

## Editorial

[Czech version/Česká verze](#) 

### *Introducing a monothematic issue*

#### **An unsolved puzzle: Social Pedagogy and/versus Social Work**

What is the relationship between Social Pedagogy and Social Work? Sometimes the two seem to compete with each other, sometimes they cooperate nicely, and sometimes the two look like two sides of the same proverbial coin. The truth remains that their origins and their approaches have unique geographical specifics that, over time, became intersected and cross-linked, their original motivations forgotten and new ones established. This complicated origin and development often veils an important issue. Both Social Pedagogy and Social Work appeared as professions of practical activities and later as professions supported by theoretical studies in the times when the one-sided development of modern society needed compensating for. The aim of this monothematic issue is to try and clarify, at least partially, the puzzle of this mutual relationship. As the birth of modern society was not an event and a process that took place in a geographically clearly delimited area, no nationality can consider their understanding of the relationship between Social Pedagogy and Social Work as the only generally accepted truth. That is why we do not confine ourselves to the Czechoslovak space. We established a dialogue with distinguished foreign authors, and we are proud to present their academic contributions in this issue. We also highly appreciate that some Czech scholars tried to ground their work in the international perspective. Thus we provide our readers with at least a partial transnational view of the problem. To encourage the breach of local limitations, the editorial board decided to publish, in the Studies section of this issue, contributions in English (with one exception representing the *varia* – see later).

The current issue opens with an invited study from abroad. It is our pleasure to introduce the study **Social Pedagogy and Social Work: Analysis of the Relationships from the Socio-pedagogical Perspective**. The author, Ewa Marinowicz-Hetka, introduces an unusual interpretation of the relationship between Social Pedagogy and Social Work, where Social Pedagogy is interpreted from a broad perspective. She proceeds from the philosophy of John Dewey, who understood socialization, education and social work as “forming a joint experience.” Such understanding of Social Pedagogy is not strictly a pedagogical discipline and does not focus strictly on education. It is an environment where problems of social reality can be analysed. Thus, it can offer a meta-theory to Social Work for analysis of its activities, methods and target groups. As will be described below, such a view can be shocking for a Czech reader, but it has its deep rational justification.

Another article, **The Relationship Between Social Work and Social Pedagogy – Similarities in Theory and Profession from the German Point of View**, is again an invited study by foreign scholars, Klaus Kreimer and Lena Altmayer. Their contribution focuses on a relatively new approach in Social Work – the so-called case-reconstructive Social Work. This approach is, according to the authors, reflected only rudimentarily and insufficiently in the Federal Republic of Germany, but the authors consider it to be highly stimulating and perspective. It is based on three dimensions in which the client is worked with: somato-psycho-social integrity, law and justice based on applicable laws, and the methodically-explicit verification of applicability in notional and sensual perception. The description of work with a client culminates in the final section where a goal is formulated that helps a client cope with risks by basing their autonomy on realistically-chosen goals. The style and depth of this approach suggests that an important role is played by what used to be reserved for Social Pedagogy. This contribution also suggests that Social Pedagogy and Social Work have had more in common than could have been understood fifty years ago.

Scholars Jitka Navrátilová and Pavel Navrátil, in their study **Educational Discourses in Social Work**, focus mainly on the topic of the identity of Social Work in relation to the discipline of Social Pedagogy. Referring to academic sources, they claim the identity is not easy to determine because

Social Work appears to be a multiparadigmatic, discursively-open discipline. They identify the four most important discourses: social-pedagogical (here the overlap with Social Pedagogy), scientific, reflexive and competence (understood as placing emphasis on competences to solve a problem). Based on the analysis of these discourses, they clarify the identity of the discipline within the given discourses. In the end, they present the results in a clear table, which shows the individual discourses as representing individual emphases rather than understandings of Social Work itself. If we look at the section “key values” (proof – scientific discourse; competence to solve problems – discourse of competence; reflexion leading to understanding a client – reflexive discourse; empowerment/development – social-pedagogical discourse), then we cannot imagine effectively helping the needy with any of the mentioned values absent. That leads us back to the question of the overlap of Social Pedagogy and Social Work, since reflexive and socio-pedagogical values are primarily the integral part of the curriculum of educating social pedagogues in the same way as emphasis on the scientific analysis of a problem and on the ability to help effectively.

The fourth article in the issue is **The Relationship of Social Pedagogy and Social Work**. The authors, Blahoslav Kraus and Stanislava Hoferková, analysis the development of the relationship between Social Pedagogy and Social Work in the Czech Republic and abroad. Further on, they typify three relationships among the mentioned disciplines: identifying, differentiating and converging. Ultimately, they state that the “trend towards multiparadigmatism” is starting to prevail in both disciplines. This trend is not accidental since, according to the authors, Social Work is not strictly distinguished from Social Pedagogy by work methods or target groups. Both disciplines used to be differentiated on the basis of simplifying principles. For example, it used to be believed that Social Work offered primarily help in the material sphere while Social Pedagogy concerned social education. The authors determine that the tendency of blending both disciplines is increasing. This article can thus be read also as a claim that both Social Work and Social Pedagogy have focused too intensively on their mutual differences to justify the independence of their disciplines, and they tend to forget the object of their interest – human beings in need of help. In other words, one cannot be helped by material means without the social-educational reconstruction of their relationship with themselves and their surroundings. Material help without help in social education is ineffective. Fortunately, this erroneous trend of simplification has dissipated.

The authors of **Convergent and Divergent Aspects of Social Work and Social Pedagogy** are Andrej Mátel and Andrea Preissová Krejčí. Their article focuses on an analysis of academic sources (primarily Czech and Slovak) dealing with both disciplines. The analysis is profiled through the following themes: character of the discipline, actors, objects of the activity, character of the activity, and space of the activity. Based on the analysis of the current state, the authors describe the convergent and divergent elements. In the final section, they introduce two typologies of the relationship between the two disciplines (from J. Schilling and from P. Ondrejkoivič). Even though the authors find the traditionally-mentioned differences to be in the core of both disciplines (Social Pedagogy is more theoretical and general; Social Work is more practical and rather an applied science), they nevertheless claim “the importance of intensive cooperation.”

The last study in the monothematic issue, by Helena Skarupská, is **Selected Methods of Intervention Suitable for Work Social Educator with Children at Risk of Social Exclusion**. The author examines the growing exigency of expanding excluded localities. She recommends that social pedagogues working in these localities should adapt and use some methods of social workers. To clarify, she begins by referring to the concept of “culture of poverty” (O. Lewis) as critically examined by C. Murray. She proceeds by detailing three intervention techniques (goal-oriented approach, reality therapy, anti-oppressive approach) and two broader strategies (case social work and the social-ecological model of work) that social pedagogues should adapt, thereby broadening their work methods especially in excluded localities.

The study by Skarupská is subject to the **study review** of Martin Stanoev. He appreciates the overall aim of the study but warns of dangers that can arise from utilizing Murray’s concept of the “culture

of poverty” in order to assess the essence of poverty. He mentions the work of the office of D. Drábek, Czech Minister of Work and Social Affairs, as a cautionary tale of how applying this approach can be economically counterproductive and socially dangerous.

Stanoev’s reflections close the section on studies, and that is where the language switches to Czech<sup>1</sup>, for the current issue, as agreed upon by the editorial board, was never intended to be monolingual. Moreover, a media change follows. For this issue, instead of the typical interview, the editorial board decided to organize a round table discussion on the current topic, of which an audio-visual recording is available. This shift marks a permanent change in course, and coincides with the editors’ desire to transform what was a primarily read-only medium into a modern multi-media space that will take into account the latest trends in the development of scientific journals.

**The round table**, which discussed the topic, *An unsolved puzzle: Social Pedagogy and/versus Social Work*, was held on February 16, 2016 at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Four participants met; two of them representing academia and two from the field of practice, each participant being from the field of Social Pedagogy or Social Work. Social Work was represented by doc. Pavel Navrátil and Mgr. Ladislav Ptáček, Social Pedagogy by Dr. Lenka Gulová and Mgr. Dagmar Gasnářková. The discussion was friendly and constructive, even when it turned to the present and highly controversial Czech Bill on Social Workers. Despite the expected disagreement, we hope an increased understanding of the concerns of both sides was reached. The whole section was concluded by a bon mot, “The Chamber (as in the Professional Chamber of Social Workers) is a help, not a threat,” in which the participants tried to characterize the modern world, detail how these characteristics transform social risks, and identify what challenges these new risks pose for Social Pedagogy and Social Work. The participants eventually uncovered an idea that should serve as food for thought in both disciplines. The idea: It is not only the appearance of social risks and risk groups that changes; our modern problem lies in traditional explanatory frameworks. We cannot effectively help the needy if we use old points of departure for the analysis of their current situation.

The audio-visual recording of the round table is available via a hypertext link located within the text in the current issue and also via a permanent link in the first slide of the journal web presentation in the section Journal Videos. The written summary of the two-hour discussion is brief but does contain a time frame where all the questions and answers of the individual participants are presented so that users can navigate directly to sections of interest.

The last part of the monothematic Social Pedagogy and/versus Social Work issue is an **expert essay** by Věra Teplíčková: *Paradigms of unique sciences*. Without losing connection with the specialist way of thinking, the author was not afraid to take risks. She begins by stating that help is a basic anthropological category, as help in most of its forms is essential for human survival. The roots of social thinking are seen in deep antiquity and their new quality is noticed in the so called “new paideia,” which appeared in ancient Greek philosophy and leads from “self-acting” to realization. The author leads us from the characters of Greek and Roman traditions into the modern times, during which the need for social workers and social pedagogues has intensified by overemphasizing individualism. Even though the author sees the difference between social pedagogues and social workers (as both operate in times when the diversity of social reality requires specialization), she eventually urges the two disciplines to cooperate closely. It is their cooperation that should help their acknowledgement by experts and the lay public alike.

And with this comes the end of the monothematic part of this issue. The closing comments of Teplíčková and the unique overlap of both disciplines as made obvious from the issue’s other articles have led the author of this editorial to several thoughts. First of all, there was originally no

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<sup>1</sup> Monothematic focused studies are also accessible in Czech or German language via hypertext link located at the head of the studies. Studies are accessible not only to a wide international audience, but also to domestic readers. It is necessary to refer your citation to the English studies, since these versions are seen as prime, i.e., they contain digital object identifier (doi) and are indexed in databases.

differentiation between Social Work and Social Pedagogy, and their generic difference was outlined only in the first half of the twentieth century when both disciplines found it necessary to establish themselves as independent sciences. It is therefore commonly believed that Social Pedagogy is different from the field of Pedagogy, as is Social Work from the field of Sociology; that one is rather more general and the other more applied is what differentiates them from each other. However, if we look to the United States, the cradle of modern Social Work, we will find a completely different picture. The activities of Jane Addams (1860–1935) at Chicago's Hull House did not clearly separate Social Work from Social Pedagogy. Likewise, we cannot separate them in the thinking of John Dewey, who underpinned the theoretical and practical activities of his friend Addams, who by her activities and thoughts on the continuously changing society simultaneously inspired Dewey to reach his most revolutionary philosophical, pedagogical and social ideas. We also cannot forget that this is where the major wave of "social work" in the First Czechoslovak Republic found its motivation, having been imported directly from Hull House by Alice Masaryk and her colleagues. However, this direct lineage was never duly appreciated. The probable reason is that the first half of the twentieth century, when the inspiration reached Czechoslovakia and when both disciplines started to establish themselves as scientific fields, was an era in which most Europeans (Masaryk being a notable exception) looked down on American intellectual and practically-oriented social affairs from the position of an older and wiser brother.

Even though it is clear from this issue that Social Pedagogy and Social Work significantly overlap and support one another, it still surprises many. The current relationship of Social Pedagogy and Social Work can be characterized as a gradual awakening from a dream of separate disciplines only to find a mutual multidisciplinary origin. This is the reason we believe that Social Pedagogy and Social Work should be seen as the proverbial coin with two sides (a metaphor used by one of the contributors). And if this is so, then both disciplines should in the long-term think of intensifying their cooperation on the level of ideas as well as on the academic, practical and organizational-legislative levels.

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This monothematic block is, uncharacteristically, followed by another study that did not perfectly fit in the univocal section on the relationship between Social Pedagogy and Social Work. As three monothematic issues followed one another and none were appropriate for this contribution, the editorial board decided to include the text in this issue in the form of *varia*. The work of Peter Ondrejko, **Understanding in the Social Research** departs from the hermeneutical tradition to ascertain and come to terms with the differences between the natural sciences and the humanities. The humanities, he contends, are unique because they rely on interpretation, and this leads to the application of different methods of research and analysis.

Three more sections follow this study. **Reviews** offer critical evaluations of Jakub Hladík's book, *Multicultural competence of students of helping professions* and Nicollete V. Roman's book, *Parenting: Behaviors, cultural influences and impact on childhood health and well-being*. The **news** section contains Hladík's report on the General Assembly of the Association of Educators in Social Pedagogy. This is followed by an **obituary** of one of the pioneers of Social Pedagogy, doc. Jiljí Špičák, to whom we pay our respects. Finally, we include a collegial advertisement of the *Pedagogická orientace* journal, and we wish its editors and editorial board a successful year ahead.

Thanks are extended to the members of our editorial board as well as to the authors and reviewers for their cooperation in the preparation of another monothematic issue. Without this energy and determination the creation of a uniquely specialized scientific journal would not be possible.

*Editorial board*