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Constructing the Quality of Social Work in the Perspective of Client Empowerment

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Social Sciences,
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This dissertation was written between 2014 and 2018 in Vilnius University.

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The text of this dissertation can be accessed at the libraries of Vilnius University, as well as on the website of Vilnius University: www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius

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SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

A word "quality" stems from the Latin word qualis, meaning "of what kind", "of what sort", which has no content epistemologically. Others see the roots of this concept in a Latin word qualitas, directly referring to "quality". A Lithuanian term *kokybė* describes the properties belonging to the particular object or a degree by which the object matches some expectations (i.e., "is good enough"), as explained in the Dictionary of Lithuanian Language. In other words, quality is a sum of elements which their users have a compatible opinion on. Indeed, quality of social work is a set of efforts, initiatives, actions and methods that all the users and suppliers agree on. That is, an expression of a quality in practice is socially created and depends on context. In this thesis the following assumption was key: the quality of social work has always been subjective therefore one has to be in a continuous process of cognizing it and searching for the ways to strengthen and structure that cognition. Accordingly, the aim of current work is to elucidate quality as a sociological phenomenon, dissociating from the view of management approach, which allows quality to be objectified. Here author uses the term social work quality (instead of quality of social services) since it represents a crucial idea of this work, which is to analyze the field of social work profession and its challenges. Although the scientific sources written often use the term "quality of social services", this is not equal to the "social work quality", the primer being a broader field. In English, one can meet the following terms: "quality of care", "quality of welfare" and "quality of support"; this is related to the fact that, historically, the phenomenon of quality was important for the care institutions while the welfare state was raising its influence.

A need for this dissertation was evoked by the recent discussions in social work, which covered questions about the market of social

services; the standardization of social work; and the influence of the managerism on the profession. Both the economic aspects and changing relations between the members of society led to the growing number of people in need of services and the decreasing of state abilities to aid in organizing social services. This resulted in emergence of society's self-regulation function (Naujanienė, Motiečienė, 2011). The state is no longer a leading partner, and gradually, there is a shift to the paradigm of collaborating with other sectors. Also, the partnership and working in various platforms are encouraged (Hafford-Letchfield, 2012). In many countries due to economic liberalism (which started in 1980s) various social partners were integrated in provision of social services (Kotova, 2013). In Lithuania, one of the important elements for change in social work is the shift from the centralized care system to the community based system. The rapidly growing community services, in their nature, are more compatible with enabling empowerment and autonomy of the client. Put all together, all of the aforementioned changes require the invention of new, innovative models of providing and managing social services. This also raises the criteria for their quality.

1.1 Novelty of the dissertation

In Lithuania we do not have comprehensive scientific work on social work quality till this time. Žalimienė (2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2015) took the biggest part in investigating the social work quality. Also, there were more authors analyzing the issue, including: Švedaitė-Sakalauskė (2007), Jackevič (2012), Maniušytė (2014). In most cases, these were scientific publications and Master's thesis. The doctoral dissertation on social work quality is written for the first time. In Lithuania, the urge to investigate social work quality was determined by the challenges in stationary care institutions, many cases of violated human rights (Šumskienė 2014, Šumskienė, Pūras, 2012; Ruškus, 2015), and ineffective management of those

institutions. A need to shift from hypercare and passive clients to the new social work culture based on community services and social innovations is being discussed. As a consequence, during the last few decades, most of the publications and scientific insights concerning social work quality described the situation of care institutions for older, disabled people, and children (Žalimienė 2007; Pūras, Šumskienė, 2012, Maniušytė, 2014). At the same time, the quality of community services for adults in social risk is underrepresented in Lithuanian scientific discussion. However, in the scientific texts of other countries, various insights can be found. Some of the authors looked into the social work quality from the perspective of management (Coulshed, 1990; Hafford-Letchfield, 2012). Others were concerned with the importance of evalution of social work quality and finding criteria for measurement (Blom; Moren, 2015; Juliette Malley, 2010).

Because of the aforementioned reasons and the dissertation author's personal interest in the development of community services, they will be analyzed in this work. On one hand, the quality of care received a lot of attention from other authors (Žalimienė, 2007, 2009, 2012; Tatoryte, 2014, Orlova, 2014, Miškinytė, 2014), but on the other hand, the research of community services is required for generating innovations, needed for the disabled and neglected profession of social workers (Švedaitė et al, 2014). The nature of community services also changes the role of client in the whole system of social services. The client becomes an active partner in providing services. This dissertation is arguing the concept of client empowerment in service provision. Moreover, in Lithuania, there was a lack of efforts in agreeing upon a complex concept of quality. Also, there was no study done on how the social workers and their clients see the quality, and whether there was a difference in their views. This dissertation gives an ethnomethodological explanation of social work quality construction, when knowledge about a particular social phenomenon is being constructed via interaction. In gaining the knowledge about

the quality, the following sources are important: learnings from organizational development (i.e., the good practices); the macro-level understanding by the founders of the social politics; the knowledge of clients and researchers (Pawson, 2003). In this work, three sources of knowledge were analyzed: the worker's, the client's, and the researcher's. Although the interaction between the social worker and the client is the object of many studies, this study centers on why and how this concept leads to the *good job* being done by the social workers. The author of this research has investigated the perception of the quality by the social workers and the clients in order to elucidate the quality expressions in micro, mezzo and macro levels, and has searched for the dominating quality cultures in the practice of social work.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The research problem is a lack of knowledge on social work quality. Without having empirical data about the perception of the quality in the frames of our social and historical contexts, we will not be able to objectively set methods for practices of empowering clients. For the sake of building the systems that would encourage quality growth, it is important to reveal the quality culture which Lithuanian social work organizations operate in.

The aim of the dissertation is to reveal the construction of social work quality in providing services for people in social risk, and to analyze the dominating cultures of social work quality that ensure the quality assurance in organizations.

The object of research
o   The perception and construction of social work quality in the intersubjectiveness.

The objectives:

1) To reveal the understanding of social work quality from managerialist and empowerment perspectives, and to evaluate their pervasion in the practice;
2) To reveal the subjective experience of social work clients in the process of interaction with professionals, and the way they feel about their relationships with the workers in different professional roles.
3) To analyze different cultures of social work quality and identify their characteristic features.
4) To shed light on social work quality expressions in different levels (i.e., micro, mezzo and macro) and to find the relationships between them.
5) To create the grounding theory which could reveal the construction of social work quality in providing services to people in risk situations.

1.3 Structure of dissertation

The First Chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to exploring the concept of social work quality, taking into account the purpose of the profession and the social historical context. The author affirms, that the concept of social work quality is constructed and socially shaped within a dialog. Therefore, it is very important to understand what are the requirements for the profession. Because of the great influence of different social agents in the social field, it is difficult to objectively define the social work services. The specifics of the social work field is revealed through the roles and practices of the agents, as defined by a French sociologist Bourdieu, with a reciprocal relationship between the social structures and the agents, i.e., the agent is affected by the structures (Duoblytė, 2012). There is a need to agree upon what is a good quality social work in a particular reality, what are the goals it aims to achieve, and how we will measure

the results. In this chapter, the author of the dissertation offers the concept of the social work quality based on Donabedian (1980) theory which divides the concept into the quality of the structure; the process; and the results. She also reveals two views on the quality of social work that are still in development. The first one could be named *empowerment approach*. It is based on the principles of partnership and the concept of Human Rights. Also, this view emphasizes the values of the individual choices and self-determination. According to the *empowerment approach*, the quality stems from a dialog and personal needs of the client. The second view can be called *managerialistic approach*, since it is based on the assumption that it is possible to structure social work activities and to apply generally defined performance procedures, by employing the principles of management with proper planning and establishment of clear organizational structures. **In the Second Chapter** the problem of measuring the social work quality is analyzed. The author argues that there is no other way to guarantee quality, except observing change in a client and comparing yourself with others or with your yesterday's self. Therefore, an evidence-based social work practice is becoming a must for ensuring quality. Citing McNeece and Thyer (2004), the evidence based practice is social services which get their foundation in the evidence collected from the clients of social workers, also, from the colleagues, practical situations and theories of the latter. This kind of practice changes the traditional paternalistic view of the social work, and how the social services should be provided to the client. The client has an active role as a participant of the service, not only as a recipient of it. In this chapter, the challenges of measuring the results and the effectiveness of social work are analyzed. However, the evaluation of social work results is always questionable due to the aforementioned social services coproduction which makes the comparison difficult. It means that the results are effected by different social conditions and actors. Consequently, nowadays, the results achieved by the service users (i.e., the empowerment practice or

quality of life) are central. In the dissertation, the term *paradox of power* is presented. The author notes that we never know when and if the client takes the responsibility of solving the problems in his or her life. It is an unpredictable process of social interaction (Page & Czuba, 1999; Peterson, Lowe, Aquilino &Schnider, 2005). A word describing capability to decide upon one's own wishes starts with the part "self", i.e., "self-determination", denoting one's autonomy. So how can we measure the result of the social work if it is being done by a person him or herself ? Admittedly, a proficient social worker can encourage and motivate the client by applying the methods of the profession. However, in such case, one has to be aware that the relation between the two is not equal anymore. This is the paradox of power. **The Third Chapter** is designed to analyze the culture of social work quality. The quality culture is a part of organizational culture and it is also a social environment of the organization. So why is it important to analyze the culture of social quality? Firstly, the culture of quality represents how we look at the client and the job that we do. And this is a soft power[1], not possible to measure or regulate, despite of being one of the most important factors while ensuring the quality. The quality culture determines how the relationship between the social worker and the client is expressed. The communication between the members of the organization and their shared values have an effect on their relationship with the clients. The insurance of the quality is impossible without the shaping and nourishing the culture of quality. In fact, to ensure the quality in the new conditions of the new

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[1]**Soft Power** is an ability to influence the behavior of others and to persuade others to believe in the rightness of your goals without using some kind of force (like military or financial sanctions), just with a help of attractiveness and persuasion. The term was firstly mentioned in the year 1900, in a monography called „Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American power".

neoliberalist world, extraordinary creativity is required. Subsequently, the author discusses the importance of innovativeness and entrepreneurship in creating a new culture of social work. Undefined and ever changing, social work practice operates in these changing circumstances, producing new forms of support in dealing with social issues, like the social business. The state is not the main insurance for welfare. The nongovernmental and private sectors became the contributors in creating an innovative ecosystem, and the innovative environment is being formed (Raipa, 2014). In the same chapter, the need of innovations for social work practice is investigated. Chapter discusses the proffesional roles of social workers based on a adapted version of Hamilton welfare classification. The professional roles determine relations between colleagues and clients, and job environment. These roles are often changing because they are depending not only on the quality culture and leadership of the manager, but also on the social context of the organization. In particular situations, workers use some kind of a professional "mask" which creates their professional identity. In the theory of the roles, Goffman (2002) compared the organizational workers to the actresses on the scene, who take on concrete roles in concrete situations; here, the scene is a social field with its social decorations. Hamilton defined 9 levels of professional develompement: *victim, survivor, worker, player, performer, conductor, trustee, composer* and *legend*. **In the Fourth Chapter,** a detailed methodology of the research is presented. **In the Fifth Chapter,** the results are shown. Finally, in **the Sixth Chapter**, the author presents a conceptualization of social work quality which could be called a grounded theory of constructing the social work quality.

2. METHODOLOGICAL PROVISION OF THE RESEARCH

For this research, a qualitative analysis of grounded theory (GT) was chosen, particulary a constructivist version of it. This choice was based on several aspects, partly related to the object of the study and the constructivist nature of social work field. The grounded theory method was chosen for the thesis due to the unique possibility to develop a theory using empirical data. In other words, the grounded theory is able to reflect a field of practice and enables conceptualization of practical experience to a higher, theoretical level. The methodology of GT allowed usage of different types of data collection from various sources: in-depth interview, dyadic and triadic interviews, and extracts from books (Charmaz, 2002). This led to a possibility to have a close-up and in-depth look into the research object. The constructivist version of GT allowed interpretational data analysis, which benefits evaluating the data in social context and does not require sterile neutrality of a researcher. Because this dissertation is based on the constructivist theory, the chosen constructivist GT version (Charmaz,2008,2010) allowed the work to come to one common philosophical view, which tells that all the world surrounding us is a product of certain social constructs and interactions between them. In contrast to other versions of GT, the constructivist GT not only has its ways to conceptualize the qualitative data, but is also able to offer some ways in interpreting them. This creates a special immersion of the researcher into the process. He or she becomes simply obsessed with the work and this allows for creativity and free interpretation, especially in studying the objects of the research, known very subjectively. Precisely in this version of GT, the role of the researcher is very important, alongside with his or her reflections and empathy while analyzing the data throughout the whole work.

The sampling of participants

The multistage purposive sampling (Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydžiūnaitė, 2008) was employed. The first stage of the sampling covers creation of the list of institutions according to their types and services provided. Firstly, author seeked to ensure an equal number of employees from nongovernment and budgetary institutions. For the institutions, the following inclusion criteria were applied:

- The organizations should provide the community based (i.e., not residential) services;
- The organizations should provide their services for the adults in social risk situations;
- The organizations should represent distinct geographical regions. Author sought the institutions to represent different regions (Birštonas, Kėdainiai, Tauragė, Alytus, Vilkaviškis), including the big cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Šiauliai). This is shown in Table 4 in the dissertation text. The regions were chosen randomly[2].

In sum, 10 organizations were chosen. After that, author did a criterion sampling for the social workers. In the first stage, the social workers were sampled in 8 organizations. Later, when constructing the empirically based theory and performing more interviews, additional 3 organizations were included in order to obtain more data.

After choosing the type of organization, the criterion sampling of social workers and the clients was performed. For the first group, containing social workers, the following criteria served for the decision to include them:

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[2]Even though the author had a plan to represent the organizations of different regions, still, searched for many of them in Vilnius since the network of organizations here is much wider compared to those in other regions. Therefore the number of organizations based in Vilnius is relatively higher in our sample.

- The workers had to have practical duties in their role profile in one the institutions selected by the first stage of the sampling, including governmental and nongovernmental institutions (but not administrative duties);
- The informants had to have a higher education in social work;
- The informants had to have at least three years of experience in social work.
- The informants had to deal with adults in social risk situations.

For the participants, a partly theoretical sampling was used. This means, that not the whole sample was chosen in the first trial. According to the methodology of grounded theory (GT), it is recommended to sample the data based on the principle of data saturation. Therefore, theoretical sampling aids for the subsequent analysis to select those workers who would help in enriching the existing categories of analysis or could show some new aspects of the phenomenon being investigated. The second group of informants included clients of social workers, i.e., recipients of social services. It was searched for the respondents based on recommendations provided by social workers or others in a field. The total number of participants consisted of 22 social workers and 8 clients. Twenty-seven interviews were held, including 1 triadic and 2 dyadic interviews.

The procedures

In this study, different data acquiring methods proposed by the constructivist GT were employed. The following methods were applied: in-depth interviews with social workers; dyadic, triadic and semi-structured interviews; literature analysis; several human trafficking stories from Eglė Plytnikaitė's book "*Nematomi*" ("The Invisibles"). In this study, 22 social workers took their part. They were from: Vilnius, Kaunas, Birštonas, Kėdainiai, Šiauliai, Tauragė, Alytus, and Marijampolė (the workers from Vilkaviškis' organizations were interviewed in Marijampolė). Eight interviews were held with the clients in the following cities: Vilnius, Kaunas, Kėdainiai, Alytus,

and Šiauliai. The first pilot interviews with three workers as the participants were held in May, year 2016. They helped creating the instrument for the research, correcting questions and possible scenarios, and served as a test. From these interviews, some data were incorporated into the analysis in a fragmented fashion. However, the data were coded separately because the interviews were held as a free discussion. The additional interviews were performed in October-November of the year 2018, while developing the grounded theory. The data were collected based on the principle of data saturation. During the interviews with the clients, the author faced some challenges. Even though she was right on her point choosing current clients as the ones able to reflect the up to date experiences, there was some trouble with their ability to be honest, while they were still depending on the social workers and the institutions. Often, the clients perceived the interview as if it was a revision of their social worker, or themselves. Because of the fresh, emotionally overloaded experiences and the felt stigma of the clients, who were the victims of the human trafficking industry, the author was not able to meet them. However, she included the data collected by Eglė Plytnikaitė (2016), which was the testimony of the aforementioned victims. In her book, there are stories of five wome n living in Lithuania in which they honestly share their prostitution experiences, also talking about their environment, the social stigma and the support they were provided with.

All of the interviews were held and transcribed by the author of the dissertation herself. The interviews were recorded using *Voice Record App for the Android* cell phone. The interviews were transcribed in a flexible manner, since K. Charm offered no specific rules on the transcription. Although the interviews were transcribed in the normative Lithuanian language, none of the authentic expressions were skipped. The initial coding started right after the first interview, this allowed better immersion in the data and, afterwards, aided not to lose touch with it throughout the whole time of the investigation. The

initial coding was performed by *Maxqda 10* software (*Vilnius University, license no. MPPL10)*, which provides more fluent fixation of the codes and creates the tree of the codes and codes' families. Afterwards the data started to be inductively conceptualized. That means they were raised into more common categories. Charmaz recommends the axial coding which aids in structuring the data. In this stage, the codes become more purposeful, selective and conceptual (Orlova, 2014). The theoretical conceptualization means that we try to recognize typical examples in the text (i.e., the research data) divided into categories and their families, and to raise those examples to abstract level. In the constructivist GT (Charmaz, 2006), the memos written by the researcher become a method of collecting data. These are additional notes of the researcher, a diary, enabling her to follow the procedure of data conceptualization. These data emphasize the social context, in which the research is being held. The researcher is reflecting his or her experience and remarks.

3. CONPEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIAL WORK QUALITY CONSTRUCTION

The theoretical construct derived from data of the research could be called the constructed picture of social work quality. This construct is made of three levels of quality (i.e., micro, mezzo and macro) and the element of quality, assigned to those levels by the author of the dissertation. The aforementioned classification has risen from the data and was depicted in the Table 1.

Table 1. The elements of social work quality in the micro, the mezzo and the macro levels (the structuring of the research data)

Individual (**micro**) level	Organizational (**mezzo**) level	National (**macro**) level
Elements of quality:	Elements of quality:	Elements of quality:
Internal values *"I am such kind of a person"*	Manager	Prestige of profession
Relation with client *"I am just a tool"* *"an electric shepherd"*	Team work	Standardization of service provision
Avoiding professional trap	Professional development	Systems designed for quality evaluation
Emotional condition of social worker	Principles and processes of how organization operates	Avoiding traps of bureaucracy
Self-enabling, believing in oneself	Coping with uncertainty and relativity of results	

The research has shown that these elements were not operating independently. Rather, they were acting in the social context, i.e., in the organization. The social context is being created by the workers performing their particular professional roles. Indeed, the quality operates in three planes. They are the following: the quality level; the cultures of quality; and the professional roles of the workers. The author of this dissertation offers the perception of the quality at the micro level; and the influence of mezzo and macro levels on the expression of the quality. Also, she suggests some explanation on the interaction of these levels.

3.1. The micro, the mezzo and the macro levels of social work quality

In social work, the micro, mezzo and macro levels are the connecting link, wrapping around the core which is the social work quality, as if they were the strata of the atmosphere surrounding the Earth. A troposphere (a stratum nearest to the core) is the micro level of quality. This is the level in which the key social work process is generated, the relationship. This is the level of the client and the worker, forming the practical field of the profession. The micro level is very sensitive in terms of influence from other levels. The quality of the social work depends not only on relationship, but also on internal values, emotional condition of social worker and believing in oneself. The second level is like a shell covering the core and it is called the mezzo level. Here, the communication of the two (i.e. the client and the social worker) turn into the processes of organization, legitimating the processes acting in the micro level. The mezzo level with the roles of manager and team shape the particular rules which become the style in which the organization operates. The mezzo level is also responsible for amortization of the influence made by macro level, mitigates "the direct sunbeams". The macro level is like an atmosphere which regulates the whole ecosystem of the social work

quality. The macro level exerts its influence on the most common elements of the quality, ranging from the requirements for workers to the funding. The relations between the three levels are hierarchic.

3.2. Framed (heteronomous) and Liberated (autonomous) social work quality cultures

The quality culture is the organizational principles originating from an interaction of the three levels. The construct of social work quality could be expressively compared to the theory of spontaneous and constructed order, proposed by a famous Austrian economist and philosopher, F.A. Hayek. In the view of the dissertation author, this comparison aids in explaining the features of different cultures and their relation with empowerment. The Liberated quality culture elements, discovered by her, share some of the same features with the Hayek spontaneous order cosmos, designed for the formation of social structures. At the same time, the constructed order taxis could contribute to an explanation of the ways in which the Framed quality culture operates. The Liberated culture seeks to delegate the responsibility of decision making to the workers. Consequently, such type of organizations often lack a strict hierarchic structure and rather operate based on example of the matrix organizations. This means, the workers have no predefined models designed for solving the problems of the client. Rather, the workers start from client needs and strengths, looking for the possibilities of empowerment. The workers in Liberated culture act autonomously and make their decisions based on the developing relation with the client. The Framed culture of social work is in the opposite end of the scale, and relies on heteronomy principles, i.e., the structure constructed by others. Such type of organization frames itself into the hierarchic structures; frames their workers into the order and procedures; frames the client into seeking the results, constructed by others. In the Framed culture, there are stricter norms of management and rules; the workers do their jobs in

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strictly set frames; and the services are provided closely following a particular problem solving algorithm. We can depict these two cultures on the scale in which the Liberated culture would be autonomous and the Framed culture would be heteronomous. All of the intermediate variations could have both, the features of autonomy and heteronomy. There is also a difference in understanding work objectives and results in these two cultures. Hayek (1998) claimed that in the case of taxis, the order is created for serving particular objectives, installing the discourse of power. The common objectives are determined from the top, and they must lead the whole organization. In the exact same manner, the Framed social work quality culture operates. This culture has its roots in the paradigm of the depersonalized universal results, usually forming in the macro level. Rather than analyzing concrete social work situations in an individual manner, the framed organization plans the results based on previously acquired experience of certain situations and certain level of their expectancy (Hayek,1998). Contrarily, in Liberated organizations, results are being constructed in relation to the client, i.e. in the micro level. In Liberated organizations, the orientation towards the process and the relationship is not intended to ignore the results; rather, this is based on the client's right of self-determination. The results encouraging awareness (i.e., not determined results) are more sustainable and have deeper social effect on the empowerment.

3.3 The expression of professional roles in different social work quality cultures

The professional roles exert their influence on relations with colleagues, clients, and the job practice. In most cases, these roles are changing not only due to the quality culture and the leadership of the manager, but also due to the social context of the organization. The social workers often accept their roles like a professional "mask", creating their professional identity. According to the adapted version

of Hamilton professional roles classification, the *Framed* culture is more comfortable for the following employees: *The workers, the performers,* and *the players.* For these professionals quality is mainly associated with constant regular work, performed by the whole team and the managers. They are better minded for operating in heteronomous environment, based on obvious regulation. If there is no managerial support to sustain quality, it will not be important for the workers either. *Worker* is a task operator, who does not make decisions. *Player* is flexible, he can change his attitude depending on situations and adapt to managers' perceptions. *Performer* is already using some creativity and decision-making skills. *The liberated* culture has its own preferred roles, which are: *the trustees, the conductors,* and *the composers.* These are often the ones who have great experience and knowledge and therefore are able to tolerate the ambiguity, they can be good team leaders, act independently and create open system organizations to empower the clients. The *trustees* are the loyal guards of the organization. They identify themselves with it, are willing to make the changes and improvements needed, to search for new social work methods, new ways of access, and are often the creators of social work in their organizations. The *Conductor* is a transitional role and he can work in transitional cultures, he can accept a certain level of control, and tolerate autonomy as well. This type values managerial and team support. The *Conductor* has a strong urge to learn and develop. *The Composers* are the social workers who despite all regulation are able to autonomously act for the welfare of the client. They can "spread their wings" and are not attached to one organization, they can be employed by several where their unique competences are needed. These are workers – experts.

3.4. The influence of macro level on the interaction of the social work quality cultures

What determines the domination and the transit between culture? The main influencer is the macro level. In the social field, the macro decisions, the strictness and the minuteness of regulation are able to change the distribution of the quality cultures. When the influence of the macro level is getting stronger, it results in the following trends: *Framed* culture is becoming more dominant; the *Liberated* culture is becoming less dominant; and the autonomy is decreasing. The amount of the autonomy is determined by the macro level. The directive decisions made on a macro level prevent autonomous organizations from surviving. As a consequence, these organizations have to change their quality culture for the sake of meeting the requirements. The *Liberated* cultures become smaller in their number or come closer to the right end of the scale, where the heterogeneous organizations lie, while the *Framed* organizations expand. By setting the requirements for the results of performance, the macro level limits the *Liberated* organizations in their ability to construct their results while individually relating to the specific client. The *Liberated* quality culture is gradually forced to move to heteronomy. This process, called *de-autonomization,* poses risk on new nontraditional views and interferes with the objective of making long lasting social changes. The reducing number of *Liberated* cultures can be harmful to the client empowerment practice and lead to the loss of some important professional roles, like *composers* or *conductors.*

CONCLUSIONS

1) The research indicated that social work quality is constructed on three levels: individual (*micro*), organizational (*mezzo*), and strategic or national (*macro*) levels, each of which can be described by quality culture characteristics as well as certain professional role structure of social workers. These three different levels (micro, mezzo, and macro) create quality expression and ensure quality itself by interacting. The relations between levels are hierarchical. Macro level is usually the source of power, the relationship with other levels is always autocratic. Depending on the control and regulation macro level is performing the operation on mezzo level is changing accordingly. Mezzo level can be more flexible when interacting with micro level. The organizations of *Framed* cultures usually have mezzo level passing requirements to micro level in an autocratic manner as well, while the organizations of *Liberated*culture seek flexible ways of working in order to sustain their workers' autonomy.

2) The research indicated two types of quality culture in the organizations: *Framed* and *Liberated*. The *Liberated* culture is more autonomous, fosters teamwork, and independent decisions based on individual client needs. *Framed* culture is more heterogeneous minding rules and strict procedures, and client needs are more frequently substituted by standardized problem solving algorithms. Self-regulating team formation and informal leaders' initiatives are supported in *Liberated* quality culture. Self-regulating teams are notable to possess strong values and show constant professional growth. *Framed* cultures depend on external regulation and common rules. Intermediate quality cultures, having features of both *Liberated* and *Framed* cultures are found in practice as well.

3) Social work quality construct on individual (micro) level is determined by different professional roles of social workers. Professional roles, such as *conductor*, *trustee*, and *composer*, interpret quality as a social construct, which cannot be determined in advance, as one can never be aware of all the circumstances. These roles are often found in *Liberated* social work quality cultures. Other roles (*worker, survivor, performer, player*) see quality as an average of previous experience, when quality can be determined by a common universal requirement. This perseption are more frequently found in *Framed* quality cultures.

4) The professional roles of a social worker are hybrid and changing, they depend on organizational culture and social context in which the organization and the worker operate.In order to promote quality, the organization aims for different professional roles to exist in a team. An even distribution of different professional roles create better conditions for empowerment.

5) On individual (micro) social work functioning level quality concludes categories, such as *personal values, ability to identify boundaries while maintaining the relationship, ability to master client manipulation and one's emotional state*, and keeping focus on one's role at the same time. Individual level is key in client empowering, here the empowerment practice is being created.

6) On organizational (mezzo) level, the organization becomes the institution that is structuring and legitimizing the quality. On this level client empowerment circumstances are being created. On organizational (mezzo) level quality is determined by *manager's role and the ability to communicate quality, teamwork and opportunities for professional growth*. The research indicates that there are several types of managers in practice. There are supportive managers, who promote a

rather flat self-regulating quality culture. And then there are non-supportive managers – administrators, who stagnate quality, as well as repressive managers, who restrict quality growth.

7) The challenge organizational (mezzo) level has, is the relativity of result. Although the result of social work is one of the most difficult areas in quality management, far too little emphasis in practice is given to it. Quality measurement should be performed applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, qualitative access is indispensable in order to reveal individual social change. Social workers lack competence in measuring this impact, and organizations lack process-based tools and recourses to ensure monitoring. Currently practice shows that quality is constructed from common experience and fragmented knowledge.

8) Macro level quality elements derive from roles and functions that research participants perceive on national level, for example, to *ensure the prestige of the profession*. Due to low prestige of the profession, the workers feel demotivated and their powers lessen in the social field as well, in comparison to other professions, like doctors, etc. Other important quality elements on macro level are *standardization and bureaucratic pressure, funding and creation of quality* control *system* for social work.

9) While macro level influence is gaining strength, *Framed* organizational cultures are dominating, *Liberated* cultures decrease, and the autonomy boundaries of mezzo and micro levels diminish.Organizations are autonomous in their activity as much as the macro level allows them to. When macro level constructs social work results, *Liberated* social work quality culture is forced to move towards heteronomy. This process

poses threat of loss of unconventional views and long-term social change.

10) There are two different perspectives towards social work quality seen in practice –managerialism approach and empowerment approach. The managerialism perspective results in employment of managerial methods and standardization, while empowerment perspective is based on human rights paradigm and self-determination values. It is important to note and avoid the mistake of confusing *social work management*(as in the process of care provision to the client and the result the client achieves) with *social work institution management* (as in organizational management). Managerialism perspective could be applied in organizational management (yearly planning and budgeting, employee search, health and safety, etc.). Whereas in the process of social work service provision the empowerment and enablement is key. Reconciling of the two perspectives would allow the formation of *liberated* empowering social work culture.

11) Currently social work quality does not receive adequate attention in the organizations. The management and the workers feel the lack of quality assurance competence. The prevailing bureaucratic system of social politics control based on distrust becomes an obstacle in forming positive quality assurance experience. The excess governmental requirements stagnate social work quality growth. The workers treat these bureaucratic requirements as distrust in their work and professional competence. This kind of environment can only simulate quality, and not create it.

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NOTES