

ABSTRACTS

SOCIALNO DELO, 46 (2007), 3

Natalija Povodnik

CULTURAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN SOCIAL WORK

Cultural misunderstandings influence the effectiveness of the social work process in a foreign culture to an important degree. They appear as a consequence of obvious external inevitabilities (such as cultural differences) and of a worker's response that can be consciously managed. Experts can contribute to greater effectiveness of work in a foreign culture by relating respectfully to the different, by communicating attentively, by balancing power relations, by being aware of their own prejudice, and by choosing the appropriate professional approach. The most suitable professional approach includes establishing a working relationship with the client and constantly re-evaluating one's professional starting-points. Clients can help reduce cultural clash by being tolerant, honest, assertive and critical. The organisations that employ experts can contribute by orienting themselves towards cultural sensitivity, choosing personnel carefully, and by adapting their working procedures. Specific skills of social workers turned out to be a very effective tool for overcoming cultural barriers, which entails that all intercultural workers should be familiar at least with their basic points.

Keywords: cultural misunderstandings, intercultural work, working relationship, qualitative research.

Natalija Povodnik, MSW, works in a development project in south Uganda [natalija_povodnik@yahoo.com].

Karmen Medica

CONTEMPORARY MIGRATIONS AND DILEMMAS OF SECURITY

Migrations, which contribute to the development of the so-called developed world and to the formation of multi-cultural societies, are imposed on the poor and

a choice only for the elite. The immigrants' positions depend on how, whence and when they arrive. Neither the countries open to influx nor those enforcing strict immigration controls have yet found a solution to restrict illegal entry, residence and work. The notion of the free flow of people is becoming dubitable even within the EU itself. The political arguments of security, as well as the imagery of global threat, function largely as everyday defensive games. The perpetual question raised by the official circles and the media is how safe we really are from illegal migrants. But the opposite might be asked as well: how safe are illegal migrants from Europe's need of fresh labour, its low birth rate, and its desire for faster gains?

Keywords: illegal migrations, security, police, state, frontiers, fortress Europe.

Karmen Medica, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer and researcher at the ISH - Ljubljana Graduate School of the Humanities and the University of Primorska Faculty of the Humanities [karmen.medica@guest.arnes.si].

Srečo Dragoš

HATE SPEECH

The author presents a typology of social conduct (according to Pareto) as the basis of a contextual analysis. His analysis of several examples of hate speech by some Slovenian politicians illustrate his main points, which may be summarised as follows. Any definition (and thereby regulation) of hate speech is contextual. It is constituted by a consent about the delimitation of permissible types of expressions of hate from the forbidden ones. Indifference towards such a delimitation leads to the adiaphorisation of the problem. Its overcoming therefore does not begin with the definition of impermissible speech but with a consent about the context in which the definition is used. Here, there are only two

choices. The more tolerant approach that, concerned with free speech, defines hate speech less restrictively is contextually confined to logically consequent actions and to reasoned actions with unpredicted effects. The more restrictive position extends the attribution of hate speech to all expressions of hate within non-reasoned but effective actions. These are the only choices available. The criminalisation of other categories of actions would threaten the democratic society, as would if none of those choices are taken.

Keywords: ethics, morals, post-modernity, tolerance, dialogue.

Srečo Dragoš, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer of sociology at the University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Work, Topniška 31, 1000 Ljubljana [sreco.dragos@fsd.uni-lj.si].

Marino Kačič
ASSESSMENT OF THE BLIND AND VISUALLY
IMPAIRED PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENCE

People who in their adult life lose eyesight completely or to an extensive degree are usually assessed on the medical basis. The latter estimates the remaining sight and classifies a person as blind or visually impaired. Such assessment says nothing about the individual's capabilities or potentials, which is the central issue of the presented research: are there differences in the degree of independence between people who lost eyesight as adults, and if so, in which areas? To answer this question, a relevant measuring instrument had to be developed. The author devised a questionnaire (the REHA test for blind and visually impaired) about eight life areas that are essential for the blind and visually impaired people's independence. A pilot research performed on persons who attend seminars on rehabilitation and education has shown that the level of independence depends on age, place of residence (urban or rural environment), acquired new skills, possession of technical aids, etc. The degree of the remaining sight does not always correspond with the degree of

independence, which calls for assessment methods of a more complex nature. The presented questionnaire is capable of such assessment. It is a good basis for planning individualised help and personal counselling.

Keywords: the blind, visually impaired, rehabilitation, independence, life dimensions.

Marino Kačič is a social worker and an associate of University of Ljubljana Faculty of Social Work. Private address Dolenjska 45-b, 1000 Ljubljana, phone (+386 1) 4274400 [marino.kacic@guest.arnes.si].

Barbara Kobal, Tjaša Žakelj
PERSONS IN POST-PENAL TREATMENT
ON THE LABOUR MARKET

Studies of social exclusion show marked vulnerability of certain groups of population, and among them increasingly of persons in post-penal treatment. One of the most important factors of social exclusion is unemployment, or the state of activity. There is a connection between criminality and unemployment, though opinions vary as to the direction of influence. The fact is that ex-convicts often find it difficult to (re)enter the labour market, often because of many intertwined factors that hinder access to employment. Low education level and the related access only to less wanted and less paid workplaces, stigma, weak motivation, inadequate social networks, and orientation towards odd jobs are only some of them.

Keywords: employment, reintegration, European Offender Employment Forum.

Barbara Kobal, M.A., is a Senior Researcher at the RS Institute of Social Protection, Rimska 8, 1000 Ljubljana, phone (+386 1) 2000250 [barbara.kobal@guest.arnes.si]. Tjaša Žakelj is a social worker and an associate of the Centre of Social Work Škofja Loka, Kapucinski trg 2, 4220 Škofja Loka, phone (+386 4) 5170106 [tjasa.zakelj@guest.arnes.si].