotypes and prejudices, foster nationalism and xenophobia, and close the student in a narrow circle of local cultures perceived in isolation from the surrounding world.

Finally, a special role is played by the media. As a powerful means of shaping the mass consciousness, they form perceptions and expectations of foreign cultures and their representatives, raise awareness communities and inter-cultural relations, and promote patterns of behaviour in cases of contact. Properly selected and well designed media campaigns are an important factor in public education. Addressed to migrants they may also significantly aide the process of acculturation. The logic by which the media function, the selectivity and the fragmentation of content and the often emotional way of communication does not always contribute to the development of rational attitudes. One-sided snapshots stimulate the processes of generalization and do not facilitate understanding of the community and of world issues in all their

¹⁸ K. Błęszyńska, *Attitudes toward race and racial equity in Polish immigrant communities*, paper presented at Race Convention “A Catalyst for Change”, Commission for Racial Equality, London, UK, 26-28.11.2006.

complexity. The superficiality of the media message often oscillates between sentimentality, touristic exoticism and voyeuristic horror with representatives of other cultures in leading roles. The disturbing ambiguity or singular single mindedness of information is not conducive to the creation of a culture of tolerance and trust¹⁹.

Social attitudes shape the atmosphere in which the services responsible for the social integration of refugees and immigrants have to function. The multidimensional nature of the integration process means that virtually all administrative bodies and public and social services are involved in these efforts. The stance of decision-makers, the precision with which the duties of the various institutions formulate their tasks, their organization, the resources devoted to implementation, as well as the level of training and competence of responsible personnel can facilitate integration or create new barriers and difficulties.

5. The role of factors related to migration circumstances

The situation of people moving to another country is also moderated by the circumstances which led to their migration, especially by the causes which influenced them to leave the boundaries of their own countries. Knowing the location of the circumstances which led to these decisions, it is possible to identify forced and voluntary migration. Considering the temporal criterion, we can identify temporary and permanent migrations.

Voluntary migration is different from forced not only due to factors of intentionality but also due to the circumstances of the displacement itself, and the accompanying experiences. Voluntary migrants have a feeling of control over their situation: they make decisions in a more thought out way; they have more time to prepare the migration itself. Their transition into a new environment is accompanied by much less stress, and the fear of failure is lessened by the possibility of return. Refugees have no such possibility. They leave their home in dramatic circumstances, escaping war and persecution. On the way to an asylum country they experience many traumatic events and situations. They experience rape, violence, hunger, sickness and physical injuries. They must hide, experiencing fear for their close ones. Often, regardless of age and gender, they experienced fighting.

The period of stay in reception centers is depressing and traumatic, as are the procedures for obtaining refugee status and the early process of adaptation after

¹⁹ K. Błeszyńska, M. Szopski, *The role of parochial community in the process of social inclusion of Polish immigrants in the USA*, [In:] G. Bonifacio (ed.), *Intersection of migration, gender and religion. Pathways to integration*; Lexington Books, Ontario 2009.

leaving the center. Additionally, often as a result of psychophysical state and illusions concerning the possibility of returning to their homeland, or moving to a more desirable country, this period is not best used for gaining the competences that facilitate finding ones feet in the new society. Child-refugees, who arrive without their parents or family members, are in an especially difficult situation. Many of them have experiences which far exceed the bounds of our idea of childhood. They usually encounter assistance and protective care in a country foreign to them. However, they must solve many difficult problems alone and without the support of their loved ones, including the necessity of joining an unfamiliar and foreign-speaking peer group.

Additionally, the cultures they represent do not always encourage asking for help from people perceived as alien.

Victims of human slave trade are also marked by traumatic experiences. Along with people forced into prostitution, this category includes illegal immigrants smuggled into a country and forced to surrender their organs or to work in slave conditions in order to repay a debt incurred in criminal circles. The situation in which they find themselves isolates them from the surrounding society. Their often critical mental and physical state, poor knowledge of the country's language, and their fear of deportation generate barriers which limit their ability to initiate contact and obtain help. An adverse residency status also means that they can very rarely, and only to a limited degree, depend on assistance from the government agencies dealing with migrants.

Fear of deportation also acts as a barrier to the social integration of illegal immigrants who arrived in a country voluntarily and not as victims of criminal action. These people usually come to the country to earn money. The need to hide from the authorities, the certainty of the temporary nature of their stay and remaining in a circle of other illegal workers does not favor their social participation and blocks attempts to initiate closer relations with the country's inhabitants.

6. Individual conditioning of integration processes

Data gathered during my studies indicate that people originating from the same country have many different ways of dealing with adaptation and acculturation problems and that they employ different strategies of growing into the new society. Their behaviour is mostly determined by such factors as age, health, family status, gender, education and professional competences, social status, religion, migration experiences, intelligence, temperament and personality, learnt strategies of dealing with stress and the level of social, language and cultural skills.

Most generally speaking an immigrant's young age and good health, medical or technical education, broad interests, high level of social, language and cultural skills as well as an earlier migration experiences favour the integration process. Women, who generally possess skills of creating and reconstructing social networks in a larger capacity than men, also cope better. Exceptions are women who come from countries whose culture limits their freedom: socialized to live dependent on men and family, they have problems with lives that are independent or require a larger degree of involvement outside of home.

A factor that significantly motivates the task of coping with acculturation difficulties is the responsibility for family and especially children. People emigrating with families to a new environment much more readily resolve the problems connected with the reorganisation of their life styles and with the budgeting of living costs. In times of crisis they obtain help and moral support from their loved ones. They also encounter more protective and friendly behaviour from the community. In some cases, especially amongst people originating from clan structured societies, a high level of self-sufficiency and a distinct and commonly accepted principal of family separateness may however create barriers to integration, favouring the distancing of migrants from others and limiting their after work activities to the areas of family life.

Social status also plays a significant role. Migration to another country in most cases involves permanent or temporary loss of status and hence the need to rebuild it. Taking into account the importance of social status in creating self-awareness and feelings of self-worth, this is a traumatic event and one that spurs to compensating activities. Some of these (such as escape, rebellion, self-marginalisation, growth of ethnic prejudices or involving oneself with criminal or terrorist hierarchies) endanger relations with the host society or lead the migrant onto a path of self-destruction.

Constraints limiting the ability to integrate may also stem from a migrant's state of health. Mental and physical conditions are the most sensitive indicators of immigration success. Health problems are exacerbated by acculturation difficulties and can develop into psychosomatic illnesses, and into emotional and psychotic disorders that limit the ability to function in day-to-day life. The situation is especially difficult people who had health and emotional problems while still in their home country and for those with traumatic refugee experiences. Social integration of these aforementioned groups is therefore largely dependent on the effectiveness of the medical, psychological and rehabilitation care offered to them.

Finally, religiousness is also a significant factor in giving meaning to a migrant's experiences and in helping to overcoming consecutive crisis situations

in their lives. Internalised moral norms mitigate the negative feelings experienced during the acculturation process, especially those directed at oneself and at other people. They also effectively protect against the feelings of anomie and of being lost in the often unintelligible order of the new society. Belonging to a religious community assists in overcoming the feeling of being uprooted and of dwelling in a social vacuum. During the initial stages of emigration it allows people to find new groups of reference, protecting them from isolation and enabling access to the local social resources. However, religiousness is not always an unequivocal factor facilitating acculturation and social integration. Fundamentalist orientations impede finding oneself in the new axionormative order and generate many conflicts with the society. Spiritual searching may on the other hand lead to involvements and dependences on sects which abuse trust and isolate their members.

7. Immigration career and processes of integration

The assimilation of immigrants into a host society is a long-term process which goes through three, and sometimes four, stages, characterized equally by the specificity of the tasks and problems as by the varying degrees of readiness to integrate with the receiving society.

Page 26, Table 1. Trajectory of immigration career, source: K. Bleszyńska, *Polscy Amerykanie. O strategiach wrastania w warunkach niejednorodności kulturowej*, [In:] J. Nikitorowicz, D. Misiejuk (ed.), *Procesy migracji w społeczeństwie otwartym. Perspektywa edukacji międzykulturowej*, Trans Humana, Białystok 2009.

Phase	Every-day problems and tasks	Social problems and tasks	Psychological problems and processes
I. Adaptation – settling in (until residence permit obtained)	Adapting to new conditions, finding an apartment, obtaining an income, legalizing status, organizing every-day life, improving language skills	Organising contacts with the country of origin and diaspora, building basic social networks, solving family problems	Mental stress, experiencing opportunity and threat, internal mobilization, overcoming cultural shock, developing basic cultural skills
II. Integration and status stabilisation	Integration, improving living and economic conditions, supplementing qualifications, securing status, solving family problems, caring about personal health	Expanding social networks, decisions regarding partaking in the life of diaspora and local society, entering the receiving society's circle of the institutions	Increased cultural competences, attempting to realize aspirations, feeling restricted and discriminated, solving escalating problems, reconstructing identity structures, feeling uprooted from old country, mental health disorders.
III. Taking root and growth/ stabilisation of life situation	Development, striving to achieve improved status or life stabilisation, health problems, securing the future	Decisions regarding social and political participation, consolidating social status	Reconstructing identity structure and feeling of self-worth, achievement pressure, evaluating migration and life success
IV. Withdrawal Subsequent return emigration	Withdrawal from social life, organizing resettlement	Loosening local ties, subsequent activities to reintegrate with the society of origin	Feeling of relief versus failure/shame, grieving over losses, fears and shock of return, problems of renewed acculturation

.....**Table 1.**

The critical role in the process of immigration career is played by the growing in stage which is also a period of creating many dimensional ties with the receiving country. It initiates the most important changes in the life of an immigrant, by being a physical and mental passage from the left behind society to the existing one. During this period the subject stands in need of getting to know the new environment, obtaining means of livelihood, providing oneself and one's family with apartment and safety, reorganizing every-day life, developing cultural skills, as well as reconstructing contacts with other people. The feeling of endangerment generating a strong need of affiliation causes the situation where the basic frame of social reference, such as the left behind national community (especially family and friends), the community of Polish diaspora together with the multi-ethnic local society, becomes extremely important. Searching for a group with which the immigrant could identify himself, obtaining the feeling of strong ties and of belonging, plays a significant role. In most cases in the initial period of putting down roots the immigrant's local diaspora becomes such a group.

The integration stage is characterized by intensive efforts to stabilize living circumstances and to broaden social networks. During this period the immigrants hone their professional skills and develop their abilities to function in the new country. They also begin initiating contacts outside the boundaries of their own ethnic group, especially in their work life.

During the stage when an immigrant starts putting down roots their day-to-day life is already quite stable and developed cultural skills enable effective coping, not only with every-day problems, but also with constantly emerging new situations. The broadening scope of involvement increases interest in local society and its institutions, and social networks become more permanent enabling the re-establishment of a subject's social capital. However, these processes proceed differently in socially isolated environments where focus is concentrated on relations within a subject's own group. In these situations a subject's overly strong connection with their new found community may create barriers to building relations with people outside their own perceived group.

The final stage – withdrawal or return emigration – is characteristic of cyclical refugees and immigrants completing their stay in a given country, of people with unsuccessful acculturation processes and of immigrants experiencing sudden and usually unfavorable changes in their life situations (retirement, heavy illness, or loss of life partner, source of income or property). They have a tendency to end or limit relations with others, as well as tending to withdraw from their existing forms of social involvement.

The loosening of ties with the local environment is accompanied by reactivation of social networks in the country of origin.

Conclusion

Action aimed at supporting the social integration of immigrants requires taking into account both the characteristics and circumstances of the immigrant as well as the conditions offered by the society of the receiving country. The aforementioned conditions should at least include the following: medical care, advice services, education, mobilisation of local community institutions, social work, employment, sociocultural animation and legal care. Seriousness consequences could result from possible communication problems and misunderstandings and so it is important and urgent to develop multicultural skills amongst the medical and public order services and to create easily accessible databases in order that translators of any language can be found quickly.

A matter of critical importance in the integration process is also the development of the competencies of social services. They should be structured in a way as to include such intercultural competences as conflict mediation, an understanding of migration, immigrants and the mechanisms of social integration, and knowledge of procedures and laws governing relations with immigrants and refugees. The development of these competences is conditional on training reaching employees throughout the various regions of Poland.

A key role in the process of integration is played by the advice and training programs aimed not only at migrants but also at members of the host society. It is necessary to train and organize immigration advisory services aimed at the complex and comprehensive evaluation of the potential and the needs of immigrants and to support their settlement into a new country and society. This support should cover legal, social, psychological, vocational and educational issues. A special role falls on educational and career guidance, whose task is to diagnose the capabilities and the training needs of immigrants and to supporting the re-establishment, development or acquisition of vocational skills in order to facilitate entry into the labour market. The need to protect immigrants from social exclusion also creates new challenges for the adult education system. It becomes important and necessary to include within the scope of their semi activities that assist immigrants to develop knowledge of the culture, language, customs and social structure of the host country.

The development of courses and training schemes specific to people from outside Europe becomes particularly important²⁰.

Different tasks are incumbent on educational institutions working with the residents of the host country, especially with children and young people²¹. The range of necessary operations required in this area includes the integration of inter-cultural education into teacher education programs and school programs at all levels, the preparation of teacher counsellors, professionally active teachers and of psychological-pedagogical support staff for work with culturally different students for whom the Polish is a foreign language. It is also important to develop a model of activities that prepare children and young people arriving in Poland for the task of studying in Polish schools.

Finally a large responsibility rests with local authorities, social workers, agencies, NGOs and socio-cultural animators, who have the task of introducing migrants into the community where they intend to settle, as well as developing a sense of citizenship within them and a readiness for social participation. However, efforts in this area should not only be aimed at the immigrants settling in a region but also at the local communities, who are not always ready to coexist with people of other faiths, who speak different languages and who represent different ethnic groups and cultures.

Summary

The following text discusses the basic determinants of social work with immigrants and refugees. It is the result of research done on a multicultural society and the process of integration of refugees and immigrants, conducted by the author over 20 years in the world's most multicultural community of California, and funded by the Kosciuszko Foundation and private sponsors. The subjects discussed are the phenomenon of cross-cultural migration in the modern world, the problems and conditions affecting the social integration of migrants, the factors determining the immigration process, as well as the level and scope of integration policy applied by social workers.

²⁰ K. Błęszyńska, *Edukacja międzykulturowa jako obszar refleksji andragogicznej*, [In:] T. Aleksander, D. Barwińska (ed.), *Stan i perspektywy rozwoju refleksji nad edukacją dorosłych*, ITE, Radom 2007.

²¹ K. Błęszyńska, *Uczniowie odmienni kulturowo jako zadanie i wyzwanie*, "Nowa Szkoła", No. 5(643)/2006, pp. 8-12.

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Table 1. Trajectory of immigration career.

“The arrival of north African migrants in the south of Italy: Practices of sustainable welfare within a non-welcoming system”

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1. Introduction

In February 2011, about 2 months after the arrival of North African migrants on the island of Lampedusa, the Italian government declared a state of emergency with the aim of producing “an effective resistance” to the flow of Non-EU citizens into Italy” (Decree by the President of the Council of Ministers, 12th February 2011; Decree by the Council of Ministers, 21st May 2011). In order to defend national security from “bogus refugees”²², a system of distributing migrants around the various Italian regions was planned as part of an agreement between the state and the agency for Civil Protection. Within this system, those arriving from Libya who might potentially ask for asylum were given an apparently humane reception which involved a proliferation of new CARA (Reception centers for asylum seekers). This, though, meant an indefinite wait in improvised identification centers in the South of Italy (e.g. disused hotels in Calabria and “solidarity” villages in ex-NATO residential structures in Sicily).

Many council administrations spontaneously declared that their territories were available as possible sites for the provision of hospitality to migrants, often offering concrete solutions and alternatives to the systems for controlling migrants’ mobility²³. Something which is particularly worthy of attention is the “request for immigrants” on the part of small calabrian towns which were experiencing a declining population and where, over the last decade, new processes of refugee integration have produced sustainable development for the local areas. In these towns, which have generally been severely affected by emigration, the experience of hospitality has become an exercise in democracy through which “old” and “new” residents alike claim their rights to exist²⁴.

The goal of this article is to show the network of relationships between institutional and social bodies which aims to define: new forms of “reception” asylum within a context of deep social and economic degradation; practices which are set up by social operators, with respect for ethical principles, and

²² A. Dal Lago, *Non persone*, Feltrinelli Editore, Milano 1999, p. 267.

²³ ANCI, *Minori stranieri, investiamo sul nostro futuro*, www.anci.it [15.06.2011].

²⁴ A. Touraine, *Libertà, uguaglianza, diversità*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 2009, p. 345.

have the goal of going beyond the market logic that sees social work as a palliative for emergency situations; the logic of co-ordination between communal administrations and local social actors in realising a project of hospitality which is consistent with sustainable development within the territory.

2. Refugees and asylum seekers in Italy: The state of the humanitarian emergency

The legislation regarding the right to asylum in Italy constitutes an element in the progressively restrictive laws on immigration which render refugees' rights to citizenship more and more precarious. In particular, reference is made to Law 94 of 2009 on the Crime of Illegal Entry and Stay within the State Territory. A migrant who resides illegally in Italy is punishable through immediate expulsion and detention in a CIE (Center for Detention and Expulsion) for the "crime" of being an illegal immigrant (a 'clandestine')". The association which people make between the presence of clandestine immigrants and widespread illegality suggests that the arrivals of refugees on Lampedusa, the "landings of clandestines", are a problem which we need to defend ourselves from²⁵. Therefore, refugees become potentially deviant subjects whose rights are incompatible with the on-going crumbling of the old Italian social state.

The confinement of asylum seekers to reception camps has increasingly proven itself to be the preferred method for discouraging their movement throughout the territory²⁶ as their rights are suspended and the idea that their stay is only provisional becomes accepted. The CARA were introduced by the 2008 Bossi-Fini Law as a "humanising" response to the logic of detention and, in fact, asylum seekers awaiting their hearing with the Territorial Commission may leave the centers during daylight hours (Decree Law 28, January 2008, No. 25). The centers are run by associations from the third sector which have the role of performing training and literacy activities, and have to reserve space and time for legal aid, socialisation and, therefore, autonomy.

The biggest reception center for asylum seekers in Europe is to be found at Crotona, in Calabria. The center has places for 900, but, as a result of the continuous, never-ending humanitarian emergency, it has housed as many as 1.500 people. Just as at other centers in the rest of Italy, the "alienating nature" of the Crotona center takes place through the ratification of the assistance services or by reducing them to the level of emergency assistance.

²⁵ A. Dal Lago, op. cit.

²⁶ A. Sciarba, *Campi di forza*, Ombre Corte, Verona 2009, p. 267.

The migrants' practice of self-determination, aimed at subverting this model, becomes a "manifestation of ingratitude" and reinforces the image of the refugee as a parasite²⁷. "They beg, saying that they've got nothing to eat (...), but we give them a complete meal. They even throw their pasta down the drains (...). The containers were new, after less than two months, the doors are off their hinges (...). We gave them heaters and they burned them by grilling meat on them" (social worker, CARA Crotona).

The images of everyday life outside the camp highlight "normal" episodes of racism and situations of inferiority in the informal labour market. The social cooperative which runs the center has adopted various strategies so as to humanise practices that violate human rights (the processes of schooling for the 16 minors who live in the camp, the opening of the camp gates to the local press, "guided" tours and stages for university students). The revolts by the asylum seekers in Crotona in the face of uncertainty regarding methods, times and outcomes of an indefinite wait clearly highlight the detention center character of the St. Anna camp.

Guided by local mayors, a number of citizens' committees have requested the closure of what should have represented the excellence of humanitarian reception. It was another "promise" of development, after attempts at industrialisation in a primarily rural territory, linked, in this case, to the practice of restricting immigrants' movement to the South of Italy. Investment in governing "forced migration" in a context with great social and economic problems reveals the disparity the populations of southern Italy face regarding access to citizens' social rights. The unfulfilled promise of "liberation" from the "clandestine" would seem to be the biggest bone of contention in a system of social inequality that takes on a territorial connotation²⁸.

During the period of the "emergency", the asylum seekers from North Africa who were continuously arriving on the Sicilian and Calabrian coasts were installed in the improvised identification centers in abandoned hotels along the coast and inland. Often the social cooperatives which were chosen to run the operations of asylum seeker "containment" had no specific skills in the field of migration or relations with the social operators or local institutions, which, in turn, were completely uninformed with regards the arrival of the asylum seekers. The social operators' tasks, though, fully illustrate the function of the humanitarian camp operator as foreseen by Bauman, that is that of "saving" the conscience of the western populations by separating them from refugees placed

²⁷ Z. Bauman, *Vite di scarto*, Laterza, Roma 2005, p. 174.

²⁸ Y. Kazepov, *La dimensione territoriale delle politiche sociali in Italia*, Carocci, Roma 2009, p. 182.

in those humanitarian camps which Bauman termed “dumps” and from where there was no realistic way out²⁹. Young people on short term contracts, often looking for their first proper jobs, had to make the centers’ guests understand why they had to wait indefinitely as a result of the Crotona territorial commission’s slowness in processing their asylum requests. Just like Crotona, other small calabrian municipalities have become places not only of asylum seekers’ social mobilisation, but also of SPRAR (System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees) social operators, mayors and volunteers who are victims of the humanitarian hospitality business.

3. Planning new forms of “reception” asylum

Given that the refugees are not guaranteed even the minimum social inclusion, the third sector steps in by operating in tandem with local administrations (municipal and provincial) in establishing a system of access to national welfare services. This occurs via local experiments with processes of support that cover the periods of suspension of the refugees’ rights to citizenship. The planning of this “bottom-up welfare” experience is based on the direct participation of local institutions (provinces and municipalities) and private social organisations. Since 2002, these local integration programmes have come together within SPRAR (System of Protection for Asylum Seekers and Refugees). This system was set up in the 1990s through the networking of various municipal reception experiences under the name of the National Asylum Plan (PNA). Through the PNA and within the framework of ANCI (National association of Italian Municipalities), the third sector and local institutions demanded a system of co-responsibility between local and national government in the economic managing and programming of assistance given to refugees.

Within the smaller SPRAR territorial projects, defined as integrated reception, social operators support families and little groups of refugees in their daily relations with the local population. The social support processes set up by the social operators require territorial knowledge which facilitates access to the territorial welfare system. Some of this experience has its origins on the Ionian Coast of Calabria in the 1990s when, following the arrival of Kurdish refugees, hospitality was offered spontaneously by the local populations.

During the night of 26th December, 1997, a few kilometres from Badolato, a village on the Ionian Coast, the ship ‘Ararat’ made landfall with over 1,000 Kurds from Turkey and Iraq aboard. Badolato had a population of about 3,500. In 1998, another ship full of refugees landed at Riace, whose mayor described

²⁹ Z. Bauman, *op. cit.*

the scene in terms of “A sailing ship borne of the sea of a multitude that advanced across the beach”. A surreal image which lends itself easily to a media representation of an invasion, “the multitude”, 300 Kurds from Iraq and Afghanistan arrive in a municipality with a population, at the time, of just 1,600, only 600 of whom lived in the actual urban area. These Kurdish refugees, guests in houses that had been left empty by emigrants, have stayed on in Calabria. This “choice” was made by social operators and refugees together when the first forms of concentration/control of migrant movement were experimented with after the arrival of Albanian refugees on the coast of Apulia in the 1990s.

We are dealing with an unusual process of a new population settling in an area where emigration of the local peoples exists side by side with international flows of migrants³⁰. Just like many others in the South of Italy, in the 1950s, villages on the Ionian Coast had a history of emigration towards America and the countries of central and northern Europe. In the 1960s and 1970s, political and economic pressures aimed to intensify the migration of southern labour towards the industrially developed North of Italy widened the gap between the north and south of the country. Albeit the urbanisation and overbuilding along the coasts reveal that territorial hegemony on the part of organised crime which Renate Siebert defines as “territorial over-lordship”³¹, in Riace, a village in the area known as the Locride which is often associated with “Ndrangheta” murders, the practice of hospitality for refugees has had the effect of undermining a phenomenon of social degradation which had seemed irreversible. The operations of assistance which would occur after a landing encouraged a group of young people from Riace to set up a voluntary association called the Città Futura association. These young volunteers organise emergency assistance and involve the local population in offering the new arrivals houses that have been left empty by emigrants. Learning about the dramatic experience of exodus from the lips of the refugees and contact with their children who are repopulating the village school are forms of social cohesion which prevent locals from identifying with the “invasion” syndrome³².

In the daily interchange of relations, migrants and Italians are rediscovering a common “minority status” condition which is due to the fact that they both find themselves on the margins of the globalised economy, regardless of their

³⁰ E. Pugliese, *L'Italia tra migrazioni internazionali e migrazioni interne*, Il Mulino, Milano 2006, p. 195.

³¹ R. Siebert (ed.), *Relazioni pericolose. Criminalità e sviluppo nel Mezzogiorno*, Rubbettino Editore, Soveria Mannelli 2000, p. 294.

³² Dal Lago, op. cit.

position in the “north” or “south” of the world³³. Those asylum seekers who have settled in the villages of the Locride bear witness to the sense of disorientation which comes from having arrived in what appears to be another frontier zone. “The first time I came here, they brought me by bus (...), we went up and up the mountain and I wondered “where am I”? This is another Africa (...), where is the technology? Where are the cars? But then I found that Riace is beautiful (...). My son is growing up (...), he goes to school (...), he even speaks dialect” (B., age 25, Ethiopian).

The “reciprocal” discovery of “cultural diversity” with respect to the “dominant model of globalisation” is encouraging the development of a new form of communication between locals and migrants which exalts the project for life produced by the exodus experience; knowledge of the contexts from where the new arrivals come on the one hand and understanding the causes of urban degradation and the living conditions of the hosts on the other. Rediscovering a memory of places, knowledge and local traditions is all part of this dynamic of recovery and finding of value in that cultural diversity which has been cancelled by the industrial production model and the dynamics of market globalisation³⁴.

In 1999, about a year after the first refugees arrived in Riace, a social cooperative which had been set up by some young people from the village undertook the restoration, with financial backing from an ethical bank, of the dwellings in the village left empty by emigrants with the intention of linking the aspect of hospitality to one of solidarity tourism. In 2001, the municipality of Riace adhered itself to the PNA (today’s SPRAR) which covered the costs of the refugees’ hospitality while the Città Futura association managed the project. Since 1998, 6,000 migrants have arrived in Riace while about 250 have been resident for many years. Those refugees who arrived in the 1990s and who have become the project’s cultural mediators and trainers have been joined by, and have often alternated with, numerous single mothers and families from Somalia, Serbia, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Palestine. At present, there are 47 social operators, 9 of whom are refugees, working on the Città Futura project.

Work grants, provided by the Calabria Region so as to help refugees find work, have been aimed at traditional trades: weaving, woodwork, ceramic work and embroidery. These are ethical forms of work which involve village and refugee women in exchanging knowledge relating to the sharing and rediscovery of a common peasant tradition. In the workplaces, the young single

³³ S. Castel, *Migration and Community Formation under Conditions under Globalization*, “International Migration Review”, Vol. 36, No. 4/2002, pp. 1143-1168.

³⁴ A. Touraine, op. cit.

mothers share learning and the transfer of knowledge about artisan work with the social operators. These are shared economic acts which become methods of involving old and new residents in the world of work, ways for refugees to recover from the emotional stress brought on by the exodus experience and, in some cases, periods in the CARA, and forms of social integration which appear at the various moments of coexistence of the refugees and tourists, old and new residents.

4. Actions of resistance to a common social inequality

The hospitality model experimented with in Riace, defined as “integrated” hospitality, was institutionalised within the framework of SPRAR as a good practice which inspired many National hospitality projects. What was particularly highlighted was the way the project succeeded in conjugating the aspects of social inclusion of asylum seekers and local development during the National Conference on Immigration. In 2011, during the “SaviAV” – Social inclusion and vocational integration of Asylum seekers and Victims of human trafficking - conference, organised by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Germany, the Department for Social Policies of the Region of Calabria presented the “Riace model” as a effective practice for the recovery of rural areas through the presence of refugees in the territory.

At a regional level and among the many reception experiences, one case that should be mentioned is the municipality of Acquaformosa, a small rural village hit by depopulation dynamics, in the north of the region, which joined the SPRAR in 2009. In 2005, in Cosenza, a town of nearly 70 thousand people, the provincial administration set up the SPRAR Asylum project in collaboration with the Kasbah, a local association engaged in combating all forms of housing and working marginalisation faced by asylum seekers. The Asylum project followed the social integration processes of young and families of refugees who were experiencing forms of social agriculture. In the municipality of Lamezia Terme, a town in the center of the region, the SPRAR project hosts North African asylum seekers who are unaccompanied minors and families in properties confiscated from the mafia.

Social workers prepare the territory for reception by organising “humanising” meetings (seminars, debates, theatre experiences, and patron saint’s days in rural villages) so that cultural elements of the refugees’ countries can be highlighted, and the political reason for the exodus can be learned about and understood³⁵. These experiences involve representatives of local institutions and social operators in actions that delegitimise those forms of institutional

³⁵ E. A. Mance, *Organizzare reti solidali*, Edizioni EDUP, Roma 2010, p. 237.

racism that fuel the image of the refugee as a problem³⁶. The agreements signed between various municipalities in the province of Cosenza and the multitude of territorial actors/operatives, for example, trade unions, job centers, town theatres, universities, health centers and the forces of order, reveal the aim to reinforce and formalise a local reception network as a response to central government's avoiding of responsibility³⁷.

Despite the professionalism that has been acquired within the model of reception which has been applied in Calabria, the collaboration between the Civil Protection and the Region of Calabria in managing the "humanitarian state of emergency" excludes the participation of the small calabrian SPRAR projects. Faced by arbitrary policies of migrant delocalisation, the mayors of some towns in the Locride (Caulonia, Riace and Badolato) have reacted by declaring that their municipalities are available as places of reception. The arrival at the calabrian SPRAR centers of migrants from North Africa dates back to the middle of August 2011³⁸, after a period of about eight months when the national media repeatedly reported on the polemics surrounding the overcrowding at the Reception and Emergency Assistance Center on the island of Lampedusa.

The offer of residence to the refugee families supports a process of participative democracy in defence of old and new residents' citizens' rights and helps local institutions continue to exist in contrast with the effects of the 2011 financial manoeuvre aimed at the unifying of municipalities with a population of under 1,000 (Legislative Decree No.138, 13/08/2011, "Further urgent measures for financial stability and development").

Another area of contrast is that of the right to education for one's own children as well as those of new arrivals. In particular, the elementary school in the Arbëreshe³⁹ municipality of Acquafredda has risked closure on various

³⁶ M. Wieworka, *Le racisme, Une introduction*, La Découverte, Paris 1998.

³⁷ The National Fund for Social Policies (created in 2000) was reduced by 65.6% between 2009 and 2011, while the National Fund for Non-Self sufficiency was eliminated. Within this process of weakening the welfare system, migrants were the privileged victims with regards their social right to citizenship. Migrants suffered the Italian welfare system's processes of inclusion/exclusion in terms of a process of civil stratification of rights and the range of legal states that govern the availability of particular rights, services and resources, E. Spinelli, *Immigrazione e servizio sociale*, Carocci, Roma 2008, p. 160.

³⁸ Twenty days after their arrival on Lampedusa, a hundred young people of between 20 and 25 years of age from Chad, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Somalia and Ethiopia arrived in the municipalities of the Locride, Riace, Badolato and Caulonia. There were also another 40 unaccompanied minors of the same origins, various family groups and about 10 children.

³⁹ The Arbëreshe communities settled in Calabria in the 15th century following the escape of Albanian groups from the Ottoman advance. These populations have preserved their strong

occasions because of highly restrictive reform, regarding mountain communities and the minimum number of pupils enrolled in schools, which was introduced by the ex-Minister for Education. The arrival of sixteen new pupils, children of refugees from Niger and Chad, has added 20% to the elementary school population today, so saving the structure and the village's linguistic heritage.

In Riace, on the other hand, out of a total of 40 schoolchildren, the 30 children of refugees greatly exceed the maximum of 30% of foreign children allowed in elementary schools as set out in the last Berlusconi government's school reform. The children attend the sports-recreational activities that are organised by the Città Futura cooperative including, for example, afternoon-afterschool classes, attendance at the swimming pool, access to I.T. equipment and hospitality in school tourism. This is all part of a new daily life which has been made possible by the "redistribution" of ministerial resources, allocated to the Locri area municipalities (Riace, Badolato, Caulonia) within the North African emergency framework, and which also includes extraordinary operations that produce "normal" services for childhood and define opportunities for intercultural didactics⁴⁰. Beyond the production of services aimed at protecting the right to education and play in a context of great infant poverty, this envelopes defence of the right to a home that comes from the preservation of public property and the production of common goods. This restoration of architectural heritage, as opposed to mafia construction activity, has been carried out by the Riace municipal administration over the last 6 years using ministerial funds earmarked for refugee reception and has led to the media library, playgrounds, restored public squares and alleyways which have become a space for play, festival places, festivals of migration, and the alleyway wall paintings depicting anti-mafia demonstrations. Associating the struggle against illegality with the reception experience renders pointless the recurring paradigm within political marketing strategies of associating the presence of foreigners with the illegality which is widespread across the territory (as cited in the already noted "Crime of being an illegal immigrant").

The planning of "sustainable" reception does not immediately satisfy the ministerial goals of the so-called "integrated" reception programme which aim at the refugee's being autonomous of the project after a year. These parameters

cultural and linguistic identity. The Arbërisht language is studied in schools and is used in daily life and religious ceremonies.

⁴⁰ The intercultural didactic approach adopted by the Italian school system (Council of Ministers 1995. Law 40/1998) presupposes the promotion of dialogue between the different cultures regarding didactic programming. Recognition of cultural diversity that should facilitate foreign students' social integration comes, though, with the denial of Italian nationality to migrants' children.

end up penalising virtuous practices, like that of reception villages in Calabria, which are found in a context where the hidden economy that produces large pools of black-work is dominant. On the other hand, levels of joblessness, a key feature of the regular labour market in Calabria, highlight a condition of territorial inequality and the rate of unemployment for the 25 to 34 age group stands at 23.4%, as opposed to the Italian national average of 15.9%⁴¹. Young refugees who benefit from the SPRAR projects in Calabria ask themselves what sort of future they might have in a social reality whose contradictions and ambiguities they have come to recognise. These contradictions and ambiguities fluctuate between the widespread hospitality and the menial works in agriculture where numerous refugees and asylum seekers who are excluded from the reception projects try to survive, and, so, become victims of mafia exploitation of foreign labourers⁴². “When I left the CARA, I didn’t know where to go (...). I have been to Germany twice, but the second time they put me in prison to make me understand that I mustn’t go back (...), but prison in Germany is better than the life I had here (...). When I was in Rome, I spent all day wandering around with my pack on my back. I went to the Caritas to eat and I slept in the station (...). I lived like this for five months (...). When I went to the police to ask what I could do, the answer was always: “go away, go away” (...). Then some Italians told me about these villages in Calabria and I came straight here. Without this work I would already be in the fields (...). Here I have got a house (...), there is a lot of solidarity, but what can I do when it finishes? There are no jobs here and even the young people leave” (A., 27, Somalian).

The humanitarian regime, to define those practices which explain how to proceed autonomously because of the scarcity of resources, does not, in reality, allow for the refugee to become active in local development and places him in a temporary position. This prospective contrasts with long term social planning aimed at seeing the materialisation of new forms of social cohesion that will give us a glimpse of “a Utopia which is being achieved”. “This project has permitted 5 young high school graduates from our village to work; we give our shopping vouchers to heads of families so that they can do their shopping in our shops (...). We pay the rent for their houses (...). Everything stays in our village economy (...), we give them a house (...), a little peace (...), but we also receive a lot because these things aren’t done as an economic calculation.

⁴¹ *Rapporto annuale, La situazione del Paese nel 2010*, [In:] ISTAT, *Annual report, the situation in the country in 2010*, 2011, p. 415.

⁴² Medici Senza Frontiere, *Al di là del muro. Viaggio nei centri per migranti in Italia. Secondo Rapporto di Medici senzaFrontiere sui centri per migranti: Cie, Cara e Cda*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2010.

Seeing the children playing in the square, that our families are together (...), it is a Utopia which is being achieved” (Giovanni Manoccio, Mayor of Acquafredda).

5. The future of “Integrated Reception” in South Italy: Open questions

Within the reception experience of the Locride villages, the planning of long term settlement for refugees does not offer them the chance to assimilate with a pre-existing order, but rather expresses the need the old residents have to prepare for the change that comes with the building of a new sustainable social order⁴³. Something which is noticeable is the effect upon those factors of social deregulation which weaken faith in legality and render deviant behaviour normal, for instance the patronage/clientalism logic on which the distribution of public resources is based and the widespread illegality in the labour market⁴⁴. Among the actions mentioned in this work, it is worth underlining the reclaiming of architectural and natural heritage with the aid of public funding for refugee reception; the planning of a sustainable reception system within which refugees become active in the project and share space and places with locals; the realisation of ethical forms of work.

The actions adopted develop new areas of professionalism and apply social practices based on each and everyone’s “social responsibility”⁴⁵. Examples of this include local responses to the lack of resources brought on by the global crisis that are aimed at compensating for the long waiting times for ministerial funding (including “solidarity money” which was made possible by the involvement of small local businesses), sustainable tourism, social agriculture and humanitarian work camps that produce forms of solidarity across a wide network of social and institutional subjects. Other than these acts of economic solidarity, there are also forms of social mobilisation aimed at subverting national government policies on migration which outline strategies of incomplete reception. Among these acts of solidarity are the offer of village houses to refugees who are “excluded” from government programmes (those who have completed the project or have not had access to places made available by the integrated reception) and hospitality to the “Dubliners” (refugees

⁴³ Order is measured in terms of the predictability of behaviour. An ordered situation could also be tied, in the specific case of the domination, to the predictability of behaviour tied to a system of complicity, P. Ceri, *Quanto è possibile e desiderabile la coesione sociale*, “Quaderni di Sociologia”, Vol. LII, No. 46/2008, pp. 132-167.

⁴⁴ P. Fantozzi, *Il welfare nel mezzogiorno*, [In:] U. Ascoli (ed.), *Il welfare in Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2011, pp. 283-302.

⁴⁵ C. Giaccardi, M. Magatti, *L’Io globale. Dinamiche della socialità contemporanea*, Laterza, Bari 2003, p. 237.

returning from northern Europe) who claim their right to mobility and equality after various border violation experiences⁴⁶. Refugees' return to Riace after failing in the migration process toward North Italy is a case of particular interest as it has become a common process in internal mobility which is often affected by the "crisis" in the structured labour market. As well as the return of the earliest migrants, there is also that of emigrants who are involved in a renewed process of internal migration⁴⁷.

Something emerging from the tales told to the youth of Riace, social operators and coordinators on some of the region's SPRAR, is the uncertainty, regarding possible areas of work, due to the unreliability of funding⁴⁸. "The project that we have been involved in for nearly fifteen years has always been a gamble. We have always had one foot ready to leave and the other ready to stay. Now we have the asylum seekers that the Civil Protection has sent to us. We don't know how long they'll stay, but we have started our activity anyway. We have given houses (...), we have opened our schools and play schools to the children (...), all of this without receiving anything for over a year"(Domenico Lucano, Mayor of Riace). "Our project will be financed for 2013, but after we don't know. This means that we will continue by using our own resources. It doesn't matter what work I have to do, washing dishes or working with glass. There aren't only foreigners here, but we are all together in this absolute insecurity. We need the courage to stay and see how it will all end" (M. I., 24, instructor in a glass workshop, Città Futura - SPRAR project – Riace).

The social operators and earliest resident refugees have learnt to deal with this situation of social insecurity by "rediscovering" the resources of the territory and consolidating reciprocal dynamics. These practices of resistance have been thrown into crisis by national and regional planning in the field of migration. Attention should be drawn to non-application of the 2009 Regional Law, passed by the previous regional council, which should have supported programmes of social and economic development in those rural areas that have been hit by depopulation, in relation to the practice of social support for refugees. Moreover, recent agreements between the Civil Protection and the State regarding the management of the "North Africa Reception project" have given rise to severe problems for the SPRAR system through overlapping with the network of co-responsibility between local institutions and the Department

⁴⁶ U. Beck, *Disuguaglianza senza confini*, Edizioni Laterza, Roma 2011, p. 57.

⁴⁷ E. Pugliese, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Every three years, the SPRAR territorial projects are evaluated and possibly refinanced. In 2011, the SPRAR system involved more than 120 municipalities and setup 153 projects throughout the country, making a total of nearly 4,000 reception places available, an offer which is clearly insufficient with regards the number of refugees in Italy, 50,000 in 2011.

of Civil Immigration and Asylum of the Ministry of the Interior. Following the agreement between the Civil Protection and the Region, resources in Calabria have mainly been assigned to social cooperatives that manage the new identification centers around the region. A year after the finance for managing the refugee emergency in Calabria failed to arrive, the mayors of Acquaformosa, Riace and Caulonia publically denounced the reception business declaring: “Can the lack of a signature on a piece of paper force, in this torrid summer, entire families to live without electricity, without a working refrigerator to keep their food in? Can the lack of a signature on a piece of paper force dozens of workers to go without their wages for 7 months? Can the lack of a signature damage the economy of entire towns, forcing many small shopkeepers to grant credit so as not to leave human beings to starve? We cannot remain silent. This is the reason why, on Wednesday, 18th July, we will begin an indefinite hunger strike until the settlement decree is signed” (Domenico Lucano – Mayor of Riace, Giovanni Maiolo – Re.co.sol. Calabria)⁴⁹.

The protests in the reception villages took on the character of a common mobilisation guided by the mayors with the support of a multitude of social and institutional subjects (the Calabrian SPRAR municipalities, the municipalities where the refugee centers are located, universities, and unions). The protest exposed the failure of a “non-welcoming system”, which had, for some time, been the cause of refugee revolts in the centers set up by the Civil Protection, and succeeded in cutting through the red tape and freeing up the funding.

In the areas of discussion between the local institutions, social operators and refugees, the debate on the future of integrated reception projects becomes part of a wider reflection regarding the problem of work during a period of crisis, the future of small municipalities and third sector operatives following the continuous cuts to their budgets (Financial Manoeuvre Legislative Decree 138/2011), and the construction of an alternative system of relations between refugees and Italians which is based on the recognition of a common situation of social inequality⁵⁰.

Summary

The arrival of migrants from North Africa has given Italy a further tightening of control policies. Tunisian refugees have become “economic migrants”, those who can not attain the status of humanitarian protection. Asylum seekers are those for whom a sort of reception has been created with

⁴⁹ www.cinenapolidiritti.it [30.12.2012].

⁵⁰ U. Beck, op. cit.

the aim of defining situations of abandonment. On the other hand, different municipalities in Italy have spontaneously offered their assistance, so establishing a network of solidarity. Something which is particularly worthy of attention is the “request for immigrants” on the part of small calabrian towns which were experiencing a declining population. In these towns, which have generally been severely affected by emigration, the experience of hospitality has become an exercise in democracy through which “old” and “new” residents alike claim their rights to exist. The aim of this research was to find those social factors which have permitted experimentation with advanced forms of migrant inclusion within a context of deep economic degradation; to analyse the network between local institutions and socio-cultural actors within the realisation of such an assistance project which becomes a part of the logic of sustainable territorial development; to explore the production of new knowledge which matures with the social operators in the construction of an alternative system of relations between refugees and Italians.

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“Child refugees and immigrants in Denmark: A researcher's reflections”⁵¹

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In this world there cannot be - as there have been for centuries - "homeless" children. Whether they be from the street, or from the living room, whether white, yellow or black -they must find in this human world their true homes, their happy lives, and, ripening under the protection of love and trust, the fulfilment of their creative desires and the opportunity to engage in the serious matters of life.

Janusz Korczak – Polish educator, doctor and defender of the rights of Jewish and Polish children⁵²

1. Support for children, refugees and immigrants in Denmark in the twentieth and twenty-first century

The international idea of helping war children developed in the twentieth century mainly as a result of the two world wars. These not only caused enormous material and economic damage, but cruelly affected primarily those who were the most vulnerable, women and children. Towards the end of the First World War and in the early post war years there was increased concern in England, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Sweden, in helping those children who had lost their parents. In Britain in 1919, the sisters Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton founded the 'Save the Children' organization, with the aim of bringing aid to just such children. Denmark also played an important role in helping the smallest and weakest victims of the war, by accepting and taking refugees into care. Danish families gave shelter to children from Austria, Spain,

⁵¹ In September 2010 I went to Denmark for the LLP Erasmus lectures, which took place at VIA University College in Viborg. With the help and kindness of Professor. Børge Pugholma of the university I had the opportunity to undertake studies in two cities: Viborg and Skive (both are in the Jutland Region of Central Midtjylland), in which I was able to carry out observations and obtain interviews and uncategorised narratives. My interviewees were six people: a female refugee from former Yugoslavia, the director of the Center for Refugee Children, the director of the integration kindergarten for children of immigrants, social workers working with refugee children, and the former Mayor of Viborg who is engaged in helping refugee children in Africa.

⁵² B. Suchodolski, *Miejsce Janusza Korczaka w kulturze polskiej i ogólnoludzkiej*, [In:] *Janusz Korczak: Życie i dzieło*, proceedings from the International Science Session, Warsaw, 12-15 October 1978, WSiP, Warsaw 1978, p. 31.

Finland and the Netherlands. The first initiative to help the youngest began in 1920. Over a period of five years approximately 12 thousand children, suffering exhaustion from hunger and disease as a result of the First World War, came to Denmark from Vienna, Austria, and were placed with Danish families for three to six months. In 1937 the then "Committee for Spanish Children's Sojourn in Denmark", began another big international aid initiative. Some 300 children and families from Spain were to be given shelter from their civil war torn country. Unfortunately only 96 of these received help and were provided shelter at a single location in Copenhagen instead of being placed with local families. The next relief effort began in 1940 as a result of which Denmark accepted 4,000 Finnish children. This was intended to be short-term assistance, but for many of the children their stay in Denmark lasted as long as 4 years. At the start only the youngest children (under 6 years old) were sent to Denmark as Finland was initially reluctant to send away children that were of a school age. It is worth noting that these initiatives, to help the youngest and most vulnerable victims of wars in the twentieth century, were not only the domain of Danish authorities and organizations. In Europe, various efforts were made on behalf of children orphaned by war. After the First World War, the Swiss armed forces organized a campaign to assist children and this among others influenced Danish organizations to create an association that would maintain contacts between Danish foster parents and Austrian families.

After the Second World War, the largest group of children that found refuge in Denmark was from Holland. With the help of the international organization Save the Children, in the years 1945-1949, about 21 thousand children from war-torn Europe found refuge in Denmark, including children from France, Austria and Poland. It is worth noting that the vast majority of them returned to their homes and parents. Some of them however, were adopted by Danish families (287 Austrian children and over 10% of Finnish children received a residence permit in Denmark).



Photo 1. Mr and Mrs Stub in Farum with Dutch children in 1945,

Source: www.danishimmigrationmuseum.com [10.08.2011].

2. The road to a better future

Currently, child-refugees (alone or together with their families) arrive in Denmark by plane, train or car. The legal way into Denmark or another EU country often requires an entry visa. Its illegal manufacture is very expensive (about 15,000 US dollars) and refugees and immigrants often sell all their belongings in their home country in order to buy this “entry permit”. As is clear from the statements of refugees, the easiest to obtain are visas for Italy, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Poland. Other illegal, and often more dangerous, ways of crossings borders are also attempted. There are known transit routes by which illegal immigrants try to get into Denmark. Refugees from Asia usually choose a route to Russia via Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and from there, via the Ukraine, Poland and Germany, to Denmark. Sometimes the journey may take as long as two months. Another road from Asia that leads to Western Europe runs through Iran, Turkey and the Balkans. The cost of transit is approximately 12,000 Euros, or 16,000 US dollars. Other refugees, the so called “boat people”, choose a route across the Mediterranean from Turkey to Greece. In Greece they often end up destitute and on the street and so choose to travel on further to Western European countries including Denmark (this very often applies to young refugees from Afghanistan). Many refugees from North and Sub-Saharan Africa (Inc. similarly called “boat people”) reach Denmark illegally via Spain. Their path takes them from Morocco to southern Spain via the Straits of Gibraltar, which is 21 km wide at its narrowest point. The boats in which the refugees sail are in very poor condition and often the journey is very dangerous and can last up to 18 hours. Unfortunately, sometimes the journey to a “better life” ends in death at sea. Another illegal transit route to Denmark leads through Malta and Italy⁵³.

3. Child-refugees: Suspension between childhood and adulthood

In every country throughout the world refugee children are treated as foreigners of special status. Due to their age and emotional immaturity they enjoy special rights. In Denmark unaccompanied minors can apply for refugee status, and their applications are considered under an expedited procedure. Each child is provided with a guardian to represent its interests, not only during status interviews but also in personal matters. When the child arrives in Denmark the Immigration Service, together with the Danish Red Cross (or another organization designated by the Ministry of Refugee, Migration and Integration), starts searching beyond Denmark's borders for the child's immediate family.

⁵³ *Struggling all the way to Denmark*, www.newtimes.dk [08.01.2010]. From the “New Times” magazine, produced in Denmark by immigrants and refugees.

Even if the child's refugee application is rejected then in many cases the child may still receive refugee status and a 7 year residency permit (extendible). A two year (extendible) residency permit, with the possibility of extension, is also available to children in certain humanitarian and legal situations⁵⁴. In 2004, 117 unaccompanied alien minors came to Denmark. In 2009, the Danish Red Cross took care of a total of 227 unaccompanied foreign minors: of this number, 210 children were boys, who accounted for 92.5%, and 17 were girls. 166 (i.e. 73%) came from Afghanistan, 25 (11%) were Kurds from Iran and Iraq, 84 of them (37%) declared their age as 1 years old? 66 (29%) declared an age of 17 years; two were sent to other European countries under the Dublin II Convention. It is worth noting that of the afore mentioned number of children 130 (57.2%) had fled from their place of accommodation⁵⁵. Overall, from 2008 to 2010 more than 1,200 unaccompanied minors applied for refugee status.

⁵⁴ www.nyidanmark.dk [15.10.2010].

⁵⁵ G. Nielsen, H. Askholt, *Reception of UMA'S in DK*, Danish Red Cross Asylum Department, ENARO Conference 11-12.06.2009, www.enaro.eu [06.04.2011].

	2006	2007	2008	1.01 - 8.06 2009
Accommodated	150	123	316 (300 boys, 16 girls)	227 (210 boys, 17 girls)
Disappeared/ run away	110 (73%)	85 (69%)	205 (63,6%)	130 (57,2%)

Table 1. The number of unaccompanied minors in refugee centers and their disappearances / escapes in the period 01.2006-06.2009, source: G. Nielsen, H. Askholt, op. cit.

As can be seen from the above table, a large proportion of minors escape from the refugee centers despite the provision of good social conditions. There are several centers for alien minors, including Gribskov Center, Borne Center, Sjølsmark Center, Center Grindsted, Center Sandvad and Jægerspris. Among these the most famous is Gribskov⁵⁶. This center was built at the end of the 90s of the 20th century and, like most of the refugee centers, is run by the Danish Red Cross (*Dansk Røde Kors*). It is located in a forest in northern Zealand and consists of red barracks built in 1920. It can take about 40 children; in 2007, most of the children and young people came from Afghanistan (14), Iraq (7) and China (6). The majority of them were boys between the ages of 15 to 18 years. Currently most children also come from Afghanistan, but there are also youngsters from Sri Lanka and Somalia.

Upon arrival at the center in Gribskov (but also in other facilities designed for alien minors) children receive basic information about the resort and are issued with basic things such as clothes and materials for personal hygiene. On the second day after arriving the children are informed about such things as school, the principles of the Dublin Convention and the functioning of the facility. Information about the Convention is given because in previous years there have been many escapes from the centers and, therefore, it was decided to appraise the young people of the consequences. After a few days stay in the center children begin going to school and start their period of adaptation to the new environment, which takes about 5-6 weeks. The school, located in the grounds of the center, has one teacher to teach children the Danish language and how to function in Danish society. Young people also learn to prepare meals,

⁵⁶ The Gribskov Municipality (*Gribskov Kommune*) lies within the Capital Region (Region Hovedstaden) and was set up in 2007 as a result of administrative reform through the merging of the Helsingør and Græsted-Gilleleje municipalities. The capital is the city of Helsingør, www.pl.wikipedia.org [02.02.2011].

and to do shopping and cleaning in order that they may take responsibility for their lives in the future, and is also related to the fact that some young refugees come from countries where there is a different system of education and a difference in social roles. After a period of induction, meals are still prepared for the young people, but only for those under 15 years of age with the remainder having to cook for themselves. The children then move to another building, and begin to receive weekly pocket money. They also move to another Danish Red Cross school, Skolen på Bakken, situated outside the center in Lyngø, where children from the Kongelunden Sandholm center also attend. Here their education lasts until they are 17 years of age, after which they are taught in the House of Culture run by the Red Cross. When it comes to education, the children in Danish schools are divided into classes by age, while in the refugee schools run by the Danish Red Cross education system, they are divided into three levels⁵⁷. It is worth noting that these children can attend regular Danish schools once they have the relevant knowledge, however more often than not, the schools do not want to accept them.

The Gribskov center's permanent employees include educators, nurses, security and kitchen staff⁵⁸. There is also a physician and a psychologist. At the center the child refugees are covered by the same health care rights as Danish children. Educational work with the young refugees is based on four principles, namely: accountability, professionalism, awareness of diversity of resources and potentials, and a sense of job satisfaction. The priorities resulting from these principles relate to two central tasks facing the staff of the center: The first relates to the staff themselves - their competence, respect for diversity and otherness, and mutual communication. The second area relates to their work with the pupils – the devotion of time to the pupils, understanding their situation, learning about their culture, gaining their confidence and achieving the broad development of the young person. The pedagogical emphasis is on the attention and time devoted to young refugees by, among others, talking with them. As a result the children feel calmer and safer, and the employees observe that they themselves are more able to devote attention to the children when relaxed and satisfied with their own work. One of the teachers commented: *What is important is the working atmosphere. When I feel comfortable, I have the desire to act and I am committed to doing what I do. To meet the challenge of working with refugee youth, we must support each other. If we, as the facility's staff, can form a practised team, then our work with young people can*

⁵⁷ E. Bauwens, J. Munnik, *Report of Exchange Programme In Denmark*, ENARO, 2007, pp. 17-18, www.enaro.eu [25.11.2010].

⁵⁸ Between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. there is one carer present in every building and usually two carers in the main building.

*be all the easier and better*⁵⁹. He adds: *The experiences of these young refugees have made a great impression on me. They have amazing life stories. I am grateful that they allow me to know them, because each of us is different*⁶⁰.

The children's stay in the center does not only consist of learning a new language, a new culture and a new autonomy. Primarily it involves coming to terms with trauma which results from their experiences in their country of origin, and from the often dangerous, long and difficult journeys to a foreign country. Simone, the director at the Borne center for Afghan boys in Vestervig (a relatively new center, established in January 2010⁶¹) says *Stay at the center is governed by a daily schedule, which the boys must follow. It gives them the opportunity to learn some of the principles which dominate in our country. For many of them this is a difficult time, because in Afghanistan they had an imposed system of standards with which they have to comply. They would be punished for breaking the rules, but punishment was externally conditioned - culturally. Here we want to show them that it's also an internal system of standards and controls. We want to teach them the rules of the democratic state, but it is not easy and requires a lot of time and effort. When boys misbehave, we speak with them a great deal, explaining what is not allowed and how different rules apply in Denmark than in their country*⁶². *The philosophy of the center and our work is based on respect for others and for oneself. Through various activities we teach boys responsibility and self-determination. We teach them the principles of moral conduct, which is also not easy. We also want the boys, apart from learning in school and at the center, to have time to relax and have fun. Unfortunately, while they are in the center their refugee status and*

⁵⁹ A.B. Sterll, *Vi fik tid til en kaffepause*, "SOCIAL PÆDAGOGEN", No. 19/2010, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, p. 18.

⁶¹ The interview was conducted on 09.22.2010. Vestervig is located in the municipality of Thisted of the Nordjylland region; it is a small town, with a population of 686 people as of 1 January 2010, en.wikipedia.org [02.02.2011]. It is worth noting that in Denmark there has been a "foreigner dispersal policy" in force since 1986. In 1999, the Integration Act legislated for the uniform "dispersal" of refugees and immigrants throughout Denmark and prohibited concentrating immigrant populations in a single region, T. Liebig, *The Labour Market Integration of Immigrants In Denmark*, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 50/2007, France, pp. 48-49. In 2006, the majority of refugees were sent to the regions of Nordjyllands (145 people), Aarhus (136), and Fyns (104). In Viborg 85 people were accommodated. Dispersal of refugees varies from year to year and those municipalities that have a large number of foreigners in a given year do not accept new immigrants (this among others was the case in 2005-2006 in the Københavns and Frederiksberg municipalities, where no additional refugees were taken in), www.nyidanmark.dk [15.10.2010].

⁶² For difficulties in working with young immigrants and refugees from other cultures see also P. Scheffer, *A second home. Immigrants in an open society*, Black Edition, Wołowiec 2010, p. 42.

subsequent fate is being weighed and as a result I very often see boys that are sad and nervous.



Photo 2. Borne Center for Afghan boys housed in a former hospital in Vestervig, 22.09.2010. Source: author's archive.



Photo 3. Borne Center for Afghan boys housed in a former hospital in Vestervig, 22.09.2010. Source: author's archive.

The children spend their free time, in or outside the center, on activities organized by the teacher. It is particularly important that they go beyond the area of residence, because it gives these young strangers an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the people, the culture and the prevailing principles and standards of the country in which they see their future. Leisure activities outside the center are particularly valuable because they promote integration with the host society. In order to encourage the children to venture out, they are given a free monthly bus or rail ticket. It is worth noting, however, that only young people aged 15-16 years are permitted to go outside the resort on their

own. Younger refugees must be accompanied, e.g. by a family member, volunteer, staff member or a legal guardian⁶³.

Pedagogical work in the centers for young refugees is based on the so-called STROP method. This is based on five principles - from the English words: Structure (S), Time to talk (T), Holydays and religious rituals (R), Organized activities (O) and Parental support (P). The method involves satisfying the child's emotional needs and providing it with a sense of security in order to help diminish anxiety resulting from fear of an uncertain future.

Structure - in the life of every child there is a very important need for security, belonging, self-identity, stability (owning your own place on earth), and for the freedom to develop its own interests. When these needs are met, youngsters build positive relationships with other people, grow in confidence and are more able to realise their own potential.

It is therefore very important for the center to provide physical and emotional stability and to stimulate the development of the pupil. Educational work takes place both during the lessons and during active leisure in the center and beyond and the child and its general well being are always at the core of a teacher's work.

Time to talk - In the educational work of the centers for Refugee Children, as I mentioned earlier, care and attention are the priority. The principles of active listening, used by teachers in contact with the child are extremely important. These include: listen with interest without interruption, do not criticize, issue opinions or comment and show respect during a conversation; do not persuade or coerce a child to say something it doesn't want to or is not ready to say; ask questions if something is unclear, do not lie to a young person. In this method of dialogue the language spoken by both parties is very important in order to ensure it is consistent and understandable to all. Mutual relations and communication play a significant role in situations where a child cannot understand Danish, has a different cultural code and has often been brought up in a different system of values. Teachers must have a highly tuned pedagogical tact, and their actions should aim to provide emotional support to the young, who have, more often than not, traumatic experiences of war. Relations based on trust mean the child feels understood, does not feel alienated, and can safely express their emotions of anger, fear, sadness, grief, despair and uncertainty about the future. Being able to share their problems with 'understanding-adults' provides hope and trust, demonstrates that the world is not all bad, and that adults can provide support and understanding.

⁶³ Children can take part in two activities per week organized outside the center. E. Bauwens, J. Munnik, op. cit., p. 18 and 20.

Holidays and religious rites - the respect shown to the child by the teacher plays a crucial role in helping the young refugees adapt to their new conditions. Here the acceptance of religion and associated rituals plays a significant role. A child that has been «removed» from its environment by war, violence and harassment needs time to orientate itself to its new situation. In their free time, besides having fun, young people need the space to be able to pray. Depending on the values in which they were raised some will need more time for this than others. It should be remembered that while prayer is a form of catharsis and purification it can at the same time be the source of a child's self-identity. Praying can be a painful act, especially when it concerns relatives that remain in the country of origin, because it involves uncertainty, separation, longing and difficult memories. A teacher must also respect a young person's difficult moments which could relate to important moments in their lives, such as 'escaping' from their native country or the death of parents or siblings. Respect for a young person's religion, history, painful experiences and memories, is the basis of the care and educational work with refugee children.

Organized activities - the STROP method also involves developing children's emotional processes through creative self-expression by means of artistic and sporting activities. This is particularly important because some young people have lost the ability to play constructively due to the lack of opportunity or as a result of the difficult situation in their home country. Through structured activities, children have occasion to learn about the world around them and to understand their bodies' capabilities and limitations. Through playing together children learn to solve problems, cooperate in a group, establish relationships, and to respect rules and principles. Music, art and theatre classes allow emotions to be expressed in a constructive way (things that are difficult to put into words can often be more easily expressed through art or drama) and, like prayer, can provide a healing experience.

Working with parents - in order to help children effectively, their parents must also be helped. A holistic approach is therefore required, embracing the whole family and not just an individual member. Parents who have survived traumatic experiences are often not able to understand their own behaviour and feelings, much less the behaviour of their children. They suffer anxieties and nightmares and their terrible experiences and ordeals are re-lived. Such parents are emotionally 'absent', unable to establish positive relationships with their children, and cannot provide them with a sense of security because they themselves do not have this feeling. They carry many negative emotions such as anger, hatred, fear, sadness, grief, and often a sense of helplessness because they could not protect themselves and their children. The task of psychologists, educators and social workers is to work with parents (to facilitate awareness and

expression of their own emotions), and to assist parents in understanding the behaviour and feelings of their children⁶⁴. One woman says of the relationship with her children: "Waiting at the center for refugee status, in the face of uncertainty, is like living on a desert island - the longer you stay there, the less influence/control you have over your children"⁶⁵. The STROP method plays a very important role in the work with refugee children and adults, and its main aim is to help them overcome the cultural shock resulting from finding themselves in a new and strange situation.

The centers for young refugees have clubs for boys where they can spend their free time. They can play cards, table tennis, basketball, table football, watch TV or listen to music. There are also various musical instruments to try out as well as the internet. One of the clubs in the resort Avnstrup is called "Club 21", because it designed for young people aged 13-21 years, adults to the club are not admitted⁶⁶. Many of the refugee centers have a kindergarten for the younger children. Children between the age of 2 to 6 can attend, and there are usually two teachers for every three children. The Sandholm kindergarten is open from 8.30 to 12.00 and from 13.00 to 15.00. For lunch the children go back to their rooms⁶⁷.

In certain cases (mainly for legal reasons) some of the refugee children arriving in Denmark are not eligible for care and assistance and these young people are deported to other countries. As this can create emotional insecurity and cause depression, some resort to self-harming in order to draw attention to their plight⁶⁸.

4. Integration activities on behalf of children and young people from immigrant backgrounds

Integration activities take place at a local and national level and embrace children and young people from immigrant backgrounds. They encompass one-time events (in the form of actions, campaigns and local initiatives for marginalized children and young people) as well as long-term programs carried out under immigration policy. In this section I will describe just some of these activities which include clubs and kindergartens for children from ethnic minorities. I will also include international efforts initiated by Danish notables on behalf of refugees from Africa.

⁶⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁵ *I Can't Control My Children*, www.newtimes.dk [27.03.2007].

⁶⁶ *Happy Clubbin*, www.newtimes.dk [08.10.2010].

⁶⁷ *The Kindergarten In Sandholm*, www.newtimes.dk [16.05.2008].

⁶⁸ See among others L. Fekete, *Afghan youth saved from suicide attempt*, www.irr.org.uk [28.01.2002].

Since 1999, the Integration Act contains the provision that municipalities are responsible for the integration process. It includes a 3-year integration program in which communities must help refugees find work and facilitate learning, and forms the basis on which the integration of refugees and immigrants into communities is measured⁶⁹.

In November 2009, the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs signed agreements with six communities to counteract the marginalization of children and young people from ethnic groups⁷⁰. In 2003 Brøndby IF, one of the biggest football clubs in Denmark, in cooperation with the city of Brøndby and the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs created a project called: "From the Bench to the Pitch", which sought to achieve the mobilization and integration of young people into the local community through sport. Thanks to the financial help offered by the football club sponsors⁷¹ over 130 young immigrants gained work experience or found employment/full time work. Another action organized by the government in 2002 was a campaign called "We need all young people", which aimed to encourage young immigrants to take up and complete vocational training. This action was based on the idea that young immigrants engaged in the project would encourage fellow students from immigrant backgrounds to continue their education by their own example, demonstrating that, despite immigrant origins, with an education you can achieve something in life. Conversations (discussion panels) revolved around such issues as identity, citizenship, democracy and extremism⁷². Meanwhile the schools developed specific programs with the aim of discouraging children and adolescents from leaving school too soon.

⁶⁹ L.M. Hansen, *Effectiveness measurement of Danish municipalities' integration policies from 1999 to 2007*, Copenhagen, March 2009, p. 2.

In the document one of the municipalities (Skive Kommune, which is located in Central Jutland) describes the aim of effective integration as giving a refugee the ability to provide for themselves and their families, equal access to education and the labour market as Danish citizens, the opportunities for personal and cultural development (for adult and children refugees) in society, and mutual respect by the refugees and the host society for each other's rights and values, [In:] Skive Kommune Integration Policy, City Council, 18th December 2007, Doc. No. 964 906, materials received on November. 20/09/2010 from L. Sanders - a social worker helping refugees in the municipality of Skive.

⁷⁰ *Country note for Denmark*, OECD International Migration Outlook: SOPEMI 2010, www.oecd.org [17.10.2010], p. 200.

⁷¹ *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners* – Directorate General for Justice, Freedom and Security, Third Edition, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, April 2010, p. 158.

⁷² *Denmark's third report under the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, ACFC/SR/III (2010)004, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 30th March 2010, p. 6.

Integration activities also targeted young unemployed people from ethnic minorities. In 2005, a project entitled: "A New Chance for Everyone" was designed to help provide equal educational opportunities to young immigrants under the age of 25⁷³. Under this initiative youngster aged 15-17 who went to school could apply for child benefit. Another project, "Youth for youth", was designed to show cultural differences and to establish contacts between children of immigrants and their Danish peers⁷⁴. A further initiative, of the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration and the Danish Council for Youth Affairs, was intended to establish a democratic platform for young people. The project's aim was to encourage young immigrants to work for democracy in an advisory capacity attached to various ministries. Through the creation of a web site and forum, young immigrants were afforded the opportunity to discuss and debate important issues such as how to build a democracy and protect against radical extremism⁷⁵.

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) also plays an important role in the field of integration activities. Approximately 4,600 volunteers work with the DRC to provide services for children and adolescents such as serving as 'home helps'. In 2009, approximately 6,500 youngsters benefited from the help of volunteers⁷⁶. In 2009, an initiative of the DRC on behalf of children of immigrants was to create a project in which they originated in the place of residence clubs for boys from ethnic minorities. This project sought to create twelve clubs for boys aged 13-17 years. These clubs were, and still are, a meeting place for young people where they can spend their free time and, thanks to external interaction, integrate with the local community (they are perceived as "bridges to integration"). Volunteers organize various activities for them, including sports (football, badminton, swimming lessons), computer classes and art classes (painting, singing and writing lyrics). In addition, young people are taken on trips to the cinema, the park and the planetarium. An interesting method of motivating the young club members was to involve them in the club's fund raising exercises⁷⁷ e.g. making items for sale. In June 2010, a new initiative called "Small businesses" was implemented for the benefit of non-Danish boys and is planned to last until May 2012. It should be noted that integration

⁷³ *Integration handbook*, op. cit., p. 152. See also T. Liebig, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷⁴ *Denmark's third report under...*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

⁷⁶ Volunteers helped 2,490 children with lessons and learning the Danish language [In:] *Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Annual Report 2009*, www.drc.dk [03.10.2010], p. 2 and 14.

⁷⁷ Examples include a calendar showing holidays in various countries around the world which was made by young immigrants from the Rantzausgade club in Copenhagen and texts written by young immigrants for a book project, organized in Copenhagen's Glasvej club, *Ibidem*, p. 13.

initiatives also come from representatives of the local community. Many companies sponsor projects for the children of immigrants, or set up volunteer groups under the concept of 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR)⁷⁸.

Educational facilities (e.g. kindergartens and schools), in which children and young people spend most of their time during the day, play a very important role in the process of integration. It is worth noting that, in addition to Denmark, the other Scandinavian countries (Finland and Sweden) also put an emphasis on integration through education and upbringing. The Eurydice Network's 2009 report entitled "*Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe: Tackling Social and Cultural Inequalities*"⁷⁹ recommends the creation of an integrated system of care and education for all children up to the age of six, irrespective of social or ethnic background. Their educational goals should include the stimulation of language development in three year old bilingual children, and teaching young children the Danish language in order to provide them with the basic skills necessary to begin elementary school education⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ Examples include employees of one company organizing one-day handball classes for boys from two clubs in Copenhagen, while Systime press covered the cost of publishing a book written by child refugees. Ibidem, p. 14.

It is worth noting that in 2008 Denmark took part in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and in 2009 participated in the European workshop: "Integration and dialogue. Intercultural dialogue as an instrument to foster Social Cohesion?", *Denmark's third report under...*, op. cit., p. 22.

⁷⁹ *Wczesna edukacja i opieka nad dzieckiem w Europie: zmniejszanie nierówności społecznych i kulturowych*, Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji, Warszawa 2009.

⁸⁰ It is worth noting that in the year before school age, day centers organize activities called: "class before school", which prepare bilingual children to begin education. Moreover, in the Skive Municipality, refugee children aged 7-17 are offered extra Danish language lessons at the Skive school (Skivehus Skole). For young people aged 16-18 there are several further education opportunities after leaving school: colleges (for those who wish to continue their studies), vocational training centers (teaching professions, such as builder, blacksmith, electrician, cook, engineer, carpenter), a business school (include teaching administration and sales), a school for social workers (including working with the aged or in the medical sector), a teacher training college and a school of nursing. It is worth noting that the proportion of bilingual children in Skive Municipality kindergartens and schools does not exceed 30% of the total population of children. *Integration Policy Skive Kommune*, op. cit.

	1995		2000		2003	
	Native Danes	Second generation	Native Danes	Second generation	Native Danes	Second generation
0-2 years	50%	19%	57%	33%	65%	43%
3-5 years	84%	56%	90%	84%	95%	85%

Table 2. Percentage of second-generation children in day-care centers and nursery schools based on age and origin, Source: T. Liebig, op. cit., p. 53.

As the statistics show, in 1995-2003 the number of second-generation children of immigrant origin in day care centers and nursery schools has increased by half. However, a disproportion in participation of children in these facilities can still be seen.

The Ellekonedalen kindergarten in the municipality of Viborg (Central Jutland) is an excellent example of the efforts made to integrate refugee and immigrant children. It is one of three facilities forming the "Dalens Daginstitutioner" kindergarten complex, which was founded in 1972. Mariehønen and Breidablik are the other two housed in separate buildings. The kindergarten is an integration facility designed for infants and children up to 6 years of age. "Dalens Daginstitutioner" caters for 35 children up to the age of 3 and 23 children aged 3 to 6 years. Ellekonedallen on the other hand has 15 children aged 0-3 years and 13 children aged from 3 to 6 years (as of September 2010). Its staff includes teachers, teachers' assistants, Marte Meo⁸¹ therapists,

⁸¹ The Marte Meo method (Latin name, which can be translated as "with own power") is used in working with children and adults (including children with ADHD, autism, depression, the mentally handicapped, the elderly). The pioneer of this method is the Dutch woman Maria Aarts, who 30 years ago used it when working with autistic children. Marte Meo is a method that aims to promote a child's development by improving its relationship / interaction with its parent. In this method parents and teachers watch the educational methods they apply to the children (pre-recorded on video), and thus have the opportunity to observe 'from the outside' their relationship with their child. With the ability to revisit the interactions of a parent, teacher and child they can choose the most effective ways of communicating and relating with the child, and consciously reapply them. The Marte Meo method is based on the principles of "watch and follow the initiatives of the child; support the child's initiatives, name what is happening here and now, teaching the child to wait their turn, e.g. in a game; share the child's joys and sorrows - emotions which accompany different experiences; delineate change phase (end of something, the start of something); note the child's progress and give positive reinforcement; broaden the child's horizons - by allowing it to experience the <world>". This method has developed in some European

kitchen staff and administration personnel. The kindergarten is equipped with, among others, a play room, a large hall for gymnastic exercises, a hand-craft workshop, a literary corner, a communal space with a fireplace and one with an open kitchen. It is located in a district where many of the residents are immigrant and poor families, hence the children come from different backgrounds and from different social classes (approximately 40% of children in kindergarten are the children of immigrants). Due to the diversity of cultures, languages and nationalities the parents, children and staff have the opportunity to learn tolerance and acceptance of "others".



Photos 4 and 5. Ellekonedalen kindergarten in Viborg, source: www.viborg.dk [06.12.2011].

Since the kindergarten is a place of integration attended by children with various deficiencies (especially emotional), it is equipped to deal with the problem of helping children adapt to and become part of their community.

countries (in Poland it is less well known), in India, New Zealand, China and the United States www.tworczezmiany.pl [06.12.2011].

Charlotte Laursen, the Director of Ellekonedalen⁸², says: *In the kindergarten children with emotional difficulties are generally Danes and children of immigrants from Poland, Romania, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Somalia. We also have children whose parents are mentally ill. Except for one girl who has a problem with walking we do not have children with motor disabilities. Two thirds of the children attending are Danes with the remainder being immigrants, which we believe is a good ratio. In most cases, the Danish parents raise no objection to children from immigrant families attending, but unfortunately there are also those parents who, when they hear that we accept children from different cultural backgrounds, do not even want to come and see how our facility works. We believe that every child is unique and, irrespective of race, that it always brings something new to the group. I would like to add that the kindergarten does not employ a cultural assistant and we do not have a special curriculum or educational program aimed at children of immigrants and refugees. Food however does need some extra attention, as the majority of the immigrant children are Moslem.*

When a child starts its stay at the kindergarten, their parents are presented with our aims and objectives and familiarise themselves with the rules prevailing in Danish society. Kindergarten is the first place, in which a child-refugee gets to know our culture and learn the Danish language. If the child does not attend kindergarten, by the time they start school it becomes much harder for them to cope with their new reality. Here however, we often have to tell the parents to use their own language at home when communicating with their child, which is often difficult for them to accept because they want their child to learn Danish as soon as possible and adapt to the Danish way of life.

Work with a culturally different child is based on verbal and non-verbal communication. At the beginning of the child's kindergarten attendance, when it does not yet understand Danish, we just smile a lot and talk, talk, talk, and talk. We begin by describing activities performed in the presence of a child and addressing requests to the child. Initially children can react with fear, because we often have a different skin colour than their parents, and we use a language incomprehensible to them. For all children, regardless of origin and skin colour, being at the nursery without a loved one is a huge stress. The beginnings are difficult, and each child needs a great deal of our patience and kindness. The role of a parent is very important in order to show their child that kindergarten is a place of safety. Recently, a 5-year-old boy who was very shy arrived from Afghanistan. For the first few months of his stay he spoke to no one, until one day, during play, he began to utter single words.

⁸² From author's interview with the Director dated 21 September 2010.

In our educational program, we place a great emphasis on the child's overall psychophysical development, including its cultural aspect. We teach children tolerance and acceptance of otherness. We have never had a child say to another that it will not play with it because its skin is a different colour. In kindergarten we have our rituals, and one of them is an outing every Monday outside the facility: to the park, woods or playground. Our educational program is very rich and particular attention is paid to active play in the fresh air. Every day after lunch, regardless of the weather, the children go outside. Children also visit the swimming pool, and do lots of painting and cutting out – presently we are making dragons from different materials. In addition, we always have time for telling stories and for learning the Danish language. For us the child's interests are paramount and that is why we respect the individuality of each one.

When it comes to co-operation with parents, this varies. Cultural and language differences are a common barrier to parent-teacher relationships. Additionally, some parents manifest post traumatic stress disorder, creating tensions and conflicts which we have to try to solve at the same time. Parents with whom we can talk only through interpreters are a big challenge for us. Although we meet with them regularly, we are not sure if the parents understand everything because we do not know how our conversation will be translated by an interpreter. Not long ago we took in the children of a young immigrant mother, who had just arrived in Denmark. Because the mother does not know the language and spends all her time sitting at home, she cannot adapt to her new situation. We attach great importance also to the way we communicate with immigrant parents, careful not to use phrases that are patronising or prescriptive in order not offend. This is in contrast to Danish parents, with whom conversation is very relaxed and there are no barriers to communication. I think that in our contacts with immigrant families we are more reserved. Until recently, a major problem was that immigrant parents did not prepare second breakfasts for their children. Parents simply had no concept of a second breakfast and did not know quite what to give a child to eat, did not know that one needs to wrap a sandwich in paper or foil. To help them, we even took photographs of sandwiches and gave them out to parents. Currently, the problem is over, since we obtained a grant from the local authority and can prepare sandwiches for the children ourselves. As mentioned earlier, another difficulty is those parents who have emotional disturbances resulting from PTSD. Sometimes it takes a very long time before they are able to tell us about their experiences of war. These parents also do not understand that their malaise affects the behaviour of their children.

Because children do not understand why mum lies in bed all day and cries or why dad is sad and spends the whole day sitting in a chair or in contrast is nervous and shouts all the time.

I would like to add that most of the children of immigrants and refugee were born in Denmark and as such have no experience of war; however their parents' trauma affects them very negatively. We try to talk with these parents, and often a long time passes before they get to recognise and understand their emotional problems as well as their children's. As to financial issues, our facility is a state institution. If both parents are working, then we charge the full fee for a child's attendance. If only one parent is employed then the fee is reduced, and if both are unemployed there is no fee. I should add that the facility is open between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., and that during this time parents can go to work or to language school. But as I mentioned earlier there are also those parents who send their children to kindergarten, while they themselves remain at home.

And I should also add that our facility cooperates with a psychologist, educator, speech therapist, social worker and nurse. When the need arises we can always get in contact with them.

As is clear from this statement, the welfare of the children and the respect shown to them is most important, and it is thanks to this that the child will be able, despite various psychosomatic deficits and cultural differences, to find a future for itself in its new social and cultural reality.

5. Verdens Flygtninge: Danish initiative for children, refugees in Africa

In addition to efforts to integrate refugee children in Denmark, the Danish authorities carry out various initiatives to help children abroad. One example of such efforts is Verdens Flygtninge (World's Refugees), which entailed an action called 'Abandoned 2010' initiated by Viborg's former mayor Johannes Stensgaard to help children in Liberia. The project is a collaboration with the Danish Refugee Council to raise money for organizations, businesses and ordinary citizens in order to help in the country's reconstruction following its 15 year civil war. It is being conducted in four villages (Tiaplay, Miaplay, Buutuo and Bualay) in the north-eastern province of Nimba, and its goal is to raise money to construct a well and three schools for 1,500 students. Under the project, an awareness campaign was started including lectures on African refugees held in Danish schools, meetings with local communities, as well as charity concerts and exhibitions on the subject of war and refugees in Liberia⁸³.

⁸³ Information regarding the project is based on materials received from Johannes Stensgaard, whom I interviewed on 09.21.2010. Johannes Stensgaard was born in 1947 in Viborg, and is a

Johannes Stensgaard says this of the beginnings of this project: *While I was still mayor the head of the Danish Refugee Council, who also came from Viborg, called me and said he had an idea in which he wanted to involve various governmental and non-governmental organizations and private companies. The idea was to organise help for people in Africa and it really appealed to me. We wanted to find a community that we could help in a very concrete manner. The choice fell on Liberia because of the misery caused by the long war, and for the reason that the residents spoke English. As mayor of the city I had many contacts and consequently was able to get a lot of people involved. We are not only bringing aid to the adult residents of these four villages, but also to former child-soldiers and child-refugees. I think that when we have collected enough funds and completed this project, I will get involved in another aid project for children. As a pensioner I want to have time for my family, but I also want to do something useful for refugee children.*

By the end of 2010 the project managed to raise the sum of 1,200.073 Krona.

Summary

Refugee children are particularly vulnerable to violence, lawlessness, torture and exploitation. Helpless and alone they are unable to defend themselves against their adult tormentors who, instead of standing up for the children's dignity and self respect, are destroying their hearts and souls by not permitting the development and joy normally associated with childhood. Only a few children are fortunate enough to escape their often war-torn and violence ridden countries, and reach a country where they find care, support and security. When they arrive in Denmark, after a long and often perilous journey, they can discover peace and refuge. Unfortunately, the sad truth is that, as a result of various conventions and international agreements, some refugee children are deported back to their countries of origin or to the countries from which they arrived. Despite many aid programs and campaigns conducted on behalf of child-refugees by governmental organisations and NGOs, it should be remembered that Denmark has some of the most stringent immigration laws in Europe.

The protection of a child and their right to a happy childhood is a challenge and a task for pedagogues, teachers, tutors, and all those who find that children's rights are close to their heart. If adults understand that children are

civil engineer. From 1989 he was a member of the Council of the City of Viborg, and became its mayor in 1998. As mayor he helped organize aid for child-refugees in Viborg.

the hope of the World and its future, then the World will survive and children will find happiness and safety.

Zygmunt Bauman concludes: "I am responsible for the 'Other' whatever the Other does. I am responsible before he does anything at all, and before I am aware of his doing anything – indeed, of his very capacity for doing something. It is precisely the otherness of the Other that burdens me with responsibility"⁸⁴.

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⁸⁴ Z. Bauman, *Śmierć i nieśmiertelność. O wielości strategii życia*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1998, p. 58.

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Photographs

Photo 1. Mr and Mrs Stub in Farum dutch children in 1945.

Photo 2. Borne Center for Afghan children housed in the old Vestervig hospital, 22.09.2010.

Photo 3. Borne Center for Afghan children housed in the old Vestervig hospital, 22.09.2010.

Photo 4 and 5. Ellekonedalen Kidergarten in Viborg.

Tables

Table 1. The number of unaccompanied minors in refugee centers and their disappearances / escapes in the period 01.2006-06.2009.

Table 2. Percentage of second-generation children in day-care centers and nursery schools based on age and origin.

II. HOMELESS

“Paths to homelessness: Reconstruction of the process based on research into biographies of the homeless⁸⁵”

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present paths leading to homelessness and to propose the application of the acquired knowledge in the area of socio-pedagogical activity. The reconstruction of the process of becoming a homeless highlights three possible paths that lead to such state, as well as condition remaining in such state or breaking free from it. Knowing this mechanism plays a very important role when working with the homeless for the sake of their social reintegration.

The basis for the reconstruction of the above-mentioned process has become a participatory study carried out by me on/with homeless men living in Łódź. This was an over two-year period of intensive meetings and accompanying the homeless in the hardships and successes of everyday life. I was “guided” by them around their world where I could fully engage in the explored reality. Thus, I gained in a sense the right to “translate” this world to those who are indifferent, even a little, to the fate of the homeless. These years of participatory observation and narrative interviews⁸⁶ conducted with the subjects made it possible to reconstruct – as they say themselves – “what was before” that “led” them to homelessness.

⁸⁵ The article is a modified version of the text published [In:] E. Dubas, W. Świtalski, *Uczenie się z biografii innych*, Wydawnictwo UE, Łódź 2011.

⁸⁶ It is worth to mention here the specifics of the narratives made by the homeless. Sometimes, in the case of my interviewees, I turned out to be the first person at all or the first person in a long time, who wanted to listen to their stories of life, which was so meaningful to them. In addition to this, their conviction that their story may in the future in some way help them, either directly or indirectly through the people working with them, made them more readily experience once again the vicissitudes of fate. The category of place and time proved to be equally problematic in relations with the interviewees, when it often happened that they did not show up at the appointed meeting, but they could not let me know about it, or they came in drunk, which also made it impossible to conduct the scheduled interview. On the other hand, the meetings were often held in places essential for the homeless, constituting as it were a substitute for their home, such as railway wagons put on a siding, parks, trains stations, etc. Therefore, these places on the one hand might have hindered communication, but on the other as places “tamed” by the homeless, they might have facilitated the contact by ensuring safety and friendly atmosphere for the narrator.

2. “Prosperous life” before homelessness

To be able to present the paths to homelessness as the key conceptual categories, we should start from explaining the phenomenon of homelessness from the perspective of the homeless. It turns out that a characteristic feature of the situation experienced by the subjects prior to homelessness is “a prosperous life”. The importance ascribed to the concept of “prosperous life” is connected by the subjects with easy life and no knowledge about what poverty or lack of money mean. *We bought everything. A washing machine, a fridge, everything new, a stove, some other such crap there, TV, Hi-Fi tower, something like this, computer stuff, everything was only the first. Well then I think I spent about 8000 Polish money. Everything was okay* (N1).

But here we sold in the square, here sold clothes, she worked. I was trading in the market, and that somehow this money came us that somehow we prospered and there's always something we wanted to (N4).

And so actually this money which I earned covered all the needs so that the children had a good life, right, because they used to go to school all (N3).

They could afford all they wanted. They worked, they could cover various expenses, taking care in this way of the family, meeting the needs of the children: *who had the right to have it, because parents are there to* (N3), as they claimed themselves considering the maintenance of the family as a specific duty.

The time of “prosperity” is contrasted with homelessness not only in economic terms but also as regards their awareness. The subjects point out that they lived in ignorance of the existence of homelessness. They felt included in the other - better world and had the feeling that the phenomenon of homelessness simply does not refer to them. They lived far away from such problems that, after all, as long existed in the society. *Well, and then in my case I did not know what homelessness is... It did not fit in my head, because I never had this. I worked as a cop, of course I had to go to different dark alleys and I pulled them out, but I had never been homeless. I had no idea of what it is like* (N6).

I did not know that it would happen to me, but I experienced this and do not know when it will be over. It's hard to say. I used to not understand this, but sometimes I meet these homeless people, I see them at the station and there you know. There are some people that he will take care of himself, he will think, but the greater part of them..., you know from all of this, that he does not have a place to live, he is homeless, right does nothing (N3).

Stressing their biographical distance to homelessness at the same time they emphasize the extremely different character of both worlds - the pre-

homelessness world and “the world of the homeless”. They also show understanding of the difficulty to comprehend the world of the homeless. Their statements suggest that it is impossible really – while not being homeless “not being in these shoes” (N2) - to understand the homeless and homelessness. Living next to the social problems surrounding them, they somehow lived beyond them, not paying a lot of attention to them, assuming an attitude “because it does not concern me” (N2).

Homelessness, from the perspective of those who experience it, is therefore a change for the worse defined in the context of their previous life situation. It is a condition which occurs as a result of a breakthrough in life, starting for example from the annulment of marriage, separation or bereavement, moving out or eviction from the house, etc. At the same time, it is a condition they “do not deserve”, as is evidenced by the following quote of (N3)⁸⁷: *This life is so cruel you know that sometimes a man does not deserve it and yet experiences it* (N3).

The sense of prosperity, within the various above-mentioned dimensions, is also opposed to a sense of loneliness in the lives of people entering the path of homelessness. And although a homeless is often surrounded by a group of people in a similar situation, he or she feels lonely anyway (even among others)⁸⁸. The feeling of loneliness is understood by the homeless as being separated from the family, the loved ones, wives and children. The sense of loneliness is inherently linked to the category of resentment at the situation which they have found themselves in. The causes of resentment can be found in the sense of sacrifice - not only did the subject devote “his whole life” to his

⁸⁷ For privacy purposes, but also in order to make clear the distinction between individual statements, each of the subjects was assigned a symbol in the form of the letters of the alphabet (N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6, N7). I realize that this method may seem somewhat distant from the interpretative paradigm according to which the study was carried out. However, resorting to symbols was a fully conscious choice. As a researcher emotionally attached to the subjects, I was not able to identify them with something other than their actual names. I also decided to resign from the use of pseudonyms, and thus to prevent the pejorative meanings that they bring about and to avoid making the Reader form premature opinions and attitudes about the subjects he or she is getting to know.

⁸⁸ Loneliness, from the sociological perspective, can be reflected upon in the category of physical and social isolation. We then deal with weak or no relationships with other people. Hence, loneliness may be total (break of all relationships) or partial. Another division will result from paying attention to the mental sense of loneliness as a feeling of lack of contact with others, of being abandoned. Loneliness, according to the division made by a psychologist Craig Ellison, can be divided into: emotional, social and existential one. Social loneliness means being without friends or family. Emotional loneliness is the lack of deep relationships with others, and the existential loneliness is the feeling of isolation and lack of any meaning in life. See: M. Oliwa-Ciesielska, *Piętno nieprzypisania. Studium o wyizolowaniu społecznym bezdomnych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2004.

family, neglecting himself, but now when he has found himself “home-less”, the same family forgets about him. *And I, you know, so I myself forgot, you know, that I also exist in this world, and well family and family, family and family. And now you know, the family has forgotten that I exist, this is sad. I put so much input there, this is not about money, because money is a thing that is acquired, you know, because when a man gets by, he will obtain this money. Right, it's just so sad that I'm homeless today, but sometimes I would take and so on. I would drink day and night, until I would drink to death, not to see this, and hear this (N3).*

In addition to the feeling of loneliness, homelessness is associated with a sense of “futility”, as evidenced by the statement of (N5): *And so I lived. Not bad was my life. Better than that of many normal persons who have a family and home. I did not quarrel with anyone, I had no conflicts, no one complained about me. Well I was as they say... I was a master of myself. What I wanted, I did. I did not like something, I left. And so this was a fairly interesting life then. Well, but anyway I missed this family all the time (N5).*

The subject emphasizes the fact that he did not have to be subordinate to anyone or anything and he could do everything that he wanted to do. The freedom exhibited by “N5” as an advantage does not become a value in itself, though, or goal, such as would be a family. This indicates the secondary importance of belonging to the world of “theirs” - a kind of necessity to last in emotional emptiness. *Because my life it is so..., maybe an interesting one..., but there is no... at the moment, so I look from the perspective of those 30 years, this was without any meaning, without any purpose. Well, I had this goal when the family was there - to raise my daughters, educate them. They completed studies, it was a goal, well then there was no purpose in life. I did not have that somebody there you look after someone. Well, I had no longer.... I do not really know what to think, because so often I sit and I think. Well you have failed with your life, well used to have a beautiful life once, but it was once... well 30 years ago, well, I lived like a man, and now well I live because I'm alive (N5).*

3. Paths to homelessness

Trying to understand the phenomenon of homelessness in all its diversity requires a multidimensional approach, including the biographical one. We can, therefore, differentiate the generated category of becoming homeless into three types of paths leading to homelessness: the way of “guilty another”, the way of “my fault” and the way of “common fault”⁸⁹. The criterion for distinguishing

⁸⁹ It is also possible to identify the path “common fault” that is represented by (N7) (he “came out” of being homeless, and therefore he presents a perspective different to the one of the subjects

this category is *a source of steering control*⁹⁰ of a homeless revealing itself in the presented processes. These types of paths are internally differentiated by the following categories: the turning point, the cyclical process of fighting for steering control, the moment before a critical decision, a critical decision. These categories, serving in this place the function of key concepts, saturate the theory of “becoming a homeless”. The turning point is an event important to the subject that changed his or her previous view of life, thus motivating the subject to transform himself or herself to change the identity⁹¹. It causes reevaluation of the individual’s world, as well as his or her personal transformation, becoming often the cause of re-ordering of life. The criterion for differentiating the category of the turning point is again *the source of steering control*.

The cyclic process of fighting for steering control is a category assuming processual nature, and often also repetitive. This is a periodically repeated fight for steering control in life, taking place between the subject and “guilty another” who makes the subject lose the steering control. “Guilty another” is for a homeless a person (or a situation) that by exerting influence on him, or her indirectly or directly contributes to the fact that a homeless steps on the path leading to homelessness. This process can take place both before the turning point occurs, leading to it somehow, or after this crucial moment, as its outcome, a kind of a way of dealing with its consequences. The moment before the critical decision is an event occurring immediately prior to that decision. It is of great significance, as it is the evidence of the direct reason that resulted in making such an important decision, often definitive in its effect. The critical decision is the last stage before becoming homeless in case of the subjects. In contrast to the turning point, it makes the immediate cause of homelessness,

who are currently homeless). He does not want to talk about the time when he himself was homeless, trying in this way to forget this undoubtedly hard time for him, focusing on the narrative recapitulating the problems of homeless people with whom he now works. Hence, the description of this path, to avoid over-interpretation, is omitted on the grounds that the research failed to gather enough material, which emphasizes the need for studies on this type of path to homelessness.

⁹⁰ Steering control or controllability, that is the feeling of connection between one’s own actions and the effects of these actions. Attention should be paid to the location of control over one’s own life (source of control), which can be inside a person (internal steering control) or outside (external steering control). D. Riesman, *Samotny tłum*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1971.

⁹¹ The category of the turning point seems to be linked to the concept described by A. Strauss, *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge University Press 1987, after: A. Gulczyńska, *Wrastanie społeczne nastoletniej młodzieży w wielkomiejskim środowisku życia, na przykładzie Łodzi. Studium społeczno – pedagogiczne zperspektywy interakcyjnej*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Łódź 2005. Also Fritz Schütze introduces this concept linking it with one of the structures of processual-biographical plan of action, F. Schütze, *Trajektoria cierpienia jako przedmiot badań socjologii interpretatywnej*, “Studia Socjologiczne”, No.144 (1)/1997, pp. 11-56.

while the turning point influenced it in an indirect way, causing more of a change of life, which could (but did not necessarily need to) lead to homelessness.

The critical decision takes on a variety of dimensions, whose variants can be defined based on the introduction of a criterion of the internal and external steering control. Consequently, the critical decisions assumed the form of a decision taken by the subject (internal steering control) or a decision taken by someone else (external steering control). The analysis of the biographical processes leading to homelessness also revealed differences in the category of the critical decision – i.e. according to the *reason for the decision*. The subjects described the cause of their critical decisions in different ways. On the one hand, “for someone”, as a consequence of caring for a loved one: *Well, I met this one girl, woman. Well, and so somehow I got involved with her. Well, it was hard for me at home and there after all, my daughters were adults they were 20 then they saw it and had a grudge. My wife was not too happy with this arrangement, such arguments were there well..., so I said goodbye and moved out. Well I did not want to, because my flat was my own, because I bought this apartment. Well, but I left it to my daughters and wife. I took nothing from them - not even one dime. My fault was, well, mine (N5)*. On the other hand “due to some defect” as a result of some kind of weakness: *I do not know what that liquor does to human beings, but it does so. If someone does not know how to stop or..., but my wife was so allergic to alcohol, so much. It would have been enough if she said two sentences, and I would have not left home, she couldn't... She boasted earlier, that she had read so many books, that if she had known earlier, this would have not happened. Well one day and said enough. And I say my darling I always love you, all my life. You were my first girlfriend and you will always be, take everything, I do not need anything. I took 20 grosze in the pocket, and I went to the sea (N1)*.

3.1. The path “guilty another”

Biographies of those subjects who seem to represent this type of “becoming a homeless” vary depending on the criterion of *tension*. The tension reflects here the process of struggling for controllability in the relation with “guilty another.” It introduces specific dimensions of this category, such as: growing tension, no growing tension, and constantly growing tension. The growing tension makes it possible for the individual to prepare to the turning point that is going to occur. We can have here a situation when the growing tension in the end leads to the expected turning point, or to a completely unexpected turning point (different from what we expected). Such is the story of (N3) – a father of four children, in the past – an owner of a purse making company and - as he

says – “the leader of placing on the market new styles of bags”. The direct cause of his homelessness was the fact that the mother in law threw him out of the house after the death of his wife. This case shows the cyclic struggle with the “guilty another” for steering control in life. The guilty another assumes in his biography the figure of “the wife’s family” and “the wife’s disease”. However, he attributes specific controllability to his wife’s family: *I was an obstacle for them, actually not so much for the mother in law, as for my wife’s sister, because she was greedy for money. She wanted me there from there you know that I moved out, and she made hints, <turns, curls and twists> to the mother-in-law, every day there was some quarrel* (N3).

The tension in his situation is further exacerbated by his wife’s illness, leading to the climax, but the gradual tension build-up while nursing the sick wife also allows “N3” to prepare for her death: *I know you know the pain, because when my wife was ill with breast cancer I saw how she suffered terribly. Half a year I sat beside her, I did the analgesic injections of morphine, because the nurses taught me how to do it. She had to have an injection every 2 hours. I had to take care of her all the time, go to pick up the drugs, and there from her family nobody wanted to do it, no one. Everything on my head* (N3). This event (the death of his wife) turned out to be the turning point for him in life. It initiated the next “cycle” of fighting with the “guilty another” (mother in law, wife’s sister), but also with everyday routine after the wife’s death, as he considers his wife the reason due to which he forgot about himself. *And I, you know, I myself forgot, you know, that I also exist in this world, and family, family and family. And now you know, the family has forgotten that I exist* (N3).

The growing tension in the life of the subject results in the introduction into the biographical reconstruction a figure of “generalized guilty another” that he calls the “fate”. *And it was not my fault that I lost my own apartment you know. It happened to me, that I am this homeless, well, because first my wife died in 94, and two years later both my parents on one day – died of carbon monoxide fumes. It’s such a fate I say* (N3). The growing tension takes on the culminating form when, after the death of his wife, the mother-in-law sends police on him to “get rid of the person who is not registered there as a resident”, to throw him out of the house, which is for (N3) the moment before a critical decision that directly leads him to take his own critical decision – to abandon the current life. Thus, he enters the path of homelessness, begins to “wander from one old friend to another”, travels across Poland and having recognized that life in shelters “is not for him”, decides to “live” on the streets.

In the case of “F”, as in the case of (N3), there occurs a cyclical process of fighting with the “guilty another” (including the mother-in-law), in order to be able to manage independently his own life. “F” is temporarily staying in a

hostel for the homeless. He arrived there when - after an accident - he was thrown out of the house by his wife and mother-in-law, because (as he says):

after the accident I was good for nothing for them. I was no longer needed, they had lost enough on me while I was in the hospital. After the accident, he suffers from post-traumatic epilepsy, which makes it necessary for him to live in the shelter facility, among other people is a similar situation. In his case, before he became homeless, the tension had grown, as in the case of (N3) in preparation for the inevitable upcoming moment of the turning point. However, in the case of (N6), the turning point that occurred in his life was not the one he would have expected. He was getting ready for something different than actually happened to him. He was preparing himself for dealing with the problems at home, with his wife and mother-in-law, when an accident happened that changed his life. After the accident, once again he struggled with the “guilty another” (wife, mother-in-law) who led him to a critical decision (moving out of the house), taken in this case for him. Well, but what for I was for them, then I was no longer needed, because I was good for nothing, because they said that so much they had already lost on me as I was in the hospital, so much that the head hurts, a lot of money. On albumins, the plate and on other matters (N6).

The cyclic process of fighting for controllability can also be observed in the case of (N1). However, here - unlike in the above-mentioned cases – the cyclic process of struggling for control takes on the form of dynamic cycles, continuous and constantly repeated. On the other hand, in cases of (N3) and (N6), these cycles are not repeated so often, they are rather static. (N6) is the subject who, as we say, “is the source of everything that happened” – meaning that meeting him sparked my research. One day, he came up to me on the street, asked for food, and then I started to meet on a regular basis not only him, but also other subjects. With (N1) I maintained contact the longest and I met him most frequently. Therefore, we had a particularly warm relation. During the research he was my guide showing me around the world of the homeless. A very funny man, always smiling, despite the situation in which he has found himself. Before homelessness he had been (as he says), the husband of his “only true love”, the father of the “beloved” son, “a good cook”, and a man who “fixes all the computers in the area”. In his case, the “guilty another” is the mother-in-law, but also alcohol, since the subject is addicted to it. *It may seem odd to someone, maybe not, but I found it hard, because everything..., although my wife was on my side. That her sisters, the mother-in-law always saw in me what they saw in my father-in-law. They destroyed him, and wanted to destroy me, maybe so, maybe not. It is something that I will never know, because I am no longer with them (N1). I cannot say that I did not drink, but I drank only beer, I drank no vodka, nothing. So, only beer with my buddies there, because I*

was bored... terribly. I do not know whether someone can understand how it is, but, for example, I do not know if every guy has that, if, for example, women have that they must go, for example, as if a woman went to her girlfriends to embosom herself. Like me for example I could not sit still a little bit at home, I had to go to my buddies, talk, drink only one, and for example, beer. And while drinking this one beer three hours passed. But I had to talk to my friends. That, I needed (N1).

The tension related to alcohol problems continued to grow, leading to the turning point. (N1) moved out of the house, in a way forced by his problems with alcohol, and – as a result – with and family. The situation of (N1) differs from these described above in that, in his case, the process of fighting is constantly repeated, taking on the form of dynamic cycles. There comes the turning point, then the cyclic struggle, again the turning point and again the struggle. And finally the final critical decision is taken by the subject himself when he runs away from home, thus stepping on the way to homelessness.

Within the path of the “guilty another” there is also - next to the dimension of growing tension – the dimension of no growing tension. Then, the subject, not feeling the growing tension, has the opportunity to prepare for the oncoming turning point. This moment comes quite unexpectedly and, as a result, has even more severe consequences, as in such situation the subject is not able to develop appropriate strategies to handle it.

This process is illustrated by the story of (N2). This is the subject with whom my relation was “the most turbulent one” and which underwent the greatest transformation. At the beginning of our contact, “B” manifested the greatest skepticism as to the activities undertaken jointly. With time, he gradually became engaged in them, and finally he started to initiate other activities. He found in himself enough determination to go to the President of the City, to block with his own body the door to the office of the President and to demand that he should get a flat. When he was given it, he would accept there everybody who needed help. When, after many attempts on my part to persuade him, he decided to go with me out of the apartment, it turned out that this was his first trial to go “outside” in a few years. (N2) performed the role of the “leader” in the group of homeless people gathered around him, and therefore by persuading him as to the validity of the actions taken, I was able to “reach out” to other members of the group. Before homelessness he had been betrayed and cheated by his wife. As a homeless – he was still looking for a woman with whom he could live, for whom he could strive. The homeless called him “Daddy”, because of his concern for each of them. For me, next to (N1), he was my second guide in the world of the homeless. The turning point in his life - an

unexpected and surprising one – became his stay in prison. An attempt to cope with this situation could be his will to return to <prosperity> that he had experienced while living with his wife before being sentenced to prison. This proved impossible, though, because of the “guilty another” - the wife who betrayed him with a man who framed him, as he claimed, and because of whom he had been sent to prison. That is why he made a critical decision not to return home after being released from prison, which directly contributed to his homelessness. *In my case I was homeless after leaving prison. I mean..., my wife had found another. That put me for those years in prison. They began to live together, and I didn't want to look at it. I did not want to look at her or him* (N2).

3.2. The path “my fault”

This path makes the category within which the subjects clearly indicate that it is due to their actions that they have found themselves in a certain situation. Here, the turning point is the result of the decisions taken up by the subjects – moving to the countryside in the case of (N4), or leaving with another woman in the case of (N5).

I met (N4) at a hostel where he is staying temporarily. He is very resourceful, trying to handle himself official affairs, he can, as he says, “get along with everyone.” Before he became a homeless, he had been a tradesman. The turning point in his life was the decision to leave everything he had had behind, in order to live in the countryside, away from the big city noise. *Well, I decided to leave as I was, I left everything, whatever we were scheming together; I left it all* (N4). On the other hand, (N5) – a calm, reflective man, appears to be all the time lost in thought, as if detached from the “here and now”, and in his mind still living in the world that he had had, which he now clearly regrets. Before homelessness he had been an electrician. The turning point in his life was the decision to leave his wife and daughter to live with another woman. *Well, we lived and well we were okay, but I felt like there, I had such work. I worked as an electrician; I met many people, there a lot of different things. Well, I met this one girl, woman. Well, and so somehow I got involved with her. Well, it was hard for me at home and there after all, my daughters were adults they were 20 then they saw it and had a grudge. My wife was not too happy with this arrangement, so I said goodbye and moved out* (N5).

In both cases, we are dealing with a feeling of defeat after they had made their own decisions. Then, (N4) experienced the disintegration of his relationship and losing his job, and “N5” was left by the second woman. Hence,

they try to somehow cope with the effects of their turning point event, which takes on the form of a cyclic struggle for steering control in life, that in the case

of (N4) and (N5) is an attempt to “build a new life”⁹². (N4) attempts to rebuild <prosperity> in which he had lived, which - as a consequence - leads him anyway to make the critical decision to “become” homeless. On the other hand, in the case of (N5), the critical decision is the act of leaving to his family everything he had. *So, just simply! The case was rather not very good, because of the fact that after the divorce, leaving everything, I went just to people who could help me too. Well the apartment in which they live is mine. I have all the documents concerning this flat, this is my proprietary flat bought with my money. Well, I could cry at least half of the money from them. I mean in these conditions, but let it be, this is my family. I will not take them to courts. Let them live peacefully and happily* (N5).

The analysis showed that the turning point takes on different forms in case of the fault located outside the subjects, as well as in the case when they take the blame on them. The subjects putting the blame on others, when the tension is growing, face on their way a turning point, which can occur either as a consequence of the cyclic process of struggling for steering power in life, or as the beginning of this fight (N3), (N1). The exception here is the case of (N6), in whose life the turning point occurs before the cyclic struggle. This is due to growing tension, which, however, does not allow the subject to prepare for the arrival of the turning point, because unexpectedly it is related to another area of life. On the other hand, if the blame is put on another person, in the absence of growing tension, the turning point occurs in a surprising manner, making the cause of subsequent process of cyclic fighting (N2).

In the case of the subjects taking the responsibility for their situation (N4), (N5), it appears that the process of cyclic struggle assumes the form of strategies applied to cope with the effects of the turning point. Thus, this meaningful moment always occurs first, and then there come the attempts to cope with its consequences. Analyzing the data and generating the theory, I posed a question about the relationship between the “source of steering control” (guilt), and the way of coping with the effects of the turning point. Further

⁹² These categories - restoration of the old/previous order and building a new life express how the homeless want to deal with the experienced turning point. Restoring the old/previous order involves making attempts to return to what it had been like before the turning point. A homeless wants - at all costs - to restore the old order, because he or she can only function within such order. On the other hand, building a new life means leaving the past behind; and at the same time focusing on creating a new life, completely different than the previous one.

exploration revealed that concerning the phenomenon of coping with the effects of the turning point in the case of the subjects putting the blame on others, there appear attempts to restore the old/previous order, and thus to return to the old life. The subjects putting the blame on themselves rather try to build a new life, leaving behind what had been before in order to be able to have a “fresh start”.

4. Application of the knowledge of a homeless' biography

The interactive conception of homelessness, revealing the structure of the process of becoming homeless, as a phenomenon generated by the social response to the homeless, shows the responsibility of a society for homelessness. Hence, a homeless integrating into a particular community may meet some resistance from the public. It turns out, that an important aspect is not only working with the socially excluded individual, but also with the community, i.e. trying to prepare it for including the person into its framework. An extremely crucial factor here is the need for openness, tolerance towards other people that so often are different from us, which does not mean that they are worse.

The analysis of the material gathered during the research also points to the need for a “third party” (as the homeless people say), who could serve as an intermediary or a spokesman in mutual relations between a homeless person and an institution, so as to make them more symmetrical. A spokesman would explain the homeless and their reality, accompanying and representing them in their relations, assisting them in the recovery of their controllability in a given area of life. Thus, he or she would be a representative of the homeless in the world of the society, but at the same time also a representative of the society in the world of the homeless.

This “third party”, representing the homeless bearing the stigma of homelessness, may come from the “fellows” – i.e. stigma bearers, or the “oriented”⁹³ – i.e. “those initiated into the secret life of the individual with the stigma”. As an “oriented” spokesman I was introduced into the world of rules valid among the homeless (such as special kind of knocking on the door, to be recognized as one of “theirs”), but I also worked out the principles specific to our cooperation which were spread among the homeless without my participation in the process (for example: no giving money, no buying cigarettes or alcohol). The spokesman becomes the “engine” stimulating a homeless to action, at first motivating him or her to do just “anything”.

⁹³ E. Goffman, *Piętno. Rozważania o zranionej tożsamości*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005.

It turns out that the presence of a person performing the role of the intermediary has a positive effect on the way the homeless are perceived by the public. The society begins to look differently at him, forgetting about stereotypes, or at least opening the eyes to their inadequacy. But if there is no such intermediary *then it is difficult to settle some matters and nothing in the offices I do not understand, they do not understand* (N1).

The category of the turning point is also of great significance as regards the possibility of breaking with being entrapped in homelessness. Skillful leading up to this point may mark the beginning of their desire to change their lives. Sometimes, the turning point already emerging at the time of being homeless can be minimizing the needs to such an extent that it motivates to change this situation, but more often the turning point is some significant event. This point of view, backed by many years of experience of Marek Kotański (the founder of Monar and MARKOT) actually brought the effects in his work.

This may be related to the phenomenon of accumulation of trajectorial potential, introduced and described by Fritz Schütze⁹⁴. Biographical trajectory “is a process that leads to depriving the actor of a social sense of control over his or her own destiny”⁹⁵. It is characterized by experiencing increasing suffering that is more and more deprived of a way out⁹⁶. The homeless “affected with a trajectory react to constantly flowing adverse events, from one situation to another, in a less and less appropriate way (at first too rapidly, then with increasing discouragement, similar to lethargy). These actions, taken by the individuals, further exacerbate the mechanisms of suffering characteristic for the trajectory, as well as coming into decline and decay. Fate takes on an automatic conduct then; the affected persons can no longer imagine that they could impact the course of events, and even gain control over it; as a consequence, in their orientations in life they become more and more hopeless and as regards their life activity, they are increasingly more passive”⁹⁷.

Knowing the stages in the development of a biographical trajectory, recognition of certain biographical phenomena, diagnosing and interpretation of them in relation to the trajectorial stages constitute the necessary knowledge of an employee wishing to work in the environment of the homeless people. It also appears that deliberate making the homeless move through the next stages of the trajectory, while controlling that process from the outside, sometimes

⁹⁴ F. Schütze, *Trajektorie cierpienia jako...*, op. cit.

⁹⁵ M. Granosik, *Wykluczony Inny. Fenomenologia (po)rozumienia*, [In:] E. Marynowicz-Hetka, *Pedagogika społeczna*, Podręcznik akademicki, T. I, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 177.

⁹⁶ M. Oliwa-Ciesielska, *Piętno nieprzypisania...*, op. cit., p. 137.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 137.

accelerating it or orienting the homeless, may lead to his or her transformation and breaking free from homelessness. *Well, one slips further and further. Because if someone falls into the swamp, it is difficult, but simply the worst is in the swamp. But if someone falls to the bottom, the bottom is hard, from the bottom you can bounce. And that's mostly people fall into the swamp* (N7).

A professional social worker temporarily takes control of the homeless' life, accelerating the individual stages of a trajectory, to finally give this control completely to the homeless when he or she is ready to get it⁹⁸. It should be pointed out that there is a need for awareness concerning the assumed responsibility and for being a professional when taking up this type of action. Otherwise, it can cause more harm than good.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing again the importance of knowing the pathways leading to homelessness not only as for the period of remaining/being in it, but also (more importantly) as for the attempts to change the situation, i.e. the process of "going out" of homelessness⁹⁹. This knowledge is a crucial tool for people wanting to accompany the homeless in their endeavors to shape their paths of life.

Summary

The paper presents an analysis of homeless people's biographies according to three possible types of becoming a homeless: the way of "guilty another", the way of "my fault" and the way of "common fault". During the research, which became an action-research, the researcher was an active individual in the field of the study - a social pedagogue who introduces changes into the world of the studied persons. The analysis of the study material allows to conduct a reconstruction of some mechanisms that appear in the biographies of the homeless, and thus it makes it possible to identify patterns as regards the process of becoming homeless. Thanks to knowing the biographies and also to the participative-understanding perspective, it is possible to propose some solutions that can be helpful in practical social-pedagogical activity. The awareness of the types presented in this article seems to be indispensable knowledge for every social worker willing to work with homeless people.

⁹⁸ M. Granosik, *Wykluczony Inny...*, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

⁹⁹ The conducted research made it possible to reconstruct three lines/dynamics of becoming a homeless, being a homeless and breaking up with homelessness. They are as follows: a line based on internal steering control – a continuous one; a line based on internal steering control – a reactive one; and a line based on external steering control. Thanks to them, we can get to know the full cycle of identity changes accompanying a man that is plunging more and more into homelessness.

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Fig. 1. Paths leading to homelessness, source: author's own elaboration.

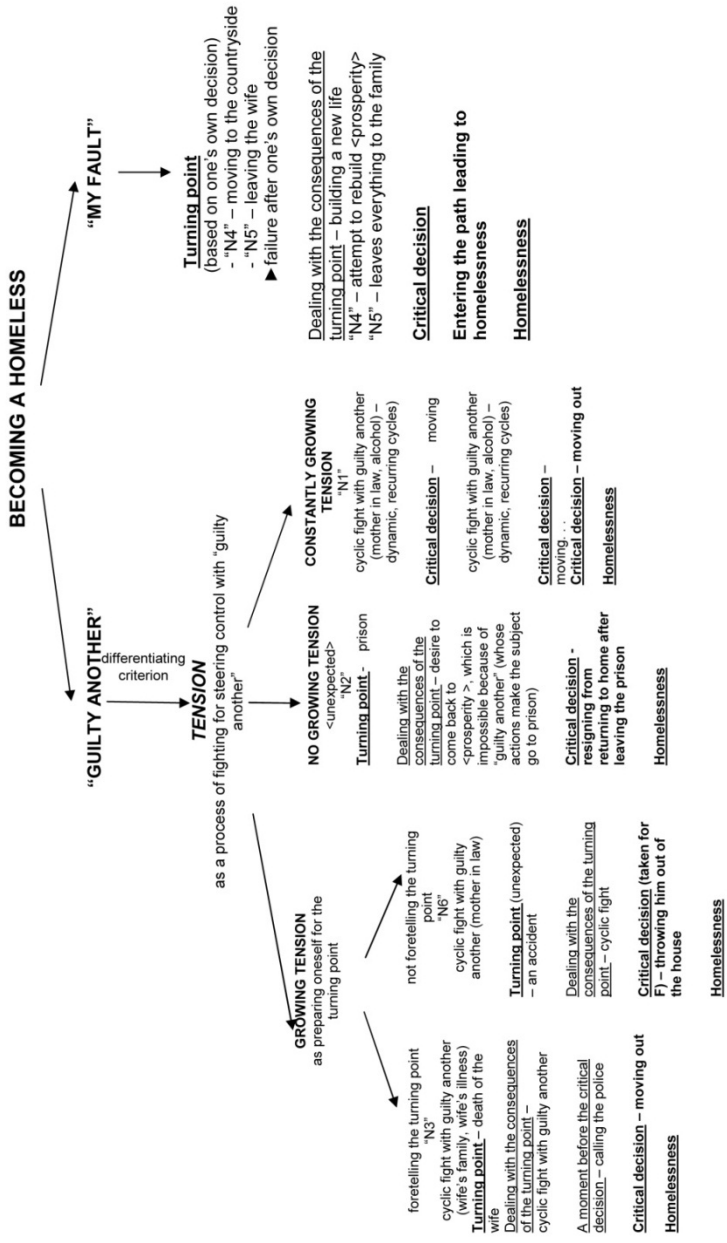


Fig. 1 Paths leading to homelessness (author's own elaboration)

“The emergence of a state-aided aberration? The case of the homeless in France”

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1. Introduction

There has recently been radical change in France in the way social work deals with the homeless. In the early 1990s, a new Penal Code (NCP) was voted in, doing away with the age-old offences of vagrancy and begging, dating back to 1810. Thereafter, the social work establishment had to respond rapidly and very differently to the more or less permanent re-emergence in public of individuals suffering extreme poverty and social deprivation. Now known as the homeless (SDF – Sans Domicile Fixe, no fixed abode), former tramps became clients of social workers, within the new sector of urgent social issues. This innovation within the remit of social action gradually led to the emergence of the “homeless question”¹⁰⁰, which became apparent in the context of new ethical, conceptual and practical norms. These were established in the course of ethnological research carried out in 2002 to 2003, considering the role of a social worker in the Paris SAMU Social¹⁰¹ (*Service d'Aide Médicale Urgente*, emergency medical assistance service). They were further defined in 2004 during research on the ground into the homeless who “live” on the street in Paris’ 14th arrondissement¹⁰², then in a documentary study in 2005 to 2007 which formed the basis of an anthropological thesis¹⁰³. Since 2009, a social work researcher has studied the question further and work has been coordinated by an applied research laboratory dedicated to this branch of the profession (evaluation, managing change, appraisal and research on the ground)¹⁰⁴, within

¹⁰⁰ J. Damon, *La question SDF. Critique d'une action publique*, PUF, Lien Social, 2nd édition, 2012.

¹⁰¹ S. Rullac S., *L'urgence de la misère. SDF et SAMU Social*, Les 4 chemins, Paris 2004.

¹⁰² S. Rullac, *Et si les SDF n'étaient pas des exclus? Essai anthropologique pour une définition positive*, Questions Contemporaines, L'Harmattan, 2005.

¹⁰³ S. Rullac, *Le péril SDF. Assister et punir*, L'Harmattan, Paris 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Notamment: *Place et missions des professionnels de l'accueil de nuit dans les Centres d'hébergement d'urgence*, UNIFAF Ile-de-France, 2007; *Des agents municipaux face aux Personnes Sans Domicile Fixe: Quelles compétences pour quelle gestion de l'espace public parisien ?* Mairie de Paris, 2011; *Les actions pour les enfants en situation de rue en France. Logiques d'action, professionnalisations et innovations*, ONED, 2011; *Production d'une cartographie de localisation des points de vente de biffins sur le territoire francilien et d'une étude qualitative sur les biffins*, Région Ile de France, 2012.

a school of social work. This study allows the objectification of the negotiation of a new paradigm, giving social work a hybrid role in social regulation, made up of support and punishment. This recent development in the way social work deals with those at the poorest edge of our society allows us to bring up to date our analysis of the long history of collective methods of treating “local savages”, and of the basic processes by which one negotiates social membership in order to be “part of society”¹⁰⁵. Our approach follows the theory of regulation negotiated between plurality and opposition of social workers, within the symbolic boundaries of norms. This process is not establishing “a general ordering of society through social values, but an ensemble, neither coherent nor continuous, of joint and separate methods of social regulation as practised by workers in the field. As an image, the paradigm of social regulation is not to be sought in a religious sect, but rather in a collective working agreement”¹⁰⁶. This study therefore allows to be objectivised the terms of the compromise which permits the deviant socialisation of the homeless, balanced between support and penalisation since 1992, within the context of the “homeless question”. Our subject will be dealt with in three parts: the 1992 turning point when vagrancy and begging were depenalised; the advent and reform of urgent social action; the punitive-supportive role of social work.

2. Historical depenalisation of extreme poverty

a. The twin historical function of the offences of vagrancy and begging

Napoleon set up the first French Penal Code in 1810. It was not until 1992 that this original text was replaced by the New Penal Code (NCP). For 182 years, vagrancy and begging were punishable offences: Article 270: “Vagrants or people with no title are those who have no verifiable address or means of subsistence and who normally carry out no job or profession”. This offence incurred 3 to 6 months’ imprisonment. Article 274: “Any person found begging in such a place as is provided with a public establishment rendering begging unnecessary will incur a penalty of 3 to 6 months’ imprisonment and will, at the end of that term, be taken to a beggars’ shelter”. Article 275 makes clear that, if no such public establishment exists, the penalty is less (1 to 3 months) and that if the beggar is out of his district, it is increased (6 months to 2 years).

Vagrancy is an offence whose spirit and terminology come from the Middle Ages. The reference to “people with no title” refers to a feudal system of loyalty

¹⁰⁵ J. Donzelot, *Faire société: la politique de la ville aux États-Unis et en France*, Seuil, 2003 (avec la collaboration de Catherine Mével et Anne Wyvekens).

¹⁰⁶ J.-D. Reynaud, *Conflit et régulation sociale. Esquisse d'une théorie de la régulation conjointe*, “Revue française de sociologie”, No. 20-2/1979.

(even belonging) to a lord who stands guarantor for his “people”. Moreover, vagrancy penalises a social situation, not an act or acts. Even in 1810, these offences were legal anachronisms. Needless to say, in 1992, the repeal of these laws signalled the disappearance of real historical monuments. The offences in question had, for 182 years, survived all attempts at radical reform despite heated debate right up until the beginning of World War II. This unusual longevity is explained by the fact that they could be applied in a wide range of circumstances and were a “catch-all” means of dealing with and penalising new forms of delinquency. So, for close on 200 years, judges and law-givers had available a sort of “legal Swiss army knife” capable of punishing those who, in whatever manner, flouted social rules – especially if they found new ways of so doing. These two offences filled specific legislative gaps and allowed these new offenders to be nevertheless penalised. This adaptability to the sociological development of delinquency was the technical role played by these offences. More fundamentally, they allowed the penalisation of those guilty of the ultimate social immorality of living in idleness. In that sense, these offences constituted powerful symbolic prohibitions, thought to protect the foundation of social cohesion by discouraging any form of socialisation outside the norm and which might challenge the organisation of society.

b. The risk taken in 1992 by removing the offences of vagrancy and begging from the statute book

Between 1896 and 1900, French law dealt with 25 422 offences of vagrancy and begging¹⁰⁷. From the beginning of WWII, the number of judicial sentences declined to the point of rarity: 702 in 1976, 129 in 1985 and 15 in 1993¹⁰⁸. After 6 years of intensive work in parliament, the NCP was voted in in 1992 and applied in 1994. Nicole Catala and Jacques Toubon (a right-wing MP) proposed an amendment on 8 October 1991 whereby the offences of vagrancy and begging should be retained and incur a 3-month prison sentence. These proposals were rejected on three grounds: it is unworthy in a democracy to penalise extreme poverty; the NCP has other ways of penalising nuisances caused by the homeless; more importantly, these offences are useless, as witness the few times they are invoked by judges. In the end, these amendments were not accepted, even though Jacques Toubon’s last comment now seems prophetic: “When the cold weather comes, there will be people who, after the

¹⁰⁷ A. Berne, *Vagabondage et mendicité. Législation actuelle et projets de réforme*, Thèse pour le doctorat ès sciences juridiques, Montpellier 1910.

¹⁰⁸ J. Damon, *op. cit.*

Underground stations shut, will refuse to go to reception centers or shelters”¹⁰⁹. MPs therefore considered mainly the uselessness of the Penal Code and wished symbolically to express their ethical desire to see no more need for society to penalise homelessness in a modern, developed democracy. This political choice of breaking with traditional punishment for beggars and vagrants was based on the hypothesis that they no longer existed. Otherwise, why should the courts have gradually stopped sentencing the homeless? However, if the Penal Code was no longer being used, did that mean that the homeless had disappeared or that society no longer needed to penalise a social structure based on idleness – a state which had been feared and mistrusted for centuries? In other words, did society still need to penalise the deviant social organisation of the homeless in order to achieve social cohesion in 1992? Whatever the truth of the matter, it is a fact that the repeal of these two offences has put them outside the justice system and that the decision is still irrevocable.

In the context of the gradual disuse of penalties recorded since 1945, the fact of maintaining that society no longer wished to penalise its poorest members resulted in breaking with a medieval tradition without taking on board the social consequences. By imagining that beggars and vagrants no longer existed, MPs failed to deal with the need for society to continue to control these ancestral forms of deviant behaviour. Notably, no means of social treatment was discussed to replace recourse to the police and the judicial system. The consequences of the double repeal soon became apparent. In the winter of 1993, the theory that the homeless had disappeared was dramatically disproved by the deaths of ten people on the streets of France. Along with the right to live full-time in the public space came evidence of the right to die there. Thus did France wake up to the fact that vagrants and beggars still existed and that there were no longer any legal means of preventing them living their entire lives in public.

c. The vain attempt to (re)penalise begging

From 1993, mayors came under increasing pressure to take over responsibility at local police level from the national authorities, who no longer had any legal means of controlling the presence of the homeless in public areas. A mayor is a judicial police officer with police powers within the administrative framework of his constituency: “The municipal police aims to maintain good

¹⁰⁹ F. Colcombet, P. Masson, *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission Mixte Paritaire chargée de proposer un texte sur les dispositions restant en discussion du projet de Loi portant réforme des dispositifs du Code pénal relatives à la répression des crimes et délits contre la nation, l’Etat et la paix publique*, “Assemblée nationale”, No. 2851 et “Sénat”, No. 466.

public order, safety, security and cleanliness”¹¹⁰. The elected official can therefore take temporary action restricting activities which, while legal, interfere with the daily life of the majority. As far as the homeless are concerned, that can mean aggressive begging in groups, owning a dog, excessive consumption of alcohol, setting up a living space in a public area, etc. So, between 1993 and today, around 100 by-laws were put in place once the presence of beggars and vagrants began to impinge on public awareness. The wish to see the homeless excluded from urban areas has been expressed especially in summer, in town centers in tourist areas. By instituting a by-law, mayors are not criminalising vagrancy or begging, simply banning them temporarily to remove the harmful effects they have on living conditions in a particular area. As is the case with any administrative measure, proceedings can be taken by citizens wishing to challenge the legality of a decision. Unlike the Penal Code, administrative law is based on precedent. Any decision is therefore binding and has to be applied in future cases by local authorities. As a framework for these local decisions, the Council of State has specified that any ban on the homeless must apply to certain areas and be for a limited time. It should also be strictly in proportion to the threat posed by their behaviour to the maintenance of “good order”¹¹¹. As precedent allows in relation to administrative measures, homeless people and associations which support them can challenge by-laws. This facility has been widely used to request and obtain the withdrawal of most of them in whole or in part. It is indeed very difficult to prove that a beggar or a vagrant imperils “good order”.

It was no doubt in response to the failure to control the problem at local police level that the State attempted to (re)penalise vagrancy and begging. The internal security measure n°2003-239 of 18 March 2003 includes a new offence of begging, at a period of high tension with regard to anti-begging by-laws. 20% of all the by-laws made between 1993 and 2005 were in fact made in 2002. This law brings back into the New Penal Code 4 articles punishing certain forms of begging: exploitation of beggars, notably by mafia networks (article 312-12-5); asking for money by force as a group or with the threat of a dangerous dog, called “aggressive begging” (article 312-12-1); begging with a child under 6 (article 227-15 al. 2); exploitation of beggars defined as trading in human beings (article 225-4-1). Penalties range from 6 months to 10 years in prison, as well as fines of 3,750 to 1,500,000 euros. This bill sparked much debate and opposition. Demonstrations and lobbying (League of Human Rights, lawyers’ and magistrates’ professional bodies, etc.) succeeded in making the government

¹¹⁰ Article L. 212-2 of the Code général des collectivités territoriales – general laws governing communities.

¹¹¹ Conseil d’Etat 1933, Benjamin.

abandon the inclusion in the law of vagrancy and all forms of begging¹¹². Sometime later, the Appeal Court refused to accept that begging with a child under 6 was to put that child in danger *de facto*. Furthermore, the most frequently invoked “aggressive begging” has led to very few convictions. It has proved very difficult to define what comes in the end from a feeling rather than easily demonstrable fact. Thus the attempt to reintroduce begging into the New Penal Code met a pragmatic failure, even though its symbolic effect is undeniable.

Withdrawing the offences of vagrancy and begging in 1992 demonstrated two contradictory societal needs. The first is to ask mayors at local level and the government at national level to carry on repressing the effects of extreme poverty. At the same time, challenges to administrative decisions and the pressure of public opinion which caused the State to create symbolic rather than pragmatic offences demonstrate a collective refusal to go back on the 1992 decision of Parliament. Society’s wish to do away with tools of repression of the homeless has up to now allowed France to emerge from a judicial structure in force since 1810. The debate surrounding anti-begging by-laws and begging offences highlights society’s dilemma. Society wants to stop penalising the social structure of the homeless while simultaneously needing to continue to discourage this structure, seen as deviant. The question then is how to respond simultaneously to the need to repress beggars and vagrants while respecting the representation of a social model which is thought precisely to exclude this need? In other words, the 1992 repeals have put in hand the huge task of defining new ways of socially controlling the homeless. The “homeless question” makes formal the process of negotiating the social regulation of those in extreme poverty who roam the streets in idleness. If the police and the judiciary can no longer penalise them, who will then respond to this need? As it happens, setting up an urgent action initiative provides the means of negotiating a new social contract with regard to the homeless.

d. The advent of urgent social action and the creation of a new branch of social action

d-1 The creation of urgent social action (1994)

It is hard to define the origin of emergency/urgent social action¹¹³. These arrangements have no clear laws or decrees as a framework, although a financial administrative indicator does mark a starting point. In 1994, a specific

¹¹² *Loi Sarkozy: les critiques des associations...*, “ASH”, No. 2294/2003.

¹¹³ S. Rullac, *Analyse sociojuridique de l’urgence sociale: cadre, fonctionnement et évolution*, dans *urgences sociales*, “EMPAN”, No. 84/2011/4.

budget was allocated (chapter 47.21, article 10)¹¹⁴. However, from 1984, the State set up winter plans to give additional help to the homeless. From 1987, these became permanent campaigns targeting ever more closely the provision of emergency shelter. In 1985 and 1987, the deaths of a number of people on the street underlined the need for this sort of seasonal response. In this context, the first emergency shelters, winter opening of Underground stations in Paris and an emergency shelter telephone number in Lyon were the first signs of emergency social action. Nonetheless, it was the deaths of a number of homeless during the winter which marked the point of departure of an urgent action initiative insofar as the measures taken were in reaction to a painful and dramatic awakening to reality. So the Paris SAMU Social (SSP) began operating on 22 November 1993 and was made permanent in an official statute on 19 December 1994. The foundation of the SSP can be considered to be the institutional starting point for urgent social action, since it led to the first institution explicitly set up and financed to provide emergency action¹¹⁵.

From then on, urgent social action developed a range of responses at “a low threshold of demand” to care for those least able to function in society. It was Xavier Emmanuelli who first defined this sector: “Urgent social action refers to all operations undertaken as rescue, when the individual concerned is perceived as a victim in deep distress whose life may be in danger in the short or medium term”¹¹⁶. This definition was suggested some years after the foundation of the sector. To our knowledge, there is still no legal definition – although that has been no bar to the rapid setting up of a number of provisions from 1993:

- Social surveillance (reception and advice centers, the emergency telephone number 115, mobile emergency response teams, day and night reception centers without accommodation).
- Emergency sheltered accommodation.
- Half-way houses, defined as alternative accommodation.
- Reception centers for asylum seekers.

d-2 The development of the right to emergency social action (2007-2009)

Measures designed to respond to social emergency have raised questions ever since they were put in place. They are based on the emergency treatment of

¹¹⁴ J. Damon, <L'urgence sociale> au pris me de sa ligne budgétaire. Autour du <47.21>, “Revue française des affaires sociales”, No. 1/2001.

¹¹⁵ Thanks to a budgetary provision managed by the Paris Social Security Authority; article 20 of chapter 46-81 of the budget.

¹¹⁶ X. Emmanuelli, C. Frémontier, *La fracture sociale. Que sais-je ?* PUF, Paris 2002.

a social problem which is characterised essentially by the chronic social situation of those they serve. There is here an institutional paradox: a chronic state of emergency. Over the years, criticism has intensified: there are not enough beds in reception centers; availability alters according to the degree of cold – in winter special measures increase the number of places available as the temperature falls, with sports halls opened if necessary; reception centers close in the morning, putting the homeless back on the streets; low response to the 115 number; the institutionalised roaming imposed on the homeless who are “moved on” at random from center to center; and also the high cost of a sector seen as too ineffective. France is the European country devoting most money to the needy: 1 117 billion euros for 2009, against 690 million in 2001.

Change was instigated not by professional social workers but by this general waking up to reality. On 16 November 2006, Augustin Legrand, Pascal Oumakhlouf and Ronan Dénécé set up the association “Les enfants de Don Quichotte” (*Children of Don Quixote*), whose president was Jean-Baptiste Legrand. During the night of 15 to 16 December 2006, its militants installed some 200 tents on the banks of the Canal Saint-Martin in Paris. Media support in the depths of winter, the presence of hundreds of homeless people, militants and public figures, put them in a position of strength against political and administrative authorities. The result of this confrontation was the creation of opposable rights in the field of emergency accommodation.

This movement first made possible the adoption of PARSA (Plan d’Action Renforcée en faveur des Sans-Abri – intensive action plan for the homeless), on 8 January 2007, which set up Centers de Stabilisation (CS)¹¹⁷. So 10 500 places in emergency accommodation were transformed into interim accommodation, while 3 000 general emergency beds were kept in service. CS are open 24h/24, all year round, for indefinite stays. The Enfants de Don Quichotte were especially effective in having adopted law No. 2007-290 of 5 March 2007 instituting the Droit Au Logement Opposable (DALO – opposable right to accommodation). In 2009, law No. 2009-323 of 25 March 2009 for Mobilisation pour le Logement et la Lutte contre l’Exclusion (MOLLE – movement for housing and against social exclusion) transferred the right to continuing support to the Code de l’Action Sociale et des Familles (CASF – code for social action and the family). Furthermore, the same law created,

¹¹⁷ These reception centers are open 24/24 and offer clients a private space in the medium term. This arrangement is the start of a method of care halfway between emergency response (CHU) and social integration (CHRS). Reception into this type of accommodation is linked to the principle of unconditional response set up by the CHU. The nature of care in the medium term looks forward to a possible future programme of social integration.

within CASF, the right to unconditional support. So three opposable rights are now recognised within emergency social action and housing:

- The principle of continuity: “Art. L. 345-2-2 - Any homeless person in medical, psychological or social distress should have, at any time, access to emergency shelter. Art. L. 345-2-3 - Any individual accepted for emergency accommodation should be able to stay there and have personal counselling and support, if they so wish, until they can be directed elsewhere. This should be towards stable accommodation and care or to accommodation in keeping with their requirements”.

- The Opposable Right to Housing: Article 7 line III of DALO includes social housing in the remit of the commission of mediation. Article 9 lines II and III of DALO include the lack of offered social accommodation in the same opposability which applies to housing. According to these texts, shelter, like housing, benefits from opposability. Reception should be carried out according to the same criteria and any constraint should be penalised.

- Unconditional support: “Art. L. 345-2-2 - Any homeless person in medical, psychological or social distress should have, at any time, access to emergency shelter (...)”.

e. The “discreet” establishment of a public accommodation service (2010)

In January 2008, the MP for Yvelines, Etienne Pinte, submitted a report on emergency accommodation. It notably pointed out the need to humanise emergency accommodation centers, seen as unworthy, and to make access to them far less difficult. In April of the same year, the Prime Minister appointed a Chief of Police to “coordinate shelter and access to accommodation for the homeless or the unsuitably housed”. The next day a circular set up the “Priority Project 2008-2012 for shelter and access to housing for the homeless¹¹⁸”. This notably required a coherent approach to be worked out “without delay”. The PDHI (Plans Départementaux d'Accueil, d'Hébergement *et* d'Insertion – Departmental Plans for Reception, Housing and Social Integration) constitute an initial response¹¹⁹. In this context, the Services Intégrés d'Accueil et d'Orientation (SIAO) – Integrated Reception and Orientation Services were

¹¹⁸ 22 February 2008. 5279/SG

¹¹⁹ Departmental plans for reception, housing and integration of homeless people are provided for in circular n°DGAS/LCE 1A/2009/351 of 9 December relating to national provision linked with the policy on access to housing. The departmental level is the operating level of the planning structure which is a regional responsibility. Each plan should notably include a joint diagnosis of needs, access by users, the definition of priority users and the organisation of a network the better to help individuals to get off the street. It runs for a maximum of five years.

defined in the circulars of 8 April 2010 which outline the system and those of 7 July 2010 which list its methods of application. Finally, circular n° DGCS/1A/2010/271 of 16 July 2010 relating to national referential criteria for the system of reception, housing and integration (AHI) gives a judicial framework to emergency measures set up in 1993 et developed on a seasonal basis as people died on the streets in winter (the first referential was published in 2004, to general indifference).

The SIAO constitute the operational side of the coherent approach of all action plans in the AHI sector, according to three principles: continuity of care, equality of service, adaptability of service to need.

The aim is to allow the integration process to lead to personal autonomy. This “single platform” is presented as a means of moving from emergency care to integration, by smoothing access to housing according to the principle of “a roof first”. The SIAO propose including AHI in the rights already confirmed: the principle of unconditional care, the principle of continuity and the law 2002-2 putting “the user at the center of the care plan¹²⁰”. To this end, we have the personalised care plan, evaluation and participation of users. The SIAO are called on to regulate the direction of users to all the available places of shelter (emergency, interim and integration) and some special housing, according to an assessment of individual need. They should also coordinate local providers of shelter and housing and harmonise their methods of social evaluation; they should take care to apply the principle of continuity by reference to personal information. The third issue for SIAO is to bring into line all care plans within the AHI sector by normalising their methodological references in social action. It should however be emphasised that reference criteria have no legal force¹²¹. Reference norms are therefore not opposable in law but are to be used in shared partnership circumstances, as good practice.

The AHI referential points then to norms established for the services offered, both in principle and in practice, to “ensure equality for service users, continuity of care and the matching of offer to need”. The referential aims to set down the “principles”, the “limits”, the “work in partnership” and to “clarify and harmonise services offered in order to improve the quality of service supplied to users”. It makes official those arrangements in place for the homeless in regard to social work rights, specifically the right to emergency shelter and in the terms of reference common to the State and its employees. This development marks a

¹²⁰ Inclusion of urgent social action within the demands of law 2002.2 had never before been explicitly stated.

¹²¹ Circular DGCS/1A no 2010-271 of 16 July 2010 relating to national criteria for provision of reception, housing and integration facilities.

mature stage in the progress of the sector of emergency social action. This sector now includes rights (DAHO, principle of continuity and unconditional shelter), a normative framework (AHI referential) and a system of regulation (SIAO).

f. The outlines of a new compromise combining penalties with aid

The creation of a new group of social deviants

Setting up a system of urgent social action not only created provisions, it created a new group of service users. In that sense, the homeless are potential users of services provided under AHI. The official census of the homeless population in France is carried out by INSEE (Institut National des Statistiques et des Etudes Economiques – national institute for statistics and economic studies). For INSEE¹²², an individual is said to be «sans domicile», without domicile, if, on a given day, he or she has spent the previous night in one or other of the following situations: either receiving emergency shelter or sleeping in a place not designed for living (the street, a makeshift shelter). The group defined as “sans-abri”, without shelter, includes those who have no roof to protect them from inclement weather (rain, cold). It also includes those who sleep in the open (street, park) or in an *ad hoc* shelter such as a station forecourt, a shopping center, a cellar or a stairwell. So there were in France in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century 100,000 “sans domicile” and 33,000 “sans-abri”, a total of 133.000 homeless, in the broad sense of the term. Finally, the 117,000 individuals occupying hotel rooms or staying with other people do not officially fall into this category.

This approach *via* categories has a number of limitations. It includes in a single group individuals whose juridical, sociological and psychological experiences are widely different. These differences are such that it causes us to question the aptness of the category constituted by the homeless. As it is, this categorisation limits the ability to give a true statistical account of the situation of the individuals concerned, and also of the sociological processes they face. What is more, these categories take no account of people given a free and long-term roof by family members or medical or judicial institutions. Finally, this construct of reality should not allow us to forget the very frequent changes of circumstances encountered by the individuals concerned. For all these reasons, it is appropriate to see as relative our sociological ability to grasp the true situation as regards the homeless today. As we have no suitable scientific method of objectification, we have difficulty in defining objectively this social

¹²² C. Brousse, *Définition de la population sans-domicile et choix de la méthode d'enquête Insee-Méthodes*, “Insee Methods”, No. 116/2006.

phenomenon. In this sense the homeless as a group conforms to no sociological reality and appears as a tool at the service of social regulation; how do we respond to the needs of a group whose defining characteristics are unknown?

The homeless as a group have a strong power of suggestion, symbolising as they do a quintessential situation of social disadvantage and calling to mind the idea of “outcasts among the outcast”. On the other hand, using the expression SDF – homeless – comes down to creating a group of individuals in terms of what they *do not* share. By favouring this global approach, we are defining a population group in function of their transgression of a norm (the lack of a home). In this case, the power of what is signified (the meaning of its use) is in inverse proportion to the power of the signifier (the description of the object in question). In other words, use of the term tells us more about deviation from the norm than it does about homeless people. If the individuals making up the group SDF exist, their actual situation does not justify lumping them together in a single category. But this is only an apparent error, since it hides real functional success in managing contemporary deviant behaviour: if the absence of sociological coherence of the group thus created works against the social policies allotted to it, this ineffectiveness of social assistance guarantees, *a contrario*, an effective means of social regulation.

g. Ineffectiveness established in the long term

Institutional development of urgent social action is characterised by an exceptional approach by professionals in terms of social action references. Urgent social action has been put in place as a set of measures a-judicial in institutional terms and a-social in terms of professional practice. However, from a theoretical point of view, the creation of a coordinating body (SIAO), of effective rights and of norms relating to good practice, constitutes a clear development working against the exceptional origins of this branch of the profession. It is too early to evaluate precisely the functional effects of the recent developments in AHI, which rest on the effectiveness of their application.

Despite everything, the AHI sector is still showing a number of dysfunctions. For example, many emergency shelters (CHU and CS) still have no recognised judicial status, unlike housing and social integration centers (CHRS)¹²³.

¹²³ Law n° 74-955 of 19 November 1974 recognises CHRS as pivotal to social housing. Law n° 75-535 of 30 June 1975 requires CHRS to obtain authorisation before they can open. The directive of 29 July 1998 relating to the fight against deprivation brings up to date the role of CHRS.

A CHU still has to apply at regular intervals to open and to receive funding, not fixed on a national scale. Negotiations are carried out directly with the state via the *Directions Départementales de la Cohésion Sociale* (DDCS – departmental directorates for social cohesion), with no clear framework of relations between the parties. Operators of the emergency line 115 continue to manage the shortage of beds by allocating them at random and instituting an alternating system requiring down-time between two care “sessions”; for example 7 nights with a bed and 7 without. In 2012, 58% of requests for shelter on 115 were turned down. Many CHU still close each day and the end of the winter period sees 4,000 non-permanent beds close in France as a whole. This does not respect the principle of continuity of care. And the unconditional right to emergency shelter does not apply to centers, which can always refuse a request addressed directly to them. This obligation is in fact defined theoretically in terms of a territory, whose geographical limits are not set out in the AHI referential. Virtuous principles (“immediate”, “unconditional” and “local” assistance) therefore remain non-opposable for institutions and in effect are proving now to be merely pious hopes. Moreover, there is little recourse to DAHO, which accounts for only 8% of all requests for shelter or housing.

This short overview demonstrates a strong resistance to AHI extricating itself from the exceptional and social tradition inherent in urgent social action. In fact, what is set down in the text remains a positive indication of developments which struggle to have any effect on actual practice. This sad state of affairs leads one to question the tendency of such provisions to be cumbersome and inflexible, leading to action ineffectual in the long term in spite of the stated intentions of recent institutional reforms. However, it is to be hoped that, 20 years after its inception, the exceptional nature of so much social emergency action is tending to disappear in the course of normalisation of its criteria and the practices set out in the public policies of AHI.

h. Ethical issues in the combination of penalties with aid

When they suddenly stopped officially taking on the homeless from 1993, social workers paradoxically realised that there was a current need to regulate this social group, always considered deviant, whereas Parliament had just decided the opposite. Shocked by the consequences of the new right to live full-time (and die) in the public arena, the profession was obliged to create a new compromise solution to manage deviant behaviour linked to this extremely deprived social group. The challenge was not easy to meet. How to help the poorest while at the same time discouraging a way of life which put social cohesion at risk, without recourse to the time-honoured tradition of judicial coercion? Procedures relating to emergency social action constitute a response

to this identity equation, with four unknown elements, nowadays jointly essential in order to “make a society”:

- 1) Discourage deviant behaviour to protect the norm
- 2) Assist the weakest to protect the collective integrity of the social body
- 3) Avoid instituting a social mechanism of judicial coercion of the homeless as a group which would run counter to generally accepted values
- 4) Remove feelings of guilt and restore the image of a society whose self-image is threatened by the resurgence of the homeless in the collective consciousness.

The “homeless question” is the result of the negotiation of a new compromise, relating to social regulation, worked out in an exceptional framework, by instituting an aid and penalty package. While regulating this deviant social behaviour, the reasoning behind urgent social action allows the removal of guilt and the restoration of a society whose own image of its ideal functioning is contradicted by the reappearance of the homeless after 1992. Finally, the wish no longer to use the law to punish the homeless is respected. By inventing this new social method of dealing with extreme poverty, our society has embarked on a new historical compromise in the management of deviant social behaviour.

The homeless constitute a category of offenders who should not be confused with those who violate criminal law. By going against tacitly accepted norms which form the basis of the social contract – essentially that of individual merit at the service of society as a whole – the homeless display an illegality of behaviour which is different from violation of the penal code by targeting property or misuse of the law for individual profit¹²⁴. Put outside the sphere of offenders against the Penal Code since 1992, vagrants and beggars were no longer subject to classic forms of repression such as a fine or a prison term. However, as ex-offenders, they inspired a vague desire for punishment: impossible to satisfy *via* historic judicial channels. The advent of urgent social action, and its legacy now enshrined in AHI, is an innovation which allows this behaviour outside the law to be regulated by a package combining aid with sanctions. This sleight of hand allows the regulation of minority identity forms while respecting a collective identity which no longer treats extreme poverty in the traditional manner as a criminal offence. By taking emergency care within its ambit, social work comes directly within a system which normalises those who move too far from dominant ideologies. By adopting this new method of operation, this professional sector is put at the service of social regulation, according to its traditional propensity for adapting to whatever ideology society

¹²⁴ M. Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, Gallimard, Paris 1975.

dictates at each period¹²⁵. The contemporary pre-eminence of policies to increase security has provided a particularly favourable context for sustained development of emergency social action, allowing an effective response to the current need to penalise all forms of deviant behaviour, in particular extreme poverty¹²⁶. To do this, social work has instituted, within the framework of urgent action, procedures ensuring a minimum of permanent ineffectiveness. This lessening of suffering relies on seasonal fluctuation in means of assistance. So, in a period of very cold weather, subsidies increase to compensate for the hardship caused by freezing temperatures. When fine weather returns, the social work profession limits its offer of help to ensure a constant level of penalty. Emergency action constitutes an exception with respect to social work culture and it is this epistemological break that AHI attempts to resolve. Problems in applying recent reforms should not therefore be seen as a simple technical issue, but as a process of negotiation of the social regulation of deviant behaviour linked to extreme poverty. This development is of necessity a long process in that it exists alongside cultural issues relating to the acceptance of the homeless as a social group. For that matter, why should we accept today what we have been refusing to accept for centuries?

Summary

There peal of laws against both vagrancy and begging in 1992, as part of the new French Penal Code, opened negotiations as to the social regulation of those roaming the streets and suffering unemployment and extreme poverty. By electing not to prosecute former tramps, now known as the homeless (those with no fixed abode), social work is now responsible for perpetuating the ancestral need for punishment. However this is to be within a support framework and without recourse to repressive measures involving the police and the penal system. Through the advent of a new branch of social work, it is possible to objectivise the means by which a social body negotiates acceptance of those on its fringe and how contemporary issues can cause social work to penalise the poor in new ways.

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III. STREET KIDS, ORPHANHOOD KIDS, FOSTER FAMILY, SUICIDE AMONG YOUNG KIDS

“Social orphanhood in Russia”

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Caring for disadvantaged children is the main moral norm of every civilized society. There are many reasons due to which more and more children are left to the care of the state and the process of their social formation takes place outside the family in children's homes and boarding schools. In every country and in every society there has always been, is and will be orphans and children who, for various reasons, are left without parental care. In this case, society and the state take care of the development and education of these children. A child who lost his parents - a special, truly tragic world. The need to have a family, the father and mother - one of the strongest needs of the child.

Any society is characterized by the following pattern: the loss or reduction of human and spiritual values in the family leads to the manifestation of child abandonment. As a consequence, we are witnessing growth in the number of children without parental care. This trend is especially observed in times of economic crises and wars, as well as in the periods of transition from the old state of the social system to the new one. No secret that today, at the beginning of the third millennium, we are in exactly that situation, so the relevance of this problem is obvious.

In the face of social, economic and political instability of Russia the number of children in especially difficult circumstances is growing. Among them - the orphans, socially maladjusted children and young offenders, children with disabilities, refugees and internally displaced children living in adverse environmental conditions. Number of children orphaned at an early age is steadily increasing.

In everyday speech and theoretical studies In Russia two concepts are widely used: orphan (orphanage) and social orphan (social orphanhood). Orphaned children - children under 18 years old whose both or one of the parents died. Social orphan - a child who has biological parents, but for some reason they do not engage in raising a child and do not care about him. In this case, the society and the state take care of him¹²⁷. These are children whose parents are not legally deprived of their parental rights, but do not actually care about their

¹²⁷ *Социальная педагогика. Курс лекций*, М. Гуманит. изд. центр ВЛАДОС, 2000.

children¹²⁸. Social orphanage is a social phenomenon, caused by the presence in society of children without parental care due to deprivation of parental rights, the recognition of parents incapable, missing.

The roots of modern orphanhood in our country are of historical character. World War I, a three-year civil war, many years of economic ruin, pestilence and famine have left us with tens of thousands of orphans. Although in the mid 30's XX c. child homelessness was formally over, in fact, this question has not been closed. Then Russia fell into the most terrible of all wars on earth, resulted in hundreds of thousands of orphans. However, besides these objective reasons were others, namely, the destruction of the moral foundations of the family, lack of spirituality and loss of the most important human values. The number of poor children continued to expand due to parents' deprivation of their parental rights because of their immoral lifestyle and drinking, and lack of maternal care and upbringing of their children.

According to experts, today Russia is experiencing the third (after the Civil and Second World Wars) wave of child abandonment. The number of orphans is almost the same as it was after the Second World War. For example, in 1945 there were 680 thousand orphans and according to official statistics, in 2011 in Russia there were about 655 thousand. 83.8% of them are social orphans, i.e. orphans with living parents. However, about two thirds of them are raised in families, including adopted children are. Others live in residential care or enrolled in primary and secondary professional education.

Statistics show that the number of orphans in Russia, accounting for every 10,000 children (and according to the Russian State Committee on Statistics the Russian Federation is now home to 40 million children), is one of the highest in the world. Almost 50% of the child population (about 18 million) is in the area of social risk¹²⁹. Every year about 100 thousand children in need of care are revealed in Russia. According to the Commission for Women, Family and Demography at the RF President in the last 5 years the number of orphans has increased by 70%¹³⁰.

More than 105 thousand orphans are living in Russian orphanages. Among the pupils of boarding schools, only 5% have no parents, 95% of parents abandoned their children for various reasons, transferred them to a full state

¹²⁸ Ю.В. Василькова, Т.А. Василькова, *Социальная педагогика*, Москва 1999, p. 299.

¹²⁹ В.С. Мухиной (ed.), *Особенности развития личности ребенка, лишенного родительского попечительства*, Прометей, Москва 2001.

¹³⁰ И.О. Осипова, *Государственная стратегия предотвращения социального сиротства*, „Семья в России”, No. 8/2008, pp. 42-48.

support, or are deprived of parental rights. Status of these children is characterized as a state of frustration that arises in situations of conflict or when the needs come up against insurmountable obstacles that somehow leads to increased irritability and aggressiveness. According to I. Demakova, space childhood of these children often serves as the territory in which the “culling”, “selection” is carried out, and the child is first encountered with the problem of inequality¹³¹.

Orphans, children without parental care and a positive experience of family life usually are not able to create a healthy normal family. Growing up in public institutions, educational systems that are far from perfect, they often repeat the fate of their parents, losing parental rights, thus expanding the field of child abandonment. According to the researchers of the problem, 40% of children who come from residential institutions, become criminals, 40% - drug addicts, 10% - commit suicide and only 10% - are able to complete an independent life¹³². Coming out of these institutions, many teenagers do not find a decent place in life. On the basis of sociological data only 10-20% of the graduates of boarding schools after 10 years were able to fulfill themselves in life, do not repeat the mistakes of their parents, as the cause of social orphanhood lies in overdue attention of the society to the state of the families in difficult situation.

At the same time many of the children living in families also have the sad fate. Conflicts in the family, divorce, parents' alcoholism, poverty, force children to run away from home and wander the country. There are about 1 million homeless children in Russia, up to 2 million - neglected children, those who only spend their night at home, but in the daytime remain without supervision and are brought up street. As a result about 330 thousand crimes a year are committed by teenagers, two thousand children commit suicide.

One of the causes of child abandonment in Russia is a voluntary refusal of parents (usually the mother) of their minor child, most often it is the rejection of a newborn in the maternity ward. From a legal point of view, the rejection of the child is a legal act, which is officially confirmed by a legal document. Within 3 months parents (the mother) can change their minds, and the child can be returned to the family.

¹³¹ И.Д. Демакова, *Гуманизация пространства детства. Теория и практика*, Изд-воТГГИ, Казань 2003.

¹³² Е.М. Рыбинский, *Управление социальной защиты детства*, „Российский журнал социальной работы”, No. 15/1997, pp. 25-31; Р.А. Валеева, *Социальная адаптация детей-сирот*, [In:] *Детское счастье как цель воспитания*, Материалы Международного научно-практического семинара, Казань, 17-19 марта 2007, ТГГПУ, Казань 2007, pp. 106-113.

Another cause of child abandonment in the Russian Federation is a force removal of children from their families, when in order to protect the rights, life and interests of the child the parents are deprived of parental rights. This is mainly from dysfunctional families in which the parents suffer from alcoholism, drug addiction, asocial way of life, disability, etc. Deprivation of parental rights is also a legal act that is carried out by the court and issue a special legal document. A third cause of child abandonment is the death of parents. It can also be defined as children, lost due to any natural or social disasters, forcing the population to chaotic migration.

Recently announced itself in Russia the phenomenon of the “hidden” social orphanhood. Decline in living standards, lower morale, increase the number of disadvantaged families has led to the fact that children are often “forced out” to the street, adding to the number of homeless children. Because of uncoordinated system of accounting, high growth in the number of children that lose custody of their parents, the exact number of child abandonment in our country called unlikely. The main reasons are the modern abandonment termination of parental rights, the death of parents, parents' voluntary withdrawal from the child (children foundlings, children in clinics or sold to other persons). But the main reason we would call such a thing as a dysfunctional family.

No less serious problem is the refusal of young mothers of newborn children. Today the figure is 12 thousand children. For example, in 2011 in the Republic of Tatarstan 234 children enrolled in special homes because of the mother's statement on the temporary placement of a child. The reasons were: the difficult life situation (28.6%), serious illness of the child (25.7%), difficult financial situation (14.3%), lack of residence (11.4%), the need for long term care mother (11.4%) for family reasons (5.7%) being in prison (2.9%)¹³³.

In addition among the prerequisites of social orphanhood are complex interpersonal relationships in the family, namely, violence against women and children. Each year an average of 14 thousand women in Russia die because of family murder, about 2 million children under the age of 14 are regularly subjected to beatings by parents; 50 thousand of these children run away from home, 25 thousand of them disappear forever.

A range of causes of childhood disadvantage is very wide. Among the important factors should be allocated in a family crisis: a violation of its

¹³³ А.Ф. Валиева, *Формирование семейных ценностей. Общественная инициатива Республики Татарстан*, [Ип:] Р.А. Валеева (ed.), *Семья и общество Грани взаимодействия*, Сборник научных трудов материалов Форума некоммерческих организаций Приволжского федерального округа, оказывающих содействие в решении социальных проблем в сфере поддержки института семьи, 24-25 апреля 2012, Изд-во „Отечество”, Казань 2012, pp. 3-4.

structure and functions, the increase in the divorce rate and the number of single-parent households, a number of anti-social way of life of families, falling living standards, deteriorating conditions of children, the growth of psycho-emotional overload in the adult population has a direct effect on children, the distribution of child abuse in families and residential institutions while reducing responsibility for their fate.

Generalized description of a Russian family in recent years has changed:

- decreased the number of children in families;
- reduced the proportion of households with two or more children;
- increased the number of families without children;
- increased the number of costs, of illegitimate births, unwanted children, single-parent families;
- increased the probability of parents' death;
- increased in the number of families deprived of their basic living conditions due to forced migration, unemployment, non-payment of salaries, allowances and pensions;
- increased the number of disabled parents;
- accelerated development of the maladjustment process characteristic of industrial type of civilization;
- deterioration of financial and economic situation, reducing the possibility of the family to meet the needs and interests of children;
- increased the number of families living in the pre-crisis state;
- increased the number of child victims of ill-treatment of various forms of violence, including sexual abuse by parents.

Family crisis is the result of the economic life general frustration, unemployment, poverty of common people, as a family is a microcosm of all the problems and diseases of society. But the phenomenon of a family crisis involves millions of people's fates, and, unfortunately, not only adults. Children are not to blame that were born in a difficult time for their country. Everyone knows that a particular family gives us a picture in miniature of the same contrasts and contradictions in which society is moving.

The growing number of divorces is one of the factors that adversely affect the fate of the children. There are more and more families in Russia where children are brought up by one parent, increases a number of children born out of wedlock. Financial difficulties, the narrowing of the scope of intra-communication in the single-parent family have a negative impact on children. They are harder to make contacts with their peers; especially among boys are

more common neurotic symptoms. Over 50% of juvenile offenders have grown in single-parent family, more than 30% of children with mental disabilities, grew up without a father. Additional risk factor for the development of the child becomes unemployment parents.

Today, the Russian state and society face extremely important tasks. First, by improving the social and economic relations to enhance the prestige of the family and strengthen its moral and household basics. It is necessary to renew the basis of human and spiritual values, which in turn would significantly affect the reduction of the number of children without parental care. Second, society must act as a guarantor of social security of these children, take responsibility to provide them with the conditions for normal life, learning, development of instincts and abilities, training, adaptation to the social environment, thus compensating for the lack of parental care.

Summary

The article describes the main characteristics of child abandonment in Russia, analyzes the causes of the phenomenon of social orphanhood. Among the main causes the crisis of the family is determined.

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“Social assistance for the foster family in Russia”

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Foster family in Russia is a relatively new phenomenon. This form was formalized in 1996 with the adoption of the Family Code. At the beginning of the 21st century there were about 1,000 foster families in Russia. It was organized to give the orphans peace of mind, comfort, emotional warmth, which is essential for personal growth and development for the adequate adaptation of the child in society. Today, there are more than 700,000 abandoned children, 90% of them have living parents. However, about two thirds of them are brought up in foster families¹³⁴.

Psychological researches of L.Y. Gozman, J.E. Aleshina, A. Spivakovskaya, A.M. Prihozhan, N.N. Tolstyh, A.V. Petrovski, A. Varga, A.A. Bodalev, V.V. Stolin convincingly demonstrated that the necessity of having a family is one of the strongest needs of a child¹³⁵. And so the best replacement for the lack of his own family is a new one. Now it is proved that the family is the source and the mediating link of the transmission of social and historical experience to the child and, above all, the emotional experience and business relationships between people.

Foster family should occupy a central place in life of an orphaned child and family educational environment must “return” the child to life, form a positive lifestyle. But many researchers working in the sphere of foster families (L.Y. Oliferenko, I.F. Dementieva and others) believe that the certain model of foster care doesn’t exist for the conditions of Russia¹³⁶. Unfortunately, sometimes the practice (the returning of a child from foster care back to the orphanage, which would traumatize a child) confirms the data. And the practice of creating a foster family has not yet found its wide distribution; the closed state institutions are still preferred more. That’s why it is very important to understand what helps to develop foster care, a positive image of such families in society, how the process of “getting used to the child” in the family.

¹³⁴ Л.П. Шустова, *Приемная семья. Психолого-педагогическая поддержка и сопровождение*, [In:] Р.А. Валеева (ed.), *Приемная семья. Социальный портрет*, Казань 2011, pp. 39-49.

¹³⁵ И.В. Дубровина, А.Г. Рузская (ed.), *Психическое развитие воспитанников детского дома*, Москва 1990, p. 34.

¹³⁶ И.Ф. Дементьева, Л.Я. Олиференко, *Приемная семья - институт защиты детства. Методические рекомендации*, Москва 2000, pp. 9-18.

The history of foster care in our country goes back to the past. The practice of creating foster families existed in Russian history since 1768. They were created in zemstvos¹³⁷. There was a collection of “The meeting of experts on children’s right” in connection with later became known as the waiting room. It is a family of up to 8 people. The rest are completely fundamental things repeating what we have today. And then this form came into oblivion. Now this form of upbringing is spread abroad, for example in Sweden, Germany and many other countries. The placement of children which were taken for some time from their families to the foster families is wide spread abroad, particularly in the USA.

Many people didn’t know about them at all, didn’t understand their purposes, confused it with other forms of guardianship for the first ten years of existence of foster care in Russia. It is confirmed by the results of surveys, questionnaires, interviews conducted by students of our University for the period from 2005 to 2007. When people were asked: “Do you know what a foster family is?” the majority of them said: “I don’t know” or “It is hard to imagine” (69-84%). After getting acquainted with the concepts many of them said that it was a family of “very generous people” and that they sincerely admired them or that it was a serious and important step, or that such families could provide care, love, mother, father, protection and even education. The question “Would you like to adopt the child?” divided people into two groups according to their gender. Most of men (79%) answered “Yes”, and women divided into two equal parts. They explained their refusal by financial problems, responsibility and by presence of their own children.

Thus, many of them didn’t know about foster family. At the same time, financial support of maintaining the child in foster care wasn’t so important. According to the Year of the Family (2008) the government and the mass media began to pay attention on the issue of foster families, also the payment for child support was increased. Information passed through the mass media: television, radio, advertising on Internet sites, additional funds were allocated to the treatment of foster children. Positive image of the foster family began to form in our society. Some regions showed high dynamics of the formation and effectiveness of foster families, for example Samara region in 2005¹³⁸. Some orphanages were closed (in Krasnoyarsk, Lipetsk, Kaluga, etc.) in connection with the involving of children in foster care.

¹³⁷ Zemstvos – elective bodies of local self-government in the Russian Empire. They were introduced by the Zemstvo Reform of 1864. By 1914 the zemstvos existed in 43 provinces of European Russia.

¹³⁸ Т. Гурко, В. Тасеев, *Приемные семьи в России (например Самарской области)*, www.isras.ru [30.12.2012].

Public organizations of support and assistance to foster families began to create. Thus, the cottages for sixteen families which are bringing up adopted children was built in Polyana village in Ryazan region. The Family service which provides psychological help for foster children and parents were based on the territory of Polyana boarding school. It includes social workers, a psychologist, a speech therapist, a lawyer. Social organization of foster families "We together" was established in Kazan on the first of April in 2009. The main objective of the organization is to promote family-orphans and children left without parental care, and assistance to graduates of social institutions, foster families. Today the organization is implementing the project "Family House". Social organization is located in a former kindergarten, which is altered to a house for a living of 10 foster families under one roof based on principles of "Children's Village". Also it will be equipped with a room for group work, an exercise gym, a cozy cafe for different celebrations, the psychological cabinets and the cabinets for a lawyer and a speech therapist. The house will be divided into two apartments for the graduates from the orphanages, who wants to continue their education or to get their own flats. Thus, dealing with foster families and mentors, they also will have the possibility of solving communication problems, acquaintance with everyday skills and family life, skills that will help them in their future.

Foster family is the way out for Russia in solving the problems of integration of orphans into society at the present moment and for the next decade. In our opinion, the education of a child, especially abandoned and getting over the negative social experience in his family is pedagogically meaningful work that must be paid. Foster family, on the one hand, must have the material basis for the reception of orphans with the help of the state. And, on the other hand, it must be open to professional help. Families should be prepared to participate in a psychological selection; they should be trained, focused on cooperation with welfare services. This problem must be solved on social and national levels. For example, because of the measures of state support of family placement of children, interagency cooperation, working with the media and the public today, 89% of orphans and children left without parental care, are brought up in families of the Republic of Tatarstan.

How does the process of "getting used to the child" in the family go? This problem is solved with the support of public authorities on the social, educational and psychological levels. To solve this problem the clubs of foster parents, courses and "School of the adoptive parents" are opened, different information and educational materials "We look forward to the family of the child", "Child's Health", "Coast of Hope - the parental home" etc. are published. All parents, who decided to adopt a child, regardless of their

professions can receive mutual help in solving problems, sharing of experiences, and dialogue between the children themselves.

Despite of the positive results today we can detect certain problems such as the fact that the adoptive parents are not able to correct profound abnormalities in the mental development of orphans caused by early deprivation, moral, physical violence, and prolonged injury without the help of qualified professionals.

Another problem in a foster family is distrust to yourself as a parent, need to prove your love and care, the fear of being bad parent. This leads to the phenomenon of overprotection which means self-indulgence and excessive concern in the absence of reasonable penalties and restrictions. Overprotection inevitably leads to various problems in the relationships up to the deviant behavior of a child, which supports the image of himself as a failed parent and leads to greater parental uncertainty. These problems are caused by, on the one hand, the closeness of the family to the public, on the other hand, by lack of willingness to accept the child. This issue may begin to appear after the adoption of a child in the family or a change of the initial situation in the family, where the child was adopted to resolve their own, often tragic problems (death of a child by blood, inability to have children, etc.) Subsequently, the family is getting through the stress and feels “burdened” by the need to bring up a child.

Also, the humane aspect of the admission of a child is not promoted and understood in our society. Some accuse the families of selfish motives, considering the orphanages as a “romantic” model of education of orphans. They say, that families can’t be good to other people's children in Russia, as in Europe and America, and if “someone wants to educate the orphan, let him adopt a child”. This negative image is maintained by mass media, such as TV-shows about the courts over the adoptive parents and the lack of information about the positive experience. Many families complain about the suspicious behaviour of their neighbors. The solution to these problems makes us consider that a professional foster care is a family which “educates citizen competently, on behalf of the state”¹³⁹. The professionalism of the family is characterized by a qualification of foster parents, who have the appropriate education and experience, trained and training before they took the child, paying for adoptive parents and time of child’s being in foster care.

According to all this, it must be organized deliberate and systematic work with the families. There should be a social worker, psychologist, who provides

¹³⁹ Н. Бычкова, *Приемная семья - новая модель защиты детства в России*, [In:] Р.А. Валева (ed.), *Приемная семья. Социальный портрет*, op. cit., p. 12.

fast and professional assistance in an emergency situation for the family. Also it is needed to educate parents, to train their effective collaboration. Today there it is needed to change the public opinion to such families in mass media, to create and “promote” a positive image of such families.

Thus, the efficiency of the foster care depends on:

1. The possibility of early identification and definition of social problems in the functioning of foster care;
2. The presence of motivation, based on humanistic values, the possibility of patronage of the adoptive parents, primarily by social workers and psychologists to identify problems;
3. Social and pedagogical competence of foster parents, the availability of training and professional development, their implementation.

Effectiveness of the process of getting used to a foster family also depends on:

1. The child's age at the time of his inclusion in the family;
2. The number of children in the family and their desire to help another destitute child to share their parents' love and attention, complete family, personal qualities and attitudes of parents to raise their own and adopted children;
3. From the whole family atmosphere;
4. The characteristics of the child, determined by prior experience.

Thus, the past shows the demand for this form of education in society. Currently, the foster family is an integral part of the Russian system of educational institutions for orphans. High educational potential of this form of education is determined by the fact that its use creates the conditions for maximizing the statutory principle of the priority of family education, according to which all the children left without parental care may be placed in foster care, and only when that it is not possible, they are transferred to educational facility. Family education is an important factor of the formation of children cultural and moral values, interpersonal emotions.

Pedagogical potential of the modern foster care should be implemented through a system of state support for families and stimulation the development of family education of the orphans, enrichment of legal regulation of foster care by educational content, development of guidelines based on the device of bringing up orphans, psychological and educational training of social workers and other professionals focused on working with foster families, public

education system and the prospective adoptive parents, aimed at improving the social status of foster care, the creation of special center providing psychological and educational assistance to foster parents.

Summary

Foster family is a new form of care for orphans in Russia. There is a practice of adoptive families in Russia both in historical past, and gained positive experience today. The article presents the experience of social help for a foster family in Russia.

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“Psycho-pedagogic prevention of suicidal risks among collegiate young people”

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Modern age poses a major problem for teachers, psychologists and social workers. Suicidal conduct among Russian collegiate young people is determined by economic factors, low morally-spiritual standard of living, a growing number of law breaking, juvenile delinquency, the problem of alcoholism and drug addiction, lack of specially trained personnel of group leaders and supervising professors, and lack of methodical literature concerning this problem. Suicide, or the act of killing yourself, is deliberate and conscious deprivation of your own life. Suicides must be seen within the scope of complex suicidal conduct problem which includes suicidal thoughts, suicidal preparations, suicidal attempts, suicidal inclinations and the act of suicide.

Factors and motives, contributing to suicide, were investigated in San Francisco and are also obviously characteristic for Russia. We need to point out the following of them:

1. Recently revealed incurable disease like AIDS may incite sick people to commit a suicide. Disease contributes to a lot of stress; a number of sick people decide to outrun their death because of the incurable disease.
2. Economic troubles which the person encounters. People keenly feel themselves nonstarters; like “the house of cards”.
3. The death of the beloved which is followed by protracted grief may also lead to suicide. During many months after the loss of the beloved person suffers panic disorders, idealization of loss, apathy, hostile attitude towards surrounding people.
4. Some people believe suicide is emancipation from excruciating psychic pain, it is also the means of reuniting with your close dear person.
5. Divorce and family conflicts may often lead to a suicide. Feeling of guilt for being abandoned, revenge and solitude cause psychic trauma in former husband and wife.
6. Emotional experience is a serious factor of possible suicide, as any personality conflict is always an important warning. The majority of self-murderers suffer from depressions. They are dispirited, “have a fit of spleen”, they lose heart and hang their heads. They think they are seriously ill, can’t manage with simple tasks, complain of sluggishness and lack of energy. Among the signs of emotional disorder are the following: the loss of

appetite, overeating, insomnia or sleepiness; frequent complaints of somatical indisposition; neglect of one's appearance; continuous feeling of loneliness, uselessness, feeling of guilt or sadness; feeling of boredom; social withdrawal; submergence into thoughts about death, and rage considerations.

7. Alcohol and drug abuse by young people can precede suicidal tendency. The half of dead young people had taken medicines prescribed for their parents before committing a suicide.
8. Mental disorder is often the reason for suicide.

Professor Shnademan from the University of California in his book called "The spirit of the self-murderer" described common features indicating an oncoming possible suicide and named them "Keys to a suicide". The common aim of all suicides in search for solutions to the problem arisen in front of the person. To understand the reason for a suicide we need to know the problems the person had to solve. The common goal of all suicides is cessation of unbearable pain awareness. The common stimulus to a suicide is unbearable mental pain. The common stressors stimulating suicide is frustrated psychic needs – suicides are never committed without reasonable purpose. A suicide does not occur in case the frustrated needs are satisfied. The common suicidal emotion is helplessness and hopelessness, which can be hidden beyond anger. The common inner attitude to suicide is ambivalence that is simultaneous desire to live and to die. The only desire to live makes the work on preventing suicides effective. This work includes stimulating the inner part desiring to live. The general psychic condition in suicide is narrowing of cognitive sphere. Consciousness becomes "tunneling", that is the choice of the variants of possible conduct, usually available for healthy people, sharply becomes limited. The common action in suicide is escape behaviour. It reflects the person's desire to escape from disaster area, for instance, leaving a house or a family, leaving a job or desertion from the army. The common communicative act in suicide is announcing one's intentions. People preparing for suicide, consciously or unconsciously signal distress calls: they complain about their helplessness, ask for help and support.

The amount of Russian young people, who desired to lose their lives, is enormous. Among them are predominantly teenagers and students of the prestigious higher education institutes. The new World-wide Health Statistics (2010-2011) have revealed that the majority of suicides is committed by young people from the age of 15 to 24, besides, in the past 30 years the amount of suicides among the children aged from 5 to 14 have multiplied up 8 times. In addition, legal experts suppose that a great number of deaths owing to an

“occasional fatal accident” (car accidents, taking poisonous drugs and firearms use), in fact are suicides.

The word “student” comes from the Latin language and means “studying hard”, i.e. acquiring knowledge. The period of studying in the educational institution coincides with the second phase of youth, or the first phase of maturity, which is notable for the difficulty of personal traits formation. The age period under 21 years is characterized by a firm orientation on the adults’ standards of conduct: desire for economic, moral and legal independence of parents. This transition explains the “peak” of antisocial conduct. There is also a representation of the adults’ standards of behavior, substitution of the real maturity for imaginary – “illusory maturity, which find expression in drinking alcohol, cynicism in respect of sexes. “Informal” relations’ influence is also possible. It is determined by a number of reasons: expansion of area of needs, compulsive self-affirmation, acquisition of independence from family influence, increased sexual interests.

The fact of admission to educational institution strengthens self-confidence and person’s abilities, generates hope on dynamic and interesting life. However, some occasional factors, which influence negatively both society and personality, quite often determine a person’s occupational choice. A sudden breaking of a long-term customary stereotype, which is based on psycho-physiological effect, investigated by I. P. Pavlov – dynamic stereotype, sometimes leads to nervous prostration and stress response, to the person’s withdrawal, and it may also often lead to the extreme form of deviant conduct – suicide. People, when they are young, can kill themselves thoughtlessly. The reason, for the person decides to lose his life, despite his age, may be absolutely insignificant. The person gets intoxicated not only because of the last alcohol drop. However, we need to research more carefully, keeping in mind that “when you lose something most important for you, everything around you becomes insignificant, and everything insignificant becomes important, and any time can become mortal”.

It is proved scientifically that social factors influence suicidal intentions of studying youth, but the group of individual psychological factors, including personality characteristics, needs to be mentioned the first. Scientists claim that “it is unlikely that a strong, confident person, able to overcome obstacles, will commit a suicide. But there are always exceptions to any rules”.

There is a psychological personal type which is characterized by having a steady set, inclination to escape conflict stressful situations, including the very extreme measures. This type of a person – self-murderer was described by Herman Hesse in the novel “The Steppe Wolf”. A self-murderer will not necessarily lay hands on himself, and not always he really lives closely with his

death. He just identifies his “very self” as something dangerous, unreliable and unguarded creation of nature, he regards himself as extremely vulnerable and exposed as though he is standing on the edge of a rock, where just a tip or an weakness is enough to fall down into abyss. Each emotional upset arouses an idea of being deprived of one’s life. For Harry the Steppe Wolf “a thought that he is free to die any moment was just a junior sad fantasy game, but he found consolation in this thought. People of this type find every upset and pain as a reason for losing their lives in order to get rid of these problems”¹⁴⁰

Those young people inclined to suicide are known to be exceedingly worried about their solitude and helplessness. They are characterized by egocentric behavior inclination to isolation and individualism. They prevent a person from forming in them such characteristic features like civic consciousness, social responsibility, the sense of duty, the ability to feel empathy. The interest for occupational studies is declined. A. G. Ambrumova in her investigation points out that “emotional instability, anxiety, unbalanced state and nervousness are often typical for students’ youth”¹⁴¹

Stress situations predispose young people to suicide, actualizing individual valuable feelings which can be both steadily individual and situational. A. G. Ambrumova singled out 6 non-pathological reactions of young people with suicidal inclinations: emotional imbalance (occurrence of negative factors); pessimism (there is nothing good in future); negative balance (“overcritical sizing up”); demobilization (refusal of communication and activities); opposition (self-reactivity); disorganization (anxiety state going along with effusive somatic vegetative disorder)¹⁴²

To find out actual motives of suicidal conduct is undoubtedly difficult. Owing to the force of circumstances, relatives of the suicidal person are not interested in disclosing real motives of the suicide, and the suicidal people themselves are not always able to evaluate their behavior and often hold up proximate reasons and occasions or subjectively misrepresented justifications. Nevertheless, their systematization and analysis give a weighty foundation for psycho-diagnostics and prophylaxis. Classifying factors and motives of suicidal conduct among students’ youth, we can single out the following factors: the loss of the purpose of life, psychic pain, self-aggression – punishing yourself,

¹⁴⁰ А.Н. Моховиков (ed.), *Суицидология: Прошлое и настоящее. Проблема самоубийства в трудах философов, социологов, психотерапевтов и художественных текстах*, “Хрестоматия. Когнито – Центр”, Москва 2001.

¹⁴¹ А.Г. Амбрумова, Е.М. Вроно, *О ситуационных реакциях у подростков в суицидологической практике*, “Журнал невропатологии и психиатрии им. С.С. Корсакова”, Vol. 85, No. 10/1985, pp. 1557 – 1560.

¹⁴² *Ibidem*, pp. 1557 – 1560.

finding no ways out of the troubles; suicide is the reaction to seemingly insurmountable obstacle. Among the factors are financial difficulties, socio-economic ill-being of the family, inability to pay for desired education; constant failures in studies; committing a felony; participation in antisocial groups' activities and religious sects; fear of legal liability; fear of punishment and disgrace; disutility on the labour-market; unsatisfying bound job; absence of socio-psychological services; parents' dislike; misunderstanding among the students of the same age; lack of attention from surrounding people; constant family conflicts and divorces; unorganized and unprofessional work of the Mass Media; bankruptcy; business failure; financial debts; blackmail; emotional crisis state of mind; stresses, the lost of the beloved; the death of the close person; derailment of the values; character accentuation; solitude; unfortunate love and rebound; jealousy; betrayal; understate self-appraisal; the loss of the prospects; taking drugs and toxic medicines; same-sex relations; imitating of an idol; somatic diseases; physical suffering, incurable disease; hereditary deformity; physical malformation as the consequence of accidents and crashes; ill heredity, etc.

The person of suicidal conduct can be determined by a number of characteristic features. Among the verbal features are: direct talks about a suicide: "I'm going to do away with myself", "I have nothing to do in this life". The person can drop hints indirectly: "I'm not going to be a burden to somebody any more"; he can also play jokes on the subject of suicide and display a morbid interest in the questions of death. Among the behavioral features are the following: the person makes peace with old enemies; puts in order his affairs once and for all; demonstrates changes in behavior; eats a lot or little; sleeps a lot or very little; pays no attention to his appearance; misses the lessons; avoids communication; sometimes behaves aggressively or falls into depression. The person also experiences sudden outbursts of euphoria or despair and depression by turns; abuses alcohol and drugs; responses on teachers', friends' and students' of the same year remarks inadequately. Among the situational features are the following: the person is socially isolated and outcast; lives in instable environment, suffers from family crisis; identifies himself as physical, sexual or emotional violence; suffered a death of the close person; over self-critical.

People inclined to a suicide need a timely swift psycho-educational help. We can avoid suicidal risks by the means of uniting various institutions of our society: medical posts of emergency, centers of mental health, mental psychiatric clinics, "hot-line" services, diurnal in-patient hospital departments, advisory and outpatient public offices. In cases of severe mental handicap, constant supervision over a person with suicidal inclinations is necessary.

The clock round duration services of psycho-educational help is also essential in all the centers of human population. Administrations of educational institutions need to solve conflict and crisis situations among the teaching staff and the students in proper time. Psychological work with students' youth, doctors, professional and teaching staff in the educational institutions is also very important. It is also necessary to introduce mass educational programs concerning people with suicidal inclinations and their characteristic features on teaching pupils, students and teachers in all educational institutions.

We need to point out that psycho-educational warning of suicidal risks among the students' youth becomes optimal only provided that it takes into account all the peculiarities and individual development tendencies, and coincides with the person's internal intentions. Undoubtedly, the results of such coincidence become ultimate. Prevention of suicidal behavior very often depends not only on the external influence, but also on the ability to adjust the outer influence in accordance with individual peculiarities.

Summary

The article reveals the essence, specific peculiarities, causes and factors, features of suicidal conduct of young people; characteristic features peculiar for people with suicidal inclinations. The system of socially-psychological help measures preventing suicidal conduct among students is also taken up in the article.

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“Actions on behalf of <street children>: Challenges, opportunities, dangers”

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Around the world, millions of children are living and working on the street. These children suffer from cold, hunger, and disease. Often ignored and living on the fringes of society, they fall victim to street gangs and drug dealers. Street children can be found in every country, regardless of its economic development, socio-political structure or geographical position. They can be seen in Rio de Janeiro, New York, Beijing, Moscow and many other parts of the world. An estimated 100 million children currently exist on city streets throughout the world. In Germany for example, it is estimated that there could be between 40,000 to 400,000. In the Los Angeles alone there are an estimated 10,000 children.

In Poland, the phenomenon of “street children” in the literal sense does not occur. Since the 1990s however, poorer districts and regions have seen an increase in the number of children from families affected by alcoholism, and in the number of children deprived of adult care¹⁴³. Children and young people who stay out on the streets are exposed to significant marginalization and stigmatization. Negative reaction to this social category, often perceived by communities as a threat, brands them as “thugs and gangsters” who have been left to fend for themselves. NGOs and institutions, responding to the needs of mainstream society, recognise the necessity for action to be taken on behalf of street children. These organisations often create social programs and therapies that are aimed to address specific problems: drug addiction, alcoholism, poverty, school absenteeism, juvenile prostitution, and difficulties within families. These result from the fact that individual street children have different social biographies, needs, skills and resources which they use to construct a variety of strategies to adapt to the “life” on the street. In Poland there is a lack of studies, which not only diagnose the phenomenon, but also analyse the effectiveness of preventative programs. What seems most crucial, from the perspective of educators and the children themselves, is the nature of the aid activities and their effectiveness.

¹⁴³ W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, *Bieda dziecięca w Polsce i w Europie*, Raport Rady Socjalnej 2005.

1. Issues of definition

Defining the term “street child” is the key. The category entitled “street children” can be found at the intersection of street and childhood sociology. Indeed, there is a long history in sociology and criminology of studying the street, and well known works include “Street Corner Society” by William F. Whyte, as well as the more recent “The Jack-roller. A delinquent boy's own story”, by Clifford R. Shaw¹⁴⁴. Characteristically the street is regarded as a place of disorganization, dominated by gangs and anti-social groups, which needs to be policed. This trend harks back to the classical tradition in sociology, namely to the study of social disorder and gangs in the United States, and to British studies of youth subculture.

The term “street children” also falls under the subject of childhood, a subject which has long been ignored by sociology. This is due to the subordinate position of children in society, and the subordination in sociology of the concept of socialization and of childhood. Today the situation is slowly changing. Children and childhood are attracting increased interest from researchers, especially from those using the subjectivist and interpretative approach¹⁴⁵. The latter of these approaches relates to constructivist theory, in which childhood and other social identities, such as class and gender, are treated as something that is subject to interpretation, discussion, and defined by social interaction. In short, they are seen as social products or constructs.

In Polish reality, street children became a phenomenon worthy of the interest of researchers in the early 1990s¹⁴⁶. The problem was considered to be the result of child poverty, or a manifestation of marginalization and social exclusion. Currently, in international terminology, it is hard to find a clear definition of the street. For this reason, authors alternate between using the terms “street children” and “children at risk” to describe one and the same group. It is difficult therefore, to find oneself in this maze of definitions, and even more difficult to identify whether existing publications cover the same subject matter.

The situation is the similar in Poland, where the term “street children” is still associated with third world countries and with homeless children. When reporting on the state of children in Poland, Marek Michalak, the Ombudsman for Children, uses the concept of poor or abused children. Practitioners dealing with children in Poland have been writing about the 'street children' phenomenon since the 1990s, when the political and economic transformation

¹⁴⁴ C. R. Shaw, *The Jack-roller. A delinquent boy's own story*, Chicago 1966.

¹⁴⁵ P. L. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Spoleczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, PIW, Warszawa 1983.

¹⁴⁶ K. W. Frieske (ed.), *Marginalność i procesy marginalizacji. Projekt badawczy*, IPISS, Warszawa 1999.

and the ensuing intensification of social inequalities in society began. But here too there has been no consensus as to a clear definition of the street child phenomenon.

Some employ the Council of Europe definition, which describes street children as: "Children under 18 years of age, who for a short or long period of time live in a street environment. These children live, move from place to place and make contact with peers or other groups on the street. Officially their home address may be that of their parents, a social institution, an institution providing educational support, a youth mental health clinic or another facility. Most significant is the fact that adults - parents and representatives of institutions for the care of children and young people, schools, welfare institutions, social services, have minimal or no contact with these children"¹⁴⁷. Others describe street children, as those who, as a result of their parents dereliction of basic educational and care duties, spend time away from home: in the street, in the yard or in other areas of unsupervised activity. It is here their life experiences are formed and their natural cognitive and social interactions are realized.

This multiplicity of definitions may be due to the fact that the term "street children" is identified with a social problem depending on the theoretical approach used, not only to assess its causes, symptoms and consequences, but also to justify the logic of remedial actions.

According to M. Parazelli, a Canadian sociologist, street children as a category can be analysed from three perspectives. The first defines street children as a social category (street children, street kids, children living on the street). The second focuses primarily on the behaviour of street children and presents them successively as young offenders, beggars, teenage prostitutes, abused children. Finally, the third sees street children as a social subclass (a group constituting a social threat, drawn from the dregs of society), or as representing a certain type of niche culture (youngsters who are on the margins of society, subculture).

Defining street children as a category is made difficult in as much as researchers often do not distinguish between sociological and social categories, that is to say, between an analytical and a descriptive definition. A sociological category, as constructed by a researcher, does not reflect a social category as used by social practitioners or social actors. This is due to a variety of reasons: firstly, the conditions in which children live may change and, moreover, street children as an identifiable group can evolve depending on situation, context, and existing processes acting from within (fighting for position in the group,

¹⁴⁷ Council of Europe, *Final report of the study on street children*, Strasbourg 1994.

alliances concluded between the children, the conflicts within the group). As a result of this difficulty, some researchers prefer to avoid consciously defining and specifically categorising the phenomenon¹⁴⁸. Others will use a slightly modified terminology in order to avoid stigmatizing this segment of the population, and to avoid unnecessarily rigid categorisation. Consequently, B. Głowacka instead of using the term 'street children' prefers to use the nomenclature 'underprivileged children'. It should be noted, however, that the descriptions resorted to by researchers are part of a social discourse on street children taking place in society, and which in turn is an expression of concern for the preservation and reproduction of social order, through the transmission of important social values and rules, to the next generation. This discourse, and its dominant and normative character, creates a framework for interpretation, which excludes alternative visions of reality, and defines the boundaries between the appropriate and desirable, and the pathological. Emotional and ideological engagement, which accompanies public debates, creates the temptation to arbitrarily define who street children are. The adoption of such an approach does not help in uncovering complexity and specificity in social phenomena. It is sensible therefore to discard the idea of a sociological definition, or to simply modify existing terminology? The answer would seem to be no, as everything depends on what is sought and the analytical method proposed, rather than on an imagined reality or ideal category, which supposedly reflects the essence of a phenomenon. Words take on a meaning relative to the role we give them. Therefore it is more important to rely on analytical definitions, whose aim is to reflect reality, rather than on descriptive definitions alone.

In this context, let us examine the Brannigan and Caputo model (1993), which presents the phenomenon of street youth as a collection of different subgroups. These are placed in four quadrants, where the horizontal axis represents time spent on the street (to the right are young people most "accustomed" to life on the street), and where the vertical axis is the behavioural variable (from acceptable to dangerous behaviour). It is a model that focuses, from a behavioural perspective, on what is keeping young people on the street. It does not take into account the original reason, for choosing a "life" on the street. The goal of the model's authors is to define such criteria that enable categorization of the subgroups most at risk of deviation, from an epidemiological perspective.

The main criterion in this definition is street subculture as defined by risk-taking behaviour, prostitution, drug abuse, criminal activity.

¹⁴⁸ D. Cueff, *Dziecko na ulicy*, GPAS, Warszawa 2006.

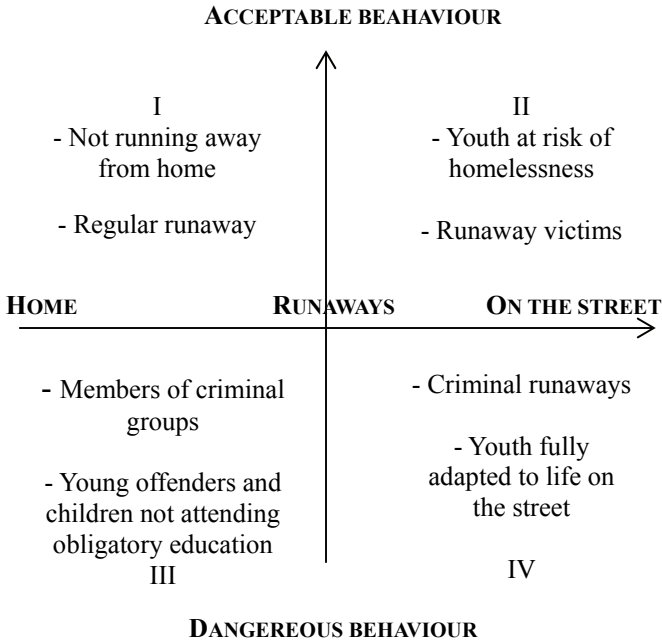


Fig. 1. “Conceptual model of a street youth category”, M. Parazelli, *La rue attractive. Parcours et pratiques identitaires des jeunes de la rue*, Presses Universitaires de l'Université de Québec, 2002.

A similar approach to the phenomenon of street children exists in the current direction of studies in Poland, which focuses on youth crime prevention, and in which the main criterion is the influence of pathological environment on individuals. This criterion not only encompasses the narrow group of people from dysfunctional communities, but also includes youngsters from so called good homes. Here, focus is put on the danger of developing various forms of maladjustment, that in adolescence manifest themselves, through social nonconformity. Researchers are raising the matter of the scale of generally perceived social marginalisation. It is worth reminding ourselves of the typology used by American criminologists, according to whom “minor” crime begins to increase in scale during early adolescence (age 10 years), accelerates and peaks at around 15-16 years of age, and then either stabilizes, or decreases rapidly by the age of 20, and fades by the age of 30. In this direction of study, the main reason for errant antisocial behaviour is the marginalisation and social

maladjustment that results from unsuitable forms of socialization in peer groups, and in the immediate environment.

Of course, in order to identify possible directions and effective methods of education, including broader prevention and rehabilitation methods, it is essential to have information regarding the scale of the marginalisation. This however, is restricted to identifying the types of anti-social behaviour, rather than examining the meaning of the behaviour to the youths themselves. It is forgotten that street children can be social players, who for better or worse, want to participate in the life of society. These children's perception of the street is significantly different to that prevailing in today's youth crime prevention activities. Seeking to understand the sense that street children attribute to their presence in the public space, does not mean we should seek to idealise their lives and those of their families. Instead, a sober understanding is necessary for the development of interventions which are tailored according to the reality of the situation, and not to the needs of a given institution.

Riccardo Lucchini, a sociologist and expert on street children in South America, noted that the term "street children" is not clearly defined, and that: "The complexity of the category called street children, makes it difficult to distinguish, between a definition and a description of the child's living conditions"¹⁴⁹. Therefore Lucchini, in his study of street children in Rio de Janeiro, proposes an analytical definition entitled "the child-street system". Based on an approach inspired by symbolic interactionism, systemic analysis and ecological terminology, Lucchini examines the street child's social environment and psychosocial identity. To this Swiss researcher the street child is not just a victim. First and foremost, it is an active participant.

¹⁴⁹ R. Lucchini, *Enfants de la rue. Identité, sociabilité, drogue*, Genewa 1993.

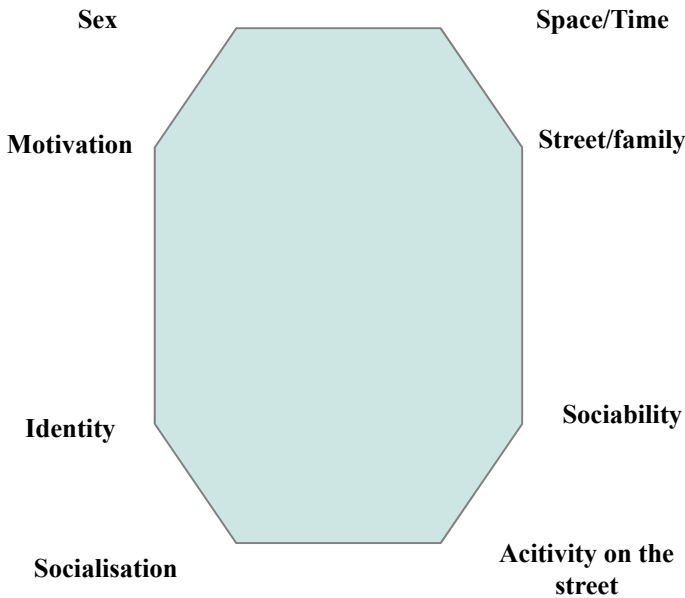


Fig. 2. "The street child", R. Lucchini, op. cit., free translation.

R. Lucchini emphasizes that it is necessary to “study the subjective assessment that a child as a social actor gives to its own actions”. He also emphasizes that a child's progress to life on the street happens in stages, as part of what he calls their “career on the street”. At the same time he adds, that the de-socialising impact of the street may be double-edged because, on the one hand, life there has its good features (a source of adventure, provides experience), while on the other hand, it has its bad side (violence, crime). The result is a fluctuation between loss, despair, and hope, and between failure, submission, and freedom. How a child weighs up these often conflicting street experiences, determines where it stands in the child-street system. R. Lucchini also points out, that the extent to which street children participate in "street subculture" varies often, not only because of a child's competencies, but also because of the events which led it to the street in the first place.

In Poland, many studies are taking a similar approach, and stressing the importance of the process of adapting to life on the street. Specialists are pointing out that the marginalisation of street children is escalating, as is their behaviour in the public space. The characteristic behaviour of children aged 3-6, and children aged 7-10 is mainly playful in nature (group play, competitive sport) and criminal behaviour is rare. In contrast, the behaviour typical of young

people between 11-15 and 15-18 years of age differs significantly, and can pose a danger to others. Researchers also highlight the abilities that children acquire on the street, such as resilience, resourcefulness, social skills, and solidarity¹⁵⁰.

This study of the socialization of children in Mazowsze, Poland, comes to the following conclusions. The concept of street children in Poland does not apply to those who literally live on the street (Romanian gypsy children, homeless children). These vagrant children, and those who live without social, family and educational ties, are greatly outnumbered by those exposed to social marginalization and exclusion in the general population. This much greater group, referred to by some as 'children on the street', is unable to find its place in society.

By definition, it is difficult to assess the phenomenon of street children. According to studies by the Polish Foundation in 1999, about 13% of children, that is around one million children, are in poverty. In the meantime, those labelled as street children number between 15 and 20 thousand. In order to complete the picture, it should be emphasized how great the poverty is, that characterizes this social group. According to GUS (the Central Statistical Office), despite the good economic situation, the percentage of poor people in Poland continues to grow (ten years ago, one in ten Poles lived in poverty, by 2004 this ratio was one in five). One can say therefore, that poverty in Poland is on the increase and with it the number of poor children. W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska shows this phenomenon in her study report¹⁵¹. It is referred to as the juvenilization of poverty. The author defines it as the increase in the number of children and young people within the poor population, and adds that this phenomenon exists throughout the country. Data provided by Warzywoda-Kruszyńska shows that every third child in Poland lives in poverty. In addition, the rate of poverty among children is three times higher than that among the elderly over 65 years of age. Isolation especially that of girls, is another distinctive feature of street children. The narrowing of children's lives exclusively to the realm of the family is a significant restriction, even assuming that they have everyday contact with girls and boys in the yard.

2. The care system and street children

There is a long history of works on behalf of street children. The first historically documented efforts in this field were the charitable and philanthropic activities initiated by the Roman Catholic Church in the twelfth

¹⁵⁰ D. Cueff, *op. cit.*

¹⁵¹ W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, *op. cit.*

century¹⁵². The main forms of aid were alms and monastery asylums called hospitals, charities that acted as shelters for the homeless, a hospice for the terminally ill and a place for healing the sick. In the fifteenth century new charitable institutions appear, such as religious brotherhoods (the Brotherhood of St. Lazarus, Cracow, 1448). During this period, there is a lack of state intervention to help street children. The situation is to get worse over the following centuries, as the sixteenth century charity reforms in Western Europe are not introduced in Poland. This leaves the Catholic Church as the main agency funding and administering the social sphere, which includes helping street children. Increased activity by institutions on behalf of street children begins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, namely during the years of war, economic crisis and mass poverty. This is the time of king Władysław IV's prerogative, which ensured measures to alleviate the misery of orphans and the homeless in the Mokotów district of Warsaw. In the eighteenth century, the state becomes involved in helping street children by initiating care programs and providing support (Institute of the Poor, the Charity Association). The Partitions of Poland (1772-1795) that lasted till 1918 saw the development of social policy by the occupying states (Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary) and the beginning of a civil society based on the resources of social trust and cohesion. Community organizations that mobilize in the early twentieth century to help street children are based on philanthropy, religious and secular charity, and social solidarity rooted in patriotism. Major organizations working on behalf of street children are founded during Poland's inter-war years, when the phenomenon of children orphaned by war and of those living, begging, and wandering the streets intensified. Many of them, like the Workers Association of Children's Friends (founded in 1919)¹⁵³, and the Society of Friends of Street Children¹⁵⁴ (founded in 1928 by Kazimierz Lisiecki) function to this day.

¹⁵² J. Krzyszkowski, *Między państwem opiekuńczym a opiekuńczym społeczeństwem*, Wydanie II, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2010.

¹⁵³ The Friends of Children Society was founded in 1919, originally as the Workers Association of Children's Friends and Peasant Society of Friends of Children (1949) and after the unification of the TPD (from 1949). In the years of the People's Republic of Poland (PRL), as a result of the absorption of the organization by the ruling regime in Poland, the Society becomes part of the influence and pedagogy used on young people by the prevailing system. Currently the organization runs orphanages, holiday resorts for children, facilities important for children's health, boarding schools and community centers at railway stations, and facilities and activities for the organization of leisure time and for feeding children. The Society has been active in the development of ombudsmen for children's rights, and in raising awareness of the dangers, abuse, and the needs of children. It is currently the largest nationwide organization with more than 20 thousand children under its care.

¹⁵⁴ In 1928 K. Lisiecki founded the Friends of Street Children Society, whose roots can be found in the first Newspaperboy Clubs (1918) and the Academic Circle Friends of Street Children

The communist period ushered in the development of public and social education. Between 1956 and 1958, community youth development centers are created in Częstochowa, Łódź and Grudziądz. Children are included in efforts to improve their living conditions, such as the refurbishment and maintenance of neighbourhoods, the adaptation of buildings for community centers, and the care of amenities and the surroundings. Mentors, who do not have special skills but are interested in teaching, and children belonging to the so-called Block Committees (from estates /blocks of high-rise accommodation), take part in looking after green spaces, helping to build playgrounds, and tending flowerbeds. The spontaneous and communal nature of this 'doorstep' education shows the sense of these activities: education of the populous by the populous. Unfortunately, in the 1970s the communist authorities distort the aims of these social initiatives by seeking to gain full control over them. Youth centers become one of the instruments of party control over society, and the methods used by instructors are increasingly based on a scouting and army mix: absolute obedience to your superiors, uniforms, survival training camps, anthems, patriotic songs, and raising the flag. A change in the approach to the phenomenon of street children takes place in the late 1980s. After a period of denying and hiding social problems in the realm of social exclusion risk, children who are poor, vagrant, coarse and aggressive begin to be noticed. To understand this situation, it should be remembered that in the early 1990s there were significant processes affecting the situation of children in Poland: de-industrialisation (industry markedly decreases its role in employment and national income), the-welfarisation (withdrawal of the state from providing free or low-priced social services, including housing) and the breakup of family (increase in the number of single-parent families, single person households, and informal ties with children) coincident with the decentralization of government with regard to social policy. Growing social disparities are also concurrent with this period of political transformation. Faced with these growing problems, the phenomenon of street children is growing also. NGOs, with an increasingly stronger position in society, are taking on the state's role of social benefactors. This is due to the fact that the governments of the III Republic of Poland have

(1919). Soon after the first youth development center is created it is followed by further centers which survived the communist period (in the 1950's they were transformed into the National Youth Development Centers Group - Państwowy Zespół Ognisk Wychowawczych). Today in Warsaw, there are ten youth development centers forming part of the "Grandfather" K. Lisiecki Youth Development Center Group (Zespół Ognisk Wychowawczych - ZOW). Sixteen other community youth centers (e.g. operating in Gdańsk, Gdynia, Tczew) also bear the name of K.Lisiecki. The rules binding these institutions are based on the child as the guiding principle. They are: self respect, "nothing for free", respect for work, "the youth center is not a shelter" and "give something back".

been abandoning the principle of universalism, in favour of selective benefits¹⁵⁵. In addition, reforms which transformed social welfare institutions (decentralization of the social welfare system, the release of social welfare policy from direct ministerial control, and the introduction of the principle of subsidiarity, according to which the public system of social assistance is to support, and not take the place of, natural support networks), have, contrary to initial claims, significantly worsened their effectiveness (insufficient funds at the disposal of local authorities, the lack of implementing legislation to facilitate the tasks imposed on local governments, local political elites not approving actions to deal with social problems, etc.). Therefore NGOs, together with other social welfare institutions, have become the major players on behalf of street children. However, the actions taken by these bodies are limited, isolated, and lacking in continuity. There is no coordinated public policy supporting the third sector: the state does not ensure adequate financial resources and does not provide accommodation for NGOs. As a result of vague laws governing the matter, and a lack of competent staff, public administration often only cooperates to a small extent with other partners who provide services for children and marginalized families. This is a big problem considering the need for long-term action in order to help children from families affected by social exclusion. Presently, all kinds of efforts are undertaken on behalf of street children. Work with this group is a complex matter. It takes place at various levels, starting from establishing some form of regular contact with the children, to taking care of their urgent needs, organizing educational and therapeutic activities, and even as far as providing family assistance. The methods most commonly used by NGOs working with street children are community centers and socio-therapy¹⁵⁶, therapeutic community work¹⁵⁷ and street education¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁵ W. Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, op. cit.

¹⁵⁶ Socio-therapeutic community centers are places created for children who exhibit behavioural disorders, which often have their origins in traumatic situations which the child has experienced in the past, e.g. physical and psychological violence, the lack of safety, love and acceptance, ignored physiological needs, and emotional rejection by loved ones. A prerequisite for achieving the objectives and tasks of social therapy is the building of close, personal contacts between educators and children. Examples of socio-therapeutic activities are: play, themed activities and pastimes, relaxing and playing sports; re-educational experiences, drama, and connecting with the community (both children and educators).

¹⁵⁷ The therapeutic community method involves regular joint meetings of educators/ therapists and those under their care, with the aim of teaching teamwork, cooperation within a group, dealing with conflict situations, and how to make, and take responsibility for, decisions. This method requires the daily analysis of current events, in order that children can receive information from peers and educators as to their progress.

¹⁵⁸ Street education, drawing on the tradition of teachers in the inter-war period, is a relatively new method for establishing contact with a street child. It allows one not only to get to know the

The activities begin with a reliable diagnosis of a child's problems in the context of its family and environment. The course of work to be undertaken with the child and family is determined on this basis. Children are sorted by age and type of problem. Then, depending on their needs, one or more of the previously mentioned methods of work are employed.

3. Actions on behalf of street children in the Mazowsze province, as part of an international project. Selected items

In this article, I will present a qualitative analysis of activities on behalf of socially excluded children. This analysis is based on a study of day support/care centers (youth development centers and community centers) and of street educator organizations, which was conducted over the 2010-2011 school year in several suburbs of Warsaw. The aim of the study was to analyse and describe the phenomenon known as street children. We were interested in the relationship between the educators, teachers, the managers of NGOs and the children who were participating in the activities organized by the centers providing support to children at risk of social exclusion. We also wanted to find out how they were evaluated by the centers' partners and by the children themselves. The research was exploratory in nature - aiming to describe the methods used to help children at risk of social exclusion. We were interested in the forms of developmental-support care provided. The study was material to a project carried out as part of our doctoral work at the Université Paris VIII, entitled "The risk of the social exclusion of children and young people. Social policy in the Ile-de-France and Mazowsze regions", and funded by the Ile-de-France region, with the participation of Dr Marta Zahorska from the University of Warsaw, Institute of Sociology.

There are four elements of interest to be examined: street children as a target group of activities, the innovativeness of the forms of work undertaken for the benefit of street children, the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and the child's views as a participant in the activities.

1) Street children as a target group of activities

The studied population consists of children who live in the following locations: two districts of Warsaw, one located in the city center (A), the second

child, but also its natural environment. This method assumes that a teacher, going into the children's world, gains a better understanding of their situation, and is therefore better able to take the appropriate steps to motivate them to change their behaviour. A major advantage of street education is the ability to respond quickly to the needs of a child. The usefulness of the street education method is demonstrated by the numerous examples of its use by international organizations.

characterized by a high degree of poverty (B); two cities in the vicinity of Warsaw, one of which is characterized by a diverse community/landscape (C), the other (D), is a city about 50 km from Warsaw, with high unemployment, and considerable poverty in areas once part of the State Collective Farms (PGR - Państwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne).

The majority of children interviewed were older than 12 years of age, with a predominance of boys. This situation may reflect the reality of the street children problem, but may also be a factor of the set group of children that researchers had access to. The families of the children studied have problems of violence and suffer a variety of illnesses including alcoholism. Most are large families with many children, but there are also single-parent families, generally with single mothers. The children often have problems at school (repeating school years, truancy) and provide pedagogical challenges (accosting and offending people on the street, swearing at their peers, fighting and stealing). They are often responsible for their younger siblings, taking on the responsibilities of their parents (girls deal with the cooking and cleaning at home, the boys take odd jobs). In locations B and D there were also instances of euro-orphans. The living conditions of the children and their families are difficult: communal housing, apartments with damp, rot and no electricity (especially in areas B and C). As an overall observation it is worth noting, that the children who were described by their school counsellors as 'difficult students' were generally conspicuous by their absence from the day support/care center activities (the exceptions were children in area B covered by the street educator program).

2) Propagating innovative forms of work with street children

Out of the four locations studied, it was only area B that targeted students, not regularly attending compulsory education, with activities that were an extension of the work at their schools (street educators). The other areas lacked sufficient resources for such forms of work. Meanwhile, it would appear that these are a necessary component of work with children who are marginalised to a greater degree.

All the studied organizations declare that they work with families, however this was only true in two cases: a family counsellor program in location A (program terminated due to lack of funds); sporadic action by educators from area D (a small town environment) like home visits and cooperating with families. The results show that it is necessary to expand the specialist support programs undertaken at the place of residence of children who are sick, disabled, victims of violence, children of alcoholics (educators in areas C and D especially pointed to the lack of programs and the urgent need to fill this gap).

3) Effectiveness and efficiency of programs

Children from areas C and D evaluate the work being done by the youth centers more highly than children in the remaining areas; they treat the centers as a second home; the pupils do their homework without help, in order to later have time for other activities, such as play, or for normal conversation. Children attending in areas A and B have a less favourable opinion of their centers. Those from area A particularly give the impression that they only attend due to coercion; they do not show much interest in the place itself. This may be due to a “big city effect”, but also due to the developmental activities not being designed to the children's needs.

Children from three of the four areas like to attend the activities organized by the centers, and also attend regularly (over a period of years). According to the children, attending the youth centers has an impact on their engagement. Children from location D emphasize that, as a result of encouragement from teachers, they have become involved in social initiatives: they collect money from the public on behalf of the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity, participate in local gazettes. They believe that their voice is important in the “public debate”. In area C, the children said that they have better results at school, are able to find positive role models in the group, and do not feel alienated.

The children's perception of the educators and their work can also be attributed to teacher experience. In the case of children from area D, the high opinion of the activities may be due to the fact that the educators running them are people with 30 years of work experience, who have worked previously in schools, and who are now retired. These people are often very well acquainted with the community. The high appreciation could also result from the creative approach taken by teachers to children's problems (e.g. meetings with “famous people” in area C or innovative forms of activities in B). It should be noted however that the center in area D was mostly attended by girls. The more marginalised children avoided the community centers.

4) The views of the child as a participant, and as the main recipient of action

Interviews with children show that there is a great need for preventive measures. The process of the increasing marginalization of children is happening very rapidly, especially in areas A and B (children spend their free time bothering the homeless and setting fire to rubbish bins).

As part of the study, interviews were conducted with children, in which one of the questions concerned the evaluation of a given facility. Their statements were compared with the responses of adults, organizations and institutional partners of the given facility. The results show that adults often forget the

interests of the child and, in the fight for resources, focus on competition instead of cooperation. Adults idealize the effectiveness of actions undertaken on behalf

of street children, whilst it is the pupils who describe the effectiveness of the facilities much more realistically.

Children's suggestions for improving the performance of the facilities: children from area D noted that passive forms of care dominate in the community centers (the lack of targeted programs e.g. dyslexia, creative arts, physical health). They proposed that the existing schedule be changed, and that a greater emphasis be placed on prophylactic, developmental, and sport oriented classes. In some cases, the children were extremely critical. According to P., aged 13, there is a lack of specialized courses and the community youth development centers acted more like community centers. Children from area C were of a different opinion, emphasizing that teachers appreciate their input and are open to discussion, though they sometimes do not react strictly enough to problems that occur in a facility. In area B the children rate working with the street educators very highly, and appreciate their teachers' hard work and commitment. The children in area A were exclusively critical of their teachers, probably also due to the high degree of marginalisation in that area.

4. Main sins and failures of prevention measures aimed at street children

1) A prevention system focused on poor but not marginalised children

The initiatives taken on behalf of street children are diverse. Children are provided with a mixture of facilities where they can do their homework, get an extra meal, play, develop their interests etc. Unfortunately, as demonstrated by our research, the offer of educational care is tailored to children from poor rather than alienated families, and to girls rather than boys. They provide good support for children who are having difficulty with learning, lack conditions at home to do homework, and yet who want to have good grades at school. School programs are so overloaded that they require increased effort and time to master them, especially from children of difficult backgrounds, without help or good parent role models. In all the facilities, the complaint was that, after going through homework with the children, not enough time remained for any other activities.

2) Low quality of local community programs

The activities of the facilities are very limited. There are no groups for music, art, sport, technical skills or theatre. Once or twice a year children prepare something be it a performance for some occasion, or singing Christmas

carols, but there is no set program for developing their talents. Community youth development centers are often situated in buildings that are poorly equipped, are only open for a few hours, and then not necessarily every day. The lack of interesting activities discourages attendance and participation by adolescent youth, who are seeking more interesting ways of spending their time. Wrecking toilets or having arguments provides more excitement than learning poetry by heart or overcoming the numerous legs of a crab. An alternative may be street educators. However this type of initiative is very rare. Young people's free time is spent at their own discretion, and this is not conducive to their re-socialisation.

3) Lack of a comprehensive social policy towards street children

There are clear differences between institutions in and outside Warsaw. Within the capital, extensive free activities were on offer to the youngest children, while in suburban areas the offer was much reduced. However, even in the first case, not all children are able to participate in the activities. Presumably, these are primarily the children and young people who are already excluded, and unable to adapt to the norms and rules prevailing in the institutions organizing free activities. This non-use of the available opportunities deepens the developmental deficits and differences of these children in relation to their peers.

The local conditions in which the community efforts on behalf of street children take place also play a significant role. There are areas with little to offer, where the activities of NGOs are practically non-existent. In areas with greater resources, there are plenty of NGOs but there is a lack of corrective and therapeutic activities targeted at children with the most severe deficits. They require professionally prepared staff and specialists ready to work with difficult teenagers. Here it is worth noting that there is practically no system that permits youth development center and community center educators to direct children to specialist facilities. This is often due to low financial resources, but also from the lack of realistic, local social policy plans, for socially excluded children. An analysis of social needs and the resulting prophylactic strategies, as developed at the regional and county level, shows that the latter are generally either not performed, or do not go beyond a wish list that is unsupported by any research.

5. Towards solving the problem of street children

To prevent these phenomena, it seems necessary to develop successful and effective day care support. Providing street children with meaningful activities, to do in their spare time, should be as important a task for the educational system as the development of school curricula. Only the linking of care, inside

and out of school, can deliver positive educational effects. Existing administrative divisions, the lack of coordination between the activities of schools and other institutions, and different perceptions of the meaning of leisure and school time, often condemned to failure those educational efforts aimed at helping children from difficult backgrounds.

It is also important for social welfare institutions and their partners, who are working to prevent social exclusion, to cooperate with each other to a greater extent. Street children often come from families affected by a variety of problems: poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence, drug abuse, health and educational difficulties. Here, the interdisciplinary nature of the measures taken should be key. Often, different services and institutions are called in to deal with the aforementioned family situations, and these rarely cooperate with each other. Families feel cornered. Yet, in the case of street children, the co-operation of their families is crucial. Educators at the studied facilities often stressed however, that they have hardly any contact with parents and, even if contact is achieved, working with them is very difficult. Therefore, cooperation with other social services in this regard is essential. There should also be investment in specialized action on behalf of street children, such as street educators, who, as indicated by local governments, are much more effective with children most at risk of exclusion than traditional forms of assistance (youth centers, community centers).

The implementation of a local system of prevention on behalf of street children requires systematic and reliable scientific research and analysis. However, this study found there was a lack of statistical data regarding children as an independent, separate group. Presently, the focus is on families with children, but not the children themselves. Children are not the direct subject of study. Family centrism prevails in discussions and research. In statistical tests, the family unit is the basic unit of analysis, and not its individual members. So, for example, studies of poor people will say, that their poverty is associated with the situation of people in the labour market and specific life conditions rather than with the situation of individual members of the families. Although, due to local government reform, care and education institutions for children are now included in social policy and its allocated funding, it should also be noted that social assistance in Poland is focused primarily on adults.

The acknowledgement of children as a separate and independent group is therefore essential to the process of organizing and designing actions aimed at street children. Also a fundamental element in the diagnosis, and assessment of the children's social situation, is their inclusion in the process.

Not least is the requirement for staff assessment and training. Prophylactic schemes aimed at street children require specialized personnel, professionally trained to work in areas that are marginalised and at risk of social exclusion, and staff with specific skills and attitudes. It is necessary to have a knowledge of the psychological mechanisms initiating specific deficits and personality disorders, a knowledge of the functioning of family systems, an ability to work with the family, an attitude of respect, partnership and a courteous approach to the client. In the surveyed facilities, educators and directors are interested in the welfare of the institution, and not the welfare of the child. Adults focus on the struggle for resources, rather than on cooperation. There is often a lack of full-time professional staff (teachers work elsewhere to bolster their income). In addition to specialized training combining theoretical and practical orientation, educators should also have their activities submitted to supervision (in our study we noted this occurred in a minority of institutions).

Finally, the system of prevention efforts aimed at the street should be monitored and its activities subjected to evaluation of effectiveness. In none of the surveyed institutions could information be obtained concerning the evaluation of the activities carried out on behalf of children and youth. The consequence of such a situation is the irrational spending of funds and the inefficient use of staff potential. All programs should be evaluated by experts, independent of the institutions awarding grants and the teams implementing projects. This would likely require the development of qualitative and quantitative performance indicators. The selection of evaluation indicators should be consistent with the aims and assumed effects of a particular program.

Summary

Public opinion and Government are presently focusing a lot of attention on children and on childhood. The place of children in society and their welfare are the subject of particular interest and effort. There is particular concern for the situation of children who are emotionally homeless despite having a home and family, and who, due to insufficient support from family, take to the streets. This text contains a review of the concept of "street children", with special emphasis on its traditional and modern applications in sociology. The author presents the results of her research into street children, and the types of initiatives directed towards them, in the Mazowsze province. The results reveal the social problem that street children present in Poland, the specificities and the weaknesses of the Polish care system in relation to street children, and existing and new means of solving the problem.

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Fig. 1. Conceptual model of a street youth category.

Fig. 2. The street child.

IV. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

“Processual models of biographies of women experiencing domestic violence: An analysis of human strengths in the context of an action plan”

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1. Introduction

Violence is a phenomenon difficult to define, among other reasons because of the variety of its manifestations. Its description involves such factors as: intention, the criterion of action, effects of violent actions that may be direct or remote and social norms. Universal definitions are characterized by a high degree of generality; therefore, a question emerges concerning their practical use due to the lack of precision of the individual components of the definition, which cannot be operationalized¹⁵⁹. The widespread perception of violence is based on the assumption that it is every act that breaches an individual's right to freedom and forces an individual to behave contrary to his or her will¹⁶⁰.

In violence - suffering, harm, infliction of psychological pain is most commonly the way of achieving the goal, for example, forcing someone to the desired behavior. It does not need to be destructive, it can be guided by noble motives, it can be identified as help, an effective technique, or a necessary component of education¹⁶¹.

An important role in the perception of behavior and its evaluation is played by models and norms. The same behavior in one situation may be perceived as a sign of concern, action aimed for the good of an individual, and in another as detrimental action. The positive and negative aspect of violence boils down to the acceptable and unacceptable form of violence, whose borders are very difficult to determine. In addition, it should be remembered that not only action, but also failure to act may be a source of abuse experienced by an individual¹⁶².

Violence occurring in a family (called family violence), also known as domestic violence, is a general term indicating rapid interactions between family members, bringing about physical and mental suffering of one party and the sense of acquiring, confirming or strengthening the control of the other party. Analyzing the phenomenon of domestic violence, it should be noted that

¹⁵⁹ J. Mazur, *Przemoc w rodzinie. Teoria i rzeczywistość*, Warszawa 2002, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ I. Pospiszyl, *Przemoc w rodzinie*, Warszawa 1994, p. 10.

¹⁶¹ J. Mazur, op. cit., p.12

¹⁶² I. Pospiszyl, op. cit., pp. 13-16.

persons applying violence can be both adults (violence against a partner, child or elderly person, such as a parent) and children (violence against brothers, parents and the elderly, such as grandparents).

Based on the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe R/85/4 on domestic violence of 26 March 1985, the term domestic violence is understood as “any act or omission which prejudices the life, the physical or psychological integrity, or the liberty of a person or that seriously harms the development of his or her personality”¹⁶³. A similar definition is proposed by the Polish Act of 29 July 2005 on counteracting domestic violence. The term “domestic violence” refers to one-time or repeated intentional act or omission that violates the rights or personal good of the persons mentioned in section 1 [family members – author’s comment], in particular such that puts these people in danger of losing their life, health, affecting their dignity, personal inviolability, freedom, including sexual freedom, making harm to their physical or mental health, as well as causing suffering and moral damage to the persons affected by violence¹⁶⁴.

Definitions of domestic violence, depending on the adopted perspective, emphasize different criteria:

- legal - legislation and the resulting rights and obligations on the part of individuals and institutions,
- moral - that refers to human sensitivity, conscience and moral judgments,
- psychological - pointing to internal processes, mechanisms and the complexity of human relationships,
- socio-cultural - analyzing traditions, customs and attitudes of the society.

Taking into account the different definitions of violence in partner relationships, it is possible to capture some common elements occurring in them¹⁶⁵:

- violence is associated with a person with whom the victim has a close relationship (a partner, spouse), in which there is unequal power system,
- the stronger party uses his or her power and physical force against the weaker party,
- both parties treat each other as objects,

¹⁶³ E. Bieńkowska, *Przemoc w rodzinie*, “Jurysta”, No. 4/1996, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Ustawa z dnia 29 lipca 2005 r. o przeciwdziałaniu przemocy w rodzinie (Dz. U. 2005 nr 180, poz. 1493, art. 2, pkt. 2).

¹⁶⁵ I. Rajska-Kulik, *Inter-marriage violence – circumstances of remaining of the abused women in a harmful relationship*, [In:] E. Mandal (ed.), *Płeć a wybrane problemy społeczne*, Vol. 1(28)/2007 Katowice, p. 12.

- the element binding the relationship is the fear of the victim – a woman – and manipulation taking advantage of this fear performed by a man who does not reckon with the woman's rights, needs and desires, since what he wants is full control over the situation and a sense of power over the woman.

Working with the Foundation Against Trafficking and Slavery “La Strada”, and later with the Specialist Support Center for Victims of Domestic Violence, I was thinking about the circumstances, conduct and effects of their work, mainly with women. Therefore, my interest gradually began to concentrate on violence against women, focusing primarily on the relationship between the course of their experiences and human strengths¹⁶⁶. Due to their difficult, often traumatic experiences, I came to the conclusion that studying their biographical narratives is the right way to reconstruct the processual nature of violence from a subjective perspective.

2. Process structures in biographical experiences

A narrative is treated in the field of studies as a material that allows for the reconstruction of the pattern of individual biographical experiences and the discovery of the basic processual structures a biography (*Prozesstrukturen des Lebensablaufs*), corresponding to the basic types of the narrator's attitude to the important phases of his or her life¹⁶⁷. Fritz Schütze indicates that the individual life story consists of a sequence of specific process structures that appear in any biography, but in different configuration of dependencies, and not necessarily all of them in each biography. On the one hand – determination of the possible combinations of these structures within individual biographies enables characterization of the types of the life course and comparing individual fates. On the other hand - biographical processes reconstructed in a sequential manner reflect the sequential nature of the social process in which the individual is involved. In the first case, this refers to studying the phenomenon of a course of human life, in the second – to studying the processual nature of social phenomena through the lens of biography¹⁶⁸.

¹⁶⁶ This issue is the subject of research in the Specialist Support Center for Victims of Domestic Violence, based in Łódź, within the framework of a doctoral dissertation, titled “Experiences in narratives - analysis of the importance of human strengths. Based on the examples of biographies of the clients of a support center”, (Łódź, 2012), which was prepared at the Department of Educational Sciences, University of Łódź, under the scientific supervision of Professor E. Marynowicz-Hetka.

¹⁶⁷ A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, *Chaos i przymus. Trajektorie wojenne Polaków – analiza biograficzna*, Łódź 2002, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶⁸ M. Prawda, *Biograficzne odtwarzanie rzeczywistości (O koncepcji badań biograficznych Fritza Schütze)*, “Studia Socjologiczne”, No. 4/1989, p. 84.

Based on the inductive analysis of narrative interviews, F. Schütze distinguished four basic process structures of a biography. They correspond to the basic types of the narrator's attitude to the critical phases of his or her life, and the varied forms of activity that constitute his or her social activities and are dominant within these phases. In addition to biographical processes - based on the principle of intentional action - there are processes in which external factors (including those that may arise as a result of the actions taken by an individual himself or herself) deprive individuals of the ability to steer the course of their life, and the dominant principle becomes just experiencing, drifting (Erleiden). Intentional action - on the one hand, and experiencing - on the other, designate the space for the most important biographical decisions, as well as the space of the possible interactions between the subjective and objective level¹⁶⁹.

The process structures of a biography defined by Fritz Schütze are as follows:

- 1) Biographical action schemes (*biographische Handlungss-chemata*) that reflect the principle of intentional, long-term planning of the course of one's life and successful or unsuccessful attempts to implement the plans of the individual. We are dealing here with a situation when an individual takes action to realize the plans that he or she had made whose goal is directly related to himself or herself, for example, plans concerning accomplishments and achievements, initiatives aimed at changing the life situation, causing a change without the explicit aims, intention of "trying from scratch", taking up, under the influence of some circumstances, actions that go beyond the routine ways of solving problems, which lead to serious consequences in life. Finally, there are such plans of action that are present during a time limited in advance, resulting in temporary suspension and not a change in long-term biographical processes (the so-called time-off). In all these cases, an individual is intentionally doing something with his or her life and identity.
- 2) Institutional schedules for organizing biographies (*institutionelle Ablaufsmuster*) or institutional normative patterns that correspond to the principle under which an individual is oriented on the institutional normative expectations and is controlled by them. It refers to such biographical sequences in which the individual is focused on fulfilling the expectations, objectives and rules of the institution, such as those resulting from the age norms, participation in family life, professional life, in all types of institutions, not just the formal ones. Although the institutional arrangements form a permanent frame of the life course, they become the basic structure of

¹⁶⁹ A. Rokuszewska-Pawełek, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

biographical orientation only when they are the basis of the organization of all the actions of an individual in a given stage of life - when the individual absorbs them, accepts them and sets them above other arrangements. Therefore, the decisive aspect here is not that a particular phase of life formally takes place within an institution, but that the problems related to the implementation of the institutional standards and expectations become paramount biographically. It should be noted here that the dominance of this process structure at certain biographical times is often associated with the problems and difficulties in the fulfillment of institutional roles.

- 3) Trajectories (Verlaufskurven) make a complex, sequential process running according to a specific scheme that corresponds to the principle of being gripped by external circumstances and events, independent of the will of the individual and beyond the individual's control. These sequences of externally determined biographical events reflect the principle of experiencing (drifting). This refers to such biographical situations in which an individual is in a new situation, heavily influenced by external forces independent of his or her intentions and causing progressive shrinking of the person's capacity to enjoy freedom of action. If the attempts to grasp the control over the course of events only increase the sense of a gap between the intentional actions and the determined actions, the whole life situation becomes destabilized, the current system of orientation breaks down, and the whole process is accompanied by suffering.
- 4) Biographical metamorphoses (Wandlungsprozesse) correspond to the processes of radical, positive change in the course of life, related to the fact that an individual has encountered unexpected, opportunities in life. The emergence of the previously non-existent or the discovery of the so far not perceived potential of action leads to the identity-related transformation of the individual. Such transformation may also emerge unexpectedly as a result of the implementation of a specific biographical project. It may be associated with an effort to replace one process structure by another, and it may also be one of the stages of biographical work on the trajectory¹⁷⁰.

3. Processual models of biographies of women experiencing violence

The experiences of the narrators associated with being subjected to violence make their subjective version of events and live testimony, but they are also a source of the knowledge on the phenomenon of violence. Considering the way of talking about the experiences, it must be recognized that almost all narrators

¹⁷⁰ M. Prawda, op. cit., pp. 85-87.

(except those staying in the specialist center for victims of domestic violence for a very short time) were using therapy. It had an effect on their communicative competences, and thus the length of the interview, the extent to which they were able to freely construct the narrative and the way of talking about the experienced situations, because they used the language characteristic for those professionally involved in the phenomenon of violence. Furthermore, telling the story of their own life in the past, might have been important for directing the narrative, in accordance with the idea of the narrators regarding my need to obtain specific information.

An analysis of the narrative's structure and through it the organization of experiences in the life of the narrators (stages of life, the sequence and dynamics of process structures) allowed to compare the women's fates and draw up the characteristics of three types of the course of their lives making the processual models of a biography. The narratives were constructed with reference to three intertwining spaces verbalized by the narrators: the space related to the family of origin, the space of their own family (family of procreation) and the space of the support center. At the same time, a reconstruction was conducted of the processuality of violence (its circumstances, course and consequences), as well as the actions of those involved in the situation - from the perspective of the narrators - participants of the events.

The course of life shaping within the process structures, their sequences or dynamics were dependent on human strengths¹⁷¹ of the narrator and those external towards her, and the interactions between them. Although similar configurations of process structures were sometimes shared by some narrators, the differences between certain specific types arise from the potential possessed by the narrators, as well as the attitude and motives for some decisions and actions they resorted to in the face of various life circumstances. In addition, a very important factor was the importance of human strengths external to the narrators, i.e. the intensity of support forces, braking forces and/or destructive forces, in the form of the experienced violence.

Distinguishing the three types of life courses of women experiencing violence certainly does not exhaust all the possibilities. Presumably, while

¹⁷¹ Human strengths make a property (attribute) of the persons present in the narratives. Human strengths being a kind of ability, opportunity, are not shown in direct observation, but manifest themselves in action and their presence can be determined only by observing the effects of their incidence. The effects of human strengths can be analyzed with regard to two aspects: first, with respect to the sequence and dynamics of the process structures revealed in the narrators' experiences, and second, due to changes in their identity.

analyzing the experiences of the consecutive persons, it will be possible to distinguish other types or subtypes of the course of life.

3.1. “Mental Self-Denying Persons”¹⁷². Processual model of biography - the first type of life course

The narrators embodying the first life course type (Fig. 1), in their family home were focused on the normative expectations of others. They were subject to the influence of the institutional pattern of norms the control resulting from it and the dependency on the environment. They adopted the standards set by other people that made a point of reference for them, they did not develop their own independence and responsibility, and sometimes their social age was lowered. This situation was natural for them and did not result in a desire to set free from the outside influence, even in later life.

In adulthood, the moment of getting independent was perceived by them as the natural course of things, resulting from their age and social expectations, and the narrators acted according to the cultural patterns known by them and surrendered to the influence of institutional normative pattern. The opinion of others was still very important for them and even though they associated themselves with the represented rules, their behaviour was managed externally and depended on the sanctions *what will the people say* (N1).

The easiness with which they subordinated to others, their submission and being focused on fulfilling the expectations, led to the situation when under negative impacts of external forces, the narrators were, in a way unnoticed for them, drawn into the trajectorial process. The narrators, additionally weakened by the devastating impact of the trajectory, subdued to it, did not attempt to set free from the situation and systematically organized their life with it. Their activity was of preservative and protective nature and focused on reducing the daily negative effects of the dynamics of the process. A release, escape from the trajectorial situation was not a strategy launched by the narrators, but the result of external forces. These were other people that decided about the further fate of the narrators, helping to reorganize their life situation and arrange a stay in the support center (e.g. intervention of a neighbor who alerted a social worker about repeated incidents of violence). When they came to live in the support center, the narrators found themselves under the influence of institutional normative pattern and easily settled in the institutional reality. They fulfilled the requirements of the personnel, waiting at the same time for help in solving their problems and supporting them in their daily difficulties. The narrators made the

¹⁷² The names given to all processual models of biography are taken from the narratives of the surveyed women.

changes in their own life dependent on the actions of others. The staff at the center and its residents had a significant contribution to the narrators' biographical action plan, they also organized circumstances conducive to its implementation. They supported the biographical work of the narrators on the trajectory, thanks to which the narrators began to see new opportunities and build their potential, which was the beginning of the transformation of their identity.

3.2. "Strongwomen". Processual model of biography - the second type of life course

The narrators, whose course of life reflects the second type (Fig. 2), in their family home, were also subject to institutional normative model, but almost from the beginning, it co-occurred with the trajectorial potential. Since early childhood, their strengths were subjected to destructive influence of external forces, which also led to accelerating their social age. These narrators applied defensive strategies, took up the fight with the trajectorial potential, as much as it was possible for children. Due to their young age, complete dependence on adults, or lack of support from the outside, they had to organize their life within the trajectory. The planned release was identified with, among others, getting self-dependent, independence of the parents, often joined with the escape and searching for the opportunities to fulfill the need of security and love outside the family home. Sometimes, however, the escape from a trajectorial situation was not possible due to the fact that they lived at their parents' place of residence. Then, the narrators focused their efforts on reducing the dynamics of the process as well as limiting and mitigating its adverse effects.

Reorganization of the life situation, associated with moving out of the family home and starting their own family, meant that the narrators had the opportunity to implement the biographical action plan that assumed having a happy family and satisfactory - for them - performance of the roles of a wife and mother. It is important to remember that an escape from the trajectorial situation did not stop the dynamics of the process, so the narrators simultaneously took up working on the experiences acquired in the family home, trying to explain and understand them. With time, the narrators' strengths and the strengths external to them (of a husband, partner), focused on achieving different objectives and realizing different values. Therefore, the inhibitory or destructive external forces opposed to the implementation of the biographical action plan conceived by the narrators and gradually led to the formation of the trajectorial potential. The narrators once again took up the fight against the trajectorial process, and - as their strengths were beginning to wear out - they tried to organize their lives within

the trajectory. They still continued to seek to implement the biographical action plan, wanting to give their family a semblance of the ordinary family.

The reorganization of the narrators' life circumstances followed a change of their milieu and moving to the support center, which took place in two different ways. Leaving home was either the result of activation of the narrator's strengths (the narrator escaped in fear of her own reaction), sometimes supported by others (information provided about the support center, ensured transport of personal belongings) or occurred in connection with the pressure of external forces (the narrator was kicked out of home by the partner).

In the space of the support center, the dominant process structure was institutional normative pattern. Actions taken under the operation of the center were designed to, among others, ensure the feeling of security and the possibility to regain balance and support. Under such conditions, the narrators rebuilt their strengths, which for years, essentially continuously since childhood, had been subjected to destructive external forces. In view of discovering their potential and new opportunities, the narrators underwent biographical metamorphoses, concerning both the identity transformations, as well as radical changes in the course of life. Regeneration of strengths also allowed the individuals to formulate a plan for the future, whose implementation already began. The next steps of biographical action plan could include support provided by other people, because a significant transformation in the attitude of the narrators was the ability to ask for help, but the plan was feasible and based, primarily, on their own strengths.

The action on the part of the representatives of social professions was conducive to initiating or continuing biographical work on the trajectory. At the same time, the conditions and organization of life in the center could sometimes cause new suffering, usually in people who were still debilitated, who did not take up biographical work, or when the narrator regained the strength to take intentional action and would not be subject to normative expectations and control of the institutional pattern.

3.3. "Warriors". Processual model of biography - the third type of life course

The third type of life course (Fig. 3) is represented by the narrators who lived in their family homes under the influence of institutional normative pattern, but at the same time, strongly stressed the implementation of their action plan. The realization of the biographical plan sometimes differed from the fulfillment of the expectations and the objectives resulting from the age norms and participation in the family life. The need for autonomy felt by the narrators made them take action against the expectations of parents and deny

their advice and warnings, which in turn led to conflicts. The moment of becoming independent and leaving home was also the realization of the narrators' goals, against the wishes of parents, which weakened their mutual relations, and thus the strength of the provided support. Establishing their own family, the narrators continued to pursue their biographical action plan, which was oriented on the desire to have a happy family. Their actions were focused on the welfare of the family and its operation was based on their own strengths. The narrators emphasized that they found their place fulfilling the social roles, as well as their resourcefulness, maturity and responsibility for themselves and others, and also their own autonomy, limited only by conscious decisions such as compromises.

Destructive action of the forces external to the narrators, led to the accumulation of problems, gradually releasing the trajectorial potential. Disruptions in the functioning of the family met with their quick response - they activated their strengths to redress the balance. Since the efforts of the narrators did not remove the trajectorial potential, they began to organize their life within the trajectory, still attempting to hamper the dynamics of the process and reduce its negative effects.

The reorganization of the narrators' life took place against their will, under the influence of external forces (when a probation officer threatened to take their children away, or when their partners kicked them out from their home). In the space of the support center, the narrators came under the influence of institutional normative pattern. This situation they considered as temporary and forced, while they still tried to pursue the realization of their biographical action plan, and the representatives of social professions were only to support the regeneration of their strengths, which allowed them to continue the independent biographical work on the trajectory.

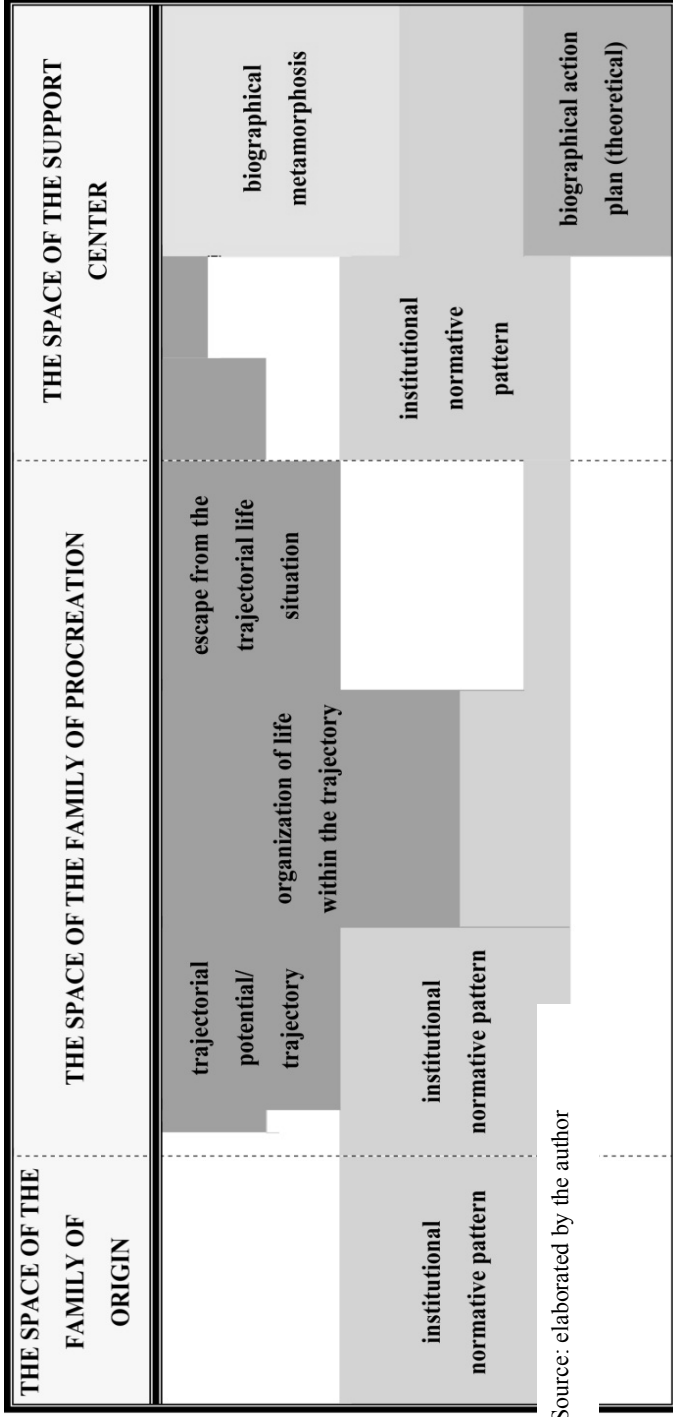


Fig.1. "Mental self-denying persons". Processual model of biography – the first type of the course of life

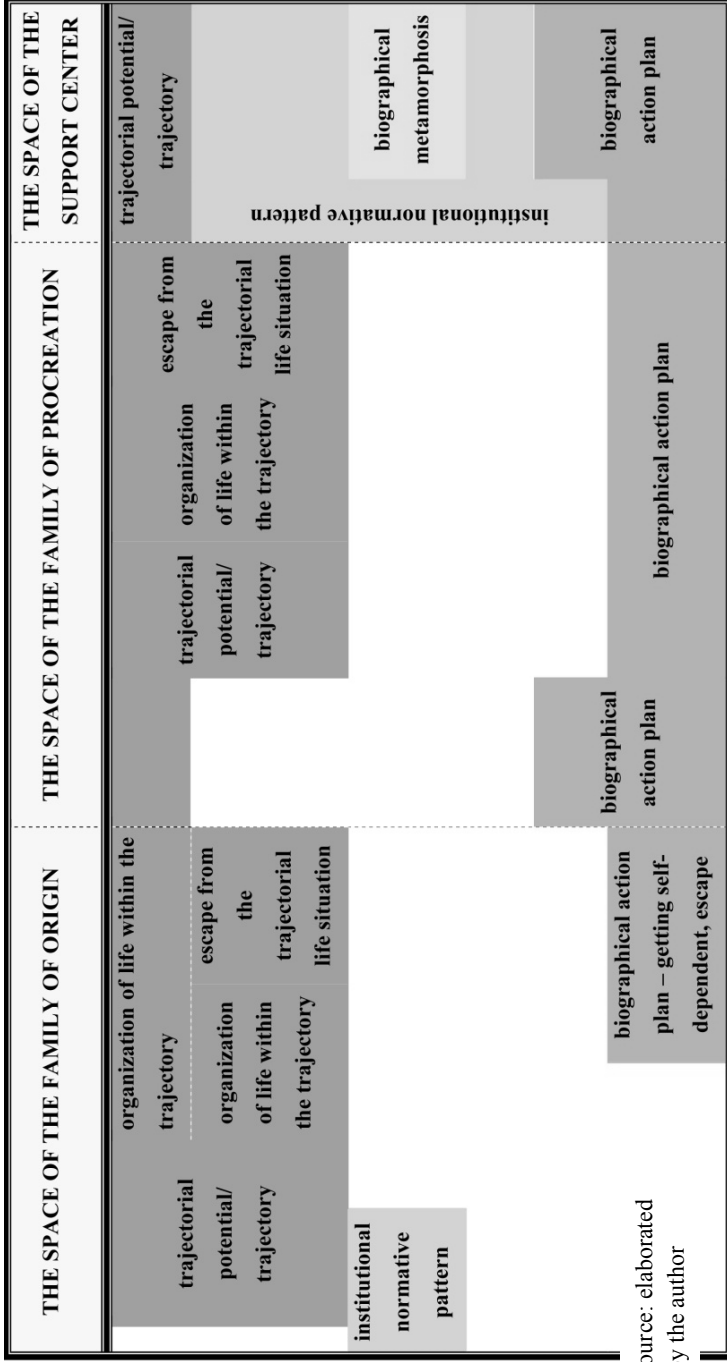
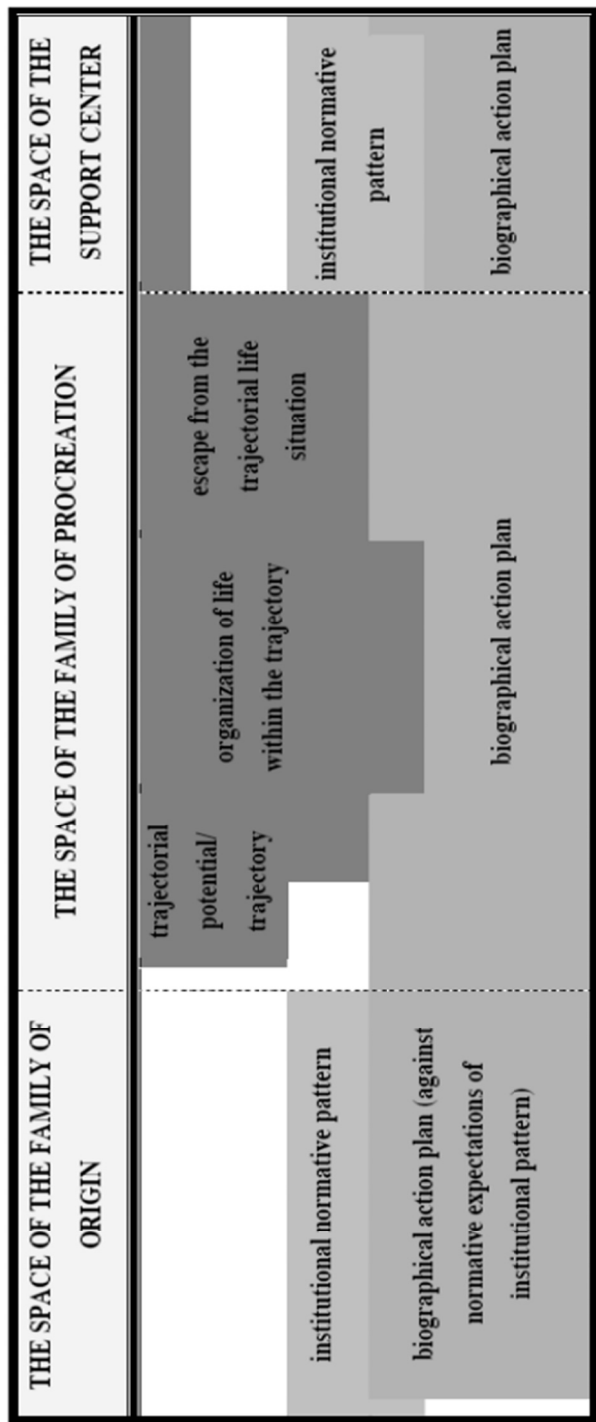


Fig. 2. “Strongwomen”. Processual model of biography – the second type of the course of life



Source: elaborated by the author

Fig. 3. “Fighters”. Processual model of biography – the third type of the course of life

The narratives of women experiencing domestic violence indicate that the oscillation between intentional action and experiencing on the part of the narrators, in addition to the impact of external forces, was also influenced by, among others, their activity, self-esteem, self-respect, sense of efficacy, assessment of potential abilities and skills, reflection, judgment, maturity, sense of responsibility, autonomy, optimism, orientation towards the future or past life and the awareness of having support.

Institutional normative patterns and trajectories resulted in gradual limiting the possibilities of taking action by the narrators, until they were reduced to experiencing associated with the influence and control exerted by others. Dependency, pressure, lack of freedom and control over one's life can cause pain and/or adaptation to this situation as a result of losing internal strengths. Lack of intentional actions may result from the destructive action of external forces, as well as docility, ease of subordinating to others, orientation on meeting their expectations, seeking in the opinions of other people the reasons for the guidance of their own actions. The powerlessness of the narrator can initially cause the need to take care of her, and thus to take the responsibility for her fate, but it is important that this situation should be temporary, planned and organized to help her become independent and activate her strengths.

Biographical action plans and biographical metamorphoses were the manifestation of the narrators' internal strengths, an example of their activation, planning and trying to implement their own plans, using the potential and exploring new opportunities. Intentional actions were intended to make changes in their life situation, they were focused on the development and self-advancement, conducted while resisting the influence of external forces - inhibitory and/or destructive and sometimes also those of supportive nature.

The diagnosis of the internal strengths of the narrators, determination of their potential, strengths, competencies, but also the weaknesses, deficiencies, delays in the development and problems provides an opportunity to strengthen them, wake them up, compensate them and make them more proficient. Thus, a diagnosis determining the orientation of action and the intensity of the narrator's strengths (the intentionality of action or experiencing), reveals the need for and the way of providing them with support.

4. Human strengths in the context of an action plan

Analysis of the importance of human strengths for the development of the narrators' experiences, shows the relationship of actions taken by them, and those involved in their lives, with the sequence and dynamics of the structures constituting the process. Careful diagnosis of the strengths of the narrators, their situation and the external human forces inherent in the milieu provide the basis

for planning specific activities. The narratives indicate that we can talk about an action plan in reference with two situations: the biographical action plan of the narrator, and planning the activities in cooperation with the representatives of social professions, especially in the support center, in accordance with the principles of its operation. Analysis of the biographical action plans shows that there can be distinguished two categories: plans aimed at acquiring, achieving something, focused on the pursuit to realize a specific goal, and plans targeted to escape from something, such as escape from a trajectorial situation. Some of these projects are theoretical, dream-like, others are more practical, usually involving some ongoing, preparatory activities.

Women experiencing violence sought above all to ensure that they and their children will have stability and security, so their attempts were aimed at obtaining or renting an apartment. Another very important issue for them was to find work, in general, or a better paid one, giving the chance to reconcile the obligations of an employee with bringing up children. The narrators also planned to start or continue their education (at school or through training), to renew and restore their relationships with family and to make further metamorphoses concerning their appearance. The support offered at the center and also the recovery of self-confidence and strengthening of the forces of the narrators led to the regulation of their formal issues concerning their relationship (submitting an application for divorce), financial issues (obtaining child support, family and social benefits, referring the case to the enforced debt collection entity), and housing issues (obtaining the confirmation of residence, applying for social accommodation or a flat to renovate).

The biographical plan of the narrators also concerned the issues related to their current partner and their attitude to build future relationships. The support of the center helping them to regenerate their strengths and the recovery of the sense of security and self-confidence both strengthen their belief in the rightness of the decision on parting with the partner. At the same time, the experience and the same mistakes committed (even several times) taught the narrators caution in their dealings with others, or caused reluctance to make new friends. There were also occasions when the narrators considered the possibility of returning to their former partners, getting involved in another relationship, or when they wanted, in the future, to arrange their personal life with a new partner. Biographical plans, formulated and implemented by the narrators, were the expression of their strengths, and - in varying degrees - also took into account the support and participation provided by others.

The narrators, who commenced biographical work on the past experiences and oriented themselves towards the future, presented a pro-active approach towards achieving realistic goals that they set for themselves. With the support

of professionals, they were rebuilding their strengths, convinced of their effectiveness, but also aware of the obstacles on the way to achieving goals, and thus they began to make gradual changes in their life. The narrators could use the help offered to them, and if necessary ask for it, but it was only the support for their strengths and it was not considered necessary for the success of realizing the plan.

The narrators who did not yet awaken their strengths were passive, lived the past, formulated a general, short-distance, theoretical plan. They pointed out the obstacles to achieving goals due to their age, lack of specific skills, physical health or mental health or their social situation. The fact of experiencing the lack of control over their own lives and inequality of opportunities, confirmed the narrators in the belief that they had no impact on their future, and thus they did not have the motivation to take action and brooded on the past failures. They awaited help and made the implementation of the plan dependent on the participation of other people, convinced of the lack of their own strengths. The actions taken at the support center for victims of domestic violence use both the practice of social work with individuals (single narrators) and with the group (the community of the current residents of the center), and the process of working with the narrator¹⁷³ is conducted on the basis of jointly prepared and approved action plan based on the prior diagnosis. The action plan created in the support center should be prepared in the early days of the narrator's contact with the center, accompanying the diagnosis and resulting from it, but such situation carries the danger related to the authorship, the acceptance and then the implementation of the plan.

The study indicated that the narrators, at the time of the reorganization of their lives, related to the change of the residence place, are characterized by different intensity of internal strengths. Oscillation between the extremes of helplessness and activity is important for their ability to make decisions related to the past and future. If the case of weakened, passive and docile narrators, their commitment to creating an action plan is restricted by the current situation. Therefore, the plan is conceived with substantial support of the center's staff, and the narrators do not feel the authors of the plan even though it concerns their lives. A social relationship of barter exchange nature (something for something)¹⁷⁴, imbalance of power and the associated distribution of goods as well as the passivity of the narrators, their submission – they all determine the

¹⁷³ R.A. Skidmore, M.G. Thackeray, *Wprowadzenie do pracy socjalnej*, Katowice 1998, pp. 76-81.

¹⁷⁴ P. Fustier, *Le lien d'accompagnement. Entre don et contrat salarial*, Paris 2000, after: E. Marynowicz-Hetka, *Pedagogika społeczna*, Podręcznik akademicki I, Warszawa 2006, pp. 139-141.

acceptance of the plan, which may be their defensive reaction or the result of the calculation of losses and gains. The consequence of this is that the plan remains "theoretical" and the narrator does not take steps for its implementation, while awaiting the activity of others. In the case of active narrators, directing the course of their lives and having their own biographical action plan, the most important issue is to take into account their intentions in creating the plan together with the representatives of social professions in the support center. Consistent content of both plans will mean the acceptance on the part of the narrators and their making the effort of implementing the plan using the support of others. In case of conflict, different points of view (employees' vs. the narrators') on the plan, the agreement becomes jeopardized, the asymmetry of relations increases, defensive reactions are induced, contrary to the intentions of both parties, and the range of support is going to be limited. The action plan created jointly by the narrators and the personnel of the support center should take into account the limited period of time that the narrators are to spend at the center, which is associated with the mode of functioning of the center. It is extremely important to make the narrators realize the deadline of completing the cooperation which is a part of the cooperation process. This does not mean a complete break of contacts, because the narrators can use the center's support, within a narrowed scope, not being the residents of the center.

The effect of the joint diagnosis of the narrators' life situation is to be gradual and consistent work on the introduction of changes in their lives. Biographical experiences, based on feeling, suffering, and submission to the expectations of other people need to be worked upon, which may be an important element of the plan. Dealing with the past can be the first step to make decisions about the future. Supporting the internal strengths of the narrators involves waking them up and facilitating their regeneration, as well as accompanying the narrators while they are overcoming difficulties, and finally exploring together the opportunities and ways of exploiting both their potential and that inherent in their milieu. The last step is to summarize the results and the changes made, to make the analysis of the strengths of the narrators in the context of their real possibility and ability to cope with the hardships and use the resources. Completion of the cooperation also indicates the independence of the narrator and her responsibility for her own fate.

5. Conclusions

Both studies on violence as a phenomenon and action associated with the intervention and assistance to the victims have a long tradition. Literature on domestic violence is extremely rich. Researchers look at this issue from

different perspectives: legal¹⁷⁵, psychological¹⁷⁶, psychiatric¹⁷⁷, sociological¹⁷⁸, educational¹⁷⁹, or medical¹⁸⁰. These studies typically deal with recognition of violence, its conditions, course and consequences, and propose ways of preventing it. The authors focus primarily on the victims of violence, mostly children¹⁸¹ and women¹⁸², or its perpetrators. This analysis was devoted to the experience and the meanings attached to this experience by women facing violence. The narratives became a form of attributing to this experience the public and social sense and expression, they also ensured a way of structuring such experience, understood as a construct of the human mind, based on the interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences. The analysis of the narratives of women experiencing violence helped to capture the subjective image of the meanings, as well as the processual nature of the phenomenon of violence – with its conditions, course and consequences. Thus, it was possible to reconstruct the organization of biographical experiences and to indicate the process structures occurring in the three areas of the narrators' life (space related to the family of origin, their own family - the family of procreation, and the support center), and also to determine the nature of the dependencies between them. On this basis, three types of the course of their lives were elaborated, making processual models of biography ("Mental Self-Denying Persons", "Strongwomen" and "Fighters"). The textual analysis of the narratives allowed the reconstruction of social processes associated with the phenomenon of violence from the perspective of the individual narrators who are the participants in the events. The narratives show the different configurations of dependencies and human strengths systems reflected in the

¹⁷⁵ E. Bieńkowska, op. cit.; U. Nowakowska, A. Kępka, W. Chańska, S. Kuczyńska (ed.), *Przemoc w rodzinie a wymiar sprawiedliwości*, Warszawa 2005; B. Hołyst, *Wiktymologia*, Warszawa 2006.

¹⁷⁶ See: K. Browne, M. Herbert, *Zapobieganie przemocy w rodzinie*, Warszawa 1999; D. Rode, *Psychologiczne uwarunkowania przemocy w rodzinie. Charakterystyka sprawców*, Katowice 2010; R.J. Ackerman, S.E. Pickering, *Zanim będzie za późno. Przemoc i kontrola w rodzinie*, Gdańsk 2002; J. Mellibruda, *Oblicza przemocy*, "Remedium", No. 12/1993; J. Mellibruda, *Przeciwdziałanie przemocy domowej*, Warszawa 2009; W. Badura-Madej, A. Dobrzyńska-Mesterhazy, *Przemoc w rodzinie. Interwencja kryzysowa i psychoterapia*, Kraków 2000; A. Lipowska-Teutsch, *Rodzina a przemoc*, Warszawa 1998; S. Kluczyńska, *Przemoc w rodzinie*, Warszawa 2007.

¹⁷⁷ Z. Lew-Starowicz, *Przemoc seksualna*, Warszawa 1992.

¹⁷⁸ J. Mazur, op. cit.

¹⁷⁹ I. Pospiszyl, op. cit.; I. Pospiszyl, *Razem przeciw przemocy*, Warszawa 1999.

¹⁸⁰ P.R. Salber, E. Taliaferro, *O przemocy domowej. Poradnik dla lekarza pierwszego kontaktu: jak stawiać pytania, by rozpoznać problem i ocalić czyjeś życie*, Warszawa 1998.

¹⁸¹ E. Jarosz, *Ochrona dzieci przed krzywdzeniem. Perspektywa globalna i lokalna*, Katowice 2009.

¹⁸² D.G. Dutton, *Przemoc w rodzinie*, Warszawa 2001.

process structures. They show the process of coping with traumatic experiences, the impact of the objectives, rules and expectations of other people on the orientation of the women's activities and the related to it “external steering control”, as well as the constant conflict between their desire for freedom and self-determination and the limitations. Moreover, it was also possible to observe, from the perspective of the narrators, the ways of overcoming difficulties, the process of planning and making changes in their life and personal metamorphoses. The narratives are also a source of knowledge about what is felt and thought by the narrators of the reported incidents.

Intentional actions associated with the use of violence breach the rights and personal welfare of the narrators, causing their suffering and damage. Violence, leaving its characteristic symptoms and causing immediate and long-term effects, also brings about stigmatization and marginalization. A diagnosis of the narrators, referring to the processual courses of life, allows to show the events for instance in the context of their circumstances, dynamics, duration, and the reaction of those involved, and also reveals the subjective interpretations of experiences, their meanings and significance.

Institutional support for the victims of violence, provided by the representatives of the authorities and social professions is related to the diagnosis of the situation, planning help, taking up interventions, and ensuring their coordination and control. The action plan created by the narrators themselves or jointly with the staff of the support center should be oriented towards the realization of a particular purpose (to support the internal strengths of the narrators), created on the basis of the diagnosis of the individual and her environmental context, taking into account both the needs as well as resources and potential. The basis for constructing an action plan should be a belief in the abilities of the narrators, their talents and efforts to enhance their own development and to have control over the course of life. This conviction causes that the goal of social support is to enhance their strengths to conduct self transformation as regards their life situation, to introduce deliberate changes and to take responsibility for them.

In this situation, it is important to make the narrators realize that they can benefit from social support in the development of their strengths, which includes broadening the scope of their abilities, skills, talents and interests, using consultancy opportunities or sharing experiences and fulfilling the needs. The ensured support should be available and adequate, but it first of all needs to have particular regard to the orientation of action and intensity of the narrators' strengths, as action inconsistent with the plans can incite a rebellion, discouragement and withdrawal, for fear of losing control over their lives.

Summary

The aim of this article is to familiarize readers with processual models of biographies of women experiencing domestic violence. This analysis was devoted to the experience and the meanings attached to this experience by women facing violence. The narratives became a form of attributing to this experience the public and social sense and expression, they also ensured a way of structuring such experience. A narrative is treated in the field of studies as a material that allows for the reconstruction of the pattern of individual biographical experiences and the discovery of the basic processual structures a biography – biographical action schemes, institutional schedules for organizing biographies, trajectories, biographical metamorphoses. Biographical plans, formulated and implemented by the narrators, were the expression of their strengths, and – in varying degrees – also took into account the support and participation provided by others. The narratives indicate that we can talk about an action plan in reference with two situations: the biographical action plan of the narrator, and planning the activities in cooperation with the representatives of social professions, especially in the support center, in accordance with the principles of its operation. An analysis of the narrative's structure, and through it the organization of experiences in the life of the narrators allowed to compare the women's fates and draw up the characteristics of three types of the course of their lives making the processual models of a biography ("Mental Self-Denying Persons", "Strongwomen", "Warriors"). The narratives were constructed with reference to three intertwining spaces verbalized by the narrators: the space related to the family of origin, the space of their own family (family of procreation) and the space of the support center. The experiences of the narrators associated with being subjected to violence make their subjective version of events and live testimony, but they are also a source of the knowledge on the phenomenon of violence.

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Ustawa z dnia 29 lipca 2005 r. o przeciwdziałaniu przemocy w rodzinie (Dz. U. 2005 nr 180, poz. 1493, art. 2, pkt 2).

Fig. 1. "Mental self-denying persons". Processual model of biography – the first type of the course of life.

Fig. 2. “Strongwomen”. Processual model of biography – the second type of the course of life.

Fig. 3. “Fighters”. Processual model of biography – the third type of the course of life.

V. SENIORS IN POLAND

“Social situation of older people in Poland”

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1. Introduction

Analyses of the situation of older people are frequently based on a shared although not commonly explicit conviction about elderly people's uselessness for the tissue and structure of the society. Such inconspicuous convictions, albeit indeed politically incorrect, come to light in unofficial statements or conversations among pre-working aged people like school pupils or higher education students, and working aged people occupied with their professional careers. They also find expression in social attitudes towards older people. The conviction about elderly people's uselessness is not a new phenomenon or one characteristic for our times and culture. It has been known to researchers in ethnography and anthropology who characterized it thoroughly in their studies¹⁸³. Younger generations brought up in consumerist culture in cult of youth and health often forget about a more basic life-long and natural human obligation – a duty to older generations, resulting from intergenerational debt. The debt can be analyzed in its biological, social, cultural and, lastly, moral facet. The latter addresses respect as a requirement justified by the mere fact that the elderly have existed and have passed various elements of their own experience on to the younger generations, including material, emotional, intellectual, social or cultural heritage.

Meanwhile, the social image of older people best manifested, as if through a magnifying glass, in the media, is being created with an aggressive language, builds an atmosphere of disdain, hurts the elderly people's dignity and prepares for neglect of their needs. As a result it induces marginalizing this age group. It can subsequently enable legalization of violence against seniors and damage their sense of security in various areas of life, including family relations, economy and safety in their living space. Listed factors impact relations with the closest environment as well as position in health and charity organizations or institutions or other public places. Finally, they also translate into apparent legal solutions, both when it comes to the constitutional as well as executive regulations.

The aim of this paper is to explore the current situation of older people in Poland and map problems that they face. Consequently, it may serve towards

¹⁸³ S. de Beauvoir, *Old Age*, Penguin Books Ltd., 1977.

pursuing an analysis of duties that will pay the natural intergenerational debt that young generations owe to their elders. It is important to note that the debt is a form of investment for the sake of one's own future, as the payment of one's dues to the earlier generations builds conditions for old age, which is an inevitable developmental perspective for most people, individually and socially. The situation of the elderly in Poland must be drawn based on statistics as well as on an analysis of their status in terms of finances, health condition, living facilities, family life and educational activity. In view of divergences between different documents and authors in setting the threshold old age¹⁸⁴, 65 years is the age used for the sake of this study.

2. Seniors in Poland – basic statistical data

An account of the statistic profile of older people is necessary for the sake of analyzing the situation of this age group. Old age is connected not only with the number of years lived by a person demarcated by a time boundary (chronology, calendar, public records) but also with a distinction according to biological, psychic, social, economic and legal transformations. Hence we talk about age in various contexts: biological, demographic, psychic, social, economic and legal¹⁸⁵. Significant differences can be noted between abovementioned types of age. Ageing can be connected to biological development, genetic conditioning, life experience, access to latest medical solutions, social status, economic situation, both individual and collective, as well as to political and other living conditions¹⁸⁶.

In spite of mentioned divergences time perspective is used for statistical analysis and older people as a group are distinguished according to a particular social feature that they share, namely their professional retirement. This attitude is present also in Polish gerontology and demographic research that sets the threshold of old age with the point of retirement, namely 60 for women and 65 for men. Following the latest amendments of the Polish pension law retirement age will be the same for both sexes and will be raised to 67. Changes state that retirement age will grow by three months every year from 1 January 2013,

¹⁸⁴ For instance, the threshold age defining old age for the Polish was 63, as estimated through a survey by The Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) [referred to as CBOS in all following footnotes unless marked otherwise (translator's note)] in 2012; see also *Polacy o starości*, statement of CBOS survey, Warszawa 1999.

¹⁸⁵ B. Szatur-Jaworska, P. Błędowski, M. Dziegielewska, *Podstawy gerontologii społecznej*, Aspra-JR, Warszawa 2006, pp. 45-48.

¹⁸⁶ M. E. Mianowany, I. Maniecka-Bryła, W. K. Drygas, *Starzenie się populacji jako ważny problem zdrowotny i społeczno-ekonomiczny*, "Gerontologia Polska", No. 12(4)/2004, pp. 172-175; K. Porzych, *Psychologiczne aspekty starzenia się i starości*, "Gerontologia Polska", No. 12(4)/2004, pp. 165-168.

which means that men will reach their final retirement age of 67 in 2020 and women in 2040¹⁸⁷.

International researchers usually follow the United Nations classification of old age that states the following:

1. Elder persons, between 60-64 years of age
2. Old persons, between 65-90 years of age
3. Very old persons, over 90 years of age¹⁸⁸.

Thus, the UN proposes to set the threshold of old age at 65 years of age¹⁸⁹.

Diverse criteria of old age are an important hindrance to making comparisons within the population of older people in terms of various social factors. Therefore, for the sake of clarity of perspective author of this paper considers the group of people who are professionally inactive due to age as older (referred to also as seniors or elderly). A statistical analysis of ageing processes of the Polish society must be based on a definition of demographic ageing. Demographic ageing means a growth in number and increase of percentage share in the whole population of post-working aged people with a simultaneous drop in numbers and decrease of percentage share in the population, of children and youths¹⁹⁰. The most significant indices of demographic ageing include:

- a) share of post-working aged people in the general structure of the population
- b) median of the age of the population (ageing index)
- c) demographic burden of post-working aged people in relation to working-aged people
- d) average life expectancy
- e) number of people over 65 years of age per every thousand of 0-14 year olds¹⁹¹.

A constant growth of the number of post-working aged people, as defined according to current categories (that is 65 for men and 60 for women), is the first and foremost characteristic of the population of Polish seniors. According to the data provided by the National Census of Population and Housing carried

¹⁸⁷ Art. 1a, 1b Ustawy z dnia 11 maja 2012 r. o zmianie ustawy o emeryturach i rentach z Funduszu Ubezpieczeń Społecznych oraz niektórych innych ustaw (Dz. U. 2012 nr 0 poz. 637).

¹⁸⁸ www.webcache.googleusercontent.com [30.12.2012].

¹⁸⁹ Z. Chodorowski, *Geriatrya. Postępy w diagnostyce i terapii*, Grafica, Gdynia 2007, pp. 13-15 and pp. 487-489.

¹⁹⁰ J. Szymańczak, *Starzenie się polskiego społeczeństwa – wybrane aspekty demograficzne*, [In:] G. Ciura, W. Zgliczyński (ed.), *Starzenie się społeczeństwa polskiego*, "Studia Biura Analiz Sejmowych", No. 2(30)/2012, Warszawa, p. 9.

¹⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 10.

out in 2011 there are 6,512 million post-working aged people which make 16.9% of the Polish population. This result indicates that the group of the elderly has risen by 0, 763 million, which makes 1.9% in comparison with the result of the previous National Census of Population and Housing carried out a decade before (2002).

The number of people > 60 was 7,613 million in 2011, which makes 19.9% of the Polish population. The same group accounted to 6,48 million that is 17% of the population in 2002, while it was 14.6% in 1988 and 8.3% in 1950¹⁹².

According to the 2011 survey 60-64 year old people were the second most numerous group, making 6.2% of the total population and 31% of the elderly. People at the age of 65-74 constituted the largest group making 36% of the elderly and 7.1% of the total Polish population, while people over 80 years of age constituted 17.5% of all elderly and 3.6% of the total Polish population. Women made the majority (58.2%) of older people in 2011, and they constituted 58.9% of all people over 60 years of age living in rural areas and 57.6% of the same age group living in towns and cities. Inhabitants of the cities are a majority the elderly (53%) and older people's share in the whole population grows faster in the cities than in rural areas.¹⁹³ Women prevail significantly in the group of people over 80 years of age and women over 80 make 12% (with the total number of 943, 700 persons) of the whole population of the elderly (persons over 60 years of age), while men over 80 make 5.3% (404,100 persons) of this group. A majority of older people (over 60 years of age), namely 4, 889 million that is 64.2% of all of the elderly, live in the cities, whereas 27,247 million people, that is 35.8% of all of the elderly, live in rural areas¹⁹⁴.

Poland is considered as a relatively demographically young country in the context of the European Union, according to the latest European Commission Demography Report. An average Pole is about three years younger than other EU citizens. Poland (beside Ireland and Slovakia) is one of the states with a high working-aged people index and the lowest index of old age¹⁹⁵.

However, the share of post-working aged population is expected to grow from 6,5 million (16.8%) in 2010 to near 9, 6 million (close to 27%) by 2,035

¹⁹² Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS) [Central Statistical Office; in all following footnotes, unless marked otherwise, "GUS" stands for Central Statistical Office (translators note)], 2011, GUS 2002, GUS 1988, GUS 1950.

¹⁹³ Ibidem., p. 117.

¹⁹⁴ GUS, *Raport z wyników Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 115-117.

¹⁹⁵ *Demography Report 2010. Older, more numerous and diverse Europeans*, European Commission 2011, www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu [28.07.2012].

according to the Central Statistical Office (GUS) report of 2009. The growth of this age group (in terms of economy age groups) is predicted to ensue systematically both in urban and rural areas. It is supposed to reach a level by 1.5 higher by 2035 with respect to 2007. Projections for expected number of very old persons, that is over 80 years of age, are important for social policy making. The share of people at this age stayed at the level of 2.9% for inhabitants of urban areas and 3.2% for inhabitants of rural areas. A rapid increase of share of people over 80 is predicted after 2013, and a growth by 5.3% in comparison with 2007 is predicted by 2035, which will make the very old people become 7.7% of the total population of Poland in 2035. The number of persons in this group was 1,739 million in 2010 and it is expected to grow to 4,678 million by 2020 and to 5,688 million by 2035¹⁹⁶.

The span of prognosis (2007-2035) thus covers a period of accelerating ageing process of the Polish population: the number of very old persons (in this case over 75 years of age) is predicted to rise from 2,4491 million to 4,4939 million in 2035, which means that the share of this group in the total population is to grow 6.4% to 12.5%¹⁹⁷. Moreover, average life expectancy is expected to gradually grow as well, so as to reach values higher by 6 years for men and by 3 years for women in 2035. In the cities men are expected to live to 77,5 years of age and women to 82,8 years of age, while in rural areas to 76,7 and 83 years of age respectively. Simultaneously, the difference between men and women life expectancy is predicted to diminish to ca. 6 years, men are expected to live to the age of 77,1 and women to the age of 82,9, which indicates that over mortality of men is predicted to decrease¹⁹⁸.

The following indices that describe the advancing process of ageing of the Polish population over recent years should be marked in the summary, with respect to their rates of change:

- 1) share of people over 60 years of age in the total population increased from 12.8% in 1990 to 17.3% in 2011,
- 2) share of very old people (over 80 years of age) in the group of the elderly (over 65 years of age) increased from 17.6% in 2002 to 24.4% in 2009,
- 3) number of people over 65 years of age per 1,000 persons younger than 14 years of age increased from 383 in 1988 to 896 in 2010,
- 4) index of demographic burden by post-working aged persons increased from 21,6 post-working aged people per 100 working aged persons in 1988 to 25,6 in 2010,

¹⁹⁶ GUS, *Prognoza ludności na lata 2008-2035*, Warszawa 2009, www.stat.gov.pl [28.07.2012].

¹⁹⁷ Ibidem, p. 165, 184, 190.

¹⁹⁸ J. Szymańczyk, op. cit., p. 15.

- 5) index of average life expectancy increased for women from 74,4 in 1990 to 80,6 in 2010 and for men from 66,0 to 72,1 respectively,
- 6) age median grew from 32,4 in 1988 to 37,7 in 2009¹⁹⁹.

The most recent Central Statistical Office (GUS) report states that the following may be expected in 2035:

- 7) share of post working-aged persons in the structure of the population is expected to grow to nearly 27% (while it was 16% in 2007), and the following regions: świętokrzyskie with 29.8%, łódzkie with 28.8% and podlaskie with 28.3%, are expected to be the oldest regions of Poland;
- 8) index of demographic burden by post-working aged people is expected to rise to 46 post-working aged persons per 100 working aged persons (while it was 25 in 2007), and the following regions are expected to be most impacted: świętokrzyskie (53), łódzkie (51), podlaskie (50), opolskie (50), lubelskie (49), śląskie (49).
- 9) age median is expected to rise to 40.6 years (while it was 37,3 in 2007),
- 10) index of average life expectancy for women is expected to rise to 82,9 years (while it was 79,7 in 2007), and to 79,9 for men (while it was 71 in 2007)²⁰⁰.

The above statistical outline of the oldest generation of the Poles should be regarded as a rather provisional one. It is well known that statistic data are not capable of rendering the population's diversity, both due to their mathematical character as well as because of their purpose. Several variables play a part in the final shape and position of the social, existential, political and health context of the seniors' situation. Statistical data should be considered as a general frame of reference for setting older people's issues. Elements of analysis that follow are linked to the existential aspects of this age group's social standing, which is reflected both in the older people's state of health, as well as living conditions and participation in social life, but also, though indirectly, on their family relations.

3. Economic situation and professional activity

A remarkable drop of income per household was recorded in 2011. This decrease affected also households of people over 65 years of age. Although reduction of expenses and real level of disposable income of seniors was not radical in comparison with other socio-economic groups the recessive tendency had its ineligious impact on them²⁰¹. Pension is the basic source of income of the

¹⁹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 27-28.

²⁰⁰ Ibidem, p. 28.

²⁰¹ GUS, *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2011 r. w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 3-5, www.stat.gov.pl [27.07.2012].

majority of people over 65, namely it sustains 86% of the total of the elderly. Social security disability insurance covers the benefits of 8%²⁰². Public benefits both pensions (retirement pay) and disability allowances were collected by 7,4548 million persons according to data provided by the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) in 2011. Retirees over 64 dependent on social security system made 4,973 million and persons over 64 with work disabilities made 1.174 million. Retired farmers and farmers with work disability over 64 dependent on the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (KRUS) made 1,3078. Retiree pensions constituted 63% and work disability allowances made 15% of all Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) assistance – both figures concerning persons over 64. Men made 41% and women 59% of this group²⁰³.

There were 26,044 households belonging to retiree pensioners and disability annuitants in Poland in 2010, out of which 81% belonged to retiree pensioners and 19% belonged to disability annuitants. Each of these households consisted on average of 2, 02 persons. Households of people over 65 make 12.7% of all households in Poland. Average net income of pensioners was 1,648.75 PLN and average income of disability annuitants was 1,230.61 PLN per capita/per month, in 2010. Income of pensioners' households was higher than that of farmers' and workers' households (1,571.37 PLN and 1,122.78 PLN respectively). Only self employed people and employees of other than worker positions received a higher income per capita than pensioners (1,867.43 PLN and 2,125.69 PLN respectively). Pensioners' disposable income was 1,244.77 PLN, which unfortunately did not allow a margin for saving²⁰⁴. Older people's disposable income in 2011 was the lowest per household and amounted to 2,477 PLN for retiree pensioners 1,756 PLN for disability annuitants²⁰⁵.

However, this relatively optimistic outline that statistic data provide presents itself differently upon a closer insight. The Institute of Labour and Social Studies (IPiSS) defined the minimal social security benefit in free market conditions for 2011 for a single pensioner as 98438 PLN and for a two-person pensioner household as 1,623.66 PLN that makes an income of 811.83 PLN per capita. The minimum existential income was defined as 474.2 PLN for a single

²⁰² GUS, *Raport z wyników Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*, op. cit., p. 137.

²⁰³ Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych (ZUS) [Social Insurance Institution], *Ważniejsze informacje z zakresu ubezpieczeń społecznych 2011 r.*, Warszawa 2012 pp. 14-17; Kasa Rolniczego Ubezpieczenia Społecznego (KRUS) (The Agricultural Social Insurance Fund), *Informacja o świadczeniach pieniężnych z ubezpieczenia społecznego rolników, dane ostateczne za 2011*, Warszawa 2012, p. 4.

²⁰⁴ GUS, *Budżety gospodarstw domowych w 2010 r.*, Warszawa 2011, p. 58 and following.

²⁰⁵ GUS, *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2011 r.*, op. cit., p. 5.

person pensioner household and 789.08 PLN for a two people pensioner household that makes an income of 394.54 PLN per capita²⁰⁶.

According to data provided by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) 305 thousand pensioners who received benefits lower than 800 PLN as well as a large part of those whose income was between 800 PLN and 1000 PLN in 2009 obtained less means than defined as minimum social security benefit²⁰⁷. This tendency indicates that the phenomenon of poverty, in spite of statistically good condition of retiree pensioners' and disability annuitants' households, can affect these groups as well. Older people's poverty is of a peculiar kind: it is not profound but there is no perspective of improvement and therefore even a small change can shake the whole economic structure. Nearly 43% of disability annuitants received an income lower than the minimum social security benefit. Many of these people are unable to sustain themselves from their benefit without external assistance. Over 60% of disability annuitants receive less than 1,000 PLN of income. A majority of retiree pensioners (55%) received income higher than 800 PLN but lower than 1,600 PLN²⁰⁸.

Researchers studying older people's poverty emphasize however that living conditions of the elderly are not bad, as children and the unemployed are living in far worse conditions in Poland²⁰⁹. According to E. Tarkowska the risk of poverty decreases with age in Poland. In spite of predominating stereotypes stating that the elderly, both disability annuitants and retiree pensioners, are the poorest, only 6.3% of pensioners while as many as 18% of youths under 19 and nearly 40% of families with three and more children live in extreme poverty, according to Tarkowska²¹⁰. The latter conclusions well illustrate a hypothesis that the elderly are not the most economically handicapped group with respect to other social and age groups. However, this does not change the fact that subjective perception of the post-working aged people is one of hardship and that these people are often not able to make the ends meet or live without additional forms of financial assistance provided by social security system,

²⁰⁶ *Poziom i struktura minimum socjalnego w 2011 r. (dane średnioroczne)*, IPiSS, Warszawa 2011, www.ipiss.com.pl [1.08.2012]; *Poziom i struktura minimum egzystencji w 2011 r. (na podstawie danych średniorocznych)*, IPiSS, Warszawa 2011, www.ipiss.com.pl [1.08.2012].

²⁰⁷ GUS, *Emerytury i renty w 2009 r.*, Warszawa 2009.

²⁰⁸ B. Gałązka-Petz, *Uwagi o dochodach ze świadczeń emerytalno-rentowych*, [In:] J. Hryniewicz(ed.), *O sytuacji ludzi starszych*, Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa, Warszawa 2012, pp. 98-99.

²⁰⁹ P. Czekanowski, *Rodzina w życiu osób starszych i osoby starsze w rodzinie*, [In:] B. Synak (ed.), *Polska starość*, Gdańsk 2002; J. Laskowska-Otwinowska, *Człowiekstary w ubogiej rodzinie polskiej wsi współczesnej*, [In:] E. Tarkowska (ed.), *Zrozumieć biednego. O dawnej i obecnej biedzie w Polsce*, Warszawa 2000.

²¹⁰ E. Tarkowska, *Oblicza polskiej biedy*, IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2007.

commercial crediting, family transfers or charity of friends, because they can not finance their household expenses optimally. A statement saying that other social groups are even more handicapped does not release relevant authorities from the duty of supplying basic means of living to seniors, whose resources for raising income are more limited than of e.g. working-aged unemployed people.

Data on households from 2010 in comparison with these of 2009 show a slightly upright tendency of marginalizing the households of older people in terms of three poverty scales, that is absolute poverty, relative poverty and national poverty, and it concerns, depending on a criterion taken, from 3.9% to 13.3% of the seniors' households. The situation of disability annuitants' households is worse. Indices show that between 10.1% and 27.7% households are in danger of marginalization (figures differ depending on poverty criterion)²¹¹.

Expenses connected to rent and energy have a higher share in the households of the elderly than in other types of households and they amount to 24.5% in case of retiree pensioners and to 26.8% in the case of disability annuitants. A drop in spending on food and non-alcohol drinks was noted in 2011 in older people's households and it was 0.2% with regard to 2010²¹². Specific data indicate that healthcare (doctor visits, medical exams and medicines) have a major share in the expenses of the elderly while spending on clothing, culture, tourism or education have a significantly smaller share in their expenses. This can be on the one hand explained by natural causes connected to the age of such households' inhabitants; however, on the other hand it can be also regarded as an indicator of limited access of education to adults, and older people among them²¹³.

In spite of the fact that nearly 5% of the elderly live below the relative poverty line²¹⁴ this group is perceived as relatively wealthy in comparison to other social groups²¹⁵ due to permanent income secured by work throughout life as well as due to the fact that their income is valorized in pace with growing prices²¹⁶. In addition to that, over 90% of persons over 60 have a permanent

²¹¹ GUS, *Budżety gospodarstw domowych w 2010 r.*, op. cit., p. 42.

²¹² GUS, *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2011 r. w świetle wyników badania budżetów gospodarstw domowych*, op. cit., p. 4.

²¹³ Ibidem, p. 39 and following.

²¹⁴ Ibidem.

²¹⁵ *Zamożny jak emeryt*, "Rzeczpospolita", No. 5.06.2012, www.rp.pl [29.07.2012].

²¹⁶ In 2011 pensioners and disability annuitants were the only social group that had their income raised to match the inflation (4.3%). All other groups' income dropped below the level of inflation.

source of income (pension or disability benefit), that although not satisfactory in terms of amount, provide comfort and sense of security given its permanence.

Simultaneously opinions are voiced that the threshold of old age and professional inactivity should be raised, with a conspicuous example of a public debate about planned changes in the pension system. The state is struggling to systematically ensure that pensioners stay professionally active for a possibly longest period before the new reform is implemented. This plan is aimed at unburdening social insurance system and facilitate – in theory – securing a bigger quota for future benefits, and hence ensuring a better social standing of the elderly. There are three possible ways of enhancing pensioners' (or disability annuitants') status so as to match that of working-aged people's: a few incomes should be joined in one older persons' household, and/or each pensioner should supplement his or her budget with dividends from savings and/or working age/professional activity should be prolonged. Unfortunately results of the National Census of Population and Housing of 2011 show that work both as self employed or as employee is a main source of income only for 1.5% of people over 65 – the remaining 98.5% of the elderly depend on pension, disability allowance, social security assistance, charity or providing by someone. Men are a majority of the group of people over 65 who continue to be professionally active and they constitute 2.6% of all men over 65. Only 0.9% of women over 65 take up professional positions²¹⁷. These data do not represent employment within grey economy market or informal employment of women who help their families in running their households, bringing up children or providing care over people dependent on others. Nonetheless, these data do not generate GDP therefore they are negligible for older people's employment situation. This does not on the other hand indicate complete professional passivity of the elderly after leaving job-market, though the scale of the phenomenon of „informal jobs” is difficult to estimate. Engaging in informal employment often urges the decision about leaving official job-market right after or even before reaching the age of 65. Unemployment is another reason for premature leaving of job-market.

Employment index for post working-aged persons continuously decreases, both in case of women as well as men. Survey of economic activity of the population carried out by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) in 2012 reveals that only 2.5% of people between 60 and 64 years of age and 4.2% of people over 65 were professionally active²¹⁸. The latest research exposes a tendency to avoid prolonging of professional activity. It is particularly explicit in a survey

²¹⁷ GUS, *Narodowy Spis Powszechny*, op. cit., pp. 137-139.

²¹⁸ GUS, *Aktywność ekonomiczna ludności Polski. I kwartał 2012*, Warszawa 2012, p. 92.

about the new pension law conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS). Raising of pension age inspires strong social protest. Most of the surveyed people expressed their disagreement with the bill to prolong working age. 84% of adult Poles oppose raising pension age to 67 for men and 64% express radical dissent. 91% of adult Poles oppose raising pension age to 67 for women and 75% voice radical objection²¹⁹. Another survey shows that 60% Poles over 50 years of age are willing to retire as soon as possible, and 1/3 of the population of people who fall under the category of „healthy 50-65 year olds” already enjoy their pensioner rights. By contrast, it is only 1/5 of an analogical group who do so in Western Europe²²⁰.

Only 1.4% of the population of elderly people (retiree pensioners and disability annuitants) evaluated their own financial situation in 2010 as very good, 15.9% as rather good, 56.9% as average, 18% as rather bad, 7.7% as bad²²¹.

The Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) conducted another survey in 2010, aimed at characterizing a typical elderly Pole. The results showed that the seniors' level of satisfaction with their households' economic situation was average. Less than one third (31%) of respondents classified themselves as satisfied and only 5% as very satisfied. Slightly more surveyed (34%) expressed dissatisfaction with their situation and 11% expressed strong dissatisfaction. A similarly big group (35%) expressed moderate dissatisfaction²²².

Table 1. presents below, replies to the crossed questions about evaluation of one's own economic situation and economic situation of the household.

²¹⁹ Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS) (The Public Opinion Research Center) BS/40/2012, *Opinie o podnoszeniu wieku emerytalnego i zmianach w systemie emerytalnym*, Warszawa 2012, p. 2.

²²⁰ J. Cieśla, M. Papuzińska, *Straszna praca. Raport*, „Polityka”, No. 4(2740)/2010, pp. 32–35.

²²¹ GUS, *Budżety gospodarstw domowych w 2010 r.*, op. cit., p. 231.

²²² CBOS, BS/2/2010, *Obraz typowego Polaka w starszym wieku*, Warszawa 2010.

Which of expressions listed below best describes manner of managing budget in your household?	Satisfaction with economic status of household (generally, including: income, assets, belongings, standard of living)				
	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Quite unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
	%				
We live in poverty	0	5	15	35	45
We live modestly	2	16	33	34	15
We live moderately	6	35	41	15	3
We live well	23	55	17	3	2
We live very well	59	26	3	12	0
Total	5	26	35	23	11

Table 1. Evaluation of own economic situation and of the household economic situation, source: Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS), *Image of a Typical Elderly Pole*, Warszawa 2010, p. 6.

It is worth noting that very few respondents (less than 1%) consider their lives very good and allow themselves a certain amount of luxury, while as much as 59% of respondents are quite satisfied with their economic situation. Persons whose living standard is evaluated as moderate are usually (41%) also moderately satisfied with their economic situation. Those who manage their expenses carefully and live modestly are rather unsatisfied (34%) or moderately satisfied (33%) with their economic situation. Situation of those who declare poverty seems the most precarious. Nearly half of them (45%) are very

unsatisfied with their situation. There are also persons (5%) who are quite satisfied in spite of their unfavorable economic situation²²³.

Evaluation of the economic situation of the elderly can be based on statistic data, and include also references to other age or economic groups. In this case older people's situation seems satisfactory. However, a qualitative study of the elderly ought to be based on a careful examination of this group's worries and limitations as to their participation in social life. This second strategy seems more adequate as there are many variables impacting the overall evaluation of the older people's situation, apart from income and expenses, including health – both in terms of objective (seldom measurable) or subjective evaluation, usually only fragmentary and concerning certain aspects of health – as well as family factors, culture, relations and education. As researchers studying this social group remark, seniors tend to give extreme opinions in their auto evaluation, namely they either idealize their situation or present it in catastrophic terms. All these variables are difficult to build an overall synthesis on, in a typical study of statistical and demographic character. Therefore, conclusions suggesting that the economic situation of the elderly is very good drawn on the basis of statistics seem rather one-sided and harmful and bear traces of purposeful distraction to avoid introducing changes to the system.

Deteriorating health that leads to helplessness, isolation, lack of activity, solitude and social exclusion of older people is one of the causes of „fluid” evaluation of the economic situation of seniors. They are exposed at a risk of exclusion due to a number of factors of economic, social or cultural nature. The most significant of them find their roots in basic existential structures that create living space and are the focus of attention of social policies. These are: job market, systems of social insurance, access to consumption of goods and services and even local and family environment²²⁴. Therefore, a comprehensive system solution, instead of only continuous raising financial assistance, should be considered for the sake of enhancing the situation of the elderly. A system solution should propose major changes in social policy with particular regard of health care and preventive actions.

4. Health condition and care needs

Health condition of Polish seniors, in accordance with universal trends, is improving. However, although mean life expectancy is increasing latest surveys

²²³ Ibidem, p. 6.

²²⁴ E. Trafiałek, *Rodzina i środowisko zamieszkania jako obszary wykluczenia społecznego osób starszych*, [In:] B. Szatur-Jaworska (ed.), *Stan przestrzegania praw osób starszych. Analiza i rekomendacje działań*, Biuro Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich, Warszawa 2008, p. 83.

of auto-assessment of older people's health condition reveal a rather low score strictly reflecting universal apprehension of post working age life. Table 2. presents more detailed results of the survey. It clearly indicates that scores of health condition go down with age. Older people evaluate their own health condition as the worst in comparison with other age groups. More than 37% of people over 70 years of age evaluated their own health condition as very bad. Men generally assess their health as better than women, 30% of men described their condition as very good while only 23% of women considered it as such²²⁵.

Age group	Very good and good	Average, neither good nor bad	Bad and very bad
60-69	28,2%	47,5%	24,2%
70-79	15,1%	45,6%	39,3%
80 and more years of age	13,6%	36,6%	49,9%

*Table 2. Auto-assessment of health condition (% of population at given age), source: own study based on data by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS), *Health and Health Care*, Warszawa 2010, p. 149.*

A study carried out in 2012 demonstrates the following comparative results concerning self assessment of health condition of persons over 60: 16.4% in 2004 and 21.3% in 2009 – very good and good; 46.7% in 2004 and 45% in 2009 – neither good nor bad; 17.7% in 2004 and 13.1% in 2009 – bad and very bad²²⁶.

On the other hand, a survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) on health condition reveals that 90% of the Polish population over 75 years of age evaluates their health condition as bad. Similarly, 34% of persons between 60 and 74 years of age assess their health condition as unsatisfactory. Only 10% of the oldest seniors declare that they feel well. Every fourth surveyed person (exactly 26%) between 60 and 74 years of age assess

²²⁵ GUS, *Budżety gospodarstw domowych w 2010 r.*, op. cit., p. 130.

²²⁶ GUS, *Mały rocznik statystyczny Polski 2012*, Warszawa 2012, p. 268.

their health condition as good and 40% can not tell that it is either good or bad²²⁷.

Purchase of medicines and treatments created a financial burden for 54.3% of disability annuitants' households and 53% of retiree pensioners' households out of 41% of households, being the total share of the elderly²²⁸. Chronic diseases prove to be a significant factor in constraining self-sufficiency and increasing need of help offered by family or informal aid groups and official social services. The "Diagnoza Społeczna 2009" ("Social Diagnose 2009") survey shows that over 90% of persons over 65 years of age use the services of health care institutions²²⁹. Seniors were recipients of over 28% of the total number of GP consultations. At the same time patients of 65 and more years of age were patients of over 50% of the total number of home medical visits which testifies to a low level of self sufficiency and great popularity of this kind of service which should serve as a factor for contracting doctors in future²³⁰. Older people received altogether 22% of all special consultations offered by specialized health care in 2010²³¹.

Geriatric care is another weak point of health care system, both in terms of number of doctors as well as geriatric care facilities. Treatment of elderly patients concerns one or more illnesses, meanwhile comprehensive care relevant to this age of human life is missing. It should be based on understanding of somatic illnesses as derivative of ageing and not the other way round. Data published by the "European Union Geriatric Medicine Society" collected by S. Kropińska and K. Wieczorowska-Tobis shows that there is only 0.2 geriatrician per 100 thousand inhabitants in Poland, while the ratio is 1.3 in Great Britain, 2.2 in Germany and Spain, 2.9 in Belgium, 3.1 in Denmark and Slovakia, 2.1 in the Czech Republic, not to mention Sweden where this ratio is the highest and reaches 7.7. According to the standards set by the British "Royal College of Physicians" 2 geriatricians per 100 thousand inhabitants are necessary in order to secure optimum geriatric care. In order to meet this standard for the sake of assisting seniors in Poland 760 geriatricians should be employed, while only 174 were registered in 2007 and only 120 of them were

²²⁷ CBOS, BS/83/2012, *Komunikat Społeczna solidarność z osobami w starszym wieku*, Warszawa 2012.

²²⁸ GUS, *Zdrowie i ochrona zdrowia w 2010 r.*, www.stat.gov.pl [3.08.2012], p. 134.

²²⁹ J. Czapiński, T. Panek (ed.), *Diagnoza społeczna 2009*, Rada Monitoringu Społecznego, Warszawa 2009, p. 109.

²³⁰ GUS, *Podstawowe dane z zakresu ochrony zdrowia w 2008 r.*, Warszawa 2009, p. 119.

²³¹ GUS, *Zdrowie i ochrona zdrowia w 2010 r.*, Warszawa 2011, p. 105.

actually employed and as few as 70 were working in their field of expertise²³². Then, the number of geriatric beds is radically low in Poland as for the European standards. Hospitals in Poland only have 500 geriatric beds, which gives an average of 1.2 per 100 thousand inhabitants, while in Sweden the ratio is 24.4/100 000 inhabitants, and 14.3 in Slovakia, 10.5 in Denmark, 5.9 in the Czech Republic and as many as 72.3 in Belgium²³³.

A more profound analysis of risk factors responsible for the quality of life in the last period of human life discovered in the 19th century may serve as an indication of further research of health condition of older people. A major part of illnesses of the last phase of life are caused by elderly people's vulnerability to these factors. Biological factors, as e.g. limited physical activity, improper nutrition, abuse of alcohol and medicines or smoking, are the most distinctive ones. Social factors, i.e. a sudden change of living conditions due to e.g. leaving professional activity for pension, moving house, loneliness, social isolation, bad economic situation, passive leisure model or low level of education, are nearly as important. Ecological factors follow in importance, these are: physical environment, air, water and soil pollution, industrial dust. Finally, there is a group of psychosocial factors, such as growing stress, need of emotional support, need of personal satisfaction, efficiency, control or impact on one's own life, usage of educational opportunities or hobbies and passions²³⁴.

High level of education, having a spouse or a partner, better economic situation, physical activity, freedom from addictions, rational nutrition as well as proper family and social relations are variables that positively impact the quality of ageing²³⁵. Predictions state that the number of persons unable to live self-sufficiently due to their health condition and thus relying of others' assistance is going to grow. The number of people over 75 years of age has grown in Poland from 1.3 to 1.5 million over the last 5 years and it is estimated to grow to 4 million by 2035. The number of people over 80 years of age is expected to grow by 125% and reach 2.5 million. In short, every fourth Pole is going to be over 65 and every fourteenth will be 80 years old in 23 years²³⁶. It can be safely stated that the larger this group the bigger part of it will need

²³²J. Derejczyk, B. Bień, J. Kokoszka-Paszko, J. Szczygieł, *Gerontologia i geriatrya w Polsce na tle Europy – czy należy inwestować w ich rozwój w naszym kraju?*, "Gerontologia Polska", No. 3/2008, p. 153.

²³³S. Kropińska, K. Wieczorowska-Tobis, *Opieka geriatryczna w wybranych krajach Europy*, "Geriatrya", No. 3/2009, pp. 12–16.

²³⁴B. Bień, *Starzenie pomyślne versus zwyczajne*, "Gerontologia Polska", No. 5/1997, pp. 40- 43.

²³⁵J. Rudzik, *Zdrowie i sprawność fizyczna osób starszych*, "Medycyna. Dydaktyka. Wychowanie", No. 3/4/1998, pp. 162-166; B. Wojszel, *Uwarunkowania zdrowotne jakości życia oraz ocena stanu zdrowia ludzi starych*, "Gerontologia Polska", No. 3/1996, pp. 28-32.

²³⁶GUS, *Prognoza ludności na lata 2008-2035*, op. cit.

assistance and support. A question must then be raised about what potential for supplying care the Polish society possesses and if families on their own will be sufficient enough for the „geriatric tsunami”, to use the term applied by researchers of demographic changes.

5. Living conditions and family situation

Loneliness is one of the more painful experiences of old age, especially with limited physical abilities and hence lack of self-sufficiency. Family and close friends are a possible solution to this problem. Unfortunately, lonely persons notably outnumber these with families in the population of people over 65 years of age. There are 2,5603 million widows, widowers, bachelors, spinsters, divorced or separated which makes 49% of the population of people over 65 years of age, while married people make a group of 2,6046 million which makes 49.8% of the same population. These proportions change with age. There are 0, 9501 million persons living alone which makes 70.5% of the group of people over 80 years of age, while people living with a partner make 27% - 0,3696 million – of the same population.

Women prevail in the group of persons living alone. There are 1, 9 million women living alone at the age of 65 and more, which makes 36.5% of the population of the elderly. Meanwhile there are only 0, 44 million men which makes 8.5% of the population over 65 years of age. This pattern is even more worrying in the group of elderly over 80 years of age. There are 0.8003 million women living alone which makes 59.4% of the population of people at this age. Men living alone constitute 11.1% of this group, that is 0, 1499 million people²³⁷.

A survey conducted in 2007 revealed that 74% of older people over 60 years of age run their households on their own. This includes both persons living alone – bachelors, spinsters, widowers and widows – who make 38%, as well as those living with their spouse who make 36% of the group of all seniors. Only 15% of persons over 60 years of age live together with their children (or parents) and 11% of respondents share household also with grand children or other household members²³⁸.

With regard to such high number of elderly people who are living alone it is necessary to analyze the needs of welfare and assistance to enable the elderly people’s self sufficiency. It is particularly pressing in view of the fact that over

²³⁷ GUS, *Narodowy Spis Powszechny*, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

²³⁸ CBOS, BS/42/2008, *Komunikat z badań. Warunki życiowe społeczeństwa polskiego: problemy i strategie*, Warszawa 2008. It is worth noting that this study was based on a remarkably big random-address representative sample of adult inhabitants of Poland of 38,866 people.

40% of people over 60 years of age are disabled. What is more, nearly 40 thousand persons at the age of 60 and more are living in asylums and hospices. The needs of care and medical services are several times higher for the group of people over 65 years of age in comparison with people below this threshold. 80% of people over 65 years of age are completely or severely physically and/or mentally disabled. 82% of people at the age of 65-75 while 77% of those at the age of 75-85 and only 46% of those over 85 years of age are able to function on their own without the need of permanent assistance at home²³⁹.

However, in spite of the loss of ability to live self sufficiently majority of older people – 66% – prefer to stay in their current living environment and only occasionally avail themselves of assistance with everyday activities²⁴⁰.

Elderly people's living conditions of 2002 did not meet their expectations. They found architectural and urban planning not successful at clearing barriers, their flats and houses were of lower standard than average, they were not equipped sufficiently and the cost of rent and expenses took a major part of all income, especially in comparison with other than senior households. Basic living costs constituted 26% of the income of elderly people's households while 22% of other types of households in 2002. Pensioners' houses are not equipped sufficiently, which is not linked with their economic situation but rather with the structure of needs. Older people use bank loans or credits more seldom than other age groups. Rent subsidies for the elderly are lower than subsidies offered to younger persons living alone²⁴¹. Pensioners, on the other hand, gain more living space. Retiree pensioners' and disability annuitants' households make the highest floor surface per person ratio, that is 35 sq. and 34.9 sq. respectively, which means a smaller number of people living in the same household²⁴².

Elderly people evaluated their living conditions as satisfactory and very satisfactory – 96% altogether, 58% declared being very satisfied. 60% of the surveyed declared that they are rather satisfied with their living conditions. Those who defined their living conditions as average are nevertheless usually satisfied (45%) or fairly satisfied (35%) with them. Over 75% of the surveyed described their living conditions as bad²⁴³. Detailed replies are demonstrated in Table 3.

²³⁹ J. Derejczyk, *Śłużba zdrowia wobec potrzeb osób starych*, [In:] L. Frąckiewicz (ed.), *Polska a Europa. Procesy demograficzne u progu XXI wieku. Proces starzenia się ludności Polski i jego społeczne konsekwencje*, PTPS, Katowice 2002.

²⁴⁰ CBOS, BS/157/2009, *Komunikat z badań. Polacy wobec ludzi starszych i własnej starości*, Warszawa, listopad 2009, p. 11.

²⁴¹ *Dane o świadczeniach z systemu pomocy społecznej „Pomost” za rok 2002*, Departament Pomocy Społecznej Ministerstwa Gospodarki, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2002.

²⁴² GUS, *Sytuacja gospodarstw domowych w 2011 r.*, op. cit., p. 17.

²⁴³ CBOS, *Obraz typowego Polaka w starszym wieku*, Warszawa 2010, p. 3.

How do you assess your living conditions?	Level of satisfaction from living conditions				
	Very satisfied	Rather satisfied	Medium satisfied	Rather unsatisfied	Very unsatisfied
	%				
Very good	58	38	3	1	0
Rather good	25	60	13	1	1
Average	11	45	35	8	1
Rather bad	2	17	35	30	16
Very bad	1	4	17	25	53
Total	23	48	21	6	2

Table 3. Assessment of living conditions, source: Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS), *Image of a Typical Elderly...*, op. cit., p. 3.

The major limitations of older people's living space are caused by lack of elevators, steep stairs that impede mobility and inflexible design of the flat that makes it impossible to rearrange its space in accordance with growing disability²⁴⁴. This kind of barriers often leads to isolation of the elderly, making it difficult for them and their caretakers to leave the walls of their flat. These barriers can also cause a person or the family to find a place in a nursing home or other kind of institution (usually private).

However, starting a series of assistance activities (e.g. delivery of meals, laundry service, aid with cleaning or shopping, hygienic or medical treatment) would enable older people to remain in their current apartments. There are special estates built especially for the elderly, although limited in number, in Poland, e.g. in Stargard Szczeciński or Radków in Lower Silesia. Their specificity can be summed up by a special space design, created with regard to meet the needs of the elderly – starting with the floor surface, wide corridors, no stairs, special signs on the doors, special bathroom facilities, through external infrastructure outside the flat, including parks, walking areas, benches, common meeting areas, like terraces, day rooms and social rooms, ending with presence

²⁴⁴ H. Zaniewska, M. Thiel, *Mieszkanie jutra osób starszych – nadzieja czy zagrożenie?*, [In:] J.T. Kowaleski, P. Szukalski (ed.), *Nasze starzejące się społeczeństwo. Nadzieje i zagrożenia*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2004, p. 323.

of doctors, nurses, guardians, as well as service centers, including meal service – all in response to the needs of older people.

This project is based on a model practiced in America and Western Europe where housing estates dedicated to older people are constructed on large scale. Western housing estates for the elderly are in fact modern living-leisure-entertainment centers. Seniors can use gyms, swimming pools, jogging areas, as well as practice various sports disciplines or spend time in internet cafes, restaurants, pubs and cafes²⁴⁵.

However, the responsibility of providing older people with properly organized care binds, in the Polish reality and culture, the closest family members. This usually results from the fact that family is the most important point of reference for the seniors as it secures the need of safety, care and acceptance. It is established that the family is the „institution” that is supposed to compensate the deficits linked to ageing – emotional ones, these caused by basic existential needs, organizational deficits, health and social deficits. In spite of a tendency, confirmed by research, to live in separate households, the family does not lose its function of providing a safeguard, source of satisfaction and focus of interest and activity – that is, an important context in the elderly people’s lives²⁴⁶. No institutional or social alternative to family has been established so far. Any attempts at substituting its functions should be treated as interventionist and provisional.

Welfare for the elderly, as a social norm and duty, is also regulated by law, through alimony obligation. The “Eurofamcare” research carried out between 2003-2004 indicated that the supply of informal assistants in Poland reach 2 million older persons. Women at the age of 50-60 (mainly daughters and daughters in law) prevail among them. Vast majority of guardians surveyed – 87% – declared readiness to provide care to a senior even in case of significant

²⁴⁵ Housing for older people is divided into four types. First of all there are homes for the elderly, that is blocks of individual apartments with a telephone line connecting them with a nurse on duty, access to medical care and access to services like house cleaning or shopping. Then there are houses for persons who do not run their own households. These houses provide shelter, catering, medical care, recreation and cultural activities. The third type of houses provides welfare for persons who require nurse’s care and aid in everyday activities. The last, and most numerous type of housing consists of multifunctional institutions that provide permanent care without the need to change a place of stay in case of deterioration of the state of psycho-physical condition of a person, www.domyseniora.pl [3.08.2012].

²⁴⁶ B. Synak, *Ludzie starzy w warunkach transformacji ustrojowej*, Gdańsk 2000, p. 14; E. Trafiałek, *Polska starość w dobie przemian*, Katowice 2004; Z. Kawczyńska-Butrym, *Wyzwania rodziny. Zdrowie, choroba, niepełnosprawność, starość*, Lublin 2008; B. Zboina, G. Nowak-Starz (ed.), *Starość – obawy, nadzieje, oczekiwania. Wybrane zagadnienia z gerontologii*, Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski 2009.

deterioration of the health condition. An option to place an elderly member of the family in a care institution was majorly rejected²⁴⁷.

Research carried out by the Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS) in 2012 reveals that nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ respondents (73%) assist an elder close family member. Older people are helped also by neighbors (21%), acquaintances (21%), friends (16%) and extended family members (12%). 30% of Poles engage in helping older people. Seniors are helped mostly by better educated people, 36% of help is offered by people with a high school diploma and 39% by those with higher education diploma as well as those living in better economic conditions. A person who offers care to an elderly devotes on average 11 hours per week, and 45% of respondents declared 4 hours per week, 33% between 4 and 10 hours per week, and 22% over 10 hours per week²⁴⁸.

Nearly two thirds of working-aged people – 64% – would prefer to live through their old age in their own flat and use the help of others – family, friends, and neighbors – only occasionally. Every seventh – 15% – surveyed senior would prefer living with children, grandchildren or extended family. Approximately every tenth – 8% – respondent would prefer to live on their own and use permanent paid aid service or charge free service, e.g. from social security or the Red Cross, Caritas or offered by other charity volunteers (3%)²⁴⁹.

The situation of the elderly is complex because on the one hand they do not want to be a burden on their families, but on the other hand the quality of their lives depends on the position they have in the family, on the frequency and quality of contacts with the closest, on the constancy of personal bonds as well as on the level of acceptance among family members. Unfortunately, in present times, modern family goes through a period of rather dynamic transformation that limits its own care potential. Phenomena connected with job migrations – both abroad and to other regions in one's country – increased professional activity of women, increase of divorce rate and disappearance of multigenerational families impact the decrease of care potential of the family. Reduction of multigenerational families and introduction of nuclear families with ever smaller number of children and the most common model being 2+1 or 1+1 and still more frequent one 2+0, causes the contacts with seniors to become of provisional, occasional or semi professional character, with seniors serving the younger generations in running their household and bringing up children while not actually sharing the household.

²⁴⁷ J. Perek-Białas, *Urynkowanie usług opiekuńczych dla osób starszych w Polsce – możliwości i ograniczenia*, [In:] M. Raclaw (ed.), *Publiczna troska, prywatna opieka. Społeczności lokalne wobec osób starszych*, ISP, Warszawa 2011, p. 64.

²⁴⁸ CBOS, BS/83/2012, *Społeczna solidarność z osobami w starszym wieku*, Warszawa 2012.

²⁴⁹ CBOS, *Polacy o własnej starości*, Warszawa 2012.

On the other hand economically challenged families, challenged by unemployment, poverty or pathologies avail themselves of older people as a source of income as they possess a permanent income. In both of these cases there is an imbalance of exchange to the seniors' disadvantage. Thus assistance flow in the Polish families is directed from the older to the younger generations. In fact over 20% of the elderly serve their children and grandchildren with help, while nearly 6% help on regular basis. Assistance flowing in the other direction is significantly smaller²⁵⁰. This pattern can be of course regarded as a proof of a good condition of the elderly, however it also testifies to the older people's culturally conditioned readiness to service and work till health condition allows.

Hence any non-family – but institutional and social – forms of assistance to the elderly are particularly needed presently. These can comprise establishing centers for sick and disabled day assistance (e.g. for patients with Alzheimer's disease), local self-assistance homes, clubs and institutions of extensive volunteer or neighbor care as well as new professions for systematic seniors' assistance. The latter are family assistants, seniors' guardians, disabled assistants, social service apprentices and field nurses.

Such action would lead to a gradual development of older people's welfare services that are presently limited due to low level of family finances. It is predicted that this sphere of the market should grow rapidly in close future due to a general trend of transformation of care forms and growing demand of formal care system. It is estimated that nearly 370 thousand of older people (over 60 years of age) will require assistance towards 2020. Close to 170 thousand will not be able to expect the help of their families and nearly 200 thousand will (probably) use the service of their potentially professionally active relatives²⁵¹.

Therefore, local social politicians are confronted with a challenge and the hope of older people for an improvement of their situation relies deeply on the local potential to create a sound diagnosis of needs and to build a local aid network that would support and not substitute the family in the care roles. However, strengthening the personal development and activity of the elderly that can enable them to remain self-sufficient and independent is a complementary alternative to building aid networks.

²⁵⁰ E. Bojanowska, *Ludzie starsi w rodzinie i społeczeństwie*, [In:] *O sytuacji ludzi starszych*, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

²⁵¹ See: J. Perek-Białas, *Urynkowanie usług opiekuńczych dla osób starszych w Polsce – możliwości i ograniczenia*, op. cit., p. 86.

6. Educational activities and leisure time

Older people have a generally lower level of education than the younger generations due to historical reasons. Most of the elderly have completed basic secondary education, i.e. 51% of people over 65 years of age. Only 7% of the elderly have completed a higher education degree²⁵². Low level of education causes the educational and information supply needs of this group of people to be not particularly high. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS) only 16% of the populations of the elderly participate in any form of education and it is usually informal instruction²⁵³. Nonetheless there are a number of elderly people who do have the need of education and who fulfill them in various ways: through auto-didacticism (informal instruction), through contact with traditional media (press, radio, TV) or through the internet²⁵⁴, participation in group forms of education such as Seniors' clubs or Universities of the Third Age. The potential of the latter form of education in 2012 has been estimated to encompass 385 institutions operating within several organizational and legal frameworks. They are established in co-operation with higher education institutions, local government organizational units like libraries, cultural centers, centers of permanent education. However, a majority of them operate as associations and foundations that is civil society entities, or NGOs. They engage over 100 thousand attendants, mostly pensioners, active seniors who are eager to widen their knowledge, develop their interests, acquire new skills and participate in trainings activating and integrating the elderly people's groups. This is a remarkable phenomenon of social movement based on self-aid, voluntary work and co-operation between several organizations and institutions²⁵⁵.

It is estimated that the number of persons with higher education among the elderly will rise significantly by 2020. It will be a result of the fact that persons born during the post-war baby boom were privileged to receive significantly higher level of education and when they reach the threshold of old age they will transform elderly people's educational needs. This will lead to a change of the seniors' educational, cultural and recreational needs profile. Elderly people who will live up to 2020 will give more effort to prolonging their professional

²⁵² GUS, *Narodowy Spis Powszechny*, op. cit., p. 130, 146.

²⁵³ GUS, *Kształcenie dorosłych*, Warszawa 2009, p. 27.

²⁵⁴ The survey, *Diagnoza społeczna 2009* revealed that 23.6% of those at the age of 60-64 used computers and 20.6% used the internet. 7.5% used computers and 5.8% used the internet in the group of people over 65 years of age. J. Czapiński i T. Panek (ed.), *Diagnoza społeczna 2009*, op. cit., p. 291.

²⁵⁵ W. Borczyk, *Innowacyjne UTW wobec nowych wyzwań*, presentation at UTW Congress, Warszawa 19.03.2012.

activity, mostly within the range of mental occupations. Hence, it is necessary to start planning changes towards establishing educational opportunities for younger generations of future seniors for the sake of ensuring their effective ageing. This depends to a great extent also on management of leisure time.

Modern seniors organize their free time around activities involving passive participation which does not help raising the level of activity. Table 3. presents detailed data.

Do you devote any time to the following activities and if so, how much:	I devote more time than I would like to	I devote as much as I wish	I devote less time than I would like to	I do not engage in it although I would like to	I do not engage in it because it does not interest me
	%				
Watching TV	6	82	9	1	2
Conversing with friends, social gatherings, calls and visits	2	80	12	2	4
Gardening	3	44	7	8	38
Reading books, press, magazines and periodicals	2	62	13	6	17
Leisure time – taking a nap, sitting a while, relaxing, taking tea or coffee	3	84	11	1	1
Job (full or part time) also work in household	3	14	3	6	74
Care of children, grandchildren, play, conversing and studying with children	3	35	9	8	45
Listening to music (radio, records, cassettes)	1	55	7	4	33
Listening to the radio	1	69	8	3	19

Playing on the computer – internet, games	1	8	2	4	85
Renovations and home repairs	2	40	8	9	41
Cinema, theatre or concert evening	0	9	9	15	67
Disco, cafe, pub, clubbing evening	0	7	4	9	80
Social activities, charities, environmental engagement, e.g. work at parents' advisory group at child's school, at condo committee, parish group etc.	1	7	2	4	86

Table 4. Ways of spending free time, source: Public Opinion Research Center (CBOS), *Image of a Typical...*, op. cit., p. 10.

Seniors devote most of their free time to activities of little demand for activity and are of rather passive character like watching TV, listening to the radio, to music and resting. These activities belong to the group of those which the seniors devote as much time to as they wish to. Analysis of frequency of engaging in given activities shows that a vast majority of older people – 82% – are satisfied with the amount of time they devote to passive pastimes, like watching TV, talking to friends or resting. Only 15% of respondents would like to be able to devote more time to these activities.

Seniors are on the other hand not interested in activities that require higher level of engagement of energy and time or participation in social life, such as cinema, theatre, discos, work or civil society activities. Nearly every third surveyed person – 64% – does not engage in such activities at all because he or she is not interested, and one fourth – 26% – does not engage although he or she would like to²⁵⁶.

Although a vast majority of people at the threshold of pension do withdraw from job market it does not mean that they withdraw also from social life. They still maintain contacts with extended family from outside of their household as well as with friends and acquaintances who they discuss their personal problems

²⁵⁶ CBOS, BS/2/2010, *Obraz typowego Polaka w starszym wieku*, Warszawa, styczeń 2010, p. 10.

with or ask for help or advice. This creates a potential that can be used for building local networks of support and community activities for older people that will help organizing their time outside home.

7. Problems of the seniors – instead of a conclusion

The Government Population Council (RRL) recommended the government to undertake changes to social and economic policy based on analyses of the situation and demographic projections for Poland. The following are the main points suggested by the Council:

1. To shape efficient family policy for the sake of increasing birth rate and child care conditions.
2. To improve the health condition of the population through efficient health care system and expanding medical and social infrastructure.
3. To guarantee indispensable means of sustenance to older people through efficient social security system aimed at health protection, social insurance, social and professional rehabilitation of the disabled and social welfare.
4. To create suitable conditions for the sake of increasing professional engagement of persons close to old age threshold, which will result in raising pensions.
5. To expand social and economic infrastructure that will improve the functioning of the families and seniors so as to fulfill their needs.
6. To undertake action towards facilitating development of additional and complementary pension systems while maintaining the current basic role of obligatory common social benefit system. Insurance awareness should be enhanced in the society.
7. To study the size and effects of migrations abroad and consider their meaning as well as to create mechanisms and instruments that will reduce the tendency to emigrate²⁵⁷.

These general suggestions seem not to have had any impact on the government's activities four years after their publication. The problem of old age has been „dealt with” by introducing cosmetic amendments to the pension system, passed by the government with extra urgency in spite of massive social protests in June 2012. It is inevitable to ask why such overt negligence of this issue takes place, why there is no support offered to families who look after seniors as well as why system solutions to prevent age discrimination in various spheres of social life are not introduced.

²⁵⁷ Stanowisko Rządowej Rady Ludnościowej w sprawie *Starzenie się ludności Polski a zabezpieczenie społeczne*, www.stat.gov.pl [3.08.2012].

Would the politicians comply with a deeply rooted stereotype of old age identified with pauperization, disability, helplessness, lack of education, burden and social costs?²⁵⁸ This image of an elderly person inspires a number of attitudes and reactions in the society – pity, indifference, negation, hostility, violence. Regardless of the fact which of these may dominate in a person's relation with a senior, they all testify to lack of acceptance, rejection, marginalization – both individual and social – within the family, local community and the society in general.

For the sake of changing this stereotype, which seems to be a foundation for more constitutive changes of systematic character it is necessary to organize social campaigns aimed at opposing all forms of discrimination and violence against the elderly, not only physical but also emotional, economic and sexual. Obligatory social education as well transformation of social awareness can be implemented through the following processes:

1. building of intergenerational dialogue,
2. diminishing the scale of economic exclusion,
3. ensuring accessibility of care, nursing, treatment and rehabilitation services to the elderly,
4. engaging older people in all types of social initiatives, especially on the level of local communities, which gives a sense of belonging to the social current of life,
5. restrictive elimination of violence, discrimination and exclusion of the elderly.

Unfortunately, these points will not be respected unless the younger generation stands for older people's rights, which does not mean a struggle for the sake of the rights of „others” but of our own, as: „(...) the sense that people attribute to their own existence as well as their value system define the sense and value of old age. And the other way round, the way the society deals with old people exposes the whole truth – sometimes carefully concealed – about its priorities and aims”²⁵⁹.

Summary

Ageing of the world population is becoming a huge international and intercontinental problem, which confronts demographers, sociologists, social

²⁵⁸ E. Miszczak, *Stereotypowy obraz człowieka starszego w Polsce*, [In:] J.T. Kowaleski, P. Szukalski (ed.), *Starość i starzenie się jako doświadczenie jednostek i zbiorowości ludzkich*, Łódź 2006, pp. 305-311.

²⁵⁹ S. de Beauvoir, *Old Age*, op. cit.; quote translated from Polish after: S. de Beauvoir, *Starość*, Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca, Warszawa 2011, pp. 95–96.

politicians and policy-makers with new social challenges as need for lengthening of working life, making strategies for senior social activity and creating the effective family policy.

The article broaches the social situation of Polish seniors. The criteria of presentation are both the statistics and the analysis of senior status in terms of finances, health condition, living facilities, family life and educational activity. Author tries to find the characteristics of social problems elderly people in Poland. The aim of this paper is to explore the current situation of older people in Poland and map problems that they face. The outcomes of the analysis are related to social policy strategies.

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Table 1. Evaluation of own economic situation and of the household economic situation.

Table 2. Auto-assessment of health condition (% of population at given age).

Table 3. Assessment of living conditions.

Table 4. Ways of spending free time.

VI. HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

“The paradox of religious diversity and human rights in Europe”

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1. International Conventions. Are they applicable when religiously sanctioned cultural differences are considered?

There is no doubt that people from different cultural backgrounds think and feel differently about many aspects of life and death. A UK medical study revealed that attitudes towards illness and pain vary across faith groups. In their comprehensive study, doctors looked at the different strategies for coping with chronic pain and discovered a substantial difference between Christian and Muslim individuals' pain experience²⁶⁰. According to Konrad Pędziwiatr, the biggest populations of Muslims in Europe are in France, the UK, Holland and Germany. In his point of view, Islam in Europe has stopped being a religion of emigrants and refugees and has become a religion of citizens²⁶¹. This article was inspired by the recent “cartoon wars” ignited by the provocative French magazine, Charlie Hebdo. These cartoons aimed to ridicule the violent reaction in some Muslim circles towards the short film produced in the US which offended the feelings of the Muslim community worldwide²⁶². The reaction consisted of protests²⁶³ and several deaths, e.g. U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. The Egyptian daily newspaper “*Al Wata*”²⁶⁴, took positive action against the violent response and fought back with a series of satirical cartoons, portraying “Westerners” as very critical and hateful towards Islam. Although the cartoons state that most Europeans view Muslims as dangerous terrorists²⁶⁵, it also brings a message of peaceful coexistence²⁶⁶. Several questions come to mind: Where does this islamophobia

²⁶⁰ J.R. Lewis, A. Gold, S. Thorpe, *The Contribution of Religion to Culture. British Muslim representation of Chronic Pain*, [In:] A. Chybicka (ed.), *Culture & Gender An Intimate Relation*, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 58-75.

²⁶¹ K. Pędziwiatr, *Religijny wymiar wolności i społecznego zaangażowania wśród młodych muzułmanek w Belgii i Wielkiej Brytanii*, [In:] K. Leszczyńska, A. Kościańska (ed.), *Kobiety i Religie*, Kraków 2006. p. 315.

²⁶² Innocence of Muslims, July 2012, an anti-Islam video, written and produced by Basseley Nakoula, pseudonym: Sam Bacile.

²⁶³ www.thelede.blogs.nytimes.com [30.12.2012].

²⁶⁴ www.globalpost.com [30.12.2012].

²⁶⁵ www.news.yahoo.com [30.12.2012].

²⁶⁶ www.edmontonjournal.com [30.12.2012].

come from? Is there a reason to perceive Islamic extremism as a negative force, a danger to democracy and a danger to personal freedom? How does extreme traditionalism in women's' dress codes or in the division of roles in the family, enhance the stereotyping of Islam by western society? In the light of the gradual progression of Human Rights²⁶⁷, employee rights²⁶⁸ and women's rights²⁶⁹, which have led to a new standard of gender equality, (promoted by the United Nations and EU institutions²⁷⁰), some have said that the liberation of women has gone too far and now discriminates against men, for example in the divorce process²⁷¹. This can be observed in the reactionist campaign of Fathers for Justice in the UK and US. However, this is counterbalanced by the pious Muslim girl, who lives in the Turkish countryside, has never been to school and is covered head to toe to protect the honour of her family, which lies with her ability to maintain her virginity until her marriage at early age to a much older man. She will not even know, not to mention love this man. "Romantic love" is a Western concept, the so called "love" will come with the birth of many children that she is expected to bare and if they are boys the "love" may be mutual from the husband who will be pleased with the results of her duty²⁷². If the children are all girls, she may be instantly divorced and left to her own resources, which with lack of education, means impoverishment and hunger. If she is lucky enough, the father may take custody of her children, so at least they won't starve. One may identify grey areas where law comes into conflict with cultural, or sometimes religiously sanctioned customs in the community. This creates an unresolved divergence between gender equality and cultural norms in Europe. An example may be the extremist views on a woman's position in the family and in society, amongst the strictest members of Muslim communities in EU countries. This publication aims to underline existing social issues that need to be addressed in social work and in the social political forum. The dilemma of how to preserve respect for diversity, religious freedom and freedom of expression, brings to light an irresolvable paradox of Quran-based Sharia law and the limitations that it places on the personal freedom of women in Muslim

²⁶⁷ The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) 1953.

²⁶⁸ Labour rights e.g. working times regulations, right to have union representation or to go on strike action.

²⁶⁹ UNICEF, *Promoting Gender Equality. An Equality-based Approach to Programming*, 2011, www.unicef.org [28.01.2011].

²⁷⁰ The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an EU agency established in 2007 to support Member State governments and EU institutions (particularly the European Commission) in promoting gender equality.

²⁷¹ D. Ross, *Matt O'Connor. The man behind Fathers4Justice*, "The Independent", 4 July 2006.

²⁷² C. Delaney, *The seed and the soil. Gender and cosmology in Turkish village society*, Berkeley, California 1991.

communities (this depends on the interpretation of the holy texts and how they are applied by families and communities in general e.g. the Wahhabi vision of Islam being one of the most strict)²⁷³. The situation of Muslim women in Europe varies from country to country, from town to village and from family to family. However, one should be conscious that female circumcision, arranged (often forced) marriages at a young age, domestic violence based on “strict” interpretations of the Koran, lack of educational progression, no social life outside the family home and no political or economic activity, may create considerable social problems not only for individuals subjected to these practices, but also for the community in a wider sense. The veil debate is only the tip of the iceberg as part of a deeper problem of social injustice and the difficulty of social cohesion and maintenance of ones unique identity and inherited beliefs. I would like to stress that I do not wish to spread religious intolerance or any form of islamophobia, but simply question how can Western values go together with views such as the acceptance of honour killing. I wonder what the Suffragettes²⁷⁴ or other women involved in the fight for women's rights would say, if they saw that the “mistreatment” of some Muslim women often goes unnoticed and is not dealt with in a satisfactory manner. A cohesive society demands that newcomers, who wish to stay, contribute to social and economic success on an individual and collective level and whilst being able to maintain their beliefs, may be expected to compromise in their actions and tolerate differences²⁷⁵. All women, girls and children, despite their ethnic origin or faith affiliation, should be protected from any form of abuse and intentional, or unintentional removal of any statutory rights²⁷⁶. This discourse is based on selected articles of the European Convention on Human Rights ratified by European states after WWII and will demonstrate the discrepancy between minority rights, women's rights and basic human rights. The source material on the subject matter is enriched with a personal 4 year experience of working with minority groups in the UK, interviews with 4 British Muslim women and 11 British Muslim men, having access to police statistics on race related domestic violence figures and living in Saudi Arabia for 2 years. The social costs of gender stratification standards in the Muslim community, which is considered old fashioned by Western standards, are high. This starts with increased

²⁷³ Gender equality in Arab world critical for progress and prosperity, UN report warns, E-Joussour, 21 October 2008.

²⁷⁴ E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement. A Reference Guide 1866-1928*, Routledge, London 2001.

²⁷⁵ N. K. Denzin, *Performance Ethnography Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*, Sage, California 2003.

²⁷⁶ B. Lockwood (ed.), *Women's Rights*, “A Human Rights Quarterly Reader”, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 2006.

personal health risks, lower rates of economic contribution and a strain on the benefit system. On the other hand, secularisation and the collapse of family values, attracts new converts, who perceive traditional principles as a guarantee of safety and stability in the constant change and chaos of the modern environment. The renowned Italian critic of Islamic culture, Oriana Fallaci said in her writings: “Moslem women rarely walk alone along the street. Generally they walk in groups, with their children and with the husband who keeps three paces ahead to make it clear that he is the master and she must follow him. There are times when even girls who are students, the most progressive girls, do not evade this ruling. You can see them coming out of high school, muffled up like nuns and they are girls who know all about Einstein or Leonardo da Vinci, but if you come too close or try to photograph them, they'll suddenly huddle together in a group, lowering their heads as sheep do when they're afraid”. “In a land which is struggling to convince women to take off their veils, explaining that they prevent the skin from breathing, carry infection, and enfeeble the sight, such anachronism is cruel. In the streets you might still happen to see cars with closed curtains: these are the cars of the richest Moslem women, for whom it is not enough to hide their head in “purdah”. Inside the houses, into which incidentally it is extremely difficult to gain admittance, you will very rarely set eyes on any women”²⁷⁷. This was written in 1964, is there any change in this matter?

2. Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The right to life

Article 2 protects the right of every person to their life. There is no death penalty in Europe outside of war time and war crime. Some voices however, particularly in the UK, call for a separate jurisdiction for the Muslim community where Muslim courts, consisting of religious scholars, would charge people in accordance with Sharia law²⁷⁸. This implies the return of the death penalty by sword, hanging or stoning²⁷⁹. Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights is somewhat connected to this thought, as it provides a detailed right to a fair trial, including the right to a public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal within reasonable time, the presumption of innocence and other minimum rights for those charged with a criminal offence (adequate time and facilities to prepare their defence, access to legal representation, the right to examine witnesses against them or have them examined and the right to the free assistance of an interpreter). The Quran is

²⁷⁷ O. Fallaci, *The Useless Sex*, Horizon Press, New York 1964, pp. 26-32.

²⁷⁸ K. A. El Fadl, *The Great Theft. Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*, New York 2005.

²⁷⁹ See: *Saudi be header Abdallah Bin Sa'id Al Bishi*, www.youtube.com [30.12.2012].

less generous in this respect and for example, gives different values to the testimony of man and of a woman (a woman's testimony is worth a 50% of a man's) and different values to that of a Muslim and non-Muslim. Looking at the last decade's trials in Arab countries there is a high level of doubt whether a fair trial is possible under Sharia.

3. Article 3. Torture

Article 3 prohibits torture and “inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. There are no exceptions or limitations on this right. This provision usually applies, apart from torture, to cases of severe police violence and poor conditions in detention. However, it must include prolonged physical, psychological, sexual and economic exploitation that women from ethnic minorities may face in their family. An example of this practice continues in Europe amongst some African tribal traditions, who promote the sewing together of the vaginal walls to ensure chastity or fidelity. Sewing, ripping apart and re-sewing seems to be a form of culturally sanctioned torture, using religious justification for the act. As an illegal procedure, it is usually carried out in dubious sanitary conditions, in secret or outside of Europe when the girl is lured abroad by the offer of a holiday. What about repetitive rape, that may occur if forced into an arranged marriage? Rape is a form of torture used in war²⁸⁰. Can it be tolerated within a family? How can it be detected, monitored and stopped or moreover prevented? The stories of honour killings are often classed as crimes of passion. There is often no mention that the murder is carried out in cold blood, premeditated and often planned together by the family to clear their name. It is not uncommon for Muslim girls who fall pregnant before marriage to have a “black market” abortion and so called “vaginal regeneration” or hymen restoration, since there is a strong emphasis on chastity. This puts some women through considerable emotional turmoil and exposes them to many health risks. One must also look at the idea of gender separation and control that sometimes leads to a lack of regular health checks for Muslim women. The husband takes the decision about whether the woman is permitted to see a doctor and this is non-negotiable. Although there is no dowry in EU laws, certain communities still “trade” their women in marriage, in return for goods or favours. The Quranic rule is that the dowry should be kept by the bride for her sole disposal. In reality, it is sometimes the family that benefits from her marriage.

²⁸⁰ S. Brownmiller, *Against Our Will. Man, Women and Rape*, New York 1975, p. 78.

4. Article 4. Servitude

Article 4 prohibits slavery. However, slavery is permitted in the Qur'an and the punishment of slaves may be death according to a Saudi interpretation. There are verses in Qur'an that allow one to have sex with slaves (war captives). For example: Surrah 33, verse 50, S: 23:5-6. S4: 24, S8:69²⁸¹. In 2003 the Saudi jurist, Shaykh Saleh Al-Fawzan, issued a fatwa claiming "Slavery is a part of Islam. Slavery is part of jihad, and jihad will remain as long there is Islam"²⁸². It is also deemed a great deed to grant freedom to slaves. Quran specialists argue that there were references to taking slaves at war in the bible²⁸³, however, the sole concept of slavery is completely out of date in the 20th century, so how does the traditional interpretation of the Qur'an correspond with article 4? In 1925 slaves from Yemen, Africa, Asia Minor, were still being bought and sold at Mecca, in the ordinary way of trade²⁸⁴. Slavery in KSA was officially abolished in 1962. Dr. Abdul-Latif Mushtahari, the general supervisor and director of homiletics and guidance at the Egyptian Azhar University in his book "You Ask and Islam Answers" says: "Islam does not prohibit slavery but retains it for two reasons. The first reason is war (whether it is a civil war or a foreign war in which the captive is either killed or enslaved) provided that the war is not between Muslims against each other - it is not acceptable to enslave the violators, or the offenders, if they are Muslims. Only non-Muslim captives may be enslaved or killed. The second reason is the sexual propagation of slaves which would generate more slaves for their owner" (pp. 51-52). There are plenty of references to ownership of slaves in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament (Leviticus 25:44-46, Exodus 21:2-6; 21:7-11; 21:20-21, Ephesians 6:5, 1 Timothy 6:1-2, Luke 12:47-48), and some argue that God's word can never be changed and therefore the Quran is resistant to "modernization"²⁸⁵. However, these Bible passages are considered historic and not transferable to this day and age. Nowadays one can still observe modern slavery across the world and homeless, neglected children are at high risk. The film *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) portrayed street children in India, who fell under the control of abusers. It is not an isolated case that people who feed them and give them basic shelter feel that they buy them with all their rights and can do anything they like with them. It is also worth discussing a "temporary

²⁸¹ *The Holy Quran. English translation of the meanings and Commentary*, (ed.) The Presidency of Islamic Researchers, Al-Madinah 1413 H, p. 215, 490, 977, 1259.

²⁸² S. al-Fawzan, "Taming a Neo-Qutubite Fanatic Part 1", p. 24, www.salafipublications.com [17.02.2007].

²⁸³ Leviticus 25:44.

²⁸⁴ E. Rutter, *The Holy Cities of Arabia*, London and New York 1928, Vol. II, p. 93.

²⁸⁵ See: Abu 'Abdullah Al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir [sic] al Jami' li-ahkam al-Qur'an*, Commentary on Surah 6:115, www.answering-islam.org [30.12.2012].

marriage” in Islam. This allows a man to take a legal concubine or a temporary “sex date”. From Eurocentric perspective, this practice allows trading in temporary brides, particularly in poor, Far East countries and therefore promotes forced prostitution. From a Muslim perspective, it is noble to take a temporary marriage contract to feed a girl's family in exchange of sexual favors, or to prevent a girl from being a “spinster” and never experience close contact with a man. It can be a charitable act, or it can be a short term resolution for someone who cannot afford a “full-time” bride.

5. Article 9. Conscience and religion

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides a right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This includes the freedom to change a religion or belief and to manifest a religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance, subject to certain restrictions that are “in accordance with law” and “necessary in a democratic society”. The last two paragraphs protect social order and prevent religiously motivated killings. It should also protect converts who leave Islam. Outside of Europe, converts from Islam can be legally put to death (Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, some African Muslim dominant states) in accordance with Sharia law that prescribes the death penalty for any form of apostasy. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Somali refugee to Holland experienced doubt in the existence of Allah and based on her own experience of work with domestic violence victims, questioned the existing quranic teachings as extremely harmful to women. She was instantly branded a traitor and death fatal were issued²⁸⁶. Baroness Warsi, who is Britain's first female Muslim cabinet minister, went on to write critically about the secularisation of Britain (14 February 2012): “You cannot and should not extract these Christian foundations from the evolution of our nations any more than you can or should erase the spires from our landscapes”. She also said that “to create a more just society, people need to feel stronger in their religious identities and more confident in their creeds” (...). “In practice this means individuals not diluting their faiths and nations not denying their religious heritages”²⁸⁷. She visited the Vatican and gifted a copy of the Quran (translated by an Eastern European Jew who converted to Islam and helped to write the constitution of Pakistan) to the Pope, together with a box containing 99 tiny golden cubes with praises for Allah, as a part of religion dialogue²⁸⁸. On 30 November 2009, she was pelted with eggs by a group of Muslims whilst on a walkabout in Luton. The protesters accused her of 'not being a proper Muslim'

²⁸⁶ A. H. Ali, *Infidel*, Pocket Books, London 2008, pp. 303-314 and 286-295.

²⁸⁷ www.bbc.co.uk [30.12.2012].

²⁸⁸ www.telegraph.co.uk [30.12.2012].

and of supporting the death of Muslims in Afghanistan. Warsi told the BBC that the men were “idiots who did not represent the majority of British Muslims”²⁸⁹. In May 2010, the British radical Islamic preacher Anjem Choudary warned that she could be in physical danger if she visited Muslim communities²⁹⁰.

6. Article 10. Expression

Although one may question the motives behind the questioning of the Quran by A. H. Ali, most western societies would agree that people should be able to pose philosophical questions and reveal hypocrisy if it exists. In one of her speeches, she described the Prophet Mohamed as “a cruel man, who demanded absolute power, stunted creativity” and “by our Western standards, is a pervert man and a tyrant” (Throw Radio, interview, Holland, January 2003). From that point she began receiving threatening phone calls from Muslim representatives in Holland and Somalia. She did not call for the burning of the Holy Book like the Islamophobic pastor, Terry Jones, in Florida, USA; she just expressed her opinion on the prophet as a historical figure. Whilst the pastor's idea is classed as a “hate crime” and understandably may cause controversy and backlash, Ali's debate on Quran's principles was a purely philosophical act. Article 10 provides the right to freedom of expression, subject to certain restrictions that are “in accordance with law” and “necessary in a democratic society”. This right includes the freedom to hold opinions, and to receive and impart information and ideas. Article 10 is regularly breached by some religious groups, who take offense at any minor criticism or satiric humour, by the issuing of death penalty fatwas to artists, political writers and opponents. At the same time, the veil debate can be considered. Can a state interfere with personal freedom of expression in the name of a greater good? The internalisation of certain strict dress codes in early childhood, together with strong mechanisms of social control and religious manipulation, leave Muslim women in France torn between fighting against racism and fighting against sexism. On a personal level, it must be daunting for someone who wants to disappear in to the crowd through an appropriate outfit and who is not used to revealing her face in public, to suddenly feel “naked” and exposed in an ocean of “infidels”. Some French and Belgium Muslim women are afraid to go out from home. They are afraid of local reaction to their “unusual” dress code and they are afraid of their husband's reaction. They are worried about giving a bad example to their daughters and at the same time they fear state-imposed financial penalties and fear confrontation. The question revolves around safety, integration and

²⁸⁹ *Tory Muslim peer pelted with eggs*, BBC News, 30 November 2009.

²⁹⁰ J. Ward, *Syeeda Warsi slammed by Islamic fundamentalists*, “Daily Star”, 16 May 2010, or: www.dailystar.co.uk [30.12.2012].

discrimination aspects. What is the priority? In an era of terrorism acts, in the public's mind, the veil creates a perfect disguise for a suicide bomber. It enhances the obvious visible social divisions within one nation and it promotes what is viewed as a symbol of oppression. Perhaps the lack of a veil would expose private issues of domestic abuse; perhaps that is just a stereotypical point of view. Hoodfar agrees that the veil is a patriarchal tool for the control of women by men and state. However, she agrees that it can be used in a positive manner by "pious" women allowing them to avoid arranged marriage, or continue their education away from home and community, which they would not be allowed to do otherwise²⁹¹. Some women use their full veil to gain respect and therefore find it easier to voice their ideas in Muslim community²⁹². At the same time Hoodfar criticizes the western outlook on the veil as racist and maintaining patriarchal power, through "white stereotyping". In her experience, wearing a veil allows women to be heard, their voice cannot be weakened by arguments about lack of religious devotion. More progressive Muslims support the idea of rejecting the veil, the successful trend in that respect was visible in Egypt in 1923 when during demonstrations in Cairo activists dropped their veils²⁹³ and therefore initiated the unveiling process without state intervention. In the Turkish example, the state argued that the veil was the main block to access to the education of Turkish mothers, who should be well educated in order bring up intelligent and well educated sons²⁹⁴. However, in Carol Delaney's study of rural Turkey, she states that women are "owned" and a "tool of procreation". She is an opponent of veiling and of patriarchal order²⁹⁵. Once again the Bible springs to mind with the passages on head covering of women (1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 1 Timothy 2:9), which is still practiced by some, for example, Amish communities. However it is not considered compulsory and nobody would consider shaving a woman's hair if she does not cover in accordance with the Bible's advice.

A short film called "Submission" by the Dutch movie maker Theo van Gogh, in association with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, portrayed 4 examples of disadvantaged and abused Muslim women. The film dealt with the oppression of women in many Muslim countries. Van Gogh was killed by a Muslim fanatic in 2004 because of the film. Ali received many threats and eventually had to

²⁹¹ H. Hoodfar, *Veil in their brains and on our heads. Muslim practice of veiling*, [In:] R. E. Hryciuk, A. Kościańska (ed.), *Gender. Anthropological perspective*, Warsaw 2007, p. 253.

²⁹² C. Timmerman, *Muslim Women and Nationalism. The Power of the Image*, "Current Sociology", No. 48/2000, pp. 15-27.

²⁹³ L. Ahmed, *Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem*, "Feminist Studies", No. 8(3)/1982, pp. 521- 534.

²⁹⁴ H. Hoodfar, op. cit., pp. 238-239.

²⁹⁵ C. Delaney, op. cit.

flee Holland in fear for her life. Anyone who portrays an image of the Prophet Mohamed faces similar problems, even if it is a match stick figure. A Novel by Salman Rashdie “The Satanic Verses” caused the same controversy and death orders were issued. Some of the people involved in the translation and publication of the book were also attacked, causing nearly 40 deaths (37 in Sivas Massacre in Turkey 1993 and Hitoshi Igarashi, a Japanese interpreter was stabbed to death)²⁹⁶. Often, literary work that is deemed to be critical of either Islam or the treatment of women in Muslim countries is banned by many states. Examples have included the Pakistani writer Quanta Ahmed, the Persian, Carmen Bin Ladin, and the Saudi, Rajaa Alsanea.

7. Article 14. Discrimination

Article 14 contains a prohibition of discrimination. While the article specifically prohibits discrimination based on “sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status”, the last of these allows the court to extend to Article 14 protection to other grounds not specifically mentioned such as has been done regarding discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation. This is probably the most incompatible article of them all. It is incompatible with sharia law that prescribes the death penalty for homosexual acts and in sharia based countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and certain African States, the death penalty is regularly given for homosexuality. Gender discrimination is observed in cases of wife beatings by Muslim husbands that seek justification for their actions in the Quran are not uncommon. Sheikh Abu Adam's actions in Munich in 2010, demonstrate that his preaching to other religions representatives about the non-violent character of Islam does not include wives²⁹⁷. “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women (in charge of women*), because Allah has given one more strength (...), and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's absence) what Allah would have them guard (...). As for those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty (rebellion*), and ill conduct, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and beat (scourge*) them”²⁹⁸. In another verse it states: “and take in thy hand a little grass and strike (*green branch and beat her with it **) and break not

²⁹⁶ www.en.wikipedia.org [30.12.2012].

²⁹⁷ www.dailymail.co.uk [30.12.2012].

²⁹⁸ Qur'an: Surat an Nisa 4:34, (*different translation in Saudi copy of Quran*), see: *The Holy Qur-an, English translation of the meanings and Commentary*, (ed.), The Presidency of Islamic Researchers, H. Al-Madinah 1413, section 6, pp. 219-221.

thy oath”²⁹⁹. Disciplining the wife was important enough in Islamic thought that Abu Dawud devoted a small chapter of the Sunah dedicated to wife beating in his Hadith collection. Below are two of them³⁰⁰. Chapter 709 contains two paragraphs on the beating of women. In paragraph 2141 Iyas Dhubab reported Mohamed as saying: “Do not beat Allah's handmaidens”, but when Umar came to the apostle of Allah and said: “Women have become emboldened towards their husbands”, the prophet gave permission to beat them. Then many women came round the family of the apostle of Allah complaining against their husbands. So the apostle of Allah said: “Many women have gone round Muhammad's family complaining against their husbands. They are not the best among you”. This tradition could be interpreted to mean either the men not being the best because they beat their wives, or the women not being the best because they are complaining about their husbands beating them. Al Qurtubi (1214-1273), from Cordova in Spain, a Maliki scholar and hadith specialist, claims that in paragraph 2142, Umar reported the prophet as saying: “A man will not be asked as to why he beat his wife”. “You need to know that Allah did not allow for beating in his book except in this situation and when the major sins have been committed³⁰¹”. Therefore, Allah has made the disobedience of wives equivalent to the commitment of major sins. Today, there are many programs on Arabic television channels that refer to women rights and one of the main subjects is the instructions of how and under what circumstances one is allowed to beat his wife. There is a difference between Muslim scholars in the interpretation of the above passage. All preachers claim that the Koran protects women by allowing the beatings because it corrects a woman's behaviour and ensures that she is not severely hurt. For example, one is not allowed to hit her in the face, nor break her bones nor cause bleeding or bruising or permanent damage to her beauty. Some say beatings are only allowed for a reason of refusal of marital conjugal rights on the wife's part³⁰². Others claim that she may be beaten if she disobeys her husband. Bahraini cleric Abdullah Aal Mahmud's interpretation is that beating is permissible if she acts in a questionable manner³⁰³ and according to US cleric Khalid Yasin (convert from Christianity) a wife could be beaten for returning home late³⁰⁴. None of the above mentions the potential harm of the sole existence of that particular passage that offers a door to domestic violence, which has moved some more orthodox preachers to

²⁹⁹ Qur'an, op. cit., Surat 38:44, p. 1383.

³⁰⁰ bin A. I. H. Sulaiman “Sunan Abu Dawud”, *al-Madina*, New Delhi 1985.

³⁰¹ A. Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller*, Amana, Beltsville, MD 1994, p. 1090.

³⁰² See: www.youtube.com [30.12.2012].

³⁰³ Ibidem.

³⁰⁴ Ibidem.

encourage harsh punishment of disobedient wives. Interestingly it only works one way and the woman continues to be a victim of a patriarchal system of beliefs. In the flood of wahhabi interpretation for the above verses, the contradictory evidence by the “Global Muslim Women Shura Council” goes almost unnoticed. In their work promoting a positive image of Islam and a much more peaceful interpretation, they claim that the word used in the discussed verses, in Arabic: “*daraba*” has over 25 meanings, which change based on context. An intellectual and historical analysis of the word indicates that “*daraba*” means “to go away from” and not “to strike”. And the word “*nushuz*”, in their view, has often been incorrectly translated as “disloyalty” or “disobedience”. However, in other sections of the Qur'an, particularly in reference to men, the word is interpreted as “to stand up” or “go away from marriage”. Therefore, this notion of one-sided “obedience” from a wife to a husband does not exist in the verse³⁰⁵.

At the end of the “Year of Korczak 2012”³⁰⁶, it is impossible not to focus on children's issues, although it is not a religion-based problem, it may be culturally sensitive, in terms of gender equality amongst minors. The Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations lists: freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom from fear, freedom of choice and the right to make decisions, and ownership over one's body. All of these rights may be removed from a girl and some from a boy, since a father's authority is the rule³⁰⁷ and the teaching methods in some Islamic schools are controversial from a modern pedagogy perspective³⁰⁸.

Despite an individualistic approach to the customs and traditions of various ethnic minorities, the health and wellbeing of children is of universal value. Professionals from educational spheres should prevent harmful practices; such as female circumcision (practitioners working with girls age 4-10 should file concerns about unexplained injuries or pain, as well as remain sensitive to conversations about an impending holiday that suggests concern)³⁰⁹, arranged marriage, extensive physical punishments (e.g. in strict Christian families or in examples of abuse by Irish catholic nuns up to the 1990s)³¹⁰, or dangerous ritual

³⁰⁵ The Global Muslim Women's Shura Council, *Domestic Violence. A Violation of Islam*, “The American Society for Muslim Advancement”, No. 9/2012.

³⁰⁶ www.en.2012korczak.pl [30.12.2012].

³⁰⁷ Children's Rights, Amnesty International 2010, www.amnesty.org [30.12.2012].

³⁰⁸ C. F. Calkins, *Reviewed Work: Children's Rights. Toward the Liberation of the Child* by Paul Adams, “Peabody Journal of Education”, No. 49(4)/1972, p. 327.

³⁰⁹ J. Lindon, *Safeguarding children and young people. Child protection 0-18*, London 2008, pp. 133-135.

³¹⁰ www.guardian.co.uk [30.12.2012].

practices to remove “evil spirits” from possessed children³¹¹. Carmen Bid Ladin in her biography describes physical punishments and verbal abuse, threatening with hell fire and beating of students in elementary schools in Saudi Arabia³¹². This breaches a United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989³¹³.

The Saudi perspective on Islamic teachings is very apparent in the Muslim way of thinking and it should not come as a surprise taking into account Saudi Arabian's oil wealth that leads to a self proclaimed promotion of Wahhabi rule abroad³¹⁴. “Islamic solidarity in the face of opposing ideological currents and combating all ideas and ideologies that contradict the Islamic creed³¹⁵”, seems to be the motto for sponsoring Quranic schools and promoting the vision of Islam outside KSA. Every citizen has a duty to participate in spreading the message and fight the Western “corruption of minds”³¹⁶. The Kingdom’s involvement in the educational sphere abroad ranges from building and funding mosques, Islamic cultural centers, schools and universities, the provision of generous scholarships to study in Islamic institutions, assistance to perform hajj, distribution of Islamic textbooks in local languages and the work of Islamic intellectuals. Migrant workers whose children often attend Saudi schools are also carriers of the religious message back to their own country. The positive role in funding madrasas ranges from the provision of basic access to reading and writing to full time schools, but on the other hand it spreads the singular vision of a Wahhabi inspired worldview, that in particular affects women issues and women's position in society. Saudi sponsored schools require gender segregation and apply Islamic dress codes, providing appropriate outfits and veils. According to the major religious authority amongst Sunni Muslims Worldwide, the Saudi based Grand Mufti Shaikh Abd al Aziz Al ash-Shaikh “mixing between men and women is totally forbidden under sharia and highly punishable. It is the root of every evil and catastrophe”³¹⁷. It has been reported that some Saudi funded facilities abroad, particularly in the UK, spread interracial unrest and could ignite extreme views³¹⁸ that could lead to acts of

³¹¹ J. Lindon, op. cit, pp. 121-140.

³¹² C. Bin Ladin, *The Veiled Kingdom*, London 2005.

³¹³ J. Lindon, op. cit., pp. 129-133.

³¹⁴ J. Piscatori, *Islamic Values and National Interest. The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia*, [In:] A. Dawisha (ed.), *Islam in Foreign Policy*, London 1983.

³¹⁵ A. Saud, ‘Al Gabba’, *As-siyasa As-sa’udiyya Al-kharijiyya* (The Saudi Foreign Policy), Riyadh, 1407, p. 90.

³¹⁶ M. Prokop, *The War of Ideas. Education in Saudi Arabia*, [In:] P. Aarts, G. Nonneman (ed.), *Saudi Arabia in Balance Political Economy*, “Society. Foreign Affairs”, London 2006, pp. 72-73.

³¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 64.

³¹⁸ A. Al Ahmed, *This medieval Saudi education system must be reformed*, Guardian.co.uk, 26 November 2010.

terror, based on a school-installed hatred towards other faiths or even other schools of Quranic teaching. In fact, government funded schools in Saudi Arabia do contain anti-Christian and anti-Judaism messages (school textbooks from 2002-2004). There have been reports that foreign students in KSA are particularly indoctrinated to become tools of the political agenda in Afghanistan, Kashmir, Balkans, Central Asia, former Soviet republics and so on³¹⁹. Any attempted change of curriculum in these schools, is perceived by many as a danger to Islamic identity³²⁰. Disobedience towards teachings and against those in authority (including mahrams-legal guardians) is equal to dissension (fitna). As disobedience is classed this way, religion can be used as a powerful tool against critics of a regime or of the social and gender stratification system³²¹. Saudi educational materials blame a Jewish conspiracy for many historical events. It should not come as a surprise that the anti-Semitic, financially supported view spreads elsewhere³²².

In 2005/2006 Nadia, from a government agency in UK told me her story. She would describe herself as a young devoted Muslim. She covered her hair and wore loose covering outfits. It did not stop her from wearing make-up or playing with her head scarf all day long, adjusting it and reapplying it tirelessly, almost defeating the point of wearing it, since her hair would come out in full glory, every 5 minutes to be covered again. Nadia was a lawyer, but did not pursue her career in that area after a painful experience of discrimination in the first legal firm that she worked for. She progressed quickly to the vice-head of management but was victimised by her direct boss. He bullied her regularly at work by requesting that she bring a mop, to wash the office floor (which was the cleaner's job), or that she personally make coffee for everyone, publicly stating *because she makes it better than the secretary, I don't not know why she doesn't swap her job for a coffee making job in Starbucks*. He repeatedly made indecent jokes about how she lost her way to heaven by working with him and other men, instead of waiting in chastity and separation for her husband to be. Nadia challenged him several times pointing out how badly he made her feel and how inappropriate his comments and requests were, with no result. It is worth mentioning that he is a

³¹⁹ See: J. Stern, *Pakistan's Jihad Culture*, "Foreign Affairs", December 2000, or Q. Wiktorowicz, *The New Global Threat: Transitional Salafis and Jihad*, "Middle East Policy", Vol. 8, Issue 4/December 2001, pp. 18–38.

³²⁰ M. Prokop, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

³²¹ Examples include textbooks from Saudi Arabia: Al-hadith 2nd grade, intermediate boys, p. 23; Al-hadith 1st grade, secondary, boys, p. 58, or Al-tawhid wa al-hadith wa al-fiqh wa al-tawhid, Riyadh 2002, 6th grade, elementary, boys, p. 23, Riyadh 1999.

³²² Al-hadith 2nd grade, intermediate, girls, p. 36, Al-tarbiyya al-wataniyya, 3rd grade, secondary, boys, p. 27, Al-hadith 1st grade, secondary, boys, p.105, Al-tawhid3rd grade, intermediate, girls, p. 102, Ta'rikh al-mamlaka al-sa'udiyya, 6th grade, elementary, boys, 1999.

Muslim like her and from the same cultural Indian background. In the end, she gave up and sued the firm and decided to fight for women rights whilst promoting the Muslim cause and fight stereotypes and misconception. Nadia had not yet thought about marriage (27), as she felt it would limit her individual needs and aspirations. She felt she could contribute more to society and the community as a single woman and as a professional; her father has respected her choice, at least for now. Nadia felt that: *there is an equal level of hate and of mistrust from both from the Christian and Muslim communities and that both can act in a discriminatory manner and both can be mislead about each other.* She was concerned that there is a tendency to brand all Muslims as terrorists and on the other hand was shocked that someone who loves and obeys Allah would kill innocent people, particularly women and children, who, she said: *even during the time of war should be spared and protected.* Nadia knew of many Muslim girls and women who were subjected to unjust cultural practices at home, *based on a harmful interpretation of the Quran.* She said that many of her friends, who wanted to study medicine or law, were forced to marry in the first year of study, fell pregnant and from then on never returned to school and never worked. They felt like they missed out and some of them felt regret that they were lead to believe that they will be allowed to continue their education after marriage and after their first child was born. She also knew of mature women being locked in their apartment and not being allowed out without their husband. She felt it was wrong and had nothing to do with Islamic teaching. She felt that men who use Quran-based ideological excuses, harm Islam and harm themselves by *closing their gate to paradise*, because hurting the vulnerable is a sin and sinners (likewise in Christianity), will struggle to enter heaven. She said she likes pointing it out to the Muslim leaders in the community, as only those with authority amongst Muslim communities (Imam's, scholars, people of social standing) can change these customs. Conversely, she felt that the integration of external organisations and individual agencies can cause even more harm, as Muslims don't respond well to advice from outside their own community. Therefore, the key is to convince community leaders to change the social practices of ordinary people. As a strong political lobby, being one of the largest minority groups in the UK, they crave recognition and fight for their public space and for their voice to be heard and respected. This causes some concern amongst far-right politicians who consider "modern jihad" to be about birth rates and the "taking over" of new territory by numbers of believers. Then again, traditionalism concerning a woman's place in the family, allows mothers to have more children and to achieve success in bringing up new generations of citizens without the trouble of juggling family and professional life "working on two shifts"³²³. 5 male

³²³ A. Hochschild, *The second shift. Working parents and revolution at home*, New York 1989.

respondents from Lincolnshire explained that in their opinion, Western women are highly exploited economically and by are lead to be believed that the way to happiness lays with career progression. This is in their view the cause of many problems such as depression, stress and various illnesses that they trigger. They also felt that Western women are falling into a trap of competition for beauty and nudity; they go out of their way to look more and more attractive to men and to wear less and less to bring men's attention. *This opens women to a certain level of vulnerability and harms them on an ethical level*, said the eldest interviewee and the chair of the local Commission for Racial Equality. Although pornography and the sex industry may be a dirty creation of the West, nevertheless it is present and utilised by men of all religious backgrounds. The most shocking testimony given by A.H. Ali about a girl, who was raped and abused, so the family decided to marry her off with a much older man, grateful that he would consider taking on such a disadvantaged wife who clearly was lacking in virtue. The husband neglected her and their subsequent children, made them live a life of poverty and fear, at the same time demanding that the wife perform the most vulgar acts from pornographic movies that he forced her to watch. He told her that she was lucky to find such a generous person to take her as his wife after what happened to her and that being an obvious whore, not a virgin at marriage, it is only to be expected that she acts like one in bed³²⁴. She was subjected to domestic violence and her family of origin shared her husband's view, demanding that she stay with him, as no one else will ever want her with her shame. Passages coming from the Hadith maintain the idea of wife beating in the following verses: Bukhari (72:715) - A woman came to Muhammad and begged her to stop her husband from beating her. Her skin was bruised so badly that she it is described as being "greener" than the green veil she was wearing. Muhammad did not admonish her husband, but instead ordered her to return to him and submit to his sexual desires. In a different place, Aisha said: "I have not seen any woman suffering as much as the believing women". This is Muhammad's own wife complaining of the abuse that the women of her religions suffer relative to other women. In Hadith Muslim (4:2127) - Muhammad struck his favourite wife, Aisha, in the chest one evening when she left the house without his permission. According to Abu Dawud (2141) at first, Muhammad forbade men from beating their wives, but he rescinded this once it was reported that women were becoming emboldened toward their husbands. "Beatings are sometimes necessary to keep women in their place"³²⁵. Abu Dawud (2126) describes a situation when a Muslim man thinks he is getting a virgin, then finds out she is pregnant. Muhammad tells him to treat the woman as a sex slave and then flog her after she has delivered the child. Ibn

³²⁴ A. H. Ali, *The Caged Virgin. A Muslim Woman's Cry for Reason*, London 2006, pp. 105-108.

³²⁵ www.thereligionofpeace.com [30.12.2012].

Ishaq/Hisham 969 - requires that a married woman be “put in a separate room and beaten lightly” if she “acts in a sexual manner toward others”. According to the Hadith, this can be for an offense as petty as merely being alone with a man to whom she is not related. Kash-shaf (the revealer) of al-Zamkhshari (Vol. 1, p. 525) - Muhammad said: “Hang up your scourge where your wife can see it (...). All these passages sound alarming if taken letter by letter. Another sensitive area of equal rights revolves around the access to sport for girls. There may be a conflict of obligation to attend swimming class in state funded school and ideological views on dress code, or physical activity amongst women all in all, and sometimes appropriate covering swimming gear may be a solution. Islamic outfit requirements may make sport education tiresome and efficiently discourage girls from physical activity all in all³²⁶.

8. Article 17. Abuse of rights

Article 17 provides that no one may use the rights guaranteed by the Convention to seek the abolition or limitation of rights guaranteed in the Convention. This addresses instances where states seek to restrict a human right in the name of another human right, or where individuals rely on a human right to undermine other human rights (for example where an individual issues a death threat). This article leaves a leeway for national resources to stop or prevent any violence based on misconstrued interpretation of “jihad”³²⁷. Carmen Bin Laden claims that despite their oil wealth, the Saudis are structured by a hateful, backward looking view of religion and an education that is a school of intolerance. “The non-Muslim doesn’t count. They scorn what is foreign, which they see as the godless, individualistic values and shameless freedom of the West”³²⁸. Due to the cultural traditions of some religious fractures of Islam, it has been reported that young girls brought up in the West are either taken on a holiday or sedated and taken to the country of origin of their father, to be married off to someone that they have never seen or agreed to marry. They are then trapped, as they become completely dependent on their new forced husband. They have no escape. Muslims often say they would not force their daughter to marry someone that she does not want, but often also admit that refusal would be a grave disobedience and would meet with restrictions and that if their daughter respects their father she will accept his will and his choice of the right candidate. The subject of religiously sanctioned wife beating returns once again. It is a major social problem within Muslim communities, because of their own cultural bias

³²⁶ M. Tworuschka, U. Tworuschka, *Religie Świata. Islam*, Warszawa 2009, pp. 101-103.

³²⁷ Compare with Q. Wiktorowicz, *A Genealogy of Radical Islam*, [In:] “Studies in Conflict & Terrorism”, Vol. 28, Issue 2/2005.

³²⁸ C. Bin Laden, op. cit., p. 206.

and defensive approach towards change from outside their religious leadership. A number of medical studies prove that while the bruises disappear after a few weeks, the psychological damage lasts for years and leaves deeper scars³²⁹. Researchers have identified low self-esteem, poor self-image, and a propensity to anxiety, depression and psychosomatic illness as characteristics common to victims of domestic violence³³⁰. One of the more insidious aspects of family violence, regardless of the level of severity or frequency is the climate of fear that is created for those who are victimized by it³³¹. According to more forward thinking Quran specialists such as Dr Jamal Badawi from the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), verses can be interpreted differently and discourage the use of violence. He appeals to Muslim men by use of the following quotes from the hadiths: “Do not beat the female servants of Allah”; “Some (women) visited my family complaining about their husbands (beating them). These (husbands) are not the best of you” and “[It is not a shame that] one of you beats his wife like [an unscrupulous person] beats a slave and maybe he sleeps with her at the end of the day³³²”. In another hadith the Prophet (PBUH) said: “How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then he may embrace (sleep with) her?”³³³.

9. Working with Muslim communities across Europe

Conclusion

Modern, often the second or third generation of Muslim refugees and migrants do not want to part with their cultural heritage and rightly so. They wish to keep their faith and tradition, however they see the need for adapting to modern ways of thinking and an interpretation of the Quran that comes with an understanding of change in the World. They also seek a cohesive and peaceful coexistence with other nations and faiths³³⁴. They want to build on trust and friendship and promote the vision of Islam in an active but positive way, which is the only way to meet the fundamental requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights. There is absolutely no space left to tolerate any other interpretation of

³²⁹ F. V. Parker “Battered”, No. 58(1)/1995, Medline, pp. 26-29.

³³⁰ Compare with S. Venis, R. Horton, *Violence Against Women*, “The Lancet”, Vol. 359, April 6/2002.

³³¹ S. Swinford, *Female victims of spousal violence*, “Family Relations”, Vol. 45, Issue 1/1996, p. 98.

³³² See: Yahiya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Riyad Al-Saliheen*, pp. 137-140.

³³³ M. Bukhari, *Sahih Bukhari*, Kitab Bhavan, Vol. 8. hadith 68, New Delhi 1987, pp. 42-43.

³³⁴ Based on statements of 9 young Muslim community leaders in UK (all of them were man, second or third generation emigrants, one of them a British convert running Islam awareness courses).

ancient passages that reflected a social order 1400 years ago. Those progressive thinkers feel that the extremist members of their religion, cause harm to good Muslims, cause harm to Islam and create unresolved conflict that can only lead to further isolation and reprisals amongst Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. There is enough violence and death in other Islamic countries outside Europe, where different fractions of Islam fight against each other causing ongoing pain, loss and tension. Muslims in Europe, still being in minority, cannot afford to make enemies. They see that outdated ritualism gives them a bad name and continues to spread stereotypes where difference is instantly noticed and confirms preconception in non-believers' minds. Democracy that was achieved through blood, pain and collective sacrifice cannot stand idly by, while some women in society lack the access to all that democracy gives: freedom of individual choice and hope. The challenge for social workers, or any other people involved in government organisations that gain an insight into the results of strict interpretations of the Quran, demonstrated by the examples in this paper, is to ensure the basic right of free choice. That free choice, granted to all citizens of Europe, can be enabled by allowing the acceptable (under the label of religious rights) to become unacceptable. Change must start at the top level, at the governing bodies' level, then the message of non tolerance should be clear and united. Professionals working directly with discussed communities should provide evidence (through case studies and quotes from interviews with the victims of "tradition") in order to stipulate interest on the decision making level. Muslim women must be heard and their opinions should be given priority. However, years of religious indoctrination have a profound effect on their often culturally limited point of view. A. H. Ali says that a long time is needed to free Muslim women from their own mental cage³³⁵. Balancing the two is not easy, but the ultimate aim is to protect the most vulnerable and the most "voiceless" whilst respecting their cultural autonomy. From the practical perspective, looking for allies within the Muslim community is absolutely essential for the success of any programme. It has to start with identifying and engaging more liberal, possibly western educated, self-aware, brave and outspoken Muslims of both sexes as mediators and cultural "interpreters" to help and break the barriers of fear and lack of trust to Eurocentric outsiders. Members of faith communities who feel under threat from people who do not share their beliefs can be especially keen to close ranks. It seems like a minefield where involved professionals who share their faith, can be forced into a choice between personal or professional loyalties. Individuals from outside the community may be anxious that they will be accused of ignorance, outright hostility to the faith or cultural group³³⁶.

³³⁵ A. H. Ali, *The Caged Virgin...*, op. cit., p. 295.

³³⁶ J. Lindon, op. cit., pp. 137-141.

After reading *Le rendez-vous des civilisations* by Youssef Courbage and Emmanuel Todd (2007), I feel reassured that it is more likely that radical ideas will be overwhelmed by slow secularisation of Muslims. In their demographic perspective, alphabetisation and scientific/technological progress tends to liberate individuals from the reign of faith.

Summary

The discourse reflects on multiculturalism in Europe and the challenge in adhering to Human Rights conventions, while respecting the individuality of cultural differences. Concerns over ethnic divisions are discussed with a focus on conflicting ideologies. The culturally sanctioned social marginalization of women is the core of this debate and a major's focus of this article is the analyses of areas where religious beliefs contradict the Eurocentric perspective of personal freedom of choice. It is not the author's aim to antagonise nor to enhance social divisions, but to look at areas of concern and inspire a drive for practical solutions to the currently irresolvable dilemmas of social justice in the gender agenda.

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“Where do children learn democracy? (a voice from The Netherlands)”

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Questions about democracy are always connected with questions of education. It started in the Polis of Athens in Greece. Politicians and pedagogues have always asked how to prepare people (demos) to participate in their society. Still today the relationship between education and democracy is urgent as it was in the time of the Greece Polis. The question is simple and fundamental: “Where do we learn democracy?” The answer is in my opinion: “We learn democracy everywhere and we learn it all the time”.

But what happens today in many European countries and perhaps also in Poland and Germany? Governments worry about the young generation. It is said that they have no commitment with society; that they are selfish, only focused on consumery, taking no responsibility etc. (later we can discuss this statement, is this right?). The reaction of the State or the minister of education: We should introduce a compulsory citizenship-education in schools. They want to change and strengthen the role and position of the young people. But we know from literature that young people had always lower levels of political interest and knowledge than adults. It is a normal phenomenon some people will argue. But others say there is evidence that the situation nowadays is really different compared with the previous generations. Whatever the evidence may be, it is clear that the government wants to change crisis in democracy with educational means; this is through the introduction of compulsory lessons in democratic citizenship. But although these lessons can be useful to give more information and knowledge to young people it is a mask for deeper problem concerning the role and position of young people in society. Moreover it has the idea that the school should solve the crisis in democracy and that the school should transform individuals into ‘good’ citizens. A naive idea.

1. What are the problems?

First of the entire problem that this kind of citizenship - education focus on individual young people. The assumption behind this is that by learning the right knowledge, skills and right values, these youngster will transform in democratic citizens (you can compare it with programs and projects to prevent young people to smoke or to drink alcohol or using drugs; it doesn’t work). The idea behind this strategy is that a democratic society will simply emerge when all citizens have the right knowledge and dispositions. It is based on a static idea

of democracy. We should never forget that people don't stop learning after they have acquired a set of knowledge and skills. A crisis in democracy or in society can change opinions and meaning of people.

The second problem has to do with the fact that democratic citizenship is seen as the final outcome, result of a long educational trajectory. It is an instrumentalist view of education. Teachers and educators should focus on the most effective ways to 'produce' democratic citizenship. From an educational view the main problem with the idea of citizenship as result is that the final result is only achieved AFTER one has followed a particular educational trajectory. That means, young people are seen as not yet-being a citizen. But young people are always part of social life. Their lives are always embedded in the wider socio-economic, cultural and political order. They are always already citizens of this society, whatever their age (see Korczak Yearbook 2012 "Children are already citizens". Where do children and youngster learn active commitment and citizenship?")³³⁷.

Third, and in my opinion the most important problem is this:

In general: education can never guarantee that what is being taught is also what will be learned. The connection between teaching and learning only works if students 'make sense' of what the teacher or educator taught them. Are these lessons abstract and theoretical or have they to do with the daily life situation of the young people. It is the crucial importance of the actual conditions of citizenship. The point is that young people learn as much about democracy and citizenship as result of democratic experiences they have in their daily life. Janusz Korczak³³⁸ said: "We adults live by theory, by what is known and knowable, while children learn by practice, by what can be felt and experienced in other than purely cognitive ways"³³⁹. From J. Korczak's point of view, meaningful learning can only take place in a culture of learning, a community of learners. What Korczak did in his lifetime, within the context of the orphanage, was to create the very conditions that made this culture of learning possible. This implied rejection of the idea that citizens may be 'produced' through education. Here, J. Korczak's view show striking similarities with that of the American philosopher and pedagogue John Dewey, in whose philosophy

³³⁷ *Dutch Korczak Yearbook 2012*, Amsterdam 2010.

³³⁸ Janusz Korczak, the pen name of Henryk Goldszmit (July 22, 1878 or 1879 – August 1942), was a Polish-Jewish educator, children's author, and pediatrician known as *Pan Doktor* ("Mr Doctor") or *Stary Doktor* ("Old Doctor"). After spending many years working as director of an orphanage in Warsaw, he refused freedom and stayed with his orphans when the institution was sent from the Ghetto to Treblinka extermination camp, during the Grossaktion Warsaw of 1942, www.en.wikipedia.org [30.12.2012].

³³⁹ J. Korczak, *Hoe houd je van een kind?*, Utrecht 1986.

of education democracy, participation and experiences are the key elements. Learning from real situations and real experiences will have a more profound and lasting impact than the official school curriculum. If students don't have any opportunity in their daily life to influence the situation that matter to them and if young people have no opportunity for real participation, than it will be an illusion that lessons in citizenship will turn them to become active and responsible citizens. So, what should have priority after all, is the improvement of the actual condition of the citizenship of young people; the improvement of the democratic quality of the life-world of many young people.

2. What can we conclude from this discussion?

- a) We should be critical and sceptical when citizenship-education is proposed as a solution for a crisis in democracy or society. We don't need more education; we need more democracy, which means the improvement of the actual condition of young people.
- b) The life world of young people consists of different kind of activities, practices, communities like family, free time, work, media, etc. And all these activities and places provide different opportunities for democratic action and learning. It is not a one-dimensional process. It consists of a complex set of positive and negative experiences with democracy. Thus, we need a broad definition of democracy. It is not primarily concerned with the relationship between young people and the politics. No, it has to do with everyday experiences of participation and with the question how to live together with people in a world of different interest, values, positions etc. And indeed the school in most cases can provide a environment for democratic actions. It says nothing about the school as institution, not because of the curriculum and the lessons, but as a place where young people have a good relationship with the teacher and the class-mates. In other words, when a school is a democratic community where children are heard and participate in an active way, then children learn democracy in a natural way. It becomes under their skin and their heart. The school should definitely NOT create a pseudo- democracy in which young people are burdened with responsibility and tasks but not given the means to actually influence or change the situation.

3. Active participation

If we agree with this point of view and if we are convinced that young people should have the opportunity to participate as young citizens in different

situations (like school, family, sport club, etc.) than we have to raise the question: “What do we mean with participation?” The term participation is used to refer to the process of sharing decisions with effect on one’s life and the life of the community. It is the means by which democracy is built. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship. There are different opinions about participation of children. Some people say that it is naive to ask this from children, because they do not have the decision-making power of adults. Others feel that children should be protected from responsibility in the problems of society; that they should be allowed to have a carefree childhood. These adults point at the erosion of children’s free time and free play. They argue that it is unrealistic to expect them suddenly to become responsible, participating adult citizens at the age of 16, 18 or 21. But as we read in the above, parents, schools, clubs, towns etc., should offer young children from the beginning on opportunities to take part in different activities. They grow step by step in responsible youngsters and adults. Roger Hart said: “An understanding of democratic participation can only be acquired gradually through practice”³⁴⁰. Also Janusz Korczak believed in the power and competence of young children. He said: “Why can we inspire them? Because our children are not surrounded by dead papers and texts, but they are able to see, to ask and to speak. First with one person, then with 3 or 4, later with families. And finally they can speak in a village and later in a bigger town”³⁴¹.

There are many examples of children who organize themselves successfully without help from adults. You can remember building a play house with friends when you were 6 or 7 years old, unknown to your parents. Such examples from your own memory are the most powerful evidence of young people’s competence. The principle behind such involvement is motivation; young people can manage complex projects together if they feel some sense of ownership in them. *I remember how some children in an elementary school in Haarlem (Holland) organised by themselves an antibullying campaign, because there was so much aggression towards some children in school*³⁴².

Interesting to notice that these young children, 11 and 12 years old, asked the teachers and parents to help and support them. For Roger Hart, this cooperation between young people and adults, based on the initiatives of the children, is the highest level of participation. It is a shared responsibility and the adults learn from children and the children learn from adults. Young people’s community

³⁴⁰ R. Hart, *Children's Participation. From Tokenism to Citizenship*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, Florence 1992.

³⁴¹ J. Korczak, *The right of child to respect*, Amsterdam 2007.

³⁴² Theo Cappone.

participation is a complex issue which varies not only with a child's motivation and capacities, but also according to the particular family and cultural context. In cultures where adults themselves have little opportunity to influence community decisions, young people can become the initiating force for change. *An interesting example I discovered in November 2012 in the Amazon. I visited some little indigoids communities living alongside the side-rivers of the Amazon River. In several villages were groups of active youngsters who started themselves projects against the pollution of the rivers and illegal woodcutting. They were the initiating force and the result is more commitment and help from adult side*³⁴³. Most commonly, however, the degree of opportunity for a child to collaborate in the everyday management of the family, school, neigh – boohood is a reflection of the participatory opportunities for adults in that culture. A good example is the situation in Northern Ghana. Adults in the little communities have almost no power and possibilities to change their social and political situation, due to the power of the chief of the community. He has the final word.

4. Children's Participation and the concept of Children's Rights

Young people's participation cannot be discussed without the struggle for equal rights. It is important that all young people have the opportunity to learn to participate in programmes which directly affect their lives. This is especially so for disadvantaged children. Participation with other children learns that to struggle against discrimination and repression, and to fight for equal rights in solidarity with others is itself a fundamental democratic right. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has significant implications for the improvement of young people's participation in society. It makes it clear to all of us that children are independent subjects and have rights. Art. 12: "States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child..." The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, orally, writing, printing, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice..." At the same time children need to learn that with the rights of citizenship come responsibilities. In order to learn these responsibilities, children need to engage in collaborative activities with other persons including those who are older and more experienced than themselves. It is for this reason that children's participation in community projects is so important.

³⁴³ Ibidem.

If parents, teachers, educators, etc. want their children or pupils to learn democracy, they should not teach them democracy, but they should do democracy.

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ABOUT THE REVIEWS

These two texts aim at meeting the requirement, in certain European countries, to subject the whole of the articles of this book to an external expert testimony. The reviewers were selected for their scientific quality. However, their opinions engage only themselves, according to their orientations epistemological, disciplinary, set of themes and methodological. The publication of reviews is not intended to give a value to the articles, but to proceed to a transparent approach of criticisms by one's peers, as envisages it the scientific approach. The editor does not join the contents appreciations carried. Each text published by the authors in this book is recognized like quality, in accordance with the decision of their effective publication. The reviews are in some kinds, additional articles whose object is to read again, in a critical and subjective way, the whole of the texts. They thus bring a scientific appreciation to the texts of the authors, by causing a debate and a setting in question and not an evaluation as regards quality.

Editors

REVIEWS OF THE BOOK

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1. Facing the world risk society

The reduction of the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU is one of the key targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. According to Eurostat³⁴⁴, in 2011, 119,6 million people, or 24.2% of the population in the 27 countries members of European Union were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 23.4% in 2010 and 23.5% in 2008. This means that they were at least in one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty, severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity, Eurostat states OECD declares Spain and Greece having respectively 21.8% and 17.9% of

³⁴⁴ epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu [01.03.2013].

unemployment in 2011 (in France – 9.3%) while in youth population the unemployment in Spain and Greece touch respectively 44.4% and 46.4% of unemployment (in France – 22.1%, Italy – 29.1% etc.). According Eurostat³⁴⁵, during 2010 about 3,1 million people immigrated into one of the EU Member States, while at least 2,0 million emigrants were reported to have left an EU Member State. <...> the United Kingdom reported the largest number of immigrants (591,000) in 2010, followed by Spain (465,200) and Italy (458,900); <...> Spain reported the highest number of emigrants in 2010 (403,000). Most EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2010, but in Ireland, Greece, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the three Baltic Member States emigrants outnumbered immigrants. Moreover, 800,000 people may be trafficked across international borders annually, with many more trafficked within the borders of their own countries³⁴⁶. It will be observed that this statistic is the only small fragment in the wave of global societal data.

This volume also discloses some unease social issues that some European countries are facing. France points 133,000 homeless people. One of the authors indicates 100 million children currently existing on city streets throughout the world. There is more than 105,000 orphans living in Russian orphanages versus only 1.000 foster families in Russia, the very new and developing phenomenon in Russia, according to a Russians ‘researcher. Russia, according to another writer, is also the country where in the past 30 years the amount of suicides among the children aged from 5 to 14 have multiplied up 8 times. In Denmark, from 2008 to 2010 more than 1,200 unaccompanied minors applied for refugee status. Work completed on The “Determinants of social work with refugees and immigrants” defines the migration resulting xenophobia and cultural shock for the countries with relative cultural homogeneity like Poland. The one about “Seniors in Poland” opens to ageing Polish society where the number of people over 75 years old is predicted to rise from 2, 5 (6,4% of population) to 4,5 million (12,5% of population) in 2035.

This volume addresses to European social issues especially enlightening some Easter European countries. Nevertheless there isn’t specific focus on Eastern European countries. The volume focuses more

³⁴⁵ Ibidem.

³⁴⁶ www.iom.int [01.03.2013].

on international social issue' patterns and its local or/and national manifestations. Ageing, homeless, migration, unemployment, etc. - these and other social issues become a really considerable challenge for people, organizations and states in all the countries. In the condition of the global economical crisis these social issues has a significant national and international implications, anchors at the cross-national level. Families, children and youth, ageing and disabled people, victims of human trafficking and unemployed, homeless people and migrants – very large populations are involved in social exclusion processes caused by globalization and global economic crisis. All countries are involved is these and such like global issues and alerts for solutions.

All these challenging societal facts and tendencies perfectly converge with the concept of “risk society” and “world risk society” developed by German sociologist Ulrich Beck³⁴⁷. Darryl S.L. Jarvis³⁴⁸ so nicely summarizes the Beck’s ideas, that nothing remains, but to refer his message: “The corporatist relationship between capital, labour and the state, which secured full employment, low inflation and reduced individual risk through welfare entitlements in return for labour stability and productivity growth, has evaporated. Individuals are now exposed to fickle labour markets, flexible labour practices and casual employment practices with the onus on the individual continually to retrain to meet the changing needs of capital and the workplace. Most disturbingly, many individuals are now essentially disenfranchised by the process of individualization and unable to take responsibility for their economic security. <...> Without access to stable or sufficient employment, many individuals experience greater vulnerability, and are unable to gain access to education that is increasingly provided through user fee-paying delivery models, or medical services based on private insurance systems. <...> Collectively, processes of individualization generate winners and losers. The former consist of individuals able to provide for themselves, form social networks, achieve educational attainments, procure wealth and ensure their personal security. The latter are exposed to increased risk, diminished long-term economic security, restricted access to

³⁴⁷ U. Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, Sage Publications Ltd., 1997; U. Beck, *Living in the world risk society*, “Economy and Society”, Vol. 35, No. 3/2006, pp. 329-345.

³⁴⁸ D.D.L. Jarvis, *Risk, Globalization and the State: A Critical Appraisal of Ulrich Beck and the World Risk Society Thesis*, “Global Society”, Vol. 21, No. 1/January 2007, p. 27.

educational opportunities and the labour market”. This reflection leads to the concerns about posture or postures of the local, national and transnational social welfare policies, systems and organizations.

2. Facing the neoliberal approach in social welfare

In 2011, a TIME magazine³⁴⁹ publishes by Michael Schuman a report from Paris titled “Au Revoir, Welfare State: Debt crises, aging population and slow economic growth could end Europe’s belle vie”. The article uncloses “the welfare state is such an integral part of French society that no one can imagine life without it <...> however, that idealism has run into a brick wall called financial reality <...> almost the entire developed world is in the same fix as France”. The main problem, Schuman states, with the welfare state is finding money to pay it. Market oriented societies has all under outcomes of the global economic crisis suffers of heavy budget’s limitations. But at the same time all modern societies have the growing of neoliberal politics “at a global scale”³⁵⁰ within reduction of the state’s role and rising of govern mentality and “enterprising self” in the Foucauldian sense. Harvey³⁵¹ defines neoliberalism as being ”in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that human well-being can be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong property rights, free markets and free trade”. Beck stresses: “The individual must cope with the uncertainty of the global world by him – or herself”³⁵². These neoliberal presumptions on individualization oddly converge with the concept of citizenship and free education of child which is argued through a voice from Nederland in this volume. But Beck warns that greater individualization is thus accompanied by greater individual risk.

It should be noted that the social welfare systems in all the countries have gone through neoliberal reforms despite their social welfare system proper to liberal, conservative or social democratic social welfare

³⁴⁹ “TIME” Magazine, Vol. 178, No. 21/2011.

³⁵⁰ Wacquant, *Three steps to a historical anthropology of actually existing neoliberalism*, “Social Anthropology”, Vol. 20, No. 1/2012, pp. 66-79.

³⁵¹ D. Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005.

³⁵² U. Beck, *Living in the world...*, op. cit., pp. 329-345.

model³⁵³. Alan Walker in the book “The changing face of welfare” argues that neoliberal economic globalization has led to a transformation of European welfare systems along at least two dimensions: firstly, in deregulation, privatization and marketization, and secondly, in the shift from social justice to economic investment (the productive role of welfare) in the guidance of social policy³⁵⁴. Market-type reforms such as a new public management based on neoliberal principles has been implemented in all the countries. The promises of new public management appear as changes from “bad” to “good”, from producer salience towards user salience, from monopolies to free markets, from imperatives to free choice, from conformity to plurality and from culture of dependency to culture of independence.

Risk society as it was described by Ulrich Beck coincides with neoliberal welfare reforms as a global political program but also with global agenda of emancipation and human rights. Iain Ferguson³⁵⁵ ironizes the “personal responsibility” as the supreme principle within new labor ideology, the strive “to be <independent>, with the good citizen being the person who relies on his/her own resources and does not draw on the resources of State”. Also Ferguson emphasizes the decline of community role created by neoliberal reforms. And in this context the modernization of social work is seen from the point of managerialism, regulation and consumerism.

3. Reclaiming social work

Welfare developments inspired by neoliberal ideology, according to Jensen and Pfau-Effinger, were enough contradictory “while some elements of citizenship were weakened during the restructuring processes, other elements were improved, such a social rights in relation to social care and elements of participation in the governance structures

³⁵³ According G. Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, London 1990.

³⁵⁴ A. Walker, *Which way for the European social model: Minimum standards of social quality?* [In:] J.G. Andersen, A.M. Guillemand, P.H. Jensen, B. Pfau-Effinger (eds.), *The Changing Face of Welfare. Consequences and Outcomes from a Citizenship Perspective*, “The Policy Press”, 2005, pp. 33-54.

³⁵⁵ I. Ferguson, *Reclaiming social work. Challenging Neo-liberalism and Promoting Social Justice*, Sage Publications Ltd., 2008, p. 41.

of welfare states”³⁵⁶. O.P. Askheim discusses this contradiction through the concept of empowerment, one of the main concepts of international social work definition³⁵⁷. He stresses that empowerment contains both an individual and a structural dimension, while one important source for empowerment is the radical, activist movements among service users, another source being the liberalist approach promoting the marketization of the welfare services³⁵⁸. The individualization stays in the heart of welfare.

Research³⁵⁹ we made in Lithuania – ex-soviet country which went through intense development, deep economic crisis and recently the neoliberal welfare reforms – demonstrates the need for mixed model, combining the principles of liberal, social democrat and conservative ideologies of social welfare. Participants of the Lithuanian social welfare system (service users, providers, managers and politicians) clearly expects for such neoliberal principles as an individual free choice and decisions, an autonomy and responsibility, an opportunity to choose according to the needs and the diversity of supplies, the service quality and effectiveness, decentralization of services denominates the need of service users same as service providers. Otherwise, the service users same as service providers expects for some social-democrat principles such as service payment and regulation by state, a guaranty of the minimal meet of needs or conservative principles of welfare such a responsibility of the family and community, and subsidiarity. Such convergence of social welfare marketization and social justice demands new social work strategies. In our research we proposed the patterns for empowering social work combining the six principles of social services (users oriented service management; empowered organization; respect of human’s dignity, user’s self-determination and civic rights; service accessibility, service availability; service priorities and succession) with three social work levels: micro, mezzo and macro.

³⁵⁶ P.H. Jensen, B. Pfau-Effinger, *“Active” citizenship: The new face of welfare*, [In:] J.G. Andersen, A.M. Guillemand, P.H. Jensen, B. Pfau-Effinger, op. cit., pp. 1-14.

³⁵⁷ ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work [20.01.2013].

³⁵⁸ O.P. Askheim, *Empowerment as guidance for professional social work: An act of balancing on a slack rope*, “European Journal of Social Work”, Vol. 6, No. 3/2003, pp. 229-240.

³⁵⁹ J. Ruškus, N. Mažeikienė, R. Naujanienė, Dž. Dvarionas, R. Motiečienė, D. Žvirdauskas *Development of Patterns for Empowering Social Service*, Research report, 2013, Research was subvented by Lithuanian National Council of Science.

In such a challenging situation facing issues of global risk society and liberal welfare reforms, social work professional perspective becomes crucial. L. Dominelli concludes “Globalization has produced winners and losers as it has spread its tentacles across the world <...> it has created considerable problems that social workers are asked to resolve. These include internationalized social problems that bring the global to the local and raise the local to the global arena. They are helped in their tasks through the development of theories, practice and research that can cross borders while still recognizing the significance of local inputs into social problems that have local and/or global dimensions”³⁶⁰.

This volume ranges a large scale of social work areas. Remarkable experience of empowerment as an individual and communitarian self-determination is greatly described in the research on the arrival of North African migrants in the South of Italy. This analysis of a very local – Calabrian, in the South of Italy – initiative under the local and national co-responsibility is a great example of the management and programming dealing with such a global issue as migration is. The global issues and the local solutions are converging in the research task about “Actions on behalf of street children” which opens to the global issue on children who are living and working on the street and to the local social work initiative in Mazowsze province in Poland. The competence to manage micro, mezzo and macro levels of social services is also actualized in the first chapter discussing the basic determinants of social work with immigrants and refugees. Another analysis describes the way how the social workers are acting in micro, mezzo and macro levels oscillating and negotiating between the changing requirements of State, emerging social services initiatives and needs of homeless people. One focus is pointed on the conflicting ideologies describing multiculturalism in Europe and the challenge in adhering to Human Rights conventions, while respecting the individuality of cultural differences. From the side of micro level – reconstruction of the patterns of individual biographies – the subtle knowledge of homeless people in the text about “Path to homeless”, and of women experiencing domestic violence in the part concerning “Domestic violence” are discovered biographical trajectories and metamorphoses are contextualized in the organizational and social

³⁶⁰ L. Dominelli, *Globalization, contemporary challenges and social work practice*, “International Social Work”, No. 53(5)/2010, pp. 599–612.

welfare' setting. This volume enters to the debate on the professional disposition and placing of social work dealing with local and global issues and resolving the growing situations of people at the situation of risk.

Social work as a profession at the beginning of 21st century becomes, transferring the Beck's terminology to social work, an important vehicle of human risk management. Global and local social issues, growing of social pitfalls and risks for individuals opens a large field for professional reflection and understanding of ongoing social processes but also for interventions and problem solving. When we think social issues and plan effective interventions we need to be able to comprehend the interplays of the individual (biographical, psychological, relational etc.), organizational (social service quality, team competence etc.) and structural (state's role, welfare ideologies and policies etc.). Social work per se is international when, according to L.M. Healy³⁶¹, the social issues are perceived as a result of the global economic, policy, environmental and security interdependence, also as an impact of the developmental initiatives in national and local levels addressing poverty and its many associated problems, and also as a human right's orientation overarching human dignity. This volume invites to the reflection on the different angles of social work facing global risk society and welfare policy and looking for solutions in some European contexts and issues.

³⁶¹ L.M.Healy, *International Social Work. Professional Action in an Interdependent World*, Oxford University Press, New York 2008.

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This book entitled “Social problems in Europe: Dilemmas and possible solutions” is presented as “an attempt to respond to the problems of the modern world and to familiarize the reader with various aspects of coping with the challenges of postmodernity”. It aims at examining how social work in Europe faces new issues due to “postmodernity”, globalization, economic crisis, drastic cuts on social policies – from a national as well as an international level – we can refer to the decline of the European funds devoted to the NGO giving food to the poorest in EU- the increase of hate towards the “others”, religious and political extremism, terrorism, and poverty and the development of ICT.

This book consists of 13 contributions, by authors from France (1), Italy (1), Netherlands (1), Poland (7), one text on Denmark, and Russia (3). We can notice one limit of this book regarding the geographical coverage, since half of the texts comes from Poland. If it presents a real interest to have some insights into this country, we can question the ambition of this book to treat of social work in Europe, as announced in the title. We can regret the absence of a comparative approach that might give some ideas of responses found by different European countries exposed to a same context or similar problems or issues, or even might stress out specificities. If many books (Campanini & Frost, 2004, Cannan & Berry, Lyons, 1992, Erhel & Palier, 2005, Ehrad, 1992, Grass, 2012, Lorenz, 1994, Saraceno, 2002) deal with social work and/in Europe, as Evelyne Baillergeau points out: “very few books offer a synthetic view on this field on a European basis/scale”³⁶². The range of issues covered may make it difficult to fulfil such an ambition. In fact, among the 13 contributions, almost half (6) deals with children or teenagers, 4 with migration issues, 2 with homeless issue, 2 with “specific” populations (women experiencing domestic violence and older people). By the way, the ethno cultural diversity of population and old age were identified by Evelyne Baillergeau as “common stakes” shared by social work in Europe. This book contains social recurrent - old or reconfigured -

³⁶² E. Baillergeau, *Les enjeux contemporains du travail social en Europe*, [In:] “Informations Sociales”, No. 152/2009, pp. 40-48.

problems, but almost very few new issues as it was announced by the editor. We can regret the absence of the ICT addiction issue and the social practices or the ways to face it. In the same way, what would be the dilemma of social work today, evoked in the title, that echoed for me 2 special issues of the French review *Esprit* (the first one in 1972, entitled “Why social work?”; the second in 1998, “What social work serves? ” that question the meaning of social work in France.

Because of this heterogeneity, reviewing this book is not so easy. For this reason, I chose to categorize this fragmented group into 4 bodies.

1. Four texts refer to researches or scientific research methods. These texts are especially interesting, because of their object (for example the text on street children in Poland), because of their methodological approaches (especially the biographical method developed in the research with homeless people, and also in the study with women experiencing domestic violence). It is also heuristic to have a point of view from two different countries on the homeless issue: France, and Poland

2. This book includes 3 descriptive texts. They present centers (centers for migrants in South Italy, centers for children refugees or migrant in Denmark – the presentation is very descriptive, almost very journalistic) or situations (the text on social situation of old people in Poland). These texts present an information interest, and give some ideas of social responses. We may regret that these texts remain at a descriptive level, lacking to problematize and to put into perspective stakes, or even challenges (as announced in the title).

3. Other texts (3) present (or are presented as) very personal reflections: some very general reflections bring nothing neither in terms of information (the text about “Determinants of social work with refugees and immigrants” could have been very interesting if the theoretic model elaborated on the basis of her studies in California get some operationalization in Polish country) nor in terms of analysis (if the very short text of 6 pages on citizenship education, we expect more than a simple and well-known critics of this education, but indication of practices or actions, more relevant, for example those inspired by Janusz Korczak, as the author inscribes himself in his inheritance, but also philosophy with children etc.), some very questionable points of view. The text about “The paradox of religious diversity and human rights in Europe” seems to me in this respect very problematic. Concerning the

reflection on the compatibility between the sharia and the European legislation in the context of the publication of caricatures of Mahomet in the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, the author depicts in a caricatured way Muslim girls and women, mixing Islam practices in Europe and some marginal extremist cases. As Gilles Verbint underlines, societies are more and more penetrated by cultural differences “as the globalization progresses”³⁶³ – that aspect is indeed present in several texts of the book. Social workers who are at the forefront of taking care of these migrant populations have to demonstrate a special empathic and comprehensive disposal towards them. These actresses and actors have to escape stereotypes and caricatured representations of these populations, of their cultural and religious practices, their system of norms and values. In a certain way, we can say that this text strengthens the necessity to train social workers for “intercultural issues”.

4. Some texts (3) present an interesting subject (as the 2 texts which tackle the question of orphan children or abandoned by their parents in Russia), but because of a lack of a sufficient development (they include 6 pages versus 20-30 for the other contributions in the book), a lack of theoretic and/or empirical basis, they remain in the surface of the problems, even transmit a very questionable pro-family ideology.

I will concentrate now on the texts that present for me a real interest regarding the main objectives of this book. I will retain as very interesting contributions approaching the homeless or street children issue, as well as texts based on biographical methods aiming at understand the process leading people in the streets (regarding homeless people) or to be victims of domestic violence. For the French context, points out the tensions around legislation on homeless people: after the decriminalisation of homeless people, the mayors and municipalities have these last years had the temptation to solve the problem of homeless people by anti-begging orders, opposed to the law. These radical practices can be compared to those developed in big cities welcoming world events– such as Olympic Games, world cup, world congress. Downtowns are “cleaned up” this unwanted population: homeless people, street children, beggars. This text stresses the tensions in which social workers are involved between support and punishment.

³⁶³ G. Verbint, G., *La question interculturelle dans le travail social. Repères et perspectives*, La Découverte, 2004, p. 5.

In the text on street children, innovative actions appear to be a good response to this new social issue in the Polish context.

The two texts that use biographic methods give a perspective on social issue or problems and/or offer original responses.

In the Polish context, through biographies, we can understand how people become homeless. Giving voice to homeless people so that they are not reduced to social negation, to not be heard, so that they can accede to an “I”, to some consistency, and place, would have surely some transformative effects on the subjects themselves and on the social workers towards this population. The stake is not less than to go out from postures of assistance, from response to the urgency towards this public, and to address and see them as subjects. The findings of this research may also help social workers in their practices and actions.

In hollow, we can wonder whether this call for empathic, listening and ethical posture towards the “others”, are not the sign that the gravity and the increase of situations social workers have to face to, conduct to no more develop or mobilize them?

The biographical approach developed with women who experienced domestic violence is also very interesting. The analysis of the data collected with this method and the construction of a typology make it possible to escape from common explanatory models. For example, even “strong” women can be affected by domestic violence. We can understand how domestic violence cross social class.

In closing, all my reserve on this book can be explained by its ambition. However, the range of approaches, countries, issues, beyond national contexts, stresses the complexity of the situations that social workers, and more generally educators in their whole, have to face today. We can identify through all these situations and problems or issues – without an elaboration in this book – the tensions or dilemma that actors have to face, the conflict, even the shock between universal rights which collide, such as the right to get access to a home, to choose and practice a religion, to be parent. These tensions and dilemma have to do with the conflict with the universality of rights as well as with the chock with heterogeneous systems of norms. To these transversal problems or issues, are there European responses? Europe engaged a process of Europeanisation policies as far migration is concerned for example, shall we expect such a process for social problems and social work? The

difference of the societal models (and thus systems of norms which underlie and organize them) invites us to be vigilant, all the more if this process means a form of normalization.

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