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SPECIAL ISSUE: SOCIAL PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH IN SLOVENIA

Editorial

Darja Zorc Maver and Matej Sande

The first English-language issue of the magazine Socialna pedagogika (Social Pedagogy) comprises of five articles, which represent a cross-section of the research conduced between 2002 and 2007, and in which representatives of the Department of Social Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana took part. It has become apparent that one of the main interests of contemporary social pedagogy, when it comes to both practical and research-oriented work, is focused on young people and the problems relating to their social inclusion, or rather the prevention of their social exclusion. Undoubtedly, young people represent a target group for which it is especially relevant to plan contemporary programmes of assistance and support, while taking into account their active participation in this process. They are a target group with which we must work in partnership – it is this partnership that can bring about change and contribute valuable ideas; it also has the potential to encourage development in the professional field and to promote the active participation of the users of social pedagogical services. Besides the participation of the target groups, research is of key importance when it comes to planning suitable projects and help programmes. By conducting regular research, we can ascertain the needs of the users, plan new ways of responding to problems and examine the suitability of the existing help programmes. This encourages development within the field, as well as facilitates the improvement of existing and the establishment of new social pedagogical projects.

The first two articles reflect the spirit of the times, where faced with insecurity, young people encounter many difficulties in the transition to employment. The articles represent the role work and employment play in postmodern society; under the influence of the factors of individualization, society has changed significantly and no longer affords simple and predictable patterns of education and employment. As a consequence of the way transition into adulthood has changed, education and experience can no longer present a guarantee for employment, as the demands of employers now focus predominantly on flexibility, additional knowledge and experience. The two researches were conducted at a time when the question of youth (un)employment, as well as the question of the aging population were key concerns for the social policies of individual EU members, which more or less successfully deal with the issues of immigration, homelessness, employment and an open market of cheap labour forces from other EU countries. Within the European context, the research of the problems of transition into employment and the experiences of unemployment proved to be both timely and topical; at the same time, the research also provided new findings and solutions for the specific situation particular to youth unemployment in Slovenia.

In his book *Risk Society,* Ulrich Beck has shown how those elements that are taken for granted in modern industrial society have in the last third of the century of modernization become more and more problematic. Concepts such as a national country, work, biographical patterns of normal biography, a social state have become increasingly problematic and questionable. These changes are characterized by two fundamental social processes, which Beck calls the concept of "individualization" and the concept of "globalization". The consequences of social changes are on the one hand connected with larger concepts of freedom and the individual's opportunities for making his or her own choices, and are on the other hand combined with radical changes of social institutions, work, family and interpersonal relationships, the courses of biographies, and identity. An individual's biography is becoming increasingly risky and can lead to a biography of breakdown.

Social pedagogy is a scientific field that deals with the social problems of individuals and groups who experience difficulties concerning social integration. Social issues are most prominent on

the fringe of society; marginal groups of people who are homeless, unemployed, dependent and otherwise socially excluded, are those groups that also put the way institutions and structures of power function into question. Although social pedagogy deals with the social problems of individuals, it is always striving to connect them to the larger framework – the social structures of power and decision-making.

The characteristics and basic direction of the research presented in this issue can be summarized by the following questions:

- How do institutions, social policies and various discourses of assistance perceive and define contemporary marginal groups?

- How do the users, those on the receiving end of social pedagogical assistance, experience and reflect upon their biographical experiences, the experiences of social exclusion and how do they view different forms of assistance?

- What is the role of social pedagogy as a scientific field when it comes to providing assistance to individuals and groups with experiences of social exclusion, and what is its role in attempting to change the way institutions and social structures function in order to achieve a more just society for everyone?

The article by Jana Rapuš Pavel presents certain aspects of the research entitled "Social Inclusion and the Psychosocial Health of Young People with Experiences of Unemployment in the Ljubljana Area". The author looked at both the material and social shortcomings of young people, because she sees youth unemployment as a risk factor for the marginalization and social exclusion that has particular bearing for young people who are only just entering the job world. Long-term unemployment leads young people into poverty and dependence on social and other forms of state-funded assistance. In her analysis of how the institutions that provide assistance to the unemployed youth function, Rapuš Pavel finds that young people perceive different forms of assistance predominantly as financial support, meanwhile expressing a need for assistance that would help them find direction and solve education and employment problems. For this reason, the author favours a thorough, individual and flexible approach to dealing with a particular case prior to one's integration into employment training, retraining and education. The research findings reflect a need for more effective planning strategies when it

comes to programme policies for supporting young people in their transition into work and employment.

Darja Zorc Maver's research, "The Concepts and Strategies of Social Pedagogical Interventions in the Field of Social Youth Exclusion", focuses on the following questions: How do young people experience work and, by extension, unemployment? How do the experiences of unemployment affect the personal identity of a young adult? The author finds that work is still of central importance to the identity of a young person and has significant impact on his or her self-image. Gainful employment represents the foundation of a "normal biography", which is why unemployment represents an exceptionally problematic experience for young people. As the transitions of young people into adulthood are becoming more and more hazardous, it is the responsibility of social pedagogy to provide them with protection and support in facing different experiences of unemployment and enable them to experience their unemployment in such a way that does not lead to deprivation, but finds creative ways of dealing with life.

In "Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the Change in the Use of Synthetic Drugs among Young People", Matej Sande analyses the extent to which drug use has spread among young people. The author advocates contemporary concepts of reducing the damage caused by synthetic drugs. The results of his research show that – within a limited scope – we can already speak of the normalization of drug use in recreational settings. The article also presents the reasons why young drug users have decided to reduce their drug use or to stop using drugs altogether. The findings suggest that young people do take the guidelines for reducing risk factors into account and are familiar with available help programmes. These should not limit themselves to being purely informative, but should also provide counselling and other forms of assistance.

The article by Špela Razpotnik is based on the research entitled "Problems of Homelessness in Ljubljana", in which the author has analysed the key aspects connected with homelessness and its characteristics. Until now, the policies relating to the homeless have mostly been concerned with material goods, and connected with charity and governed by church. The author poses the question of what exactly defines homelessness and goes on to determine various structural and individual factors that lead someone to such a situation.

She pays particular attention to highlighting the significance of social networks, peer groups, social mobility and housing. Social pedagogues can play an important role when it comes to the abovementioned key topics for formulating homelessness policies.

The research of Olga Poljšak Škraban analyses the role parents and interaction within the family system play in helping to shape the identity of female students. Her analysis is based on two aspects of identity research: psychosocial development (Erikson) and the theory of identity statuses (Marcia). The main finding of the research is that family members perceive interaction within the family differently, and these differences in perception can represent an important source of family conflict. Solving these conflicts also depends on the competence of the family system, which is the foundation for the healthy psychosocial development of a female adolescent.

Youth about Facing Problems in the Transition to Employment

Mladi o soočanju s težavami pri prehodu v zaposlitev

Jana Rapuš Pavel

Abstract

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The article deals with the risk of the social exclusion of young people who have experienced permanent unemployment; it pays special attention to experiencing institutional exclusion and public aid from the position of unemployment. The article includes the findings of a quantitative and qualitative research carried out among unemployed young people in the Ljubljana area (Slovenia). The results show how they experience the risk of institutional exclusion within the framework of the employment, the education and the social sector. The conclusions of the article reveal the need for more the efficient planning of program policies concerning the support of young people in the transition to working and employment.

Key words: *young people, unemployment, social exclusion, institutional exclusion, active employment policy.*

Povzetek

Prispevek se ukvarja s tveganjem socialne izključenosti mladih z izkušnjami trajne brezposelnosti. Posebno pozornost namenja doživljanju institucionalne izključenosti in izkušnjam z javnimi podporami v položaju brezposelnosti. Prikazani so nekateri izsledki kvantitativne in kvalitativne raziskave, ki je bila izvedena na populaciji brezposelnih mladih na območju Ljubljane. Rezultati opozorijo na doživljanje tveganja institucionalne izključenosti v okviru zaposlovalnega, izobraževalnega in socialnega sektorja. Sklepi prispevka navajajo na potrebo po učinkovitejšem načrtovanju programskih politik pri podpori mladim ob prehodu v delo in zaposlitev.

Ključne besede: *mladina, brezposelnost, socialna izključenost, institucionalna izključenost, aktivna politika zaposlovanja.*

Introduction

In modern society employment represents a basic part of everyday life and a key source of financial independence, status, identity and social participation. Unemployment represents a risk of marginalization and social exclusion, especially of the young, who are only entering the world of employment (Rapuš Pavel, 2005). Higher levels of unemployment of young people compared to the levels of unemployment in every other age group are to be expected; however, the European Commission is discovering that the unemployment level of young people in Europe is still higher than the unemployment level of the general population, which represents a serious problem and the possibility of the marginalization and exclusion of young people (Hammer, 2003). Different countries face the unemployment of young people in different ways, according to the specifics of the labour market and their social policy models.

The issue of social in/exclusion and in particular the significance of this issue can be defined not only in terms of such objective states as low income, poverty, unemployment, dependency on social welfare etc.; from the point of view of the people facing social exclusion, this position is also linked with experiencing a lack of social recognition and personal dignity, as well as powerlessness to change one's own situation (cf. Rener, 2003, p. 159).

Young people who try to organize their lives separately from the source family and create their own families, are nowadays often (over)burdened by financial difficulties. Organizing their own lives, what with the insecurity of the labour market and low incomes, is closely connected to their financial situation. Young people normally do not have their own savings, and are for this reason even more exposed to the risk of poverty. Long-term unemployment leads young people to poverty, dependence on welfare and other forms of state-provided aid. The different models of welfare in European countries can to some extent alleviate the material marginalization of young people. They range from the highly-evolved model of social security in Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark and Norway), a model of social security with a more moderate arrangement, divided between institutions and families, as well as combined forms of aid (Scotland), to the models of social security that are based on the family as the primary source of social care (Spain, Italy) (cf. Hammer and Julkunen, 2003, p. 135). By accepting the Programme to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2000, Slovenia is also following the strategic goals set out by the EU (Lisbon 2000), the fulfilment of which should lead to the modernization of the European social model, investment in human capital and the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

The altered circumstances of the labour market also change the structural context and the patterns of poverty, and experts are discovering that poverty is moving towards younger households. The trend of increasing poverty among young people is prominent in all European countries. Today more than ever, poverty is manifesting itself in various forms. In more advanced societies, even the people that border on satisfying their cultural and information needs are considered to be poor; they cannot satisfy their need for identity, normal inclusion into society and in planning wider social activity. This points to a logical interconnectedness and interdependence between certain forms of poverty and specific lifestyles (Dekleva, Razpotnik, 1999).

Some aspects of social exclusion of the young unemployed in the area of Ljubljana

The research entitled "Social Inclusion and the Psychosocial Health of Young People with Experiences of Unemployment in the Ljubljana Area"[1] looked at both the material and the social deprivation of young people. In the analysis of the social conditions of young people's lives, the concept of deprivation is differentiated from poverty: deprivation is seen as a degree of relative deprivation in view of the local community or the wider society of which the individual is part. Taken into account are both the deprivation of basic necessities (food, clothes, housing conditions) and the deprivation of social activities and conditions that are 'common' in a certain community. Many young people may feel deprived in terms of material or cultural circumstances, but we only speak of poverty when at the same time, access to sources with which they could attain more suitable social conditions is restricted. Deprivation depends on experiencing certain social conditions, while poverty depends on the possibility of accessing various sources (Hammer and Julkunen, 2003, p. 136).

In the above research, material deprivation of unemployed young people was established by the following question: which of the listed activities did each of the 655 poll participants have to give up in the last 12 months because of they could not afford them?

We can see that the smallest percentage had to give up warm meals, while the highest went without frequenting bars and restaurants, going on holiday, buying newspapers and magazines. The medium degree includes maintaining social relationships, pursuing hobbies, attending cultural events and spending their free time. As much as one fifth was subject to the shortage of the most basic essentials such as food, and more than two thirds had to forego cultural goods.

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[1] The article presents the results from the research project entitled Social in/exclusion and psychosocial health of young people with experiences of unemployment conducted in 2003-2004, Dekleva and Rapuš Pavel (2004). The project was financially backed by the City Council of Ljubljana.

Table 1: The percentages of poll participants that had to give up a certain commodity because of a shortage of money.

Goods or activities that had to be given up:	%
Warm meals	19
Paying the rent and other bills on time	31
Essential clothes for yourself and your family	38
Inviting friends to your home	44
Visiting relatives or friends in other towns	50
Hobbies and recreation	53
Buying gifts for friends and family members	54
Spending holidays outside the town of residence	67
Buying magazines, newspapers	68
Buying cinema, theatre, concert tickets	69
Frequenting cafés, bars, restaurants	71

The aforementioned research also examined how young people of different ages with the experience of prolonged unemployment, with completed or uncompleted education, define the vulnerability of their position in life, what they experience as their key obstacles and limitations, as well as sources of support in their transition to the work sphere. The characteristics of different forms of public aid that the 655 poll participants have received were established by the following question: did you seek assistance and support from the following experts / institutions during the time of your unemployment?

Table 2: The percentages of young people, unemployed for a longer period, seeking assistance or advice from various experts / institutions.

Where they sought assistance:	%
Seeking advice, assistance from a Social Work Centre while unemployed	50
Seeking advice, assistance from doctors, psychologists while unemployed	12
Seeking advice, assistance from the Youth Information Centre while unemployed	5
Seeking advice, assistance from various non-profit organizations and societies while unemployed	15
Seeking advice, assistance from various counselling centres while unemployed	29
Seeking advice and assistance from counsellors at the Employment Service while unemployed	76

The table shows that the majority sought advice and assistance with the Employment Service and Social Work Centres. From a different point of view, the information also reveals that only two thirds of the young people registered at the Employment Service, view working with experts in this institution as actual assistance and counselling, while a third views this relationship as purely instrumental. The Mladina 2000 research (Rener, 2002, p. 95) also showed that young people do not trust professional advisors, as only a very small number of people turned to them (in the case of problems or when they needed advice). The frequency in which assistance was sought in various counselling centres in the period of unemployment is, in our opinion, quite high, as 29 % of the young people visited them. At a similar percentage of frequency (12-15 %), they sought assistance from doctors, psychologists and other non-government organizations.

Further analysis of the data shows a kind of 'classic' trend in economically and socially threatened groups that turn towards government institutions for aid in the period of unemployment, namely social transfers that help them deal with their existential hardships. The vulnerable groups that more often seek advice and different forms of assistance are young people of lower social status, young people with lower levels of education, and women.

The quantitative part of the research complements the qualitative part, where with the help of the Ljubljana Local Office of the Employment Service, we formed focus groups of young people and conducted interviews with them concerning the status of unemployment and how they perceived the support of various institutions. The groups were formed as follows:

Group 1: young people without completed vocational or high school education, up to 23 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "younger dropouts" in the rest of the text);

Group 2: young people with completed vocational or high school education, up to 23 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "younger successful students"[2]);

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[2] The somewhat unusual use of the term "younger successful students" simply means that the people in this group have successfully completed their studies at

Group 3: young people without completed vocational or high school education, between 24 and 26 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "older dropouts");

Group 4: young people with completed vocational or high school education, between 24 and 26 years old, registered in the category of seeking first employment for over 12 months (also referred to as "older successful students");

We initially also wanted to include a group with completed college-level education in the research. However, after studying the information register, it turned out that there is only a small number of such candidates seeking employment, which is why we decided to abandon the idea of including a fifth group.

Education sector: A selection from the statements[3] given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences with education:

A1: You would expect that you would get to know your country at a school of tourism. In the three years of education, we did not go on one excursion or trip. At Gimnazija Ledina [a general upper secondary school] they had something organized every week, while we at tourism had nothing. We knew nothing about tourism. During our practical training, we ended up cleaning hotel rooms rather than working in reception or dealing with guests.

A3: When I started my extra-mural studies, I realized that the school wasn't giving me anything I needed to practice the profession or what my employer required. And I had to work so I could pay my tuition. But you didn't get anything out of it, or at least I didn't, and then, for example, if you actually worked in the mornings and got to school at three o'clock, you were tired, right, and it worked for a couple of months, but then you're just not able to do it any more. Now I don't care if it's this school or another one, it doesn't matter nowadays, as long as I finish it and get my piece of paper, that's what matters today.

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a vocational or other type of high school. In many cases this is only a two-year vocational program that the people themselves do not view as a sign of any particular scholarly achievement or success.

[3] A1 – A5 denotes statements given by participants in the group of "younger dropouts", B1 – B5 by "younger successful students", C1 – C5 by "older dropouts" and D1 – D 5 by "older successful students".

A2: Computers, that's what you've got to be good at these days. Wherever you go, at least some basic skills are required. I know I'm supposed to know this, and I'll focus on it more in the future, and on languages. I think it's good if you know more languages, at least one, two, three, at least passively, you have to know English actively, you have to know it, and then if you understand at least something, you have more of a chance to get a job. And you have to be good at interacting with people, this is the main thing when it comes to jobs, it's often more important than a diploma.

B1: It's a difficult situation if you find yourself high and dry when it comes to education. If you're extra-mural and only take exams, then you have to put more effort into it yourself. You take exams, you don't have classmates, you're basically on your own; if you have money, you can maybe afford a tutor.

B2: Maybe I should add something about the choice of these schools, because there's very little choice when it comes to these lower types of jobs. For example, there's nothing that would interest me and suit me better, where they would help to finance my education.

C4: I don't know, retraining often leaves you on the same level, in the same position. It's a level where we all already have professions. But they're the kind of professions where it's hard to get an actual job. Anyway, they demand a higher level of education for jobs, finished college, so I don't see how retraining would make my situation any better.

D2: I plan on continuing my studies, but it's difficult to be accepted to college, but I want to go to a specific school that interests me. You need to try several times to get in, because I want to go to the Academy of Fine Arts and Design. But that's what I want.

We have found that education means widening the field of opportunities for entering and acquiring a better position in the world of employment to all sub-groups. "Younger dropouts" are focusing on finishing the vocational schooling they had previously discontinued and stress the importance of earning a certificate of concluded education. They are critical of the level of actual usefulness of the knowledge they acquire during their schooling and professional training. They point out that in their current position – finishing their schooling in the framework of adult education – they are left to rely on themselves and their own decisions concerning the organization

of the learning process, which can sometimes be fairly difficult for them. They also point out that their position is more difficult than that of their peers, who are full-time students: they are lonelier and they miss the support of classmates etc. The majority feels that in the future, they will not be working in the vocation for which they are currently concluding their education. Concerning their future employment, they point out the relevance of social competence, resourcefulness and flexibility; they feel that these skills – particularly in view of the lower level of education they have reached – can increase their chances of employment in the future. Compared to the other groups, these young people keep up with current developments in the labour market and keep themselves informed about possible market niches. "Younger successful students" stress the problem of the shortage of opportunities to take part in different educational fields subsidised by the state. The majority expresses distress that their desire for education is dependent on and subordinated to their limited financial capabilities. They point out their unfavourable experiences of employment in the private sector, and for this reason show more interest in education which would enable them to find employment in the public sector (for example, in medicine as an orderly or nurse etc.). What they recognize in these professions is a higher level of social security for the future. Young people in the group of "older dropouts" report about their past experiences of taking part in various forms of additional education, courses and retraining as part of an active employment policy. They are critical of being advised to partake in additional education and retraining, where they can only attain a lower level of education, because they feel that even with the additional knowledge and courses, they were not any more successful in finding employment. This group's vision of the future entails getting a higher, possibly college-level education and 'collecting' education certificates in various fields. This is where they see better employment opportunities and the chance for a better situation in life in the future. "Older dropouts" are registered at the Employment Service mainly because they are looking for additional options for subsidised education and acquiring additional education that would later enable them to take part in and achieve higher levels of education. Compared to the other groups, they have more to report about actual experiences in the labour market: they feel that additional education they have acquired to increase their chances

of employment are actually obstacles when it comes to finding permanent employment. Employers often see them as competition instead of knowing how to utilize their knowledge and their skills. In this group of young people, some face the problem of having their level of education ratified due to the disarray in the verification of educational programs of public and private educational institutions (schools in the field of art). Compared to the other groups, they express a higher level of persistence to be educated in the fields of their own interest, although they are aware that in certain cases with the current labour market, their professions are not highly sought after or alternatively full to the brim. The majority have a vision of self-employment for the future.

Employment sector: Some of the statements given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences of working with the Employment Service:

A3: I came to the Employment Service basically because it was very hard to get a job anywhere, because it you don't have student status, you can no longer get work through the Student Employment Service, you can't do anything. I am also here because the Social Work Centre sent me because I don't have any means of subsistence.

B2: This whole employment plan is just about administration. It's just pieces of paper; they don't know what will really help you, I mean you have to help yourself, it's just so they keep an eye on you.

B1: You have to know how to deal with these people at the Employment Service so they leave you alone to go on with your schooling and that they don't force a job on you if you don't want it. But a lot of people don't know how to do that, so then they threaten to take them out of their records and they loses everything, their status and their insurance, and everything. I know a lot of people like this.

C4: I expect to get certain information from the Employment Service, as much information as possible, anything I want, if I'm interested in something new, that I can come here, turn to the office for certain information. I don't expect the Employment Service to find me a job, just to give me as much information as possible about things I'm interested in.

C3: Co-funding is only for certain schools, for the ones that have only finished elementary school the Employment Service will pay for everything, as long as you show up. Unfortunately, they pay and

help you only where they can, are supposed to, but they can't help you at all where you want them to. That's not ok.

D5: Yeah, the system might be good, just not for us, it doesn't offer me practically anything, I get nothing out of this system, even if I go see my counsellor. I come to see her, and she asks if I've filled out any job applications and that to her is success; that I write one measly job application, that's maximum cooperation.

D3: No, I don't get any other type of aid here other than money. I think that the Employment Service, as far as working with employers is concerned, is not well organized. Just as the employers take us on, they reject us, because the Service pays them for it. They should change the law, so that we'd be more protected.

D6: I personally don't write job applications because I know the way employers, hairdressers, work. They get an application, they don't even open it, they just throw it in the bin; who should I write them for if I know they go directly in the trash? So I prefer to go there personally. But they want me to write a certain number of job applications.

"Younger dropouts" say that they registered at the Employment Service predominately because they had difficulties making ends meet (paying for tuition, rent), so they could claim welfare at the Social Work Centre. The majority is concluding previously discontinued schooling and for this reason does not take part in other active employment policy programmes available. They report favourably about their experiences with the organization of study aid provided by the Education Service. In the group of "younger successful students", registering at the Service is connected with their intention to actively seek employment, difficulties in obtaining temporary employment, and also with the need to arrange social and health insurance. They express satisfaction with the attitude and the effort put in by the experts at the Employment Service when it comes to education. They feel a shortage when it comes to the variety of courses available and to subsidising in those fields of education they are interested in. They view the construction of an employment plan as foremost bureaucratic and a form of control. When it comes to solving the problem of unemployment, they say that they rely essentially on themselves, as their work with the Social Work Centre until this point has not resulted in successfully

gaining employment. They strive to fulfil the required conditions set by the Employment Service in order to keep their status as "active employment seekers" and the benefits that this status entails. The young people point out that counsellors take their interests and priorities into account if they bring them up (for example, focusing on education rather than actively seeking employment); however, the chances of finding employment more quickly, and the type of work actually available within the framework of the support the institution offers, are very limited. "Older school dropouts" report limited information and unsuitable job offers provided by the Employment Service. They reject the unsuitable job offers if they feel that they do not correspond to their qualifications and abilities. They are familiar with how cooperating with the Employment Service works and are aware of the fact that they have to respect and fulfil the required conditions if they wish to remain in the register of employment seekers. They favourably asses the motivation provided by the experts from the Service and the way they keep track of their progress in the process of education. This group also points out the bureaucratic nature of the employment plan. Some see it as something the expert "prescribes" to them. The expectations they have of the Employment Service are connected mainly with receiving quality information about education and employment suitable to their qualifications. They sometimes see employment courses that their counsellors direct them to more as a control mechanism of the institution, a way of verifying if they are actually actively looking for work. They point out the problem of the different types of approaches used by experts, the inconstancy, the switching of the employment counsellors they work with. "Older successful students" experience the problem of competitiveness on the labour market the most acutely. They registered at the Employment Service mostly because of the need to arrange their social status and health insurance, and to attain additional financial aid so they could continue their education according to their own interests. They feel that the Employment Service does not offer them sufficient information or suitable employment opportunities in view of their qualifications. They express resistance to and disagreement with the conditions they have to fulfil in order to remain in the Employment Service register (for example, writing a certain number of job applications, reporting to their counsellor, having to be available

at a certain time etc.). They are critical of the current manner of cooperative partnership between the Service and the employers, because they feel that this method is essentially damaging to them, and stack up a long list of unpleasant employment experiences; the employers benefit more than the employees. They have second thoughts about the retraining available at the Service for tackling the problem of unemployment. They wish the Employment Service offered more information about aid provided for education based on their own interests. They are critical of the sometimes biased attitude of the counsellors, who for the benefit of the institution sometimes hold back relevant information, do not familiarize them with the rights afforded them by their status, which instils in the young people a sense of distrust in the aid and support offered by the institution. It is more often that they get information about the financial aid they are eligible for and other rights from other young people in similar situations, and more seldom from an employment counsellor. They view an employment plan as beneficial because it records their achievements, consequently increasing their chances of employment.

Social security sector: Some of the statements given by young people in various sub-groups about their experiences of working with a Social Work Centre:

A1: Twice now I'd been getting welfare for three months and a half, and then at the end they said, "well, you'll have to sell your shares, or pick up a broom". And I just looked at them, what, is this any kind of way to treat a person. Later I heard from other people that this happened to them as well, that they were treated like that at a Social Work Centre.

B5: It also depends a lot on the Social Work Centre, how much you get. It can be the same Centre, the same situation, and someone will be given welfare and someone else won't. I mean, it's like this, I even know some cases where she finds some loophole and doesn't give you as much as you're eligible for.

C2: These people that work at the Centre maybe don't even know that it's not like it used to be back when parents took care of their kids, and now maybe the parents can't even take care of themselves and even the kids have to fend for themselves, and then what are you going to do? They just don't get that.

D3: I went to the Social Work Centre yesterday because she wanted to reduce my welfare. She started asking me what the financial situation at home was like, how are the wages, how much pension my father gets, and I don't know what else. I'm the one getting the welfare, not my parents. My parents help me as much as they can, but that's none of her business. So I said, I don't know, I don't go through his wallet to see how much he gets. Yeah, I am registered as an independent single woman and I am like my own family, so why does she keep bothering me about how much money my parents have? By law, my parents aren't responsible for me anymore; the parents are responsible while you're still in school full-time, I'm in school extramurally, which means they're not. It really depends on how much they even want to help me, but then she keeps bringing up my parents all the time.

In the majority of the cases, the Social Work Centre workers put the "younger dropouts" in touch with the Employment Service. The participants of all the groups brought up unpleasant experiences of working with the staff at the Social Work Centre when claiming their welfare rights. They feel there is a lack of clarity when it comes to the criteria the experts use when allocating social aid; they report experiencing injustice, inequality, the bureaucratic mindset, wilfulness and inappropriate attitude of the experts.

Conclusion

In Slovenia, more and more young people take part in educational programs for adults; they are commonly described as the population without a profession or work experience and are for this reason socially categorized as the least employable. Our findings, derived from the experiences of young unemployed people in the system of adult education point to the following: young people are critical of the usefulness education has for practicing certain professions, they endeavour to acquire an educational certificate (a school credential, a diploma, a professional title) that will enable them to enter into the employment system and compete for positions; to the majority of the young people, the position outside of the mainstream educational system means experiencing social isolation and a heavy financial burden, which in spite of financial aid and state subsidising, is in view

of the current living expenses still too great, particularly for those who want to be educated in the area of their desired professional interests. Rather than retraining at the same educational level, the young are more attracted to attaining a higher level of education, because they feel this will give them a competitive edge and afford them greater advantages in life. They are aware of the fact that more education means a better starting point for (better) positions in the working world. In the research, particularly young people who have already finished vocational school express more disagreement and resistance to retraining and being redirected in their education; they also have more complaints about their relationships with experts and employment counsellors.

In Slovenia, an active employment policy is carried out by various institutions. The central institution concerned with employment and insurance policies in the case of unemployment is the Employment Service. Beside the Employment Service and its regional and local offices, various other institutions and non-government organizations – mainly functioning within a local environment, although some operate on a state level – deal with the problems of the unemployed. These are the following: educational organizations, Social Work Centres, volunteer societies and organizations, other organizations for helping male and female individuals (Red Cross, Caritas etc.), professional organizations on a national level (the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education). In all of these organizations and institutions, active employment policies are carried out with the help of a number of programmes such as: programmes offering assistance with planning a career path and finding employment, programmes offering assistance to employers, programmes for preventing unemployment, educational, training and employment programmes for the unemployed. The results of the research show that the various forms of public aid and the role of the measures taken by the institutions is perceived by young people above all as financial aid, obtaining insurance and certain other benefits provided for the unemployed. They report experiences that point to a lack of confidence in the aid provided and the direction certain public institutions take when tackling the problems of education and employment; in the research, this is most prominent with the older group of young people who have been unemployed for a long time. The participants also pointed out the bureaucratic nature of working

with experts; some experience the provided assistance and keeping track of their search for work predominantly as a form of control, while only a minority find this type of approach helpful, providing them with direction, which they evaluate favourably. When it comes to asserting their rights for public forms of aid, they report experiencing social inequality, stigmatization and attempts to curtail the rights that their unemployment status affords them.

For transition policies to be successful in supporting young people as they embark on the path of employment, there is an urgent need for reaching agreements though the cooperation of the individuals, institutions and services involved with the needs of the most vulnerable groups, which implies a need for an approach that would consider multiple perspectives and was based on the teamwork of different experts and officials already on the local level. We feel that the psychosocial stabilization and development of an individual should have precedence over the integration into employment training, retraining and education; this is particularly important for young people who, as well as being unemployed, also find themselves in dire social and financial situations. It is necessary to encourage the development of programmes outside of government institutions that would reach out to those young people who decline contact with employment institutions. The contents of these programmes should include room for encouraging creativity, with the purpose of discovering one's own interests, and for introducing, for example, new forms of studying, shorter forms of obtaining qualifications, offering practical work experience and work that might not require special qualifications. A useful improvement would come from experts developing a realistic plan for the professional careers of young people who have been unemployed for a long time in cooperation with the individual himself, taking into account his current situation in life. Our findings show that the current manner of handling the issue of young people facing unemployment focuses too greatly and predominantly on keeping records of their educational achievements, while insufficient attention is given to a thorough, individual and flexible treatment of the problems facing young unemployed people, and not enough attention is given to considering the wishes and interests of the young. Additionally, it would be prudent to consider strategies, mechanisms and measures for orientating and directing young people on the labour market, with

which social inequality, stigmatization and segmentation would be reduced, and in which young people were able to participate more, to win recognition and validation for the knowledge they possess.

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Biographical Research of Youth Unemployment

Biografsko raziskovanje nezaposlenosti mladih

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Abstract

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The article analyzes how the young unemployed grapple with the experience of unemployment and how it influences the building of their identity. Since in the society of work, employment stands for the youth's identity centre, the experience of unemployment represents a risky situation for an individual. The author deals with the question of how social pedagogy can offer the possibility to form a 'non-professionally-oriented life course', where the young can try out new forms of social integration.

Key words: *society of work, identity and unemployment, social networks, social capital.*

Povzetek

Prispevek analizira, kako se mladi nezaposleni spoprijemajo z izkušnjami brezposelnosti in kako ta vpliva na graditev njihove identitete. Ker v družbi dela zaposlitev pomeni središče identitete mladostnika,

je izkušnja brezposelnosti za posameznika tvegana situacija. Ukvarjamo se z vprašanjem, kako lahko socialna pedagogika ponudi mladostnikom možnosti za oblikovanje nepoklicno usmerjenega življenjskega poteka, kjer mladi lahko preizkušajo nove oblike socialne integracije.

Ključne besede: *družba dela, identiteta in nezaposlenost, socialne mreže, socialni kapital.*

Introduction

The processes of societal modernization in the sense of 'reflexive modernization' (Beck, 1986) and 'late modern' (Giddens, 1991) manifest themselves in the de-standardization of the transitions between statuses in the course of life (Hurrelmann, 1994). In modern society, the transitions between education – employment – retirement statuses represented the normal course of an individual's biography. The foundation for the transition between statuses was employment, representing the basis for social integration. Nowadays, the flexibility between the labour market and education leads to the individualization and de-standardization of the normal courses of life, which means that the dynamics of transitions between statuses can no longer be understood within the categories of institutionalized normal life courses; it is the subjective perception and dynamic of the transitions that is in the foreground. For social pedagogy, it is important to understand the individualized ways young people cope with transitions, their competence and their sources. On a subjective level, individualization causes increasingly higher levels of uncertainty and breaks, which the individual has to control and reflect within the biographical course. Individualization is closely connected with self-thematization, where young people themselves have to establish their perceptions of reality, their decisions and their ways of dealing with uncertainty and be responsible for them. The biographical perspective of an individual is closely connected with existing institutional structures of a life course, and represents a biographical construction of reality. The increased complexity of the transitions is also reflected in the subjective coping strategies.

The subject-oriented research of transitions is concerned with the analysis of subjective biographical uncertainty and coping strategies, as well as the analysis of the socioeconomic conditions and institutional regulatory processes.

The presented research "The Concepts and Strategies of social-pedagogical Interventions in the Field of social Youth Exclusion"[1] sought to explore the ways in which work is subjectively experienced in the biographies of young people, what kind of experiences they had with unemployment and what the subjective coping strategies they used to deal with uncertainty. Twenty young people, both male and female, aged between 18 and 25 during the time of their unemployment were included in the research. Qualitative methodology was used, namely interviews, with the purpose of answering the following questions:

1. How do young people experience employment, what meaning do they attribute to it in their life biography?
2. What strategies do they use to cope with unemployment and how do they integrate them into their views on life?
3. What role does social pedagogy play in offering protection, support and aid to young people who have experienced unemployment?

Example:

Ivan is 22 years old and is currently unemployed. He has finished high school and was employed for a time. He had problems with drug use and lost his job. He finds it difficult to cope with unemployment because he has lost a lot of friends and is facing social isolation. The worst of it is that he 'does nothing' and feels that he is 'socially useless'. "You're nothing without a job," he says; this is why employment means a great deal to him. He lives with his parents. They offer him some support, but he has problems with his father who has lost faith in him, even though Ivan finds his loss of faith unjustified. He spends his time playing sports and looking for work. He has very high ambitions: he wants to go to university and become a translator. He sees the solution to all his problems in finding employment, which would enable him to no longer be dependent on

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[1] The project was conducted in the years 2004-2007.and funded by the Slovenian Research Agency.

his parents and lead the sort of independent life that he would find personally fulfilling – he greatly values the type of work that would be personally fulfilling and not only financially beneficial.

The experience of unemployment that Ivan is faced with is similar to the experiences of many unemployed young people nowadays. The fear of unemployment represents a substantial burden for today's youth. In a young person's biography, unemployment stands for a critical life situation because work represents the central element of an individual's identity.

For the majority of the interviewed youths, work represents the possibility of self-realization, social recognition and social inclusion. The consequences of unemployment that they experience are social isolation, surviving on the existential minimum and prolonged dependence on their parents: "Without a job you are nothing and you feel socially useless. I have lost a lot of friends and that's why it's all harder to deal with." (Tomaž, age 23).

It is interesting to find that with the growing level of unemployment, the meaning attributed to work, to jobs that are fulfilling and enjoyable to the youth, is also becoming more highly valued. For young people work represents both an existential foundation as well as meaningful fulfilment in life. The interviews showed that the majority is oriented towards traditional professional biography, where one's profession is the central element of identity; due to the current changes this results in a risky situation for young people.

For most of the young people that were interviewed, being excluded from work has a significant impact on their sense of self-worth: they feel 'socially useless'. The strategies young people employ to deal with the experience of unemployment can be divided into productive and unproductive. The unproductive approach is evident in Ivan's case: he says that he is haunted by the feeling that he 'does nothing', which shows that he has not organized his time and his activities, besides sports, which he sees as relaxation. He has subordinated all of his life goals to finding employment, but does not do anything to achieve this goal. His goals are idealistic – he wants to go to university, but he does not actually do anything to get there. The other group faces their problems in a more productive manner, particularly in trying to achieve better employment conditions by furthering their education or by retraining.

Social networks play a significant part in facing and conquering the experience of unemployment. For most of these young people, the main source of social support are their families; however, it is also evident from the provided example that the family is also a source of stress and strain, as Ivan's relationship with his father is not ideal due to his drug use and unemployment. He has also lost a lot of friends and feels socially isolated. He perceives his unemployment as his own personal problem, which he can solve by persistently looking for 'a job'.

Employment-oriented personal biography is a risky situation because young people who build their identity exclusively on the basis of gaining employment and have no other opportunities to develop their identities quickly find themselves in an identity crisis. They build their identity on the basis of a firmly fixed future goal; however, if for whatever reason they do not achieve this goal, they will most probably be faced with a great deal of disappointment.

Ivan is an example of a youth who built his identity on the idea of a profession, which is why unemployment is an extremely straining experience for him.

Identity is not something we are born with – it is something that develops in the process of living. We see identity as a progressive process of shaping one's own life, which is constructed anew in every daily situation. Additionally, identity is always a process of adapting, negotiating with different demands. Nowadays, the open identity project is at the forefront, where the identity project itself is an imaginary 'fixed point, which constantly changes' (Keupp, 2002).

At this point we are faced with the question of how a youth can establish a satisfactory identity at all. A satisfactory identity enables the individual to reach a certain level of coherence, authenticity, recognition and ability. Keupp (Ibid.) stresses the fact that subjective abilities and sources are necessary for a satisfactory identity. These are:

- A satisfactory identity requires material sources. In modern society, which is ideologically, politically bound exclusively to the regulatory power of the market, this causes social differences to increase. Because of the process of individualization, social questions have also become individualized; an individual must seek solutions for his situation in life on his own.

- A satisfactory identity requires social inclusion and recognition. Employment does not only mean acquiring material sources, but also achieving social inclusion, recognition, a social network. Because of the increasing erosion of traditional communities and increasing levels of unemployment, the significance of other types of social networks – friends, neighbourhood, self-help groups, who can offer a young person social inclusion and recognition – is also increasing. It is with people from the fringe that the lack of these sources becomes apparent.

- An individual in the modern world requires the abilities to negotiate with different possibilities and identities. Different partial worlds call for the individual to master different roles and behavioural patterns; he has to be able to handle different situations, roles, demands. This calls for a certain level of sensibility, reflexivity and the ability to resolve conflicts.

- An important psychological requirement for establishing a satisfactory identity is the subject's ability to continually adapt to different situations and people, and not function on the basis of the principle of 'all or nothing'.

An individual requires sources to establish his everyday identity. It does not matter what sources are available to him, but how he perceives them and how he is able to use them. Bourdieu (in Keupp, 2002) has developed the concept of sources as different forms of capital: economic, cultural and social sources. Economic sources are material sources, which an individual requires to build his identity. These sources are monetary, for example, money, salary, property etc. Bordieu describes three forms of cultural sources, namely incorporated, objective and institutionalized capital. Incorporated capital is represented by internalized characteristics and attitudes; acquiring such capital requires time and energy (for example, education). Objective cultural capital comprises of books, art; institutionalized capital is represented by awarded certificates and distinctions. Social sources represent the entirety of current and potential sources, connected with a network of more or less institutionalized relations of mutual acquaintance. For identity building it is important how each individual is able to transform certain forms of capital into others, for example, how he is able to use or exchange his social sources for material or cultural sources.

According to Bourdieu's theory (in Keupp, 2002), one thing that is important for the unemployed young is under what conditions they are able to transform their social capital into economic capital –the possibility of employment or other forms of ensuring their own existence that are unrelated to work.

Unemployment is a straining and stressful experience; how can the experience of being unmotivated and the experience of risk be counteracted by different forms of positive experiences, developing new levels of competence for dealing with risks productively? The ways in which unemployment will affect an individual on a psychosocial level depend on the interpretation patterns and value orientation of an individual, as well as on positive activating sociability patterns. The essential finding of recent studies is that subjective experiences of unemployment cannot simply be mechanically mirrored from an objective structure of the strains and stresses. Studies of unemployment that have thus far focused mainly on the strain discourse are turning out to be very limited and insufficient in view of the realization that the levels of strain are very different. Focusing on sources and researching social networks is brining the concept of social networks as socio-political ways of dealing with youth unemployment to the forefront.

Modern societies have established a cultural model, according to which professional work is the subjectively purposeful centre of life activity. Consequentially, professional work has become the central medium of social inclusion, recognition, contacts and identity development of an individual. On the other hand, this process of establishing a cultural model of a society of work has made the exclusion from the society of work not only the basis for more poverty, but also for the loss of identity (Scherr, 1991). Unemployment results in the loss of material existential security and social position, and precisely because these economic and cultural models have been joint, unemployment also represents an existential risk to an individual (Ibid.). Due to the appearance of individualization and the erosion of collective patterns, unemployment is perceived as a person's individual fate.

Within the context of increasingly de-standardized transitions, the concept of social networks is becoming ever more important; it stresses that the socially unevenly divided sources can be mobilized. If in making transitions young people can no longer rely on traditional institutional forms of support such as school and family, they still

have social networks as a place of support and protection. Scherr (Ibid.) has developed a concept of social networks for working with the unemployed. He points out that social networks can be used as a new direction for working with the young unemployed. A social network is a composite of social relationships in which a person is included (Hurrelmann, 1994: 239). We differentiate between personal networks which concern a specific person and his relationships, and social networks which concern an entire system of relationships – a neighbourhood, a community. The basic ideas of studying social networks are founded on the following concepts:

- The more a person is invested in relationships with other people, who are important to him, the easier it is for the person to overcome critical situations in life, and the ramifications of straining situations are reduced.

- A social network functions as protection when straining situations occur; it functions as a 'social immune system' (Hurrelmann, 1994). Social networks can act as a protective system and offer the youth help in dealing with his everyday difficulties in life.

When working with young unemployed people, the relevance of social networks is apparent in the following areas:

- The development of group work, for example mutual help. Its purpose is to promote valuing non-professional work, for example upbringing and education.

- Social networks can represent an innovative and experimental field, where socially accepted, matter of course policies and behavioural patterns become relative.

- Social networks can establish new relationships outside the workplace, family or partnership.

- Within social networks, a 'non-professionally-oriented life plan' can become materially supported and socially accepted.

Within a social network, it is possible to conquer individual unemployment much more successfully because of the mobilization of social capital. Our research has shown that in conquering their unemployment, young people cite their family and friends as the main source of social protection. When it came to finding strategies for dealing with unemployment, it became apparent that they perceive unemployment as an exclusively individual problem, which can

be solved by 'working harder, being diligent and studying'. The awareness of their role in the community and alternative movements did not become apparent in our research. This can be explained by the fact that alternative forms of work for young people that would enable them to reflect on their experiences of unemployment and help them to find new forms of social inclusion are not yet organized in our area.

In his research about the effect of unemployment on identity, Keupp (2002) found that:

- In modern society, the de-standardization of professional biography is occurring. A normal professional biography as part of a professional identity almost no longer exists. A work identity is established through various projects, which continuously reinvent, change and improve.

- During the time of the erosion of those instances that would enable young people to find purpose, work is playing an increasingly important role in the formation of identity. Young people want work that would fulfil them.

- Employment defines the social position of people in society and remains the basis of an individual's identity. Unemployed people do not form their identities around their families or their free time; they base them on the absence of work and the resulting loss of purpose and social inclusion. This can have psychosocial consequences and manifest itself in destructive forms of behaviour, as well as in a rigid fixation on subjectively meaningful work. It is precisely because of a lack of work that the relevance of work for identity development increases.

Because of the high level of importance work has in the formation of a young person's identity and the simultaneously occurring erosion of the society of work, the question arises concerning possible alternatives to the society of work.

The pedagogical concept of a 'non-professionally-oriented life plan' (Krafeld, 1999) aims at enabling individuals that are excluded from work to distance themselves from a biography oriented towards a society of work. In this instance, instead of helping a youth with the integration into work, social pedagogy tries to help a young person productively cope with the situation of unemployment and enables the youth to develop his non-professionally-oriented life plan (Scherr, 1991). This type of assistance focuses on young people as productive

agents in reality, who have at their disposal the ability to 'actively shape their lives'. We have to distance ourselves from the problem of deficits, which sees the underlying cause behind unemployment in socialization and qualification deficits. These are first and foremost selection criteria, and not the cause of unemployment (Galuske, 1999). This represents a shift from focusing on the problem to focusing on the development of sources. Focusing on the problem increases a young person's feelings of helplessness and his need for help.

In this sense, assistance should focus on:

- projects focused on life rather than on the labour market;
- enjoyment and interest in becoming involved (these have to stem from the project itself and not from some imaginary future on the labour market);
- helping young people in their search for a life model (even ones that are not work-related);
- building a community and social networks, involvement in socio-political discourse about the division of labour and wealth, material security and the patterns of social inclusion (Ibid.).

Social pedagogy that is oriented in these directions should offer young people the space and support to find new patterns of social integration into society. In this sense, social pedagogy can be seen not as helping young people to integrate into the society of work, but as the answer to the social processes of modernisation and the risks of reaching adulthood.

Conclusion

The changes in the transitions of young people call for new forms of professional perception, where the differences in comparison to standardized transitions can no longer be seen within the categories of deviation, an individual's deficit and the corresponding compensation-oriented form of help. For subjectively-oriented and de-standardized transitions, a social pedagogy of transitions is required (Walther, 2007), which would create a new socio-pedagogical view of the transitions between youth and adulthood. This form of social pedagogy focuses more on biographical competence and potential for dealing with uncertainty, than on deficits. Pedagogically, social

pedagogy of transitions represents a shift away from compensational upbringing and education and towards helping with acquiring biographical competence. We see biographical competence as the reflection and formation of relations between social demands and possibilities, particularly on the labour market, and personal needs and interests in the framework of an individual's life course (Ibid.).

The basic premise of this kind of social pedagogy is the participation of the users, their own motivation and involvement in their transitions. Participation means:

- voluntary involvement and the possibility of choosing between various options, where the individual can identify with his own choice of profession and his own manner of transition;
- the flexibility of the offers for the individual formation of educational processes;
- the availability of time and space for the individual to test, develop informal learning;
- recognizing the individual as a unique subject with his own professional demands and life plans, instead of perceiving him in terms of socialization deficits;
- the key relevance of trusting the experts, who are open to various biographical courses;
- perceiving the young person as a 'social partner' in the socio-political institutions of the market and help providers. (Ibid.)

The subject-oriented research of transitions sheds light on and analyzes biographical perceptions and transition strategies, as well as institutional and socioeconomic processes. De-standardized transitions call for the competence for independence, for self-formation, for choosing between various options, where young people have to arrange their transitions independently. For this they require the type of protection and support that will take their requirements seriously.

The subject-oriented research is based on the individual's sources, which are overlooked within traditional institutional logic of help if the assistance is based on a traditional understanding of social integration where only employment is necessary to achieve successful integration. This form of help overlooks other possibilities of social integration that concern transitions, as well as the individual's subjective biographical perceptions and ways of coping.

The biographical research of young people's situation in life and their manners of transition, their sources and coping strategies opens a door for the possibility of a social pedagogy of transition, which would integrate into its repertoire of provided assistance a reflection of social changes and the subjective perceptions of young people, where the way institutions function is reflected in the biographical perception of reality. Compared to more traditional forms of employment assistance, when dealing with the transitions of young people, this kind of social pedagogy focuses more on the needs and subjective experiences of young people and on offering institutional forms as opportunities for social integration regardless of employment.

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The Use of Amphetamine Type Stimulants and the Normalization of Recreational Drug Use among People Who Attend Electronic Music Events

Uporaba stimulantov amfetaminskega tipa in normalizacija rekreativne uporabe drog med obiskovalci prireditev elektronske glasbe

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Abstract

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The article presents the results and findings of a quantitative and qualitative research into the use of ATS and the characteristics of attending electronic music events in Slovenia. The main conclusions of the study that concern the prevalence of drug use at electronic music events point to a decrease in the prevalence of ecstasy use and an increase in the use of cocaine and methamphetamine. The analysis of the interviews in the qualitative part reflects the influence of the normalization of drug use on a specific group of people – those who attend electronic music events – and is evident among all of the subgroups included in the interview section. These young people are familiar with drugs because they have become more accessible and are a part of the

growing up process of every individual; this can also been seen in the attitudes the young people who do not use them have towards drugs. These young people continually put off quitting their drug use further and further into the future or else they do not even consider stopping. The analysis of the interviews shows that these young people are relatively well aware of the measures necessary for reducing the harm caused by drug use and the measures to take in case of an overdose, as well as of the available sources of help.

Key words: synthetic drugs, electronic music, drug familiarity, normalization, harm reduction.

Povzetek

V prispevku so predstavljeni rezultati ter ugotovitve kvantitativne in kvalitativne raziskave o uporabi ATS in značilnostih obiskovanja prireditev elektronske glasbe v Sloveniji. Glavne ugotovitve raziskave glede prevalence uporabe drog na prireditvah elektronske glasbe se nanašajo na znižanje prevalence uporabe ekstazija ter na povišanje uporabe kokaina in metamfetamina, uporaba ekstazija pa se je nekoliko zmanjšala. Analiza intervjujev v kvalitativnem delu zrcali vpliv normalizacije uporabe drog med specifično skupino obiskovalcev prireditev elektronske glasbe, ki se kaže med vsemi zajetimi intervjuvanimi podskupinami. Mladi so seznanjeni z drogami, saj so postale dostopnejše in del odraščanja vsakega posameznika, kar se med drugim vidi tudi v odnosu do drog, ki ga skozi odraščanje vzpostavijo tisti mladi, ki drog ne uporabljajo. Prenehanje z uporabo drog mladi odlagajo naprej v prihodnost ali pa o tem sploh ne razmišljajo. Iz analize intervjujev je razvidno, da mladi razmeroma dobro poznajo ukrepe zmanjševanja škode pri uporabi drog in ukrepe ob predoziranju, prav tako pa tudi obstoječe vire pomoči.

Ključne besede: sintetične droge, elektronska glasba, seznanjenost z drogami, normalizacija, zmanjševanje škode.

Introduction

The systematic and continual research in the field of using **amphetamine type stimulants** (**ATS**) is an important facet of planning the suitable or altering the existent prevention programmes aimed at young people. The basic premise of the study, entitled Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of the Change in the Use of Synthetic Drugs among Young People,[1] was to ensure continuity in this type of research that would make it possible to track the prevalence and trend developments concerning the use of ATS in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The starting point stems from the findings and suggestions provided by the 2000/2001 research, which was conducted with comparable methodology. The second starting point of the research is the previously established relatively high prevalence of synthetic drug use at electronic music events in our region.

Using systematic quantitative research of the use of ATS among a specific population of young people is fairly new in the European region; according to information from EMCDDA, systematic indicators of the changes in drug use in special target groups have not been established yet (despite the fact that the use of ATS is usually at its highest in these groups).

Before the year 2000, Calafat and his co-workers conducted two researches concerning drug use in recreational contexts in different European countries by using qualitative and quantitative methodology. The first focused on certain characteristics and the social representation of (the use of) ecstasy in five European countries (Calafat et al., 1998), while the second research looked into the characteristics of night life and recreational drug use in nine European countries (Calafat et al., 1999). Both international researches were conducted in the field (in club, bars etc.), polling a relatively large sample of 1600 to 2700 participants in recreational environments (clubs, bars, discotheques). The distinctiveness of the qualitative work lay in the fact that interviews were conducted with different types of people connected with night life (club owners,

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DJs, guests, security guards, social workers, police officers etc.). The main findings of the abovementioned researches concerned explaining the social worlds of drug users, the social representation of ecstasy and the various risk factors involved. The risk factors included the low evaluation of risks involving the use of legal drugs (alcohol and tobacco). The evaluation of the risk of driving under the influence of drugs proved to be problematic: almost half of the sample had already driven under the influence of alcohol, while a third had driven under the influence of other illegal drugs.

The two above mentioned researches were relatively early in pointing out the mixing various stimulants and the different patterns of the use of ATS, which are partially connected to the social worlds of the users (Ibid.). Beside the already mentioned issues, they also pointed out the consumer-oriented socialization process of young Europeans, whose time is divided between weekends of pleasure and an arduous work week, and who in recreational environments use drugs in a 'consumerist' manner. This means that drugs serve as additional entertainment, and extra element of their partying and their music style, and even hold an element of prestige in the same way as entertainment-oriented electronic devices or clothes by big name brands (Calafat et al., 2001). Access to pleasure is no longer entirely limited by moral norms and stigmatization, but is to a certain extent reliant also on the market and its particular set of rules, aimed at increasing consumption. Because of their effects, for example sociability, relaxation, expansiveness and daring, young people connect certain drugs to social success (Ibid.). Linking drug use with marginalized groups and social exclusion are therefore no longer necessary and suitable explanations of recreational drug use in the process of its normalization. These types of changes in the perceptions of drug use and the new ways of recreational drug use also call for new preventive measures, and for including new or adapting existent help programmes.

The two researches conducted by Calafat and his co-workers (Ibid.) have also pointed out some of the drawbacks of prevention programmes: most were aimed at distributing information concerning the risks and dangers of drug use, and they experienced difficulties with establishing a connection with their target group. Despite a relatively well-established information network, personal contact with the young and their scene as well as counselling have turned out to be more

important. An important finding of the research was also that to work well in this field, cooperation between the different types of people that are part of the night life is necessary, because this is the only way to achieve more substantial improvements in this field (Ibid.).

The only research that tracked the use of synthetic drugs among those attending electronic music events in the European area after the year 2000 was the Mixmag Drug Survey (Mitcheson and Hunt, 2006), conducted in 2000 and 2005. The research targeted certain characteristics of the use of synthetic drugs and attending electronic music events among the readers of the magazine Mixmag in the United Kingdom (England and Wales). The research was limited insomuch as the sample was confined to the magazine's readership, as well as by using only quantitative methodology. The Mixmag Drug Survey is also the only European research in the field of ATS use and electronic music events with which we can – to a limited extent – compare the results of the research presented in this article. In the nineties, the UK had the highest life prevalence of synthetic drug use in Europe in terms of the general population as well as in terms of the population frequenting electronic music events (EMCDDA, 2005). In the UK between 2001 and 2004, the life prevalence of using synthetic drugs (ecstasy, amphetamine) and cocaine among the general population (young adults between 15 and 34 years old) was still among the highest in Europe. According to the degree of ecstasy and cocaine use between the years 2001 and 2004, the UK is followed by Spain, France and the Czech Republic (the latter placing first in the category of use in the last year).

The prevalence of amphetamine use in the group of young adults in the EU is somewhere between 0.1 % and 10 %, reaching its peak at 18.4 % in the UK. In the same age bracket, the prevalence of ecstasy use ranges from 0.6 % in Greece to 13.6 % in the UK (Ibid.).

According to the EMCDDA[2] report, in 2004 and 2005 the use of stimulants in different age segments was measured only in the general population, where due to a specific pattern of use, the prevalence is significantly lower than in a specific population of people who attend electronic music events. In the general population, the life prevalence of amphetamine use among adults (15 – 64 years old) in the EU ranges between 0.5 % and 6 %, with the exception of the UK, where it reaches 12 %.

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[2] European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

The general indicators of the reports show that in Europe the use of amphetamines, ecstasy and cocaine is still on the rise; the prevalence of ecstasy use is sometimes higher than the prevalence of amphetamine use, making it the second most commonly used drug after marihuana. Information regarding Slovenia is not provided in the EMCDDA report; therefore, it is important that we take a look at comparable information, gathered by Hibell and his co-workers (2004) in 2003 using ESPAD methodology. This and comparable types of methodology have been used for over a decade to establish the level of the drug use of high school students between the ages of 15 and 16 in various EU countries and the countries that were EU candidates at the time.

In 2003 the life prevalence of amphetamine use among 15 and 16 year old students in EU and EU candidate countries was less than 1 and up to 7 %. The prevalence of the amphetamine use of high school students in the European countries included in the research during the month before the research was conducted was between 3 and 4 % (Ibid.).

Up to 8 % of the students in EU or candidate countries have taken ecstasy once or more times in their lives. The life prevalence of ecstasy use among Slovenian high school students (first year students) in 2003 was 3.3 % (from those, 1.7 % tried ecstasy once or twice) (Ibid.).

Synthetic drugs are second only to marihuana when it comes to the most often used illegal drugs among high school students in Slovenia also. One domestic research, using ESPAD comparable methodology, kept track of the changes in drug use among students in their first and last year of high school in Ljubljana (from 1999 to 2002).[3] The results showed that the life prevalence from the first to the fourth year of high school increased from 4.4 % to 11.3 % when it came to ecstasy, from 1.9 % to 3.7 % when it came to amphetamines, and from 1.8 to 3.7 % when it came to cocaine (Dekleva and Sande, 2003; Stergar, 1999).

The main goal of the quantitative part of the research, the results of which are presented below, was to acquire information about the prevalence of the use of legal and illegal drugs at electronic music events in Slovenia. The methodology that was used is similar to the

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[3] The changes in use were measured within the same generation, not the same population. This means that the research did not include the same students, but the same generation (students that began in the same year), which underwent certain changes (changing schools, places of residence, registration renewal etc.).

one used in our 2000/2001 research; it is partially comparable to other European researches conducted in this field (Calafat et al., 1998; Mitcheson and Hunt, 2006), so the results enable us to make international comparisons. The additional goals were to establish the level of awareness about the harmful consequences of using synthetic drugs and to evaluate the quality of the prevention efforts in the field of ATS.

In the qualitative part, we attempted to establish patterns in ATS use and the habits of the users by analysing interviews conducted with three subgroups of users (periodical users, chaotic users and former users) and those that do not use drugs. We attempted to find out which cautionary factors and risk factors affect the different types of ATS use and what helps young people stay abstinent at electronic music events. We were also interested in finding out the reasons why certain young people use drugs in a high risk manner and why some have decided to abstain.

Conducting research at events and with the help of the internet: the sample

For the requirements of the research, we have formed a sample comprised of people who attend electronic music events in Slovenia. In the (main) sample, both those who use and those who do not use illegal or legal drugs were included. The sample, based on self-selection, is **not representative**; the manner in which it is comprised and the selection process enables us to compare it with previous domestic research of drug use (Sande, 2002) as well as with previous European studies in this field. The information was collected using a questionnaire, distributed to participants personally at events or included in the magazine X-press.[4] The questionnaires were in envelopes and the participants returned them within three months after the research began. Returning the questionnaires was not obligatory (informal environment) and depended on the individual, which is why we assume that the more motivated parts of the population were reached. The number of returned questionnaires, distributed in the two manners mentioned above, after a preliminary

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[4] The magazine is aimed at young people who attend electronic music events; at the time of the research it was published by Association DrogArt.

survey of the data and a verification of validity and reliability, was **403**. The main sample comprised of 39.6 % of men and 60.4 % of women, who were between 14 and 42 years old. A similar percentage of the participants was attending high school (38.7 %) or a faculty or another form of higher education institution (38.2 %) during the time of the research. A relatively large part of the sample was no longer at school (22.6 %), while the remaining participants (0.5 %) were attending elementary school.

The additional sample, acquired using the internet, was collected in a three month period; we advertised on three different portals connected with electronic music and on the largest domestic search engine. In this way, after the preliminary survey of the data and verifying the validity and reliability, 213 fully filled-out questionnaires were collected. The sample acquired using the internet comprised of 61.1 % of men and 38.9 % of women, between the ages of 15 and 35. Nearly half of the participants (49.0 %) in the **additional** sample was attending a faculty or other form of higher education institution; the rest were attending high school (24.5 %) or were no longer in school (26.5 %). The following presentation only includes the results of the main sample, while any significant differences between the main and additional sample will be highlighted.

For the qualitative part of the research, 25 participants who were prepared to share their thoughts and experiences were interviewed. There were 11 girls (44 %) and 14 boys (56 %). 6 (24 %) of these interviewees had either completely stopped using drugs or only used alcohol and cigarettes, or had never used drugs at all. The oldest (male) participant was 36 years old and the youngest (female) was 16. The ages of the girls who participated averaged at 21.6 years old, while the boys' ages averaged at 24.6 years old. Compared to the quantitative part of the research, the male group was somewhat older, while the female group was approximately the same age.

The characteristics of attending electronic music events

The characteristics concerning electronic music events included in the research were: age when attending for the first time, the frequency, and the duration of attendance.

The largest number of the participants first attended such an event at age 16 (20.8 %) and 15 (19.2 %). A large part (74.3 %) of the participants first attended between the ages of 14 and 18. Compared to the boys, the girls attended such events for the first time in a higher percentage at age 14, 15 and 16; however, there are no statistically relevant differences (t-test) between the genders were the age of first going to such an event is concerned.

The largest part of the participants attends such events once a month (33.3 %) or once a fortnight (23.6 %), which is similar to the information from 2001. 12.1 % of the participants attend every weekend. The highest percentage of the participants attends these events for four years or more (42.9 %). The results in this case differ from the 2001 findings, when events were attended for three or more years by only 35.4 % of the participants. Almost half of the participants (46.8 %) on average spend one of their weekend nights "out" (between Friday and Sunday), 41.6 % two weekend nights, and 11.6 % all three nights. 25.8% of the participants attend such events **during the week**.

The last of the characteristics is the **financial means** that individual participants normally designate to attending events. The participants usually get this money from their parents (27.8 %), from occasional (27.5 %) and regular incomes (26.9 %). One tenth (9.9 %) gets it from scholarships, and only a small percentage (2.5 %) gets the money by selling drugs (the rest of the 100% is presented by other sources of income).

There are statistically relevant differences (t-test at the level of p = 0.01) between the sexes when it comes to getting the money for attending these events. Boys get the money to party from regular incomes more often then girls, while girls largely get the money from parents. For these young people, **entry fees** are the biggest expense over the weekend, as almost half (44.5 %) of the participants spends more than 12 EUR per weekend this way. One quarter of the participants (25.0 %) spends more than 12 EUR per weekend on alcoholic drinks, 26.2 % of all the participants spend it on illegal drugs, and 10.5 % of all participants spend it on transportation to and from the events. They spend the smallest amount of their weekend funds on cigarettes: 96.0 % spend less than 8 EUR per weekend this way. Statistically relevant differences between the sexes (t-test at the level of p = 0.01) have shown that when it comes to alcohol and illegal drugs, boys spend significantly more money than girls.

The participants in the additional sample differ significantly from the participants in the main sample in that they frequent electronic music events more often ($p = 0.01$) and for a longer period of time ($p = 0.05$); they also spent fewer nights out during the weekend ($p = 0.05$). The participants in the additional sample also differ significantly from the participants in the main sample in that they get the money to party to a lesser extent from parents and more often from regular and occasional incomes ($p = 0.01$); they also spent more weekend money on alcohol and less on entry fees (in both cases $p = 0.05$).

Reasons for attending the events

As in the study from 2001, this one also included questions about the reasons behind attending these types of events; they were taken from Calafat's study entitled *Night Life in Europe and Recreational Drug Use* (1999). Seven of the reasons (table 13) for attending were selected based on the qualitative research that accompanied Calafat's abovementioned study. Every participant could mark the level of importance of each reason in the table.

As in 2001, 'social' reasons for attending events were once again the most important: listening to music (80.0 %), dancing (68.1 %) and meeting friends (50.0 %). A large number of the participants also saw breaking the daily routine as an important reason. Drug use (4.1 %), finding a partner (2.1 %) and opportunities for sex (2.9 %) were, as in 2001, among the causes that the least number of participants marked as 'very important' (table 14).

The results of the research confirm the findings of the ATS research from 2001, namely that the most important reasons for frequenting electronic music events are **dancing, socializing, listening to music, and breaking the daily routine**, while among these young people, using drugs is a significantly less important reason to attend.

Drug use was listed as a very important reason for attending these type of events by 3.4 % of those participants that also marked dancing as a very important reason, and by 7.4 % of those participants that also marked meeting friends as a very important reason, and by 4.2 % of those participants that also marked listening to music as a very important reason to attend such an event.

Electronic music

Among the six subgenres of electronic music cited in the research, the largest number of participants preferred techno (52.6 %), followed by house (28.7 %) and trance (8.9 %). The results show that these three types of music are still the most popular among the people who frequent these types of events; compared to the research from 2001, the popularity of techno music has risen somewhat, while the results for house and trance music are similar.

Drug use

The majority of the participants in the sample have tried both types of legal drugs. 94.5 % of the participants have tried alcohol, 88.2 % have tried tobacco. Closely following tobacco was **marihuana**, which 87.5 % of the participants have tried; this was followed by **ecstasy** (74.7 %), **amphetamine** (70.4 %) and **poppers** (70.4 %). More than half of the participants in the sample have tried cocaine (57.9 %), almost half (47.1 %) have tried magic mushrooms, and somewhat less than a quarter have tried LSD (23.6 %) and methamphetamine (23.1 %).

Comparing this information about the use of stimulating drugs by people frequenting electronic music events to the data from 2001, we can see that the (life) prevalence of **ecstasy** use has decreased from 86.0 to 74.7 %, the use of **amphetamine** has stayed on approximately the same level (71.9 % in 2001 and 70.4 % in 2005). The prevalence of **cocaine** use has increased from 46.7 % in 2001 to 57.9 % in 2005, and the prevalence of **methamphetamine** use has also increased from 9.8 % in 2001 to 23.1 % in 2005.

Among the other types of drugs, the prevalence of marihuana, heroine and LSD use has decreased, while the prevalence of magic mushrooms has increased. When it comes to legal drugs, both the prevalence of alcohol and tobacco use has decreased.

Among illegal drugs, the participants most often use **marihuana**, with 18.3 % (out of all of the participants) using it every day, 39.6 % using it once a week or more often (the combined categories of 'once a week' to 'regularly every day' in table 18). 22.6 % of the participants do not use marihuana, while 14.7 % have stopped using it.

When it comes to **amphetamine type stimulants**, the participants most often take **ecstasy.** 4.1 % take it once a week and 3.3 % use **amphetamine** (sulphate) with the same frequency. A similar percentage uses ecstasy and amphetamines several times a month (but less than once a week). With the same frequency, 12.2 % uses amphetamines and 11.4 % uses ecstasy. Nearly 12 % uses ecstasy and amphetamines once a month. The highest percentage of participants uses amphetamine (24.2 %) and ecstasy (17.3 %) less than once a month. Methamphetamine is used (several times a month) by an only somewhat larger percentage of the participants, once a month by 1.3 % of the participants and less than once a month by 4.7 % of the participants. The results show that almost a quarter (23.1 %) of the participants has had some experience with methamphetamine, while only a relatively small number of the participants actually use it.

In spite of its relatively high life prevalence (57.9 % of the participants have tried it) **cocaine** is used regularly by a relatively low number of the people that attend electronic music events. It is used once or several times a week by a little over one percent of the participants. It is used several times a month (but less than once a week) by 3.0 % of all the participants and once a month by 5.1 % of the participants. A quarter uses cocaine less than once a month.

As in the 2001 research, **the favourite illegal drug** among the participants remains marihuana, followed by ecstasy and cocaine. Interestingly, alcohol has risen from third (9.7 % in 2001) to second place (19.2 % in 2005) in the ladder of legal and illegal drugs. According to the results, alcohol is becoming increasingly popular with these young people, while the popularity of ecstasy is falling (from 24 % in 2001 to 16.5 % in 2005). The popularity of cocaine has not altered significantly.

Nearly half of the participants (49.0 %) often mixes various types of illegal drugs; 26.8 % always uses one type of drug, while 24.2 % of them have stated that they do not use illegal drugs. 6.4 % has **injected** drugs (the number of boys is almost twice the number of girls). If we only take into account the participants who have admitted to using drugs when it comes to the question of mixing different drugs together, the results are the following: 35.3 % always takes only one type of drug and 64.7 % often mixes various illegal drugs. The largest number of participants uses ecstasy together with

alcohol (44.4 %), marihuana (38.1 %) and amphetamines (31.6%). 15.9 % mixes ecstasy with more than one other type of drug.

When it comes to mixing ATS with other types of drugs, the general conclusion is that from 2001 to 2005, the simultaneous use of both ecstasy and amphetamines (each drug separately) with alcohol has increased; that the simultaneous use of ecstasy and amphetamines (both drugs together) has decreased; and that the simultaneous use of both ecstasy as well as amphetamines and marihuana has decreased. Mixing both types of ATS with cocaine has remained almost unchanged.

The largest number of participants (41.2 %) uses up to two tablets per night, which is similar to the findings from 2001. 23.2 % uses one tablet, while 15.8 % uses between three and four tablets. A relatively low percentage (5.3 %) uses five or more tablets, and only 1.3 % uses more than ten. These results are very similar to the results from 2001.

There were no statistically significant differences (t-test) between the main sample and the sample acquired using the internet concerning the frequency of legal drug use. There were also no statistically significant differences concerning the most often used illegal drugs (marihuana, ATS and cocaine).

Normalization of recreational drug use

Some years ago, when the study The Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Changes in Tobacco, Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use among Young People in Ljubljana in the Period of High School Education (Dekleva and Sande, 2003) first discovered that more than 50 % of Ljubljana's high school students have already used illegal drugs, we began speaking of the normalization of drug use. When more than 50 % of young people are using an illegal drug at least once, we can no longer speak about drug use only within the context of marginalized youth or marginalized groups of young people, because drug use obviously appears at the very centre of youth culture.

Abroad, The North West Longitudinal Study that began in 1991 is cited as the first research by Parker and his co-workers (Parker,

Aldridge and Measham, 1998) that deals with normalization in a wider sociological context. In this study, the researchers kept track of a group of 700 14-year-olds from the North-West of England for a period of 5 years. The book Illegal Leisure (Ibid.) was the first to explain and define the normalization of drug use among young people. Before this, attempts had been made to formulate a theory of normalization, connected to drug use; after the abovementioned work was published, similar studies began to appear, which confirming the theories of normalization in various places around the world. Particularly interesting is one British study from 2003 by Hammersley and his co-workers (Hammersley, Marsland and Reid, 2003) that is based on a specific population of young (aged 15 and 16) criminal offenders. 300 interviews were conducted with young criminal offenders in England and Wales. The research is especially interesting because it attempts to determine the influence of the normalization of drug use has had in the beginning of the 21st century. The young criminal offenders had the most difficulties with excessive alcohol, marihuana and tobacco use, but not with cocaine and heroine, as is usually portrayed by the media. Even though the sample is not representative, the study does discover that the influence of the normalization of drug use also indicates that the connection between opiate use and criminal offences is beginning to dissipate, something that is happening for the first time. The authors point out that this is not necessarily good news because normalization means that the number of drugs that are used more often has increased (Ibid.).

The qualitative part of our research consisted of interviewing 11 girls and 14 boys, out of which 6 interviewees had completely stopped using drugs, only used alcohol and cigarettes, or had never used drugs at all. The oldest (male) interviewee was 36 and the youngest (female) was 16 years old.

Using descriptive analysis we have organized 10 significant thematic areas from the results. Some of the main findings concerning the characteristics of drug use and the attitude towards drugs are presented below.

Besides the fact that they defined drugs differently, the participants also had different attitudes towards drug use. We might say that some almost seemed proud of their drug use. Others spoke of it more objectively or with a slight 'moral hangover'.

Those that had not used drugs proved to be highly informed about drug use and had formed a distinct point of view on drugs in general. Because they all exist in an environment where drugs are accessible and socialize with friends who use drugs, we can conclude that they have chosen to abstain from using illegal drugs, and that their choice is based on various types of information, their life experiences and their upbringing.

In the interviews we asked where, when and with whom the individual uses drugs. We have found out that the majority of those interviewed use drugs on the weekend at parties, whether at clubs or private parties. This is especially true when it comes to illegal drugs. Only rare individuals use drugs when they are on their own.

The interviewees said that they either go to parties with friends or they have a special party group. The majority takes drugs with these friends. When it comes to drugs, they mostly adjust to the group they are in. Some do not change their social circle even if they themselves do not take drugs while the other members of their circle do. These individuals usually tolerate their friends' drug use. Some are excluded from their social circle because of their excessive drug use and the changes that this entails. Unquestionably, it is their friends' and their experiences that the young trust the most when it comes to drugs, their effects and consequences. They also believe that their friends will understand them the most if they have any problems, that they will sometimes stop them and especially that they will watch out for them when they are too high and help them if they need it.

The reasons for drug use provided by the users are very different. Some could not explain why they use drugs; others were very specific when detailing their reasons. Drug use can no longer be seen as something an individual does to try and solve his or her problems. Nowadays, young people say that they do drugs more for the purpose of having fun and socializing, what we could call 'functional use'; on the other hand, the problematic (chaotic) users, the ones who risk more, use larger quantities and mix drugs, say that they do drugs to escape from their problems and the world in general.

The young people who are involved in the party scene are relatively well informed about the consequences connected with drug use. Each and every interviewee could name some of the consequences of drug use. They find psychological and social consequences to

be worse than the type of ramifications that affect physical health, probably because the latter are not visible straight away. Many of the young people were very uncritical or non-objective when it came to describing the harmful consequences concerning themselves or their friends. The objectively very harmful ramifications to their health – physical, mental and social consequences that result from high-risk drug use – are minimalized and brushed aside. Nevertheless, they still feel vulnerable.

Parents, the organizers of prevention programmes and experts who work in the field of drug use are often faced with the question of how to make someone stop using drugs. When we asked the young people – those who still use drugs and those who have stopped – about this in our interviews, we received different kinds of answers. The reasons that were given for stopping were similar to the answers given to the questions about how and particularly why to stop with chaotic drug use or why to cut down on drug use. For some, growing up (getting older) was their reason to stop using. They explain 'growing up' as gaining some sort of sudden insight into their own condition and the harmful consequences of drug use. The concern for their health also becomes important. We can see from the interviews that the decision to stop using followed a mental process of weighing the odds, considering what had more advantages – continuing to use or stopping.

These young people learned about risk reducing measures from the internet, friends, fliers and youth magazines that deal with the topic of drug use. They trust these measures to be reliable and sensible depending on their own experiences and on the credibility of their source.

We asked the young people about the measures they themselves take to reduce the risk factor. Again we have found that young people know quite a number of measures for reducing risks, but only a substantially lesser number actually uses them. They usually take measures only when they are already faced with the negative consequences of drug use, when they are already too high or after a very negative experience, either their own or a friend's. Many dismiss and generalize the risk on a case to case basis – for example, if nothing bad happened once, then it will not happen the second time either. Some bad experiences prove to be sobering and force them to re-evaluate and reassess the risks. Is it worth it? Some decide

to continue using; some reduce the frequency and quantity of their drug use; some stop taking the particular drug that is linked with the negative experience; some stop using any type of drug. Because of the consequences of drug use, some need help.

Young people try to solve their initial problems themselves and with the friends they party with and who have had similar difficulties themselves. Usually, they stop using drugs or drastically reduce their intake for a short period of time. In case of more serious problems, many would seek help with a nongovernmental organization (DrogArt), as they obviously trust the team that is constantly present at parties. Some would turn to their parents; the smallest number would seek medical attention. Some find asking for help for the first time shameful, others see it as the beginning of the process of solving their problems. Those who have already sought help (with a psychiatrist, psychologist etc.) for their drug-related problems, were usually satisfied with the provided assistance. We can see from the interviews that the parents of our interviewees were prepared to help their children, but that their children, who are reaching or have already reached adulthood, do not trust them enough.

Conclusion

The results of the research have shown that amphetamine type stimulants are still very popular among the people that frequent electronic music events. The life prevalence of ecstasy use has dropped somewhat, while the prevalence of amphetamine use is still at a similar level. Compared to 2001, the life prevalence of methamphetamine use has increased in 2005. In the questionnaire, a quarter of the participants stated that they do not use illegal drugs at such events.

The results also show that in our target group (young people who attend electronic music events), the life prevalence of cocaine use has increased, which corresponds to the information from different sources, which report similar trends of increased cocaine use in the EU (EMCDDA, 2005).

In 2005 young people at these types of events also use drugs in a relatively high-risk manner: nearly two thirds of those that use

drugs mix different illegal drugs together. Combining ecstasy and amphetamines has decreased, while mixing both of these drugs, particularly with alcohol, has increased.

According to the findings of the research, the stress of preventive action should be on cocaine and methamphetamine, as the prevalence of these two stimulants has increased the most in comparison to the findings from 2001. In view of the results it is also obvious that the popularity of alcohol as well as combining drug stimulants with alcohol has increased among the people attending electronic music events. Until now alcohol has been neglected in connection with preventing the harm caused by drugs at such events, because the focus was focused only on dehydration and the subsequent possibility of a heat stroke. In future more attention should be paid to excessive drinking in combination with the use of stimulants, as well as on the dangerous effect this type of mixture would have on driving to and from the event.

Providing information about the appearance of new drugs and the effects of stimulating drugs (dangerous mixtures, particularly 'strong' drugs) on the internet has turned out to be very useful; more people who frequent electronic music events looked up information on the internet before using in 2005 than in 2001. This information is important to the target group, as a large majority of those who take drugs look it up before using a new drug. More findings connected with preventive measures are presented in the third chapter of this book.

As in previous studies, we have again found that much can be learnt from direct conversations with young people and that it is important to evaluate our preventive measures and get feedback from the users themselves. It is necessary to be present on the scene and to try to understand the young. They are open to information that they can rely on and that is provided in an approachable way, which is why those who use drugs and are involved in this environment need to be included in all the stages of the prevention programmes – planning, execution and evaluation.

We have reached three main conclusions in the qualitative part of our research. **The first conclusion** is that young people who go to parties are familiar with drugs (drugwise), regardless of whether or not they use illegal drugs or not. This is a sign of the normalization of recreational drug use, which already became apparent in the

previous study conducted by this research group, and was once again confirmed. **The second conclusion** of the research is that young people put off quitting drugs more and more, or else do not even think about abstinence. On the other hand, even those who do not use drugs cannot be sure they will abstain in the future. The previous study of this research group showed that the interviewees largely put off quitting until adulthood, linked with responsibilities (the end of schooling, the beginning of employment) and starting a family. This conclusion is also a sign of the normalization of recreational drug use (Parker, Aldridge and Measham, 1998). **The third conclusion** of the qualitative part of the research is that young people are relatively well informed of the measures necessary to reduce the harm caused by drug use and the ways they can find help if they should encounter problems connected with drug use, which shows that prevention activities have been successful and that information is accessible. It would make sense to continue conducting qualitative research in the future because the direct contact with the population is the fastest way of tracking the latest trends and the fastest way of getting feedback about the execution and the effect of prevention activities directly from the target group.

As we can see, we have come across three aspects of normalization according to Parker (familiarity with drugs, putting off quitting for the future and familiarity with risk factors) in the specific group of people who frequent electronic music events. We can deduce the accessibility of drugs and a relatively high level of ATS use prevalence on the basis of the findings of the quantitative research presented in the previous section.

From the acquired information we can make out the elements of the normalization of ecstasy use in recreational environments and perhaps even in a wider context if we also take into account the results of the latest ESPAD studies concerning high school students, where the prevalence of ecstasy use among fourth year students of high schools in Ljubljana is relatively high (13.0 % in four year vocational programmes and 10.1 % in general upper secondary schools). In illegal drug prevalence, ecstasy follows marihuana

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[5] The research was conducted among the same generation of high school students, once in 1999 (Stergar, 1999), and again in 2002. The study did not include the same students, but two representative samples in two different periods in the 'same' generation of high school students in Ljubljana.

(50.3 % of fourth year students have tried it), with solvents in third place (Dekleva and Sande, 2003). Passing judgement on regular marihuana use has decreased between 1999 and 2002 (from the first to the fourth year of study[5]), while the assessment of the availability level of illegal drugs has increased. With marihuana and ecstasy, the assessment of the availability level increased by a little more than 20 %. Marihuana was accessible to 79.0 % and ecstasy to 58.5 % of fourth year students. The risk factor assessment did not change dramatically between the first and the fourth year; however, students in the fourth year saw the use of the majority of the drugs (except smoking and alcohol) as somewhat less of a risk than the first year students.

From the data acquired from the research conducted among a specific and a general population of young people, we can infer the normalization of ATS use in recreational environments (clubs and discotheques), and in more general terms, the normalization of marihuana use and elements of the normalization of ecstasy use (accessibility, the prevalence of use) among high school students in Ljubljana.

The results of the qualitative part of the study also allow us to assess the preventive actions taken in the field of synthetic drugs in our area as suitable; in part, this prevention work is aimed at peer cooperation and education (the relevance of a 'party group' and the importance of trusting friends were prominent). Again the relevance of certain familial cautionary factors (the possibility and rewards for participating in family activities, supervision in the family) point to the importance of improving family relationships and communication, rather than on the importance of informing the parents about the consequences of drug use.

The research shows that these young people are familiar with the measures that should be taken to reduce harm; however, this does not necessarily mean that they actually take them. For prevention programmes, this is a very significant piece of information, because it means that simply providing information obviously is not enough. Young people turn to these measures when some of their problems have become pronounced, which is why a key aspect of prevention programmes should be their presence on and contact with this environment, as well as establishing direct contact with the users. This makes it possible to identify problems when they are in their

early stages; it also enables counselling and other suitable forms of assistance. These types of problems are often not only linked to drugs, but also to school, poor or non-functional relationships in the family, difficulties with friends etc.

Some reasons to stop using drugs are evident from the interviews. Stopping or reducing drug use is the goal that help programmes are trying to achieve in various ways. We can see from the interviews that these reasons are often outside of our 'reach': growing up, learning from one's own bad experiences or the bad experiences of peers. The quantitative part of the research clearly showed that these types of experiences, whether good or bad, are the ones young people trust the most. The reasons that are within our reach, and which are significant in counselling techniques, for example motivational interviews, largely depend on a personal evaluation of the good and the bad aspects of quitting one's drug use and being concerned about one's health.

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What Can be Learned from the Biographies of the Ljubljana Homeless People for Policy Formation in the Field of Homelessness

Kaj se lahko iz biografij ljubljanskih brezdomcev naučimo za oblikovanje politik na področju brezdomstva

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Abstract

The article brings results of a research project, within which ten case studies of the homeless of Ljubljana were made. Confidential contact with them was established within the framework of the action-research development of a new organization for help and self-help of homeless. The data analysis defined the key – homelessness related - topics of the dealt with biographies, and finally classified them into four thematic groups: housing, the significance of social networks, peer groups and mobility, as well as the importance of the inclusion of the homeless into productive activities. These key themes were instrumental in forming the proposals for the future development of homelessness policies.

Key words: *homelessness, Ljubljana, case studies, shelters, field work.*

Povzetek

Članek prinaša rezultate raziskave, del katere je tudi deset študij primera, opravljenih med ljubljanskimi brezdomci. Zaupen odnos s sodelujočimi v raziskavi je bil vzpostavljen v okviru akcijske raziskave oblikovanja nove organizacije za pomoč in samopomoč brezdomcev Kralji ulice. Analiza podatkov je privedla do ključnih z brezdomstvom povezanih tem, ki se dotikajo desetih biografij. Te ključne teme so klasificirane v štiri tematske skupine: nastanitev, pomen socialnih mrež, pomen vrstniške skupine in socialne mobilnosti za brezdomce ter pomembnost vključenosti brezdomcev v produktivne aktivnosti. Omenjene ključne teme so izhodišča pri oblikovanju politik na področju brezdomstva.

Ključne besede: *brezdomstvo, Ljubljana, študije primera, zavetišča, terensko delo.*

Introduction

The homelessness related initiatives in Slovenia has been until recently focused only on providing basic material goods (food, clothes and – to limited extent - temporary accommodation in shelters). Many of those initiatives are traditionally linked with charity and are governed by church. Only one ministry (Ministry for work, family and social affairs) and some municipalities are funding homelessness-related programmes. In Slovenia's capital Ljubljana the issue of homelessness is the most visible and challenging and so it comes to no surprise that one can find the biggest number of homelessness related initiatives in the municipality of Ljubljana. Till now there has been not much effort devoted to developing a comprehensive and sustainable homelessness policy in Slovenia. In the last few years as a response to the growing extent, visibility of homelessness and pluralisation of its forms, some new organizations have been founded, developing new kind of programmes like drop-in centres, publishing a street paper, programmes of social inclusion, informal trainings, employment

support, mentoring (Dekleva et al. 2007; Rapuš Pavel and Razpotnik, 2007). This initiatives differ from former ones especially in regard to participation of homeless people and to the professionalisation of the programmes. A new awareness has emerged also in public regarding understanding and recognizing homelessness as a serious problem of our society. The street paper *Kralji ulice* (Kings of the street) with its relatively broad circulation and predominantly positive public reception contributes greatly to this new understanding.

If we are to understand and react to social phenomena, these should first be defined. However, the definitions of homelessness and related social phenomena are diverse and often contradictory. The basic difference between definitions is in ascribing reasons of homelessness to structural or individual factors[1]. According to the research by Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai (2000), interaction between personal, social, economic and help-system factors is essential for the understanding of homelessness. Their study, based on in-depth interviews with the homeless, confirms that homelessness is much more than having nowhere to live. The authors specifically focused on the aspect of damage to individual's identity, self-esteem and self-efficiency.

Structural definitions attribute homelessness to social reasons, especially changes in labour market, housing market, social care system, subventions, etc., as well as to wider demographic changes. Homelessness being related to housing problems by definition, housing market is usually believed to be the essential factor contributing to this phenomenon (Liddiart and Hudson, 1998). The situation differs from one European country to another, although some trends are similar. Over the recent decades, several European states have been facing dramatic decrease regarding accessibility of such housing that vulnerable population groups – the young, underprivileged, people without adequate social networks – could afford, so in the private as in the public sphere of supply. Homelessness being closely linked to accessibility of lodging leads to individual purchasing power as another highly significant factor, defining this phenomenon. Hence it follows that the next two

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[1] Besides the basic opposition between structural and individual explanations other conceptions take into account also other dimensions and specificities. Edgar (2006) mentions four kinds of etiological factors: structural, institutional, relational and individual.

significant factors, explaining homelessness, are unemployment and low wages (caused by the vast supply of manpower on labour market). According to the authors' opinion (Ibid.), these two factors are the ones decisively contributing to the increase of homelessness in the last two decades, so in Europe as in the United States. Another important factor is the system of social welfare which has been curtailed in Europe in the last twenty years, thus becoming less favourable for many vulnerable groups, especially young people.

Individual factors, applied to the definition of homelessness, are individual traits of the homeless and their kin. The most frequently used personality factors are: non-attachment to home, the experience of having lived in an institution or some kind of care, psychic or sexual abuse, mental disease, crime, and alcohol or drug abuse. All these factors are often really closely related to homelessness, although authors disagree over the nature and interpretation of this relation. The problem often starts with the definition of cause and effect. Is (non)involvement into criminal activities the cause of homelessness or its consequence (will an individual having lost his usual resources resort to other sources, be they legitimate or not?). Phenomena related to homelessness can apparently not be clarified on the basis of causality; on the contrary, it is necessary to apply the perspective of circularity along with simultaneous and mutual effect of different circumstances upon individual's life sphere. Reasons are just as diverse as results; consequently, solutions for the problem of homelessness should be varied too, striving for an integral and multidisciplinary approach.

Hallebone (1997, quoted by Boydell, Goering and Morrell-Bellai, 2000) studied 38 homeless men ethnographically and found that their psychosocial identities tend to be fragmented. An additional group of 30 homeless young people were found to suffer a marginality of psychosocial identity. She found that the extent to which alternatives to homelessness were perceived depended on the construction and deconstruction of a collective culture and identity of homelessness. Attribution of meanings to one's life situation is of course supra-individual, but the meanings used for self-understanding and self-presentation of an individual are taken from symbolic interactions with the wider environment, in conformity with the understanding of symbolic interactionism. Two findings proceed from this: biographies of homeless people; events, reported

and described by the homeless in our talks, must not be understood objectively, but rather as constructions of meaning in response to certain contexts and interactions. The second finding or starting-point for the understanding of such stories is that a homeless person's social position is of key value for the understanding of his identity and therefore it is the precious and necessary starting point for developing politics to combat homelessness.

The purpose and method of the research project

The research study »Problems of homelessness in Ljubljana«, financed by the Municipality of Ljubljana, was carried out in the period 2005-2006. The study was based on several research approaches (Dekleva and Razpotnik, 2007; Razpotnik and Dekleva, 2007), one of these having been case studies approach. The purpose of this approach was to gain an in-depth insight into participants' life stories, and to gather information on specific homelessness-related topics, relevant for the social policy. Homelessness topics needed to be identified so that action guidelines leading to the increase of this population's quality of life could be outlined on their basis.

Ten case studies were made. Participants were selected according to two key principles. Our wish was to include diverse biographies leading to different accents and exposing many possible life circumstances, related to homelessness, or many different types/ways/forms of this phenomenon. We made sure to provide adequate diversity and comparability to wider population of the homeless in accordance with the following variables: gender, mental health problems, alcoholism, illegal drugs addiction, age, duration of homelessness, institutional career, social relations, type and form of homelessness and possible peculiarities. Only those individuals of both sexes were selected with whom (confidential) contacts were established.

The case studies were prepared within action research activities, aimed at development of a new organization for help and self-help of the homeless, which started issueing the first Slovene street paper named *Kralji ulice* (Kings of the street). The project began with extensive field work which was carried on even after the organization was already established and the street paper regularly published. In the process of field work and action research, the researchers got

a relatively thorough insight into lives of the ten selected persons, including their life setting, lifestyle, everyday activities and people they live and associate with. The knowledge of their external world provides better insight into their subjective realities. The individuals having participated in the case studies were in fact our co-workers in different joint projects, mostly related to the project of production and sale of the street paper *Kralji uli*ce. Other similar projects were a creative writing workshop, a drama group, furnishings of the daily distribution centre, and projects concerning our collaborators' life problems (obtaining personal documents, search for lodging …).

Among the 10 selected persons there were:

- three women and seven men;
- seven users of legal or illegal drugs, three non-users;
- two under 30, three over 50 years old;
- two out of ten stayed in an educational institution in childhood, six were imprisoned, five were on psychiatric treatment and five participated in drug detoxifying programs;
- their total duration of being homeless in their life was between 4 and 15 years.

There was attempt to include both genders, various age groups, and both shelter users and avoiders, also homeless people in different points of their life circles. The comparison of data concerning the 10 selected homeless and the 107 homeless people, questionned in a field survey in 2005 (Dekleva and Razpotnik, 2007) indicates the sample of the selected 10 persons to be quite comparable by age; however, according to most other indicators it represents a rather more vulnerable and at-risk group. We believe this is a sufficiently representative sample of all the homeless living in Ljubljana, although it may be slightly more representative of those with longer duration of being homelessness.

Data analysis was based on qualitative approaches. For most of the participants, extensive materials were collected, for some even as many as 100 typewritten pages (comprising interviews, autobiographies, documents, field work observations, etc.). With the purpose of making a survey of findings in the present article, each case study identified relevant and characteristic homelessness-related topics, which were to some degree specific for a case study

and possibly differed from those of other case studies. Table 1 shows these topics according to the 10 dealt with persons. Subsequently, these topics were brought together into four sets of key thematic fields and a special set of other non-classified topics; all the topics will be separately interpreted on the following pages.

Findings

Different topics were exposed in the described biographies. Each story opened up more key themes – some were common, some rather unique. The main topics of individual biographies are listed in the table 1. Some are related to individuals' life situations, others verbalize their strong points and potential sources, still others expose major threats or show possible forms of professional response.

Table 1: Key topics opened by individual case studies.

Name of the person, sex and approximate age:	Selected key themes:
Anka, F, 25	particularities of young homeless people obstacles to transition into independent life male – female relationship and related dependencies acceptability to interventions in the early stages of homelessness
Damjana, F, 50	living in shelter women - minority population in shelter lack of post-hospital habitation facilities lack of alternative habitation facilities (to shelter)
Darko, M, 50	inaccessibility of cheap, non-profitable apartments lack of alternative accommodation facilities to shelter fear of future, poverty, lack of subsistence social isolation the need of support in the process of coping with housing market
Darmin, M, 25	role of criminal career and culture »revolving door effect« (moving from institution to institution with in-between periods of living outside institutions) life in prison the need of support in the process of coping with housing market the need to work with families substance addiction problem participation (in productive/creative/inclusive social activities) non-formal, informal and accessible education

nadaljevanje tabele:

Jani, M, 55	abstinence from drugs on street lack of social networks; social isolation inadequate living conditions in shelter lack of alternative accommodation facilities to shelter inaccessibility of cheap, non-profitable accommodation for an individual the need of mobile field work the importance of inclusion into new productive activities/social networks
Janko, M, 55	imprisonment lack of meaningful daily activities differentiated social and cultural interests problems of looking for jobs without having a place to live the importance of inclusion into new productive activities/social networks social isolation
Jernej, M, 35	daily homelessness institutional career (extra familial education) substance addiction problems health problems vicious circle, repetitions and lack of vision
Primož, M, 40	permanent stay in shelter passvistion chronic homelessness the connection with the peer group
Tim, M, 40	homelessness in a small or big town (comparing both experiences) mental health problems uprootedness (institutional career, extra familial education) the importance of supported apartments and temporary forms of lodging the usefulness of the social role of a mental patient the importance of inclusion into new productive activities/social networks
Viktorija, F, 55	the importance of local community networks (community, compensation of home) generational transmission of social problems social isolation housing problem at old age the importance and options of field work

The selected key topics are diverse, leading into different directions of thinking. Some expose the peculiar features of homeless life, others emphasize key systemic and individual problems, threatening the discussed persons. Together they give rise to new ideas for the formation of policies and programmes in work with the underprivileged population groups.

The key topics were summed up into four major groups or sets, based on the similarity of contents. The first group concerns the wider problem of **housing**, a highly important topic from the viewpoint of a homeless person, affecting the possibility of individual's inclusion

into other life spheres (acquisition of personal documents, health care, employment, intimate life, interpersonal relations …). The second group of key themes focuses on **peer group** and **chronic homelessness**. The third group also deals with major themes, related to broader **social networks,** and the fourth highlights the **importance of inclusion of the homeless into productive activities**, giving purpose to their everyday life and potentially affecting other spheres of their lives.

Housing

The first group of findings, concerning the possibility of housing, focuses on the existing services in the field of homelessness, discussing their benefits as well as their increased and improved supply in the recent decade. On the other hand, a vast field of needs remains unfulfilled. These are mostly specific needs of individual subgroups, calling for a more flexible and differentiated services in the sphere of homelessness.

An obvious finding, supported by all case studies is that a wider spectrum of housing facilities for the homeless is needed; in fact this is true with all the dealt with cases. For example, supported types of housing are needed for specifically threatened groups (i.e. Tim, Darko, Jani, Damjana and Viktorija). Socially vulnerable young people are not given sufficient support in gaining housing independence (i.e. Anka, Darmin). Young people without parental financial support, that are not participating in the typical and normatively planned educational, working and leisure time structures, find it very hard to attain independence in terms of housing. Jones (2003) is talking about the same problem in UK context when she says that »young people are expected to support their own transition to adulthood, through their incomes. When these are not sufficient, they should defer their transition to independent housing, or obtain subsidies from their parents. State support should not be providing this subsidy. At least, this is the argument of the Right«. In our case there are also insufficient services supply for the grown-up young, especially those having insufficient or none family support and other problems with social integration (Anka, Darmin, Jernej). The existing housing facilities is only suitable for the most

risky forms like homeless illegal drug addicts (shelter for homeless drug addicts), which means that a young person that ends up in a drug addicts shelter for lack of other housing facilities, risks 'social infection' from the part of addicts (i.e. Anka, Jernej). A shelter is of course also too ultimate and hopeless form of existence for some young homeless people (Primož) and is more »better than nothing« answer to the housing problem.

Another topic within this framework is the considerable lack of alternative and post-treatment housing, along with supported apartments, half-way houses and other forms of transitory lodging. Other equally delicate themes are obstacles to independence, specific needs of the certain vulnerable social groups - the young, women, families, the need of supporting homeless people in the process of their coping with the housing market, e.g. renting own apartment.

Considering the fact that the homeless (be they young, women, families, addicts or non-addicts) in Ljubljana (with the exception of two small shelters) are completely at the mercy of private apartment owners or the private housing market, it turned out to be necessary to assist them in finding appropriate housing (Darko, Darmin), as well as to intervene on their behalf and to act as a link between them and apartment owners. Especially individuals that are not trustworthy in public opinion, e.g. single older men and women, as well as the young who are not students, are often in a disadvantaged position regarding apartment or room searching. Such individuals can be additionally stigmatized by apartment owners due to their untidy appearance or lack of social networks (someone to accompany and support them). They are not only financially but also socially underprivileged as they do not fit into the image of a humble and tidy lodger.

Special chapter within the problem of housing should be dedicated to the habitation of aged and debilitated homeless, as well as the homeless released from hospital treatment (Damjana, Viktorija, Jani). It is very difficult to find a place in old people's homes for the poor and financially unprovided for people; on the other hand, such institutions will not always be the best option for them. Lack of facilities for debilitated and ill homeless people has for a long time been one of the major complaints of workers in the Ljubljana shelters, that are in charge of the homeless needing special care. Better coordination of shelters with health care centres and home nursing service is needed, along with permanent presence of these

services in certain forms of habitation facilities for the homeless. Each of these instititions tries to compensate as best as it can for the deficiencies of the present systemic regulation.

Temporary shelters are too hopeless form of habitation, which again speaks in favour of more specialized and differentiated forms of housing facilities. This is also true in the sense that there are no attempts which would help to develop new life-visions in livs of the homeless, including demands for activities enabling them to settle their lives. But the fact remains that this low-standard form of habitation is still needed – but only to the extent, that there are no other housing possibilities and policies.

For those chronically homeless who lost vision of change and are not even capable of it due to their psychophysical condition, the low-threshold program of reduction of the negative consequences of homelessness and of assuring certain quality of life, inasmuch as it is possible, continues to be the first and most important option. Among individuals included into our studies and presented in the chapter dealing with life stories, no one was incapable of change and unmotivated. The »chronicity« of homelessness and risk for it may vary amongst them, yet their situation is by no means hopeless.

Nevertheless it is necessary to strive for such forms of motivation and housing conditions that would stimulate independence and autonomy with those physically and mentally capable of it. Although external motivation is often not sufficient for changes, the supply of wider spectrum of accommodation forms, aiming at resettlement of the homeless, would mean a basis for more optimism and better options for their future. Such mobility is a complex phenomenon of course, and should be supported with adequate systemic, housing, urban-planning, economic, employment, social, health care and other policies. The institutions in charge of these policies should get together and assume their respective responsibility for the solving of the unfavourable situation of the people suffering from permanent exclusion. Cases of good practice in this field vary from state to state in terms of success and elaborateness. »Housing first« is one of the foremost principles of the policy, striving for improved housing conditions amongst different groups of threatened and excluded people, this being the basis for further settling of life. The urban-planning policy should strive to distribute apartments and houses for socially deprived all over towns to avoid the principle of segregation.

It is important to provide for low-interest and easily accessible housing loans, which would enable unemployed and people living on social aid, to find a permanent housing solution. Good examples in this field are the Norwegian *Husbanken* or Housing Bank or Danish City Pool Programme (Benjaminsen and Tosi, 2007), which developed a system of easily accessible and low-interest loans for the poorest and underprivileged. Norway with its interdisciplinary approach to the solving of the issue of homelessness developed a model example, presented in the year 2006 to other European states as an example of good and possibly generally applicable practice. Models of shelters and similar models, supporting the segregation of the extremely excluded without offering permanent solutions, are only a temporary solution of acute cases from the standpoint of the above described model. Once they become a permanent solution for an individual, their original purpose is lost, pointing to the lack of more adequate, wider systemic solutions.

Peer group and social mobility

It has been found that the role of peer group with the homeless, especially those permanently homeless, is two sided. On the one hand it is of crucial value and can essentially improve the life quality of a homeless person (i.e. Primož, Darmin …), bringing meaning to everyday life, leading to more creative ways of leisure time spending and being generally useful (from information supply to small favours). On the other hand, a peer group can even be a threatening factor with the change of individual's status and his vertical social mobility. Hence the determined statements of some of the homeless, especially addicts, that peer group should at any rate be avoided once a person is through with his former lifestyle (i.e. Darmin), as memories of old behaviour patterns are quickly reawakened and reactivated in old surroundings. However, there are also cases deviating from this rule, proving that influence of a peer group upon sticking to old behaviour patterns can sometimes be a mere excuse, rather than a true obstacle to change (Jani, Janko). Nevertheless, there are different types of social relations, applicable to different purposes; if a peer group represents an important instrument of survival on street, it is hardly likely to contribute to

individual's social change. Many of our participants mentioned conflicts in one's peer group, provoked by an individual that starts striving for a change of his status. Likewise, it is an interesting fact that many homeless people (not all – in our studies there have only been two such cases) were familiar with homelessness before becoming homeless themselves. In the beginning their relations with the peer group may have been only occasional, but once they left or lost home, they quickly turned into »full time« members. In other words – membership of a peer group of homeless people is frequently an unfavourable prognostic factor of later homelessness. It should also be emphasized that many individuals that later turned into homeless people, were born and spent their youth in peripheral neighbourhoods for poor and »redundant« people, so their marginal status must have been dragging on through several generations.

Importance of social networks

According to Martinjak (2004), social networks are the most important basis of survival. The relevance of this claim can directly or indirectly also be observed on our cases.

The greatest problem of homelessness, as observed in the studies, are social networks, or rather, their lack of and exclusion from, along with momentary and potential loneliness, as well as abandonment. This problem can be related to generational transmission of exclusion (i.e. Jernej, Viktorija …), to long-lasting imprisonment (Janko), to long-lasting treatment programmes (Jernej), to long-lasting addiction (Darmin, Jernej, Jani, Primož, Anka …) or to mental health problems (Darko, Tim). Moreover, importance of social networks is also related to lack of strong and binding social ties, reaching into the early periods of life - symbolic uprootedness (Tim). All this contributes to the anxiety over future (Darko, Tim, Darmin, Viktorija, Damjana …), great uncertainty as well as too great (unrealistic) hope (the cases of Jernej, Primož, Darmin). The great importance of social networks as well as fatality of their deficiency opens up a new field of work in the sphere of social networks – team work, project work, field work, as well as work with families, employers and institutions; briefly, any activities, supporting existing ties between a homeless person and his surroundings, mediating between the two sides in

crucial moments and compensating for the lost, non-functioning and non-existing social networks. »Associating, joint activities, sincere and strong social contacts provide support and ground to community members for the compensation of possible deficits« (Jeriček, 2004).

Importance of inclusion into productive activities

The following set of conclusions refers to the analyzed significance of including the homeless into productive activities. These could be the activities the homeless are explicitly invited to participate in and contribute to their shaping. At the same time, these activities generate new social networks for the quality of their life (be it a life of a homeless person or a new, gradually changing life). The important fact is that including of the homeless into different activities - publishing of a street paper for example – serves as an ideal medium of mutual acquaintance, as well as an excellent catalyst of changes and visions of future. Adjusting activities to life of the homeless people is of crucial importance, meaning symbolic recognition of their experience and world. It is also an excellent basis for further cooperation. Such form of cooperation is highly demanding regarding time and energy, bringing together people in all their complexity and vulnerability. Participation in activities, specifically tailored to their needs, offers different possibilities to the homeless – from testing and developing their skills and abilities in safe surroundings to free expression of their opinions, feelings and problems. All this contributes to their general social participation, expanding its extent, strengthening the feeling of self-confidence and autonomy, and offering the possibility to acquire wide range of life-important experience. Because of the nature of our approach (participatory action research) we have had a lot of experiences with co-working in different projects with all ten homeless people from our sample. Due to the nature of our cooperation, inclusion of the homeless into productive activities was relevant in all the ten cases. This form of cooperation and work with the homeless proved useful, although – as already mentioned – highly demanding in terms of time, energy and expertise.

No less important than inclusion is timely »exclusion« from projects, concerning work with the homeless; in fact, upward mobility would be a more appropriate word than exclusion. The purpose of work with

the homeless is to achieve a state when services and projects, aimed at the homeless, will no longer be needed. Therefore, permanent efforts for increasing autonomy and independence are needed, as well as for more efficient networking with other organizations and projects, so that a homeless person could join in when feeling ready. One of the factors which makes upward mobility difficult is the high fluctuation of users of services for the homeless, as well as their unsettled and »circling« nature (which is not their inner quality, but rather a consequence of the system of help, reduced to several partial supplies at different places, lacking integration into an efficient whole, part of this being the revolving door effect). If the ten homeless people in our sample are also more stable and settled in their relations and ties, this certainly doesn't apply to everyone. Another frequent reason of (self) exclusion from joint activities are mutual rivalries, individual's wish for a specific status with regard to other users, and corresponding institutional inability to cope with users' great expectations.

As the homeless are individuals, excluded from different spheres of life, durable and persistent efforts are necessary to achieve results. Therefore, professionalization of workers in this field is of vital importance. The belief, all too widely spread in our cultural setting, that lay, charity and voluntary work with homeless people is sufficient, should be overcome. Volunteers are of course most welcome in work with vulnerable population groups, but only under professional guidance. Increase of professional supply, promotion of preventive work, expansion of joint projects, participation of wider public and above all interdisciplinary approach of different ministries will in time bring about gradual lowering of financial and social costs of work with vulnerable groups. Alleviating of the negative effects of homelessness or »fire extinguishment« is of course necessary, but insufficient and not contributing to long-term positive changes.

Other findings

Amongst the key findings, a few specific fields within the wider problem of homelessness should be stated, claiming our attention with defining and preparation of supply and programmes in the sphere of homelessness. These are:
- Gender and generation related particularities amongst the

homeless should be taken into account in planning services.

- For homeless drug addicts and users of mental health services (Tim, Darmin, Anka, Darko, Jernej, Viktorija), a special role of a psychiatric patient develops which in the wider society enable them to enjoy special advantages and a privileged status on the one hand; yet, on the other hand, these very benefits bind them to the identity of patients and addicts, entitled to support due to addiction, instead of stimulating self-initiative and wish for change.

- Individuals involved in crime and the problem of criminalization of addicts, as well as of (especially after the latest Law on Public Order and Peace) homeless people or »vagrants« deserve special attention. Criminalization and consequently imprisonment of the homeless are indeed a major part of their lives, although mostly a counter-productive and wasted part. For the homeless, financial and social debts aggravate the chances of their social integration (Darmin, Jernej). Imprisonment and absence of permanent lodging make it impossible for an individual (officially and physically) to seek employment; moreover, a regular working relation implies that past debts would be obligatory reimbursed from their earnings – even without their consent. Due to all this, such individuals hardly ever strive to find regular employment. Indebtedness keeps the society and individual apart, each persistently sticking to his side (one to repayment, the other to despair and resignation).

- Daily homelessness as a form of homelessness, typical of individuals who do have a home (or rather a roof over their head), but cannot stay there, are not attached to it or do not perceive it as a safe basis; they have to seek safety and belonging outside home, although – due to their own uprootedness and incapability for making and keeping social relations – this usually turns out to be a hardly attainable goal. Daily homelessness is often a preparatory stage for permanent homelessness, and these individuals are certainly exposed to the danger of repeating vicious circles (Jernej, Darmin, Anka, Damjana, Viktorija …) of unsuccessful solution seeking and inability to move. An individual lacking any idea and experience of home, together with adherence, is certainly not very likely to find and develop them.

Conclusion

A research was done on ten cases of homeless people in Ljubljana in the period in time when public awareness of homelessness in Slovenia has just begun to grow. This period is characterized by recognizing only the basic needs of homeless people and having the conception that they would be deserving only the very basic material help and that any more ambitious forms of support would be impossible and/or useles. At the end of this period we are beginning to recognize the needs for homelessness policies to be developed and the need for more complex and multi-sectorial responses to be implemented. »The establishment of new units requires the cooperation of many agencies and different levels of government« (Benjaminsen and Tosi, 2007).

Starting from this background the aim of our research was to develop proposals for homelessness policies based on the needs, experiences and biographies of ten Ljubljana's homeless people. These proposals for further tackling the problem of homelessness are mainly focused on flexible, more individualized and user-cantered forms of work, enabling each individual to set out on the path of social mobility and integration at his own speed. Policies and services can only be successful if based on individual needs, which can be perceived, recognized and defined through dialogue with users. Inclusion not being a one-way but a two-way process and further recognition of the homelessness as a serious and multidimensional social problem and the settlement of quality standards of the growing number of units are important issues in tackling homelessness.

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Researching the Identity Development of Individuals within the Family System

Raziskovanje razvoja identitete posameznikov v družinskem sistemu

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Abstract

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In the article, the author summarizes the main findings of her research, aimed at examining the role parents and interactions within the family system play in the identity formation of female students. The research of the family is based on Beavers' family competence theory (Beavers, 1976; Beavers and Hampson, 1993). The two foundations for the research of identity development are the aspect of psychosocial development, presented by Erikson's (1968; 1989) theory and the theory of identity statuses (Marcia, 1993a). The instruments used are based on the theoretical foundations listed above. The research included 93 families (with both parents) of female adolescents – students of the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana. One of the main findings of the research is that family members perceive interaction within the family differently. This can be an important source of conflict in the family. How a family deals with conflict depends on the competence of

the family system, which also represents the foundation for the healthy psychosocial development of the adolescent. Both parents and their psychosocial development also play important, but different roles in their daughter's psychosocial and identity development.

Key words: *psychosocial development, identity development, family competence, the role of the father, working with families of adolescents.*

Povzetek

V prispevku avtorica povzema temeljne ugotovitve raziskave, katere namen je bil raziskovanje vloge staršev in interakcij v družinskem sistemu pri oblikovanju identitete študentk. Raziskovanje družine temelji na Beaversovi (1976; Beavers in Hampson, 1993) teoriji kompetentnosti družinskega sistema. Temelja raziskovanja identitete sta dva: vidik psihosocialnega razvoja, ki ga predstavlja Eriksonova (1968; 1989) teorija in teorija identitetnih položajev (Marcia, 1993a). Uporabljeni merski instrumenti temeljijo na predstavljenih teoretičnih izhodiščih. V raziskavo je bilo zajetih 93 dvostarševskih družin mladostnic in študentk Pedagoške fakultete v Ljubljani. Ena od temeljnih ugotovitev raziskave je, da družinski člani različno zaznavajo interakcije v družini. Različnost pogledov članov družine je lahko pomemben vir konfliktov v družini. Kako družina razrešuje te konflikte, je odvisno tudi od kompetentnosti družinskega sistema, ki je temelj za zdrav psihosocialni razvoj mladostnice. Oba starša igrata s svojim psihosocialnim razvojem prav tako pomembno, vendar različno vlogo v psihosocialnem razvoju in razvoju identitete svoje hčerke.

Ključne besede: *psihosocialni razvoj, razvoj identitete, kompetentnost družinskega sistema, vloga očeta, delo z družinami mladostnikov.*

Introduction

The aim of the research is to examine the role of the parents and the interactions within the family system in forming the identity of adolescents – female students (of social pedagogy).

The research sheds light on the "inner life" of (one segment of Slovenian) families – it examines the psychological processes taking place in the family unit, using the method of self-reflection of its members, as defined by Čačinovič Vogrinčič (1998).

The research deals with adolescence, a period of development that is of key importance to the shaping of an individual's identity. This is connected to the findings of those authors, who view different types of interaction between the adolescent, the father and the mother, as vital for successfully concluding the development of identity (for example, Cooper and Grotevant, 1987; Bartle-Haring, 1997). Another valid premise is the claim that a competent family is one that provides the (male or female) adolescent with the optimal conditions for developing his or her identity (Lewis, 1989).

In researching **family***,* I have drawn from Beavers' (1976; Beavers and Hampson, 1993) theory. He defines family as an interactive unit. This systemic viewpoint for understanding family is based on the premise that all family members contribute to creating and maintaining a family, and that every member of the family affects all of the others, and that all the other members in turn affect him. The unit under observation in this case is the family as a system. The key dimensions, defining the level of a family's functionality are, according to Beavers (cf. Poljšak Škraban, 2007), competence and the style of interaction in the family.

Competence is defined in connection to the capabilities of the family as an interactive unit, performing the necessary tasks of organizing and managing itself. The key elements of competence are: *1. the structure of the family unit* – egalitarian leadership of the family, strong parental or other adult coalition and established generational boundaries; *2. the development of the autonomy* of family members, evident in increasing trust, clear and distinct boundaries, clear and direct communication and the ability to deal with or accept differences, *3. the ability to resolve conflicts, skills of clear and direct communication*, *4. spontaneity, expressing a wide array of emotions, optimism.*

The style of interaction is a dimension Beavers based on Stierlin, and refers to centripetal (directed inwards) and centrifugal (directed outwards) tendencies concerning the effect on an adolescent's separation. In centripetal families, the parents bind the adolescents to themselves, and in centrifugal families they encourage the separation of the adolescent. The family system functions in a healthy way when it is flexible. This means that a competent family alters its style according to its responsibilities and developmental needs throughout the family's life cycles.

Identity is explored in this article from two aspects. The first is the point of view of *psychosocial development*, based on Erikson's (1968; 1980) theory, where personal development is defined as the transition between eight stages (trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity). Successfully solving the tasks of each stage means a higher level of personal integrity. Erikson's theory deals with development throughout an entire life span, and is therefore suitable for examining the degrees of psychosocial development in adolescents and their parents, as I was also interested in the role the parents' psychosocial development plays in the identity development of the female adolescents.

The research employs another method of examining identity: the theory of identity status, for which Marcia (1993a) has developed a theoretical model, enabling the empirical verification of identity structure indicators in adolescents. He writes about four identity statuses that can be classified according to the level of development. The criteria for ascertaining one's identity status are *the presence of crisis or exploration* (referring to searching for and experimenting with identity issues) and *commitment* to certain values, viewpoints, standards and social roles – in other words, the level of personal self-investment. In accordance with the above criteria, the following identity statuses are formed: the status of *identity achievement,* which includes those individuals who have surpassed the crisis phase and have successfully committed to certain values, behavioural norms and social roles. The other type of individual has reached a choice and committed; however, instead of taking into account various options for his own future, he has accepted the designs of others (usually the parents or other leadership figures). This is the position of *identity foreclosure.* There are two types of individuals, who have not yet committed. In the case of an individual who is still actively searching

for identity, we are dealing with *identity moratorium*. The adolescent is still actively seeking out alternatives. The final position is that of *identity diffusion,* where the adolescent has not yet experienced a crisis or attempted self-definition. An adolescent finding himself in this position, does not know how to define the contents of his identity.

Description of the research and its basic findings

The research named "The role of parents and interactions within the family system at forming the identity of female students of social pedagogy"[1] included 93 female adolescents from families with both parents – students in the second, third and fourth year of study at the Faculty of Education, the Department of Social Pedagogy. Because some authors have found that there are significant gender-specific differences in the shaping of identity (Marcia, 1993b; Josselson, 1987), the research focuses on a narrower field, researching the identity of adolescent females. The sample is comparable to the demographic structure of the population in terms of the students' residence, and to the population of students' parents in terms of the educational structure of the parents. For more thorough information concerning the sample selection and method, cf. Poljšak Škraban (2002b and 2003).

The instruments used in the research are based on the theoretical foundations presented in the introduction. With the help of a modified Family of origin questionnaire (Lewis, 1989), I have examined the quality of family interactions and the way that all three family members experience them. The results of the factor analysis and the internal reliability coefficients all illustrate the satisfactory psychometric characteristics of the instrument.

For measuring the degree of psychosocial development of the adolescents, I have used the Psychosocial development questionnaire by Wessman and Ricks (1966, in Lamovec, 1994); a questionnaire suitable for adults was used for the parents (Ochse and Plug, 1986, Ibid.). Both questionnaires are based on Erikson's theory. For measuring the identity status of the adolescents, the EOMEIS-2 questionnaire was used (Adams, Bennion and Huh, 1989). All three instruments satisfactory fulfil the required psychometric characteristics.

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[1] The project was conducted in 2002 and financed by the Faculty of Education.

The basic principle of this research is that interaction within the family system is explored through the perceptions, the experiences of all three family members, both parents and the daughter – the adolescent. This fact also determines the technique used to analyse data on an individual (for each family member), dual (comparative analysis of pairs) and a systemic level (the family as a unit).

Experiencing the qualities of parenting and the family as a system

I used a modified version of the Family of origin questionnaire (Lewis, 1989) to examine two issues: family interaction, relating to important qualities of parenting, and family interaction, relating to the family as a system.

In the first part of the questionnaire, where the family members answered questions about important *qualities of parenting,* I analysed six variables referring to childhood, and six variables (of the same content) referring to the adolescence of the daughter. I asked about: 1. The anxiety the parents may feel about the daughters, 2. The sensitivity to the daughters' feelings and needs, 3. The ability of the parents to respond and satisfy the daughters' feelings and needs, 4. Closeness to parents, 5. The parents' intrusiveness into the daughters' lives and independence, 6. The satisfaction the parents derive from their parental roles. Significant differences in perception were apparent in the period of childhood in three, and in the period of adolescence in five out of six variables. For the period of adolescence, compared to the period of childhood, there were also more significant differences between the adolescent and both parents. Therefore, the differences in experiencing the qualities of parenting between a daughter and her parents increase in adolescence. As far as significant differences are concerned, the daughters are consistently more critical in their perceptions of family interactions than either parent. Only with the variable concerning the satisfaction the parents derive from parenting, are the results inverted. Fathers rate the satisfaction derived from their roles lower than their satisfaction is rated by the daughters. No significant differences were found when it came to mothers and daughters. It is also obvious that mothers and daughters do not recognize the father's dissatisfaction with his parental role.

While examining whether or not individual family members saw their interactions with each other differently during the period of the daughter's childhood and adolescence, there were significant differences in five (out of six) variables, except for the variable concerning the parents' anxiety. All family members experienced a drop in the quality of interaction during adolescence.

The second part of the questionnaire concerns *experiencing the family as a system*; I inquired about: 1. The structure of the family (decision-making within the family and the parental coalition); 2. Communication (negotiation, manner of communication, dealing with conflicts and connecting to surroundings) and 3. Dealing with emotions (ascertaining the level of permeability, expressiveness, the mood and the tone and the empathy).

Significant differences concerning the family structure were apparent between the daughter and the father when it came to decision-making processes within the family.

The perception of communication within the family in general terms (taking into account all the variables for communication) differs with all three family members.

Significant differences appear between the way the daughter and the mother experience dealing with emotions within the family (taking into account all the variables concerning emotions).

As with experiencing the quality of parenting, the individual's perception of the family system is consistently assessed better (higher) by the parents than by the daughters. In the majority, the assessments given by fathers were the highest. Only in two individual variables did the mothers give the highest assessment of interaction.

The more complex (using factor analysis) the analysis of the results concerning the family as a unit, the more reliable it is, and the more apparent the differences between the family members become. Daughters perceive interaction differently than their parents. This is one of the main findings of the research; out of all the family members, the evaluations of the daughters were the most critical. Similar findings have been recorded by others (for example, Adams, 1985; Dekovic, Noom and Meeus, 1997; Paulson and Sputa, 1996). Dekovic, Noom and Meeus (1997) claim that these differences in perception are larger in families where there are more conflicts between the adolescents and the parents, usually concerning different

expectations both have for the autonomy of the adolescents. There are probably no differences between the parents because of the necessary generational differences in a family structure (cf. Poljšak Škraban, 2002b). Because the parents are fulfilling specific parental roles, it is understandable that their perception is similar, while on the other hand different from that of their daughter.

Noller and Callan (1991) think that the evaluation given by adolescents is more 'objective' than that given by parents, and usually correspond to the assessment of the experts. The results of the research illuminate the fact that the daughter's perception within the family system carries much weight (in the results of the factor analysis, the high percentage of the shared variance is explained precisely by the daughters' evaluation), which confirms the premise of the systemic theory that all family members shape the family and that in the period of adolescence, the adolescent has a prominent role in shaping that system.

The above results confirm the thesis of many authors who claim that the period of adolescence is the hardest test for the quality of the relationship between the parents and within the family as a whole. The finding that individual family members perceive interaction within the family differently, begs the question if there is such a thing as an objective fact when it comes to families. It is my claim that an individual's perception, the way one experiences things, is vital, because it significantly defines an individual and what is, to him, an objective view. The differences in experiencing interpersonal interaction within the family often lead to conflict. The conflicts caused by the adolescent compel the family (particularly the parents) to change, which cannot be achieved without adequate communication. The family should be able to repeatedly establish mutual and open communication, thus making it possible to strike a balance between the autonomy and the interconnectedness of family members. In principle, only a competent family is able to do this, which is why it is important for a counsellor – together with the family members – to recognize and treat these differences as real, and in accordance with Walsh's findings (1993), stress the importance of respecting individual differences, autonomy, an individual's needs, and to encourage the fostering of the family members' well being, regardless what generation they belong to.

The role of the father in the family

These are some of the results of the research, raising questions about the father's role in the families that were part of the sample:

- Fathers and daughters have a significantly different perception of decision-making in the family.
- Fathers rate themselves (and the daughters rate them) lower on the variable of recognizing and satisfying the emotional needs of their daughters, compared to the way mothers and daughters rate each other.
- Fathers and daughters do not feel as close to each other as mothers and daughters do.
- Fathers are not satisfied with their parental role, a fact that goes undetected by the other two family members.
  Predominantly:
- fathers are less anxious about their daughters in childhood, and more concerned in adolescence, and
- intrude on the adolescent less than the mother.

It has been noted that there are significant differences between the way the father and the daughter perceive decision-making in the family. It is interesting that the adolescents taking part in the research view mothers as the predominant decision makers in almost a third of the families, fathers in nearly a quarter, and both parents together in less than half of the families.

Mothers view decision-making somewhat differently. They similarly feel that they make decisions in about a third of the families; however, only 15 percent see the father as the one to make decisions, while both partners make decisions in more than half of the families. 20 percent of the fathers see themselves as the decision makers, while the partners are only seen as such in 14 percent of the answers. Two thirds of the fathers are of the opinion that they make decisions together with their partner.

In another research (Poljšak Škraban, 1996), which included only 30 families, and also employed different methodology, the percentage of families, where decisions were made by the mother was significantly lower (10 %). The new research obviously shows

that the percentage of women making decisions within the family is rising. It would appear that mothers are more involved in decision-making for various reasons, one of the main ones being that they are employed and therefore economically independent. Women generally also perform the greater amount of family duties in the afternoons, which certainly contributes to having greater influence in the family. Another aspect, found also by certain Slovenian authors (for example, Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 1993; Tomori, 1989), is that the father in Slovenian families is often less involved in a child's upbringing and often psychologically absent. Probably one of the reasons the father withdraws, according to certain authors (for example, McGlodrick, Heiman and Carter, 1993) is that he often feels uncomfortable during the period of the daughter's adolescence because of her developing sexuality. This might also be the reason he experiences the family situation differently than the daughters and prefers to withdraw.

I am of the opinion that the mother's role in the decision-making and her greater level of involvement in the upbringing can be linked to corresponding results where the other family members view the mothers as the ones who inhibit the daughters' independence more than the fathers (both in childhood and in adolescence). If the mother is more involved in the upbringing, then she is more often the one to set boundaries and make demands. According to Beavers (1976), the dominance of the parent is necessarily linked with the subordination of the adolescent; there is less room for negotiation, and consequently, the adolescent daughter naturally experiences more of a threat to her independence. It is also probably true, as some authors have found (for example, Cooper and Grotevant, 1987), that parents find it easier to accept and adapt more quickly to the growing up of boys rather than girls.

In the research sample, both parents were employed in almost 90 % of the families. Some (for example, Piotrkowski and Hugher, 1993) claim that families, in which both parents work, live under a lot of strain. The authors snidely remark that the family team where both parents are employed is short of players. If the father is also psychologically distant, the situation is even more difficult.

To understand the role and the identity of the father, I think it is important to be aware of the fact that in creating, accepting and committing to a fathering role, the man's conscious decision to take

care of and be responsible for others is of central importance. To construct a model of fatherhood they can be satisfied with, fathers need the time, support and trust of their immediate social circle (particularly their partner). The support of the wider environment is also necessary as it encourages fathers to have a larger role in the family on the one hand; however, with more and more pressure for efficiency in the work place, it does not really provide this support in actuality (Poljšak Škraban, 2001). When working with a family, this must be taken into account and fathers must be encouraged to participate.

The competence of the family system and the identity development of family members

Beavers' competence model, representing the starting point for examining the family in this research, defines competence in terms of the structure of the family unit and the interactions within it; it has proven to be a useful model for examining the family's role in the development of the female adolescent. Cluster analysis has turned out to be the most useful method for examining the family as a unit. The families have, in terms of perceiving the family as a system, separated themselves clearly on the competence continuum into two equally sized groups: into less and more competent families.

The premise that a competent family enables the development of not only the children, but of the parents (Lewis, 1989) has been confirmed by the significant – although not very high (around 0.30) – correlations between the family's competence and the level of the adolescent's, as well as the parents' psychosocial development. We can therefore conclude that a favourable family atmosphere presents a good basis for an active search for and formation of the identity of all family members.

The results have also pointed to a significant correlation between the degrees of the daughter's and the mother's psychosocial development, but not of the daughter's and father's. This result is related to the theory presented in Gillingan (1982) and Josselson (1987), stating that female adolescents build their identities through interpersonal relationships (especially with the mother). The mother provides closeness, sensibility, support and friendship.

In predicting the daughter's psychosocial development, we can see that the level of the mother's psychosocial development is the most important factor for the development of the adolescent's autonomy; for predicting the other stages, the competence of the family system is generally the most relevant factor.

The results concerning the correlation between the way the family's competence is perceived and the achieved identity statuses are less discernable. The significant connection between identity foreclosure and family competence was to be expected. The correlation between the competence of the family system and identity achievement (mature identity) is low and only approaching statistical significance; the research did not yield any significant correlations when it came to the remaining two identity statuses.

The level of the father's psychosocial development has a significant role in shaping the identity achievement status of the daughter. Bartle-Haring (1997) has discovered that particularly the father's encouragement of the female adolescent's autonomy is important. It is also vital that the father forms his expectations realistically and expresses them clearly (Elium and Elium, 2001). This might be easier to accomplish if the father is somewhat distant.

In view of the negative significant correlation between the level of the parents' psychosocial development and the daughter's moratorium, and a similar negative connection between the level of the mother's psychosocial development and the daughter's identity diffusion, I have concluded that the parents each play a different role in the daughter's development. The role of the mother (or her level of psychosocial development) is more fundamental, while the father (or his level of psychosocial development) is the one who will encourage his daughter to be active on her path towards actively shaping a mature identity (identity achievement).

In predicting identity statuses, we can see that for predicting identity achievement, the only relevant predictive element is the father's level of psychosocial development, and, as mentioned, the competence of the family system is relevant for predicting identity foreclosure.

The highest level of correlation with identity foreclosure is to be expected, because it by definition presupposes that the adolescents

accept the patterns and the decisions of the parents, rather than define themselves on the basis of their own quest for identity. It appears that an adolescent female does well in a competent family. Communication within the family affords her enough space to establish her autonomy. And if the parental models are acceptable and favourable, there is no reason why the adolescent, after some consideration, should not accept them.

We can conclude from the above results that the competence of the family system represents the foundation for the healthy psychosocial development of the adolescent female. Both parents with their individual levels of psychosocial development also play important, yet fundamentally different roles in the psychosocial and identity development of their daughter.

Conclusion

The results of the research naturally cannot be generalized and cannot be applied to the entire population. After all, modern society is so diverse, that it is important to conduct research within a carefully selected context (Petzold, 1996), which in turn sheds light on merely a small part of a very complex field. There are, of course, some findings that are very useful for working with the families of adolescents.

In my research, I have focused only on nuclear (two parent) families. However, I feel that the results of the research can to some extent be applied to different family structures, namely those with only one parent. The adolescent should, in any type of family structure, experience the feelings, mentioned by Kempler (1975, cf. Čačinovič Vogrinčič, 1995): that a happy family is one where the home is formed according to the reality of those that dwell in it, and not according to what a home should look like and how a family should behave. The adolescent needs the home to change, but the home is shared with others and therefore all family members take part in altering it.

This is exactly what happens in a competent family; G. Čačinovič Vogrinčič (1995, p. 125) describes it like this: "*...boundaries constantly need to be re-established; sometimes they need to be*

demanded, other times negotiated. ... We both learn. The adolescent learns to act according to his new competence levels, and we as parents learn what it is they need from us, what they wish to alter. As parents, we learn to change the rules as well as the roles; we learn to accept the new degrees of the adolescent's autonomy and competence. And in doing so, we require each other's help."

The role of the counsellor, the way the author sees it (Ibid.) is also in collaborating when it comes to discerning, explaining and naming every single element of very concrete situations in terms of these major themes – just authority, new competence of the young person, negotiation over changing rules, accepting the adolescent's assistance, negotiating new but clear boundaries.

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Theoretical article, submitted for translation in January 2008.

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