Challenges of Postmodern Institutionalisation for Education in Social Work

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In the eyes of Czech society, social work remains an institution with a vague purpose and blurred status. In contrast to social work in many other countries, this is not a consequence of its deprofessionalisation and postmodern casting of doubts on a domain that used to be clearer (see, for example, Clark, Newman, 1997; Laan v. d., 1998, Harris, 2003; Dustin, 2007; and other authors). In its modern past, Czech social work never attained clear attributes of a professional occupation (Wilensky, 1965: 283–308; Greenwood, 1976; Howe, 1986: 114–122) and was hence not accepted as a helping profession with a distinct domain (Musil, 2008). Prolonged, informed observation leads to the assumption that in Czech society we perceive "social work" as a legitimate and routine offer of social services and income maintenance. The latter are seen as suitable means of "social work" aimed at compensating for personal deficits[1] wherever individuals are prevented from satisfying their personal needs or the needs of their families (Musil, 2010). Understood in this way, "social work" can hardly be recognised as a helping occupation with a specific domain, because the public considers that workers in professions established under modern conditions (especially psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, teachers providing special education, lawyers etc.) and even workers in non-professional occupations such as day care, personal assistance etc. are, too, experts in help with personal deficits.

A debate about the need for establishing social work would be useless if personal deficits were exclusively responsible for life difficulties of the recipients of helping occupations. I consider that the focus of Czech "social work" on personal deficits marginalises troubles related to problem interactions between individuals and entities in their social environment. In

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[1] It is considered that personal deficits of individuals that are usually compensated for by using social services or income maintenance include, in particular, lack of independence due to a health limitation, disability, mental illness or personality disorder, lack of personal competence or qualification, poverty, drug addiction, inclination to deviance, etc.

Czech society, interaction problems are routinely regarded as a consequence of personal deficits. The latter are considered to be the source of life troubles, and emphasis is "logically" placed on help with managing them. Interaction problems pass unnoticed and two types of people in need are not afforded any help with managing such problems: first, those whose problems in interactions with their social environment present difficulties in managing life with a personal deficit, and second, those whose interaction problems present difficulties which are hard to manage despite the fact they do not actually live with a personal deficit[2].

Thus, in the Czech environment, help with managing problem interactions, which – as will be shown below – is often understood as a distinct domain of social work (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965, 286, 288–291, 315–316; Bartlett, 1970; Laan v.d., 1998; Lorenz, 2004: 146–147, 2006; Payne, 2006; Musil, 2013a), is often unavailable to people who in fact may feel the need for such help. It tends to be available at random and cannot be expected as a routine part of what is normally offered by helping organisations. The managers and social workers from such organisations often do not anticipate that help with interaction troubles should be offered and (hence) the recipients of help do not actually expect it.

Filling this gap in the offer of helping work in Czech society means not only aspiration for recognition and practical provision of skilled help with interaction troubles. Given the historical background outlined above, this also means an attempt at winning recognition for social work as a field oriented on help with interaction troubles in postmodern conditions.

It is my opinion that the contents of education in social work must be governed by this task. I understand that those who received this education should gain recognition for their field by helping those involved in the recipients' life situations to address the troubles present in mutual interactions. In my view, two topics are crucial in postmodern conditions in relation to education of social workers. First, the identity of the occupation, and second, negotiation of his role by the social worker. With a view to explaining the meaning of these topics and formulating them more accurately, in the following text I shall attempt to answer the following question: "From the viewpoint of postmodern institutionalisation, what education topics are crucial for cultivating the ability of social workers to provide a specific type of help and gain recognition for its routine use in society?"

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[2] Where interaction problems bring difficulties which are difficult to manage for individuals without a personal deficit, laypersons and helping workers do not provide them with assistance in managing their problems in interactions, assuming that the interaction troubles are caused by a personal deficit. Instead, they look for their personal deficit in order to find an explanation for their troubles, or to help them with the assumed personal deficit.

In the following text, the answer to this question will be based on determination of the outer limits of the term "institutionalisation of a helping occupation" and a more detailed description of "modern" and "postmodern" institutionalisation of social work. By providing characteristics of postmodern institutionalisation of social work, I will substantiate the importance of identity and role negotiation for the social worker's ability to gain recognition for his occupation. Finally, I will offer three scenarios of postmodern institutionalisation in a society where modern professionalisation has not taken place. I will outline the contexts in which, according to the assumptions known to me, it could be possible to put into practice the proposal for integrating the study of knowledge and "technical" apparatus of social work with a reflection on its identity and exercise of its improvised application in negotiation within the postmodern context of multi-occupational nets.

1. Social institution and institutionalisation of a helping occupation

In this chapter, I will define the notion of social institution and, subsequently, use the same to define institutionalisation of a helping occupation so as to make it a practical starting point for describing the modern and postmodern approaches to the institutionalisation of social work.

1.1 Institution

Sociologists understand social institution as an established pattern of actions and interactions of members of a group, by the application of which people express, either in fact or symbolically[3], an attitude to meanings accepted in the cultures of their groups[4] (Keller,

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[3] To express practically an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of a group means to factually contribute, by using an institutionalised pattern of action, to the attainment of something that is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. help satisfy the needs of people with disabilities by donating to charity), or to factually restrict or threaten the attainment of something that is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. to deplete the fund from which the needs of people with disabilities are to be satisfied by committing theft in the foundation's office). To express symbolically an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of a group means to show, using an institutionalised pattern of action, a positive or negative attitude to what is considered important by someone within the group (e.g. to publicly manifest support to those in need by unpretentiously receiving the Three Kings' carollers every year or, on the other hand, by publicly showing aversion to support for the weak and disadvantaged by regularly attending concerts of a music band whose texts proclaim a message of racial purity). An institutionalised pattern of action can simultaneously serve to express an attitude to what is considered important by people in the group, both in fact and symbolically (a celebrity can donate to charity generously but also ostensibly for the media; theft can have financial implications but can also cast doubts on the trustworthiness of the foundation and its objectives).

[4] Keller (1991: 55–56) draws a distinction between functional and anthropological concepts of an institution. In the functionalist concept, institutionalised behaviour is oriented on meanings that are important for the whole group (e.g. the relatively complex pattern of actions and interactions which we call "school" is, for the members of the group, a means of socialisation and continuation of the group's cultural traditions), while the

1991: 54–56; Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 39–40; and other authors). In the above understanding of the social institution, the defining elements are, according to theory, meanings of established patterns of actions and interactions for those who apply them on the one hand and, on the other hand, conditions for reproduction of institutionalised patterns of action[5].

Keller defines social institution from the perspective of meanings for members of groups of people. According to him, institutions are ways of satisfying needs or addressing a real or fictitious problem (Keller, 1991: 54–55). If we understand non-satisfied needs as a synonym for a problem, we can say that the importance of applying institutionalised patterns of action lies in the fact that they make it possible or easier for people to address problems with meeting their needs or attaining values that are important for them personally or for the groups (or parts of the same) to which they belong.

Not every pattern of action used to manage problems can be regarded as an institution. While there are endless patterns of actions which are used as described above, they can be called institutions insofar as they can be identified as standardised (Keller, 1991: 54–56; Colyvasm, Jonsson, 2011: 38) and are simultaneously accepted as legitimate ways of managing a problem (Keller, 1991: 56). The authors cited above present standardisation, legitimacy and complementarity between them as preconditions for the reproduction of abstract patterns of action. The word standardisation can be understood as a collective term covering transmissibility, exteriorisation and routinisation, i.e. characteristics of the ways in which patterns are used. The word legitimacy is a collective term for recognition and knowing assumption of a pattern, i.e. for the characteristics of the ways in which it is experienced.

A pattern becomes an institution if its characteristic actions and typical interactions are transmissible (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 38–45). This means that actions and interactions anticipated by the pattern can be imitated and replicated over time, by various agents and at

anthropological approach admits that established patterns of actions and interactions may represent personal meanings of individuals (e.g. the school, which serves as a means of cultural reproduction for the group, may serve a maltreated child as a means of personal escape from its unemployed, paedophile father). In order to bridge the difference between the two approaches to the relationship between the pattern of action and meaning of its application as observed by Keller, we say that "by applying institutionalised action, people express an attitude to the meanings recognised in the culture of their group". Putting it this way, both the functionalist interpretation (by applying patterns of action, people can express their attitude to something that is important for the whole group – take part in the group's cultural reproduction by sending children to school) and the anthropological interpretation (by applying patterns of action, people can express their attitude to what is important for themselves, a subgroup or the group in its entirety – for example, by failing to send their children to school and excusing absence, parents can use the institution of truancy to show unwillingness of a member of a minority subgroup to participate in the group's cultural reproduction; their children can use the same institution – truancy backed by parents – to demonstrate their personal wish to do whatever they like or show their personal wish to avoid teachers' criticism).

[5] Given that interactions can be seen as chains of people's mutual actions and reactions (Grossen, 2010: 2-4), the terms "established pattern of action and interactions", "institutionalised actions" or "institutionalised pattern of actions" can be considered synonymous and will be used as synonyms in the following text.

various places without a change in the understanding of the pattern accepted by a certain circle of people (Zucker, 1977: 728). For example, school is an institution. It is a pattern which defines the passing over of cultural contents as a characteristic action and defines interactions among teachers and students as typical interactions. Diverse cultural contents have been passed over via interactions between teachers and students for centuries in many schools of various kinds all over the world, without any fundamental change in the basic arrangement of the pattern.

Exteriorisation is the first precondition for the thus-understood transmissibility. This means that an understanding of actions and interactions that are considered characteristic of the given pattern is passed over through symbolic communication[6] (Keller, 1991: 56) among members of the group and is therefore seen by them[7] as an obvious part of the outer world. (Zucker, 1997: 728.)

Routinisation is the second precondition for transmissibility. A certain pattern of actions and interactions is institutionalised to the extent that it is "ready-made" (Zucker, 1997: 728) – it is at hand for its (potential) users and is replicated by them when in use, without having to think about what course the action should take. The above exteriorisation is a precondition for routine application of patterns of actions and interactions. Routinisation is conditional on passing over the understanding of the patterns through symbolic communication. Patterns of action are then – according to Zucker – seen as rules given from outside that are an obvious part of the world around us and determine what is possible and rational (Zucker, 1997: 728). The members of a group are therefore routinely expected to use them when addressing a specific type of problem (Keller, 1991: 58).

As mentioned above, Keller (1991: 56) considers that institutionalised action is "standardised". For me, this term covers the three aforementioned defining characteristics of

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[6] Symbolic communication is a form of action which is characterised by communication or exchange of information, meanings and their interpretations through symbols. Symbols are attributes which act as an impulse with a substitutive role, i.e. attributes that mean something other than they directly convey or from which something can be derived in addition to what they directly convey (Nakonečný, 1996: 1255). Keller notes that this is a specifically human form of communication which makes it possible to obtain information regarding things, events and thoughts that are distant both physically and in time. Thanks to symbolic communication, humans can learn from the past, envisage the future and live in a world of abstractions. Keller, 1991: 36–37.) The ability to learn from the past using symbolic communication and hence to understand abstractions is a key to passing over and replicating patterns of actions and interactions among people in groups.
[7] In symbolic communication, the role of attributes can be taken by gestures, sounds, depictions, things, actions or colours (Nakonečný, 1996: 1255). It follows that the taking over of the communication of an abstract (unchanging) content of institutionalised patterns of behaviour by people is mediated by more than just spoken or written word (articulate sound or image); instead, it is carried by the vehicle of observation of people's everyday actions and interactions, the course of everyday events and the like. In other words, from the recipient's view, communications of institutionalised patterns of action are symbolised by his entire usual social environment. The patterns of action passed over in this manner can thus appear to be an "obvious part of the outer world".

institutionalised patterns of action. It is inherently transmissible and, at the same time, exteriorised and routine, and these three characteristics are mutually interdependent.

In addition to standardisation, legitimacy is the second condition for reproducing institutionalised action. Following Schuman (1995, in Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011: 39–40), we can define the legitimacy of an institution as an understanding prevailing in the group that actions following a certain pattern are appropriate in terms of a socially constructed framework of values, rules, ideas and definitions (briefly, "cultural background"). We consider that this definition of legitimacy is abstract enough to include both the functionalist and anthropological approaches to the legitimacy of institutions as distinguished by Keller (1991: 56).

For functionalists, according to Keller, patterns of actions are legitimate insofar as they are "approved and sanctioned" in terms of meanings important for the whole group (for example, ties of relationship are desirable for ensuring biological, economic and cultural reproduction of the group). In the eyes of functionalists, legitimacy stems from the cultural background, and from the perspective of the latter, certain patterns of actions and interactions are seen as appropriate responses to problems and needs that are perceived as important for the whole group. Those who advocate the anthropological approach regard institutions as forms of actions that are generally recognised in interpersonal relationships because they relieve humans of the need to re-explore and rethink the best ways to satisfy each need. In this respect, patterns of actions can be called legitimate insofar as they make it easier for people in the group to satisfy their collective needs or individual needs, even if such needs are perceived as appropriate by only a part of the group, or seen as inappropriate by a large or small part of the group (e.g. non-marital cohabitation). In this case, various cultural backgrounds that express what is appropriate in terms of the problems or needs of various entities within the group are seen as a source of legitimacy. The anthropological approach makes it possible, amongst other things, to distinguish patterns of actions that are appropriate in terms of problems and needs important for the whole group from patterns of action appropriate in terms of the needs that are constructed by a dominant part of the group as important for the whole group.

Colyvas and Jonsson point out that a pattern of actions becomes an institution if the relationship between its legitimacy and standardisation is that of mutual support. In other words, this is so if in the eyes of those who apply a standardised pattern of actions, legitimacy justifies transmissibility and repetition of that pattern and if a routine and repetition gives

exteriorised practices the value of something habitual that exceeds their immediate usefulness. (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 40.)

Keller comments on the way in which institutionalised actions are accepted. He points out that authors who discuss institutions (such as Sumner) distinguish between institutions and habits. Habit is an elementary form of action which is experienced as binding; people respect it and reproduce it by their actions, not always knowingly. On the other hand, institutions are conscious habits, with a disposition to additional rational justification of their binding nature. (Keller, 1991: 56.) In this respect, for example, adult people's spontaneous tendency to show and name surrounding things to children is a habit. School can be seen as an institution in which the original habitual actions of adults are knowingly arranged and developed into a complex system of interactions among teachers and students, whose binding participation in interactions with teachers may be rationalised, e.g. by the need to cultivate qualified workforces, the need to pass over the cultural traditions of the nation, etc.

The division between habits and institutions leads to the concept that institutions are established by additional realisation and rationalisation of what were once unknowing habits.

If we summarise the above elements of social institution, we can define it as a standardised (i.e. transmissible, exteriorised and routinely applied) pattern of actions and related interactions whose application by others is routinely expected by people (individuals, groups or parts of them) affected by a problem with the satisfaction of needs or attaining values, who recognise the given pattern of actions and interactions as an appropriate means of addressing this problem on the background of the values, rules, ideas and definitions they have socially constructed.

A standardised pattern of actions and interactions usually encompasses an abstract understanding of the personnel structure of the institution in question. Since this article discusses institutionalisation of a helping occupation, it is reasonable to distinguish here between two types of abstract ideas concerning staff. In the first case, the personnel of the institution consists of its users only – those who use it primarily[8] as a means of addressing their problems. For example, the institutionalised pattern termed "support group" expects that the users and, at the same time, exclusive members of staff of a support group will be people who personally struggle with the same problem. The other view is that the staff of an

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[8] I use the term "primary users" for entities whose problems the institution is expected to manage with a view to achieving its purpose. If a model institution encompasses the concept of executive staff expected to work towards achievement of the institution's purpose and the primary users interact with this staff to receive help with addressing their problems, the executive staff may use the institution as a means of addressing their own problems instead of addressing the primary users' problems. If this is the case, the executive staff are no longer seen as the primary user but rather the "secondary user" of the institution.

institution comprise two groups of people – the users of the institution and autonomously organised executive staff. For example, the institutionalised pattern which is usually termed "family counselling" assumes that the users of the institution will be people with problems in family relations and the executive staff will be the counselling centre personnel, perhaps plus other family experts they may work with.

According to Keller, it is important not to confuse an "institution", or institutionalised pattern of actions, which is a recognised and standardised abstract idea, with an "organisation". The latter is a specific network of people who, at a specific place and specific time, act and organise their relationships on the basis of a recognised and standardised abstract idea. (Keller, 1991: 56.) In the above examples, we refer to an understanding of the structure of staff which is part of the abstract pattern of "support group" or "family counselling". In these examples, "support group" or "family counselling" are institutions that the members of specific organisations applied to organise their interactions. We could name, for example, the support groups of people with diabetes mellitus at the Prague Teaching Hospital and the workers and recipients of help at the family counselling NGO "Srdce na dlani, o.p.s." in a certain town of the Czech Republic. Where I refer to institutionalisation of social work in this article, I refer to the clarification and acceptance of an abstract pattern which could be subsequently taken by people with interaction problems at various places in Czech society to routinely use the help of autonomously organised specialists in the management of these problems.

If there are organisations which are, in an isolated and unsystematic way, active in Czech (or other) society to offer help to people with interaction troubles, this does not necessarily mean that social work has been accepted by that society as a legitimate, standardised and hence routinely applied way of addressing interaction problems. An effective but isolated help from social workers may spark interest in a generalised understanding of professional help with interaction problems in the media, among the public, policymakers and employers of social workers as well as potential recipients of help. However, before a specific part of society accepts a comprehensible and abstract pattern of "social work", the individual cases of help from social workers will continue to be just isolated examples of a pattern taken most likely from abroad rather than routine examples of diverse applications of a legitimate pattern of addressing problems that people in society experience in their personal relations or relations with various organisations.

1.2 Institutionalisation

For me, institutionalisation is a process in which an abstract pattern of actions and interactions gradually attains the characteristics of a social institution. This means that a significant part of a social group begins to be aware of, and give a name to, a problem which is poorly addressed or new and yet to be addressed. At the same time it formulates a pattern of actions and interactions by reinterpreting an established habit or pattern taken from the group. It begins to use the respective pattern in a standardised manner as a means of addressing the problem and, consequently, knowingly assumes the idea that the given pattern of actions and interactions is a reasonable way of managing this problem. The said individual processes, i.e. naming the problem, formulating a pattern, using the pattern to address the problem, standardisation in using the pattern and knowing assumption of the pattern as a means of addressing the problem are mutually stimulative in the process flow of institutionalisation (Colyvas, Jonsson, 2011: 38–45; de Swaan, 1990); as such they often run in parallel.

Despite this, it is possible to conceive, with some caution, a general sequence of the above individual and mutually supportive processes. De Swaan (1990) perceived the birth of psychotherapy as a process of institutionalising a helping occupation. He considers the birth of psychotherapy as part of a wider process in which various modern professions including social work were analogously established and delimited in relation to each other (de Swaan, 1990: 14). In this respect, de Swaan's concept of the inception of psychotherapy can be seen as a model for modern institutionalisation of all helping occupations. I will attempt to extract this model from de Swaan's discourse. In doing this, I will disregard the modern details of formulation, standardisation and legitimation of psychotherapy and will focus my attention on the general sequence of the individual processes of institutionalisation as a assumed by de Swaan. I will therefore consider the below-stated interpretation of de Swaan's concept of the birth of psychotherapy to be a description of the framework pattern of institutionalisation of a helping occupation.

According to de Swaan (1990), we can identify two, or in fact three, starting points of the process of institutionalisation of a helping occupation. The first is the specific context from which stem the impulses for formulating and applying a new pattern of actions (for example, psychotherapy, etc.). As a specific part of this context, de Swaan describes how people who live in the relevant social context experience a formerly unknown type of troubles. I will therefore take the experience with the formerly unknown type of troubles as the second, relatively independent starting point for the birth of an institution. The third starting point is the formulation of a new, or reformulation of an old, pattern of actions.

According to de Swaan, naming the experienced troubles as a problem which can be addressed using a pattern of action which has not yet been fully tested is a fundamental impulse for further development of the new institution. By using its pattern, even if only rarely at first, and as their awareness increases, people learn to name their troubles (e.g. difficulties accompanying the experiencing of privacy or leaving privacy when entering the public space) as problems (anxiety, neurosis, depression, etc.) that are expected to be manageable by applying the new pattern (psychotherapy). De Swaan repeatedly analyses the role of giving life troubles the name "problem". This generates the impression that according to him, institutionalisation is not necessarily triggered by experience with a formerly non-existent type of troubles, but primarily a new designation of certain troubles that could formerly be unknown or undetected. The new designation of troubles as a problem is understood by de Swaan as part of a new pattern of actions.

The endeavour to manage the newly named problem becomes a prompt for standardising the use of the new pattern and support for its legitimacy. Gradual standardisation of the use of a pattern together with naming the problem may result in conscious acceptance of the pattern as a means of addressing the problem. This may in turn support its legitimacy and further standardisation. Standardisation and legitimation of a new pattern of actions are described by de Swaan as a process of deepening knowledge, and awareness, of the terminology and language by which the purpose and rules of use of the respective institution are conveyed.

In my opinion, the above hypothetical sequence of individual processes can be seen neither as an algorithm of institutionalisation of a helping occupation nor as a measurable series of events expected in its course. For me, it is a description of a broad pattern of mutual stimulation among sub-processes within the process of institutionalisation of helping occupations. I will use the pattern derived from de Swaan's discourse as a background for asking questions related to institutionalisation of social work. In the following chapters, the said questions will be related, first, to the context of formulating a new pattern of action, i.e. social work, and second, the content of the pattern, i.e. the concept of social work, and third, the ways of legitimation and standardisation of the new pattern. I will discuss answers to these questions in the modern and postmodern contexts in the following, second chapter.

2. Modern and postmodern institutionalisation of social work

The terms institution and institutionalisation are almost absent in literature on the social work occupation. Researchers describe the process of formation, standardisation and legitimation of abstract patterns of actions of social workers dealing with clients and other

entities by using the terms profession and professionalisation. They use the term "profession" (or "professional occupation)" to refer to an organised group of specialists which shows certain cultural, organisational and economic elements (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–308; Greenwood, 1976; Howe, 1986: 114–118; and other authors). They usually use the term "professionalisation" for the process in which a group of specialists attains these elements (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283). The above authors believe that the cultural elements of a profession lie in the ethos of devotion to the client's interests and concept of help (mainly in terms of area of competence, function and method) supported by a fund of systematic knowledge and theory. The organisational elements of a profession include, in their opinion, autonomous professional association and guarantee of control marked by law over the professional skill of the members provided by the association. A key economic element of a profession is seen by the authors in the monopoly of a group of specialists from the given occupation on an activity in a specified area.

The above elements were regarded as appropriate in the conditions of modern society. Indeed, the professions existing today, including social work in some countries, attained these elements in its context (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965; Lorenz, 2006; and other authors.)

Payne, Lorenz and Howe point out that postmodern development has cast doubts on the formerly respected characteristics of professional helping occupations approached from the perspectives of modernity. Emphasis on narrow specialisation was gradually losing its legitimacy in the last decades of the 20th century, while the universal ideas – providing little differentiation – about what the recipients of help needed and how they should be helped began to lose their credibility. The modern idea that the question of what means should be used to help and how such help should be provided is to be answered by a closed group of experts without the involvement of clients or representatives of their interest groups generates a suspicion that the experts will not take sufficient account of the diversity of people's problems, their cultural differentiation and other social groups' interests. The above suspicion gives legitimacy to attempts at what is called de-professionalisation, which is promoted by the elites with the fear that closeness and autonomy of professions may pose a risk to their economic and political interests. (Payne, 2006: 141–162; Lorenz, 2007: 65–67.) The idea of a universal theoretical concept of social work was defeated in the context of distrust of attempts at promoting one monopolistic truth and under the influence of the movements for the rights of various groups of clients of the welfare state (Howe, 1994: 524–525; Lorenz, 2007: 65–67). Howe is more explicit than other authors in his interpretation of these findings; he considers that social work is disintegrating into diverse parts, each following a path of its own. Their

independent knowledge diverges and suggests disintegration of attempts of social work at unification in philosophical, theoretical, professional respects and in terms of education and organisation. (Howe, 1994: 525.)

Under the conditions observed by Howe, it is no longer manageable or indeed impossible to present social work as a coherent and organised group with a clear mission, thus guaranteeing credibility of its members in the eyes of the legislature, the public and recipients of help. The arrangement and elements of the profession cease to provide legitimacy to the activities of helping specialists. In professions that became standard professions in the past, their members continue to practice their rituals but face distrust among a large part of politicians, general public and recipients of help. Occupations that did not establish themselves as professions in the past can no longer become a profession in the modern sense of the word, or they face considerable difficulties in such attempts. This leads to the assumption that in present society, the term professionalisation ceases to be an appropriate means of gaining insight into the processes of formation, standardisation and legitimation of abstract patterns of social workers' actions in interactions with the recipients of help and other entities. It appears that the term professionalisation refers to the contemporary – modern – course of the above processes. It may therefore pose an obstacle to understanding how social workers gain recognition for their specific method of helping in postmodern society.

The term institutionalisation appears to me as a more appropriate means of gaining insight into the processes of formation, standardisation and legitimation of social work. From that perspective, we can distinguish between the modern concept of institutionalisation of social work, characterised by the "professionalisation" perspective, and the postmodern concept of institutionalisation of social work, an appropriate presentation of which I will endeavour to provide on the following pages of this chapter. I will describe the typologies of both concepts.

I will also attempt to reproduce the notions and key arguments used by the relevant authors to express their understanding of the processes of institutionalisation of social work in modern and postmodern conditions. I have chosen relevant authors who explicitly deal with the formation of social work as a professional, or otherwise constructed, occupation. I will interpret their arguments from the viewpoint of the above concept of institutionalisation of a helping occupation. I will gradually draw the contours of the modern and postmodern pictures of the social context in which take place the variously constructed processes of formulation, legitimation and standardisation of an abstract pattern of social workers' actions in relation to the recipients of their help and other entities in society.

2.1 Social context of institutionalisation of social work

Institutionalisation is described above as a process in which a pattern of actions and interactions is recognised by people in society as an appropriate manner of managing a problem or satisfying a need. I will therefore ask how the relevant authors understand modern and postmodern conditions of recognition of social work by people in society.

2.1.1 The nation state context – modern view and postmodern reflection on the modern situation

Both modern (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965; and other authors) and postmodern (Lorenz, 2006; Howe, 1994: 517–519; and other authors) lines of interpretation situate the emergence of social work in the context of the nation state of the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century. Both lines of interpretation consider that national consensus is a prerequisite for the recognition of social work. However, they differ in its interpretation. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 338–341) maintain that nationwide consensus is a permanent and inherent feature of society and do not consider the possibility that it could be a temporary phenomenon. Lorenz (2006: 31), on the other hand, understands national consensus as a temporary *"project"*, vision of a culturally homogeneous society of the emerging nation state preached by the elite and accepted by loyal citizens. Wilensky and Lebeaux describe the circumstances of the emergence of social work in the United States of America ("America"); Lorenz points out the analogous conditions of establishment of social work in Europe. They agree that fear of destabilisation of the national entity by "strangers", i.e. immigrants, migrant workers as well as "outsiders" from within, was a strong impetus for the emergence of social work.

Modern interpretation of the context of emergence of social work

Wilensky and Lebeaux describe the American nation state as *"industrial society"*. They use this term to describe national economies with a high degree of mechanisation, bureaucracy and, most importantly, specialisation and the ensuing role differentiation. According to them, industrial societies are internally divided into the powerful ones with a high status the rank-and-file ones, a majority of which are those that sell their labour, not the product of their labour. The two cited authors maintain that the cohesion of that society, divided by specialisation and share of power, is ensured by interdependence of individuals and organisations mediated by the money system as well as by the nation state and a broad national consensus. The usual principles of consensus in national societies of industrial type mentioned by these authors include economic individualism, tolerance, endeavour to act

appropriately according to expectations attained in the process of socialisation, nation-state allegiance and discretion towards outsiders. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 45–48, 338–341; and other authors)

Wilensky and Lebeaux understand social work as one of the results of the specialisation process. In addition to benefits, it also brings certain new problems that give rise to specialised groups which address them. According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, specialisation gave rise to social work in that it produced the complex system of specialised organisations. The problem appeared to lie in the lacking sense of direction in the system which Wilensky and Lebeaux characterise by saying: *"We need guides ... through a new kind of civilized jungle."* The latter generates a demand for liaisons, of which social work is an *"example par excellence"*, *"a large part of its total activity being devoted to putting people in touch with the community resources they need but can hardly name, let alone locate."* (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286).

The need to mediate a sense of direction in the "jungle" of big cities became stronger in America at the turn of the 19*th* and 20th centuries with the influx of immigrants from overseas and, somewhat later, Mexican, Puerto Rican and southern Negro or white migrants "from farm to factory". Each of the groups had troubles with the sense of direction. *"His problem of adjustment... created a demand for welfare services"*. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 54–55.)

According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, the emergence of social work is a response to the functional need for mediated direction in a complex of organisations. The mere existence of this need is not a sufficient precondition for recognising social work as a specialised profession. For its workers to specialise in the satisfaction of this functional need, they must first earn a reputation[9]. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 284–285, 340) consider that this is possible because there is a broad national consensus in industrial society regarding the standard of proper behaviour of a professional. According to this assumption, social workers can acquire a reputation if they create an autonomous professional organisation and communicate to the public and the elite that its members act in accordance with what they are expected to do to fit into the national standard of proper behaviour of a professional. (Such expectations are discussed below in connection with the aspect of legitimation of social work.)

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[9] Wilensky and Lebeaux do not use the word "reputation". They describe the influence of technical and social characteristics of workers in the profession on the public opinion, which de Swaan (1990) referred to as "reputation" in his theory of emergence of psychotherapy. The message derived from both theoretical lines of interpretation is analogous; de Swaan's term appears more fitting. I therefore took the liberty of implanting it into my interpretation of the theory of Wilensky and Lebeaux.

If they succeed, and the existence of national consensus creates suitable grounds, they acquire a reputation, receive legal sanction to exercise their specialisation as an organised profession and hence a legal guarantee of monopoly on pursuing their specific activity. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 284–285.)

Postmodern interpretation of the modern context of emergence of social work

Lorenz (2006, 28–44; and other authors) provides a description of the context of emergence of social work in Europe from the postmodern perspective. According to him, social work was established at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in connection with the need of the elite in the emerging nation states in Europe to safeguard loyalty of their culturally heterogeneous populations. The problem of cultural heterogeneity was addressed by support for citizens' identification with the understanding of a standard proper behaviour of a member of the national entity. The national standard of proper behaviour was not experienced by the citizens of states as an officially promoted pattern but rather as a *"taken-for-granted"*, "unquestioned" understanding of the proper behaviour of every human being (Lorenz, 2006: 33, 36, 38; and other authors).

In European countries, according to Lorenz, this understanding became the *"criterion by which it could be decided who was to belong properly to the nation"* (Lorenz, 2006: 31). At the same time it served as a premise for deciding how to respond to people who have fallen outside the national standard due to their poverty, disability or misbehaviour: whether to help them attain the standard and integrate them or isolate them through placement in an institution such as an asylum, hospital or prison. (Lorenz, 2006: 44.) According to Lorenz (2006: 36), this approach was taken by educational and helping organisations with the objective of *"levelling differences"* in the standards of behaviour.

Lorenz (2006: 31) describes the selective practice of cultural homogenisation of the populations of the emerging nation states as a *"project of creating a national heritage of standardised behaviour"*. According to him, social workers, or their early predecessors, became involved in the "project" (Lorenz, 2006: 44). They participated in "professionally objective" decision-making, which was based on professionally substantiated criteria (Lorenz, 2006: 31–34) regarding whether sources of public or civil help should be used for the benefit of integration or for social isolation of those clients who did not meet the standards of proper behaviour. The latter included outsiders as well as all those who did not meet the standards of proper behaviour due to mental function disorders or failure to understand the national standard. Where mental function disorders were identified as the reason for deviation from the

standard, it was considered that such people needed treatment and, sometimes, permanent care. Where it was found that the deviation from the standard was due to poor understanding, it was considered that they were in need of education. (Lorenz, 2006: 33.)

Howe's understanding of the role of the social worker in modern society is similar to that of Lorenz. Unlike Lorenz, however, he does not present social workers as objectively operating professionals. Howe says that *"moral systems and the laws which reflect them"* were the premise for assessment of the behaviour of clients by social workers. From this point of view, according to Howe, social workers engaged in the national project as direct implementers of *"welfare legislation defining which people* are *a problem and which people have a problem. It also determines the kind of responses available to social workers when they meet the difficult and the distressed."* (Howe, 1994: 519; emphasis by Howe.)

Despite the already mentioned dissimilarities, the above lines of interpretation are similar in the way they describe some key elements of the modern context of the emergence of social work. According to them, recognition of social work is conditional on a national consensus regarding the standards of proper behaviour of citizens. (For Wilensky and Lebeaux, this standard refers to citizens' sense of direction in a net of specialised organisations, for Lorenz it has to do with fulfilment of the vision of national identity.) Both lines of interpretation show that social work acquired recognition as a response to the lacking capability of a part of the population, especially immigrants, but also people migrating from rural areas to cities or otherwise "failing" people, to act in accordance with the national standard. Wilensky and Lebeaux emphasise the national consensus on the standard of proper behaviour of members of the profession. Lorenz refers to this dimension of the context of recognition of social work when he points out that social workers provide legitimacy for their decisions on people's capability to meet the national standard by applying the national standard with professional objectivity.

To put it more generally, four ideas are typical of the modern perspective presented by Wilensky and Lebeaux. First, the idea that the process of recognition of social work takes place in the context of a large social group. Second, the idea that the existence of a collective identity of this large group – nation – is a prerequisite for recognising social work. Third, the idea that recognition of social work is conditional on the ability of the organised group of social workers to satisfy the consensual expectations of the large group. Fourth, the idea that the ability of the organised group of social workers to satisfy the consensual expectations of the nation is a precondition for formal recognition of social work by the state power.

Lorenz confirms that the above ideas are relevant for understanding the process of emergence of social work in the modern context. While he formulates his interpretation based on postmodern perspective, he adds that a certain fifth idea is typical of the modern approach to institutionalisation of social work. According to this fifth idea, the recognition of social work depends on the confidence in grand narratives, or projects – visions of better future for everyone, formulated by the elites (Lyotard, 1993). According to Lorenz, social work received recognition at the time of birth of the nation states because citizens were won for the vision of a nation which will be successful if it becomes a homogeneous group of people behaving in a proper way. The nation state was not *"a realisation of ancient dreams just waiting for their moment in history"*. It was the need of the nation states' elite to form a loyal population identifying with the vision of a successful nation that led to the endeavour to present the modern form of institutional framework for the nation and its territory as a *"manifestation of historical destiny"*. (Lorenz, 2006: 28–29.)

2.1.2 Recognition of social work in postmodern conditions

From the postmodern perspective, the above modern characteristics of the context in which social work acquired recognition in its early days, became a past illusion. People lost confidence in the grand narratives, or projects, of a better future for the whole nation and the collective identities of nations and other large groups were losing ground (Lorenz, 2006: 79–85, 99–104; Musil, 2008: 71–74; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15–16). This eliminated the large groups' consensual expectations from social workers and other professional groups that were able to organise themselves and offer their professionally justified contributions to achievement of promises for the future, thus acquiring reputation (Payne, 2006: 141–162, 185; Payne, 2012; Witkin, Iversen, 2008; Růžičková, Musil, 2009). Since globalisation reduced the sovereignty of the nation states and the consensual expectations regarding proper behaviour of social workers vanished, the ability of the nation state to enact these non-existent expectations and guarantee their fulfilment from the position of state power faltered as well (Lorenz, 2006: 84–85; and other authors; Musil, 2011).

Thus, from the postmodern perspective, the modern conditions for institutionalisation of social work as a specialised occupation vanished. If, in a certain country, social work was not recognised as a standard way of addressing a problem under modern conditions, the question arises of whether it may become one in the postmodern context. When the relevant authors describe the postmodern context, they show that the following characteristics of present-day

society have an effect on social work, in particular:[10] temporariness of social nets, individualisation of identities, validity and hence relativisation of all lines of interpretation, intercultural nature of communication, permanent negotiation, trust being conditional on the ability to control the rules of debate, uncertainty and returns to the universal "truths" and bipolar thinking of modernity.

Temporariness of social nets

Musil (2008: 73) points out that the absence of a national consensus on the standards of proper behaviour of social workers and the lack of understanding regarding the concept of social work within the occupational community are both related to the nature of social structure of postmodern society. A limited number of large and culturally homogeneous groups such as nation or occupation were replaced by a quantity of variable and temporary social nets. According to Lyotard (1993: 98, 114–118), while negotiating on individual subjects, people in present-day society set up provisional, temporary and variable social nets; this creates a *"a web of relationships that is ever more complex and mobile"*. The temporary nets, the members of which are brought together by the link of a *"pragmatic alliance"*, repeatedly regroup depending on the current subject of discussion (Beck, 1992: 100–101)[11]. Within the nets, the debate takes place under changing rules in different situations and in negotiating on different problems (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176). In the context of these temporary social structures, it seems unlikely that large groups of people would attribute the same meanings to certain events in the long term.

Individualisation of entities

Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008) ask what it means for the concept of social work that the external structuring of people's individual identities has waned and that "the self" has become

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[10] Relevant authors usually do not ask whether and how social work can be institutionalised in the postmodern situation. They explore the aspect of *"re-professionalisation"* or *"reconstruction"* (Lymbery, 2001: 378) of the professional conduct of social workers in postmodern (Lorenz, 2006; Witkin, Iversen, 2008; Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012) or quasi-market conditions (Chytil, 2007; Dewe, Otto, 2011a, 2011b), or in both of these contexts (Lymberry, 2001; Payne, 2006; Fook, Gardner, 2007: 3–11). They thus study re-institutionalisation of social work and, as a result, they indirectly opine on the establishment of the occupation in the postmodern context by describing the present conditions for the existence of social work and their effect on social work. Howe (1994: 530, see also 524–525) is cautious about re-institutionalisation of social work as an occupation and asks: *"... if modernity's project is in decline can social work's discourse as originally formed survive?"*

[11] Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) believe that the characteristics of late 20th century society are not a display of a radical transformation and postmodernity but rather accomplishment or escalation of the principles of modern society. This is the reason why they refer to late 20*th* century society as "late modern". If I quote these two authors, I do so insofar as the description of selected characteristics of contemporary society in their texts is similar to Lyotard's (1993).

an individualised project. Giddens (1991: 83–85) claims that the take-up of electronic communications has made accessible and proliferated alternative options of identity and lifestyle. Everyone must find a sense of direction in the wide range of various options in their own way – depending on their personal life strategy. Individualised life-planning has therefore become a means of preparation and fulfilment of everyone's individual life course. (See also Beck, 1992: 131–137; Lyotard, 1993: 115; Lorenz, 2006: 101.) Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008) therefore propose that support for life-planning become a key theme of social work.

Changes accompanying temporariness of nets and individualisation of identities

The variable nature of the web of social nets and individualisation of identities changes the conditions for recognition of social work as a legitimate model of addressing a problem. First, they imply validity of all lines of interpretation, thereby relativising them all (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 17). Second, they cause that every communication is intercultural (Lorenz, 2006: 101–115). Third, they require a permanent negotiation of identities, roles (Lorenz, 2006: 99; Payne, 2006: 157–159; Payne, 2012) and the rules of debate (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176; Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 88).

Validity and hence relativisation of all lines of interpretation

According to Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012: 16–18, 20–21; see also Fook, Garder, 2007: 4–11), development in the concept of social work and discussion of the same are a response to the uncertainty which follows from the relativisation of the lines of interpretation put forth by all the parties involved. Diverse views, beliefs, allegations and interpretations *"are considered valid because they differ",* which means "they are all relative" (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 17, see also Howe, 1994: 525). As a result, it is no longer obvious for social workers that their view of things is seen as legitimate in the discussion or in the decision-making process, and they may find it difficult to maintain their authority as a party to the communication equal to the recipients of help (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 20–21; Lymbery, 2001: 378; Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489), with the public (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 84,86), with managers (Fook and Gardner, 2007: 4–5), sponsors (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489), members of the team from other modern professions (Payne, 2006: 157-159), other social workers (Musil, 2008: 71-–72; Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 83), or with members of groups *"that constructi themselves as 'helping professionals' and encroach on social work's historic professional territory through both rhetoric and action"*

(Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489). I believe that in terms of the conditions for recognition of social work, social workers cannot expect that recipients of help, managers, sponsors, team members from other occupations or competitors will respect social work's monopoly or the privileged "territory", no matter how delimited, of the occupation.

Witkin and Iversen (2008: 489) consider that social workers see the lack of authority of their view of things and the ensuing lack of respect for the domain of social work as a *"threat"* to themselves. Gojová (2013: 64–67, 82–90) noted that in Czech society, social workers experienced helplessness when faced with the lack of respect for their views among the public, recipients of help and managers and the lack of trust in their competence among those involved in governmental and municipal social policies. On the other hand, no negative response to the loss of monopoly was observed in Czech society. This seems to be a logical consequence of the fact that Czech social workers never had the impression that they should have a monopoly on a certain sphere of activity guaranteed by public opinion or law. For the time being, this interpretation must be voiced cautiously because nobody has inquired into the response of Czech social workers to the absence of monopoly in their occupation. This seems to be partly due to the fact that Czech social workers never lived with the feeling of an effectively guaranteed, delimited "territory".

Intercultural nature of communication

The relativisation of all lines of interpretation which accompanies the individualisation of identities applies to all, and hence also *"well established"* (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 16–17) and *"universal"* (Lorenz, 2007: 65–67) thought frameworks such as "national homogeneity" or proper standard of a member of the national entity (Lorenz, 2006: 68). Minorities and civic movements defending the civil rights of those who are stigmatised for being different express the specific identity of social work clients more distinctively and emphatically than before (Howe, 1994: 524; Lorenz, 2006: 69; 2007: 66). The validity and definiteness of the standards of proper behaviour that social workers habitually relied on when classifying clients is now blurring (Lorenz, 2006 ,21–22, 73–74). Given the relativity and hence validity of all lines of interpretation, and as a result of public articulation of diverse identities, individualised personal identities and interpretations of recipients of help are taking on increased significance (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 18; Lorenz, 2007: 65–66). Under these circumstances, social workers *"are no longer the sole arbiter of the meaning of events"* (Howe, 1994: 525). They sense or reflect on the validity of the personal views applied by the recipients of help and their ways of perception. Their communication with recipients of

help thus ceases to differ depending on whether they communicate within or outside the social worker's culture. According to Lorenz, every communication becomes intercultural communication of people with different identities and different understanding of the subject of their attention (Lorenz, 2006: 63, 83–84, 101; and other authors). Howe says that if no privileged perspective is acknowledged, the truth becomes the result of *"collaborative authorship"* and *"participatory, conversational mode of reasoning"*. *"Understanding is no longer a mode of knowing, but a dialogical activity."* (Howe, 1994: 525).

Permanent negotiation

If we summarise the foregoing, we can say that in their work, social workers establish temporary pragmatic alliances with the recipients of help, colleagues, managers, clerks and workers from other helping occupations and are engaged with them in intercultural communication in these alliances. This means that social workers, like all people in postmodern society, transfer from one net to another to communicate with people who may question their view, whose own specific views need to be understood and who must be repeatedly reasoned into the relevance of the social worker's thought frameworks. Due to the temporary and intercultural nature of co-operation, if they want to achieve something for themselves, recipients of their help or anybody else, they must again and again negotiate on everything they find important with those involved in the temporary nets. The variability of social relationships and individualisation of identities of the parties involved result in a situation where the recognition of social work under postmodern conditions is conditional on *"permanent negotiation"* (Payne, 2012) or constant negotiation on differences (Lorenz, 2006: 99).

Conditionality of trust on the possibility to control the rules of debate

What are the rules that govern communication involving constant negotiation on differences within temporary pragmatic alliances? Růžičková and Musil (2009: 87–89) ascertained that the social workers approached by them expressed a vision of clients who feel they should experience that *"the social worker is a competent person who provides them with qualified help"*. However, they did not feel that the attempt to accomplish this vision could appeal to all social workers and that there could be a fair debate about this across the community of social workers, with rules suitable for all. *"Every person has a specific understanding of social work"* without *"understanding that he works within his own paradigm and he should accept a different organisation where they do things differently."*

They also stated that the vision of a recipient of help who, based on his personal experience, expects the social worker to provide a qualified and effective help can be developed and achieved by social workers within smaller nets of people from various occupations who want to join forces to help people from a target group, for example drug addicts, long-term unemployed, clients with a psychiatric diagnosis, the Romani people, etc. They described co-operation within such nets as an antithesis to social work in public administration and experienced it as a space "free of clerks" where they could do things in their own way. According to them, social workers from public administration *"do not take our service seriously"* while when meeting with people from their net, they *"feel... familiarity"* and are able to *"consult on what to do with the authorities, how to position themselves in relation to the authorities, what to do with the labour office and how it all works... "*.

Růžičková with Musil (2009: 88–89) consider that the way in which the above-cited social workers construct their identity as members of a net of people who wish to help a target group corresponds to Lyotard's description of people's grouping in a postmodern situation. Lyotard says that people today have distrust towards the grand narratives, or projects, that promise a better future for all in the name of a noble idea. Instead, they temporarily form small special-interest nets. They do so mainly because they can discuss their topical problems using their own, autonomously and continuously negotiated rules. (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176.) In my opinion, this means that the recognition of social work in postmodern conditions is conditional on its acceptance by members of pragmatic alliances who believe that they have accepted the practical contribution of social workers and their thought frameworks during a discussion with rules under their control, and under the social workers' control.

Uncertainty and returns to universal "truths" and bipolar thinking of modernity

The picture of the postmodern context of recognition of social work provided so far appears far too complete in that it emphasises the impermanency and relativity of inconsistent thought frameworks. Everything seems temporary and questionable and everything needs to be subject to intercultural negotiation within temporary pragmatic alliances. This negotiation results in models of addressing problems that the members of alliances perceive, again temporarily, as legitimate institutions. Other problems will emerge later or in parallel and the members of existing special-interest nets will always regroup into new alliances to address each of them. In these new alliances they will temporarily negotiate other rules of negotiation and will apply intercultural negotiation to attain other, temporarily legitimate models of addressing other problems.

The relevant authors take the picture which emphasises the relativity of positions and impermanency of negotiation results to its ultimate conclusions by even relativising its unambiguity. According to them, the relative invalidity of positions and impermanency of agreements generates uncertainty in postmodern people, which they attempt to escape by returning to a clear validity of modernity models. They do not always attempt to tidy up the web of incoherent ideas and unreliable agreements by mutual intercultural clarification. Instead, they sometimes tend to face the feeling of chaos by postulating self-evident and clear ideas of what is appropriate. This way, according to Lorenz, they attempt to question the very existence of the problem of mutual understanding. They postulate the *"universal validity"* of the values of a successful society and take this perspective to classify people around them as "good" and "bad". They may attempt to unilaterally suppress or silence the differences of the "bad" ones, often believing that for *"their own good"*. (Lorenz. 2006: 111.)

However, there is a substantial difference in comparison with the circumstances of the modern view. By adopting clear positions, the advocates of universally valid ideas of what is appropriate do not become part of large groups of people with whom they would intrinsically and lastingly share their clear view. The wide range of clear ideas which have lost public trust due to their "universal validity" serves them as a huge stock of patterns. They surf it as a web browser to find a clear view to take and "arrange" the chaotic world, in order to reduce their personal uncertainty. If a certain social worker takes the standard of appropriate behaviour of her nation to find "diligence" and be able to divide clients into "deserving hard workers" and "hopeless sluggards", she by no means creates a new, hard-working nation. Instead she avoids the chaos that would emerge if she respected every recipient of help as an authentic individual with an individual life strategy. Or she forms a pragmatic alliance with several colleagues at the workplace with a view to assuring themselves, in an attempt to deal with incoherent demands of their managers, regulations and recipients of help, of the validity of the idea that "hard workers should receive more time while sluggards need nothing more than formal processing".

The relevant authors have found the tendency to use the range of "universally valid" patterns of modernity among both managers and social workers as they attempt to manage uncertainty. According to Dustin (2007: 13–30), managers use Fordist[12] methods of

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[12] According to Dustin (2007: xi), "Fordism" is characterised by the use of modern rationality or scientific management in creating an efficient organisation which generates material products of mass production. A Fordist organisation is characterised by standardised, non-differentiated products, mass consumption, vertical hierarchical management, centralised bureaucracy, clear delimitation of specialisations with clearly defined activities, role expectations from workers and a collective philosophy.

management to limit the uncertainty generated in them by social workers' tendency to apply the thought frameworks of their occupation. The latter do not emphasise outputs, which are the managers' priority, but rather the process of interaction with the recipient of help (Lymbery, 2001: 380; Dustin, 2007: 29). Consequently, social workers generate uncertainty in managers by deviating from the performance objectives of the organisation. Managers therefore attempt to promote performance objectives by routinising working procedures and standardising performance indicators. (Dustin, 2007: 28–30.)

Fook and Gardner (2007: 7–9) describe how social workers experience the above response from their managers, adding that the managers' Fordism is a source of uncertainty among social workers. Social workers say that the managers' emphasis on procedures, administration, individual fragments of problems and outputs casts doubts on their understanding of how they should do their work. Witkin and Iversen (2008) and Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) describe how social workers cope with this uncertainty.

Witkin and Iversen claim that in terms of the position of their occupation in society, some social workers turn to modernist patterns of control of their positions. They therefore stress the "scientific expertise" of social work, exclusivity over knowledge and terminology of the occupation and control of their professional associations over entry into the vocation (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489).

Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) deal with the question of how social workers address uncertainty in relation to the recipients of help. According to them, the "competent professional – incompetent layman" model, in which the worker's relationship with clients was formed in the context of modernity, has been replaced, in the postmodern situation of intercultural interactions[13], by the "competent expert – competent expert" pattern (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14–15, 18–20). This brings uncertainty for social workers in that, in the relationship of "two experts", the recipient of help legitimately obtains power which he may use unilaterally. Social workers therefore *"may tend to resort to the paternalistic concept of social work as it provides them with the much sought-after boundaries where they can feel secure."* (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 21.)

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[13] I believe that what Lorenz (2006) refers to as universal presence of intercultural communication is the one side of the same coin whose other side is described by Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012) as "relativisation of validity of all thought frameworks". I therefore took the liberty of introducing the notion of "intercultural communication" into the proposition presented by Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová, despite the fact that the authors themselves do not explicitly use it.

2.2 Formation of a new pattern of actions and interactions

   This subchapter is dedicated to the question of how the relevant authors understand, or how their arguments can be used to construct, the causes for emergence and typical features of the abstract pattern of actions and interactions which has become known as "social work" in the modern context. I will describe the impulse for emergence and typical features of the abstract pattern separately for modernity and postmodernity.

   I will considerably simplify the matter by renouncing description of the convoluted line of development of social work[14]. I will interpret the cited authors' arguments typologically and will therefore concentrate on the hypothetical "time of birth" of the modern understanding of "social work" at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the hypothetical "moment" of initiation of the postmodern understanding of "social work" in present-day society. I will describe the different characteristics of the modern and postmodern forms of the social work pattern at the "moment" of their hypothetical birth typologically, from four perspectives. First, in terms of the impulse which led or leads, in the given context, to formulation of the abstract understanding of social work. Second, in terms of approach to the problem social work should address. Third, in terms of ideas about the ways of responding to the problem. And fourth, in terms of ideas concerning a typical form of interaction between the providers and recipients of help.

2.2.1 "Washing the black" – understanding of social work in the modern context

   The understanding of social work which, according to the relevant authors, was born in the modern context, was expressed metaphorically by black social worker Dodson in the 1960s (1970: 89–96). He voiced the "washing the black" metaphor at a time when the movement for the rights of the disadvantaged began to publicly relativise the validity of the national standards of proper behaviour which social workers customarily applied in categorising their clients. He said his colleagues usually had no doubt that poor black people *"could not be induced to participate"*. They admitted though that some poor black people *"could be grown"*. Thus, according to Dodson, they say about them that they are willing to be *"washed"*, to [be transmuted] *into reasonable facsimiles of the dominant group members"*, which in America meant to become *"black Anglo-Saxons"*.

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[14] Describing the development of social work as an institution would require a separate treatise which I cannot offer here. A basic understanding can be derived from the works of Lubove (1968), Davis (1982), Abel (1994), Parton (1994), Lorenz (2006, 2007); and other authors.

Impulse

Dodson's anecdotal presentation of Lorenz's interpretation of the participation of social workers in the "project" of cultural homogenisation of the nation state's population (see above in 2.1.1) points out that the emergence of social work had to do with the way in which dissimilarity was understood in modernity. According to the above interpretations of the modern context of emergence of social work, cultural heterogeneousness of nation states' populations, or the need for cultural homogenisation of such populations, was the impulse to form an understanding of the specialised occupation.

The authors differ in their interpretation of the motives behind the need for cultural homogenisation. Functionalists Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 54, 181–187, 286) considered that cultural homogenisation was a need for the social entity system. According to functionalists, the ethnic and religious diversity of newcomers, accustomed to a life in agrarian societies, did not allow for the creation of a motivated industry workforce. It was therefore necessary to promote their focus on patterns of behaviour that were appropriate in the context of industry and urbanised settlements. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 54). Foucaultian lines of interpretation present the endeavour for cultural homogenisation as an expression of the elites' interest in ensuring cultural grounds for governmentality (Parton, 1994: 14–19; Howe, 1994: 517; Lorenz, 2006).

Despite these interpretation differences, the above authors identically describe that social work was a response to problems due to dissimilarities between those who were and who were not compatible with the understanding of "normality". Without a *"culturally standardised"* population, which was originally full of *"the others"*, it would be impossible to have efficient modern industry and loyal citizens (Lorenz, 2006: 31). According to this interpretation, social work emerged as a response to fears of excessive dissimilarity and its consequences. It was brought to life and gained recognition as an agent of cultural homogenisation.

Problem formerly addressed by social work

Social workers were not the only agents of the mission for homogenisation. In addition to the elites, the mission also involved educators, medical doctors, psychologists, sports coaches, social service workers and administrators of social benefits (Lorenz, 2006: 31–36. Each of the groups had a specific role in the homogenisation task. Social workers were expected to address problems concerning the interaction between "the others" and people and organisations active in the modern, or industrial, society. According to the relevant authors,

especially interactions between "the others" and their community as well as interactions between privacy of "the others" and the public life sphere were seen as problematic by the elites and citizens living in line with the acknowledged conventions.

Wilensky and Lebeaux note the problems in interaction between "the others" and community. They show that the ethnic and religious diversity of newcomers, accustomed to a life in agrarian societies, made it difficult for them to find a sense of direction in the notional "jungle" of specialised organisations (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286 It also reduced the ability of communities in large cities to appreciate conventional and regulate "deviant" behaviours (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 181–187). Thus, interaction between "the others" and community was difficult for both parties. "The others" found it difficult to find a sense of direction and it was hard for established community members to regulate the consequences of that deficiency.

Parton points out the problems in interaction between the privacy of "the others" and the public life sphere. He claims that at the given time, the emergence of social work was part of the solution to the unresolved problem of how child rearing can be made a public concern without destroying the ideal of the family and its self-regulation. On the one hand, it was necessary to respect the autonomy of private family life. On the other hand, it was necessary to ensure that public entities could regulate the impacts of unsuitable care for children on their actual or potential anti-social behaviour in later life. The public audience was presented with questions of this kind from the perspective of a social entity – state or community. Public policy measures were to promote interests that were presented as the interests of the whole entity. As such, they could not go without public entities intervening in the life of the families of "the others". However, their privacy was protected by the widely accepted ideal of an autonomous family. (Parton, 1994: 16–17.) The interaction between the public sphere and the family was therefore a delicate one.

The problem of troublesome interaction of "the others" with the public sphere and community, which was a partial aspect of the broader problem of cultural heterogeneity of the modern society population, gradually crystallised in the eyes of the elites and the public. The question arises of what stood behind its separation. Why the elites and the public considered it appropriate to separate the problems in interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community from the wider problem of cultural heterogeneity and to respond to these troubles separately? Literature does not claim this was a natural process. The relevant authors assume that the separation of a part of the problem was "natural" from the then-valid points of view.

What are these viewpoints? Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 249–250) say that part of the present specialisation *"probably owes as much to considerations of professional jurisdiction and prerogative as it does to actual gains in efficiency"*, i.e. those gains that modern society usually expects from the establishment of a specialisation. Thus, according to contemporary authors, there were two aspects in the modern context due to which it seemed natural that the problem of cultural heterogeneity should be further structured. First, the conviction that a narrower problem can be managed more efficiently. Second, it seemed obvious that a group of specialists attempts to monopolise the solution to a defined problem. Wilensky and Lebeaux point out that the two aspects may not always be consistent, but in the long-term the benefits for the social entity from applying both aspects are likely to meet in the future.

According to Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 249–250), the emergence of specialisation in respect of a partial problem for reasons not related to efficiency does not preclude benefits which would otherwise be hard to achieve. Narrowing the subject of specialisation into a partial aspect of a more complex problem may cause difficulties in co-ordination. In technical terms, however, this narrowing down should ensure that the specialist need not address the nature of the more complex problem, but rather concentrate on his part instead. Thanks to this, he can attain a considerable level of excellence in addressing the given part of the whole. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 258). Narrowing the problem down allows an organised group of specialists to monopolise the solution and ensure that the problem is managed exclusively by properly trained specialists. The latter will respect certain ethical standards, thanks to which they will deliver quality in performing activities specialised in the given partial aspect of the problem. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–285.)

It can therefore be said that at their time, those involved in the formulation of the problem of interactions with "the others" spontaneously regarded separation of this part as an obvious step towards efficiently managing the complex problem of cultural heterogeneity. It is likely that this process was supported by social workers who endeavoured to obtain the status of a professional occupation. Narrowing the problem down enabled them, among other things, to present the scientific nature of the procedure applied in addressing the problem, thus gaining a prestigious reputation for their occupation. Lubove supports this thought. According to him, American social workers in the 1920s encountered a lack of a scientifically backed theory of effects on interactions between clients and their social environment. They addressed their fears of the impact of the lack of scientifically justified knowledge on the status of the field by a shift to psychiatry and by narrowing down their attention to whether the client's personality qualifies him for interaction with his environment. (Lubove, 1968: 86.)

The process of narrowing down the understanding of the problem, which was to be addressed by social work in the first decades of the 20th century, was presented in the previous paragraphs by an example of the focus of modern social work in America. This seems to illustrate the way in which the subject of attention of social work as well as other helping profession was delimited in the modern context not only in America, but also in Europe. I consider that this modern way of defining the problem, or the subject of specialisation, was characterised by a focus on a partial aspect of a more complex problem. Modern helping professions, probably for the reasons specified above by Wilensky and Lebeaux, were oriented on problems Barbier (2006) would refer to as "instituted". The meaning of the term "instituted problem" follows from the interpretation of the typology of a specialist's subject of attention as formulated by the author.

Barbier distinguishes between two types of problems[15] on which specialists focus their attention. On the one hand, according to her, there is a problem which has been "instituted" through a specialised theory. On the other hand, there exists a *"natural"* problem which emerges before the specialist as brought by the course of life or the development of a situation. The attention of a specialist dealing with a natural problem focuses on the flow of causation among several different aspects of the problem. If the problem is "instituted", the specialist's attention focuses on a single aspect of the "natural" problem. (Barbier, 2006: 36–37.) It follows for us from Barbier's interpretation that the specialist concentrates on a partial aspect of the "natural" problem and becomes an outstanding specialist in its understanding and addressing. (The same idea is presented by Wilensky and Lebeaux above.) If constant new "natural" problems emerge as the situation unfolds, the specialist can repeatedly recognise "his partial aspect" and concentrate on it within each "natural" problem. The problem he specialises in is part of all "natural" problems.

According to Barbier, "instituted" problems are constructed as partial, while "natural" problems are constructed as more complex ones. The specialist's focus on the "natural" problem is oriented on links among its individual aspects. If these aspects are separated from the mutual links, they become the focus of a narrowly specialised, thorough attention of specialists in problems which have been "instituted". (Barbier, 2006: 36–37.)

In terms of the above typology, the problem of the difficulties in interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community was "instituted" at its time as a partial aspect of

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[15] Barbier deals with education as a cognitive activity and she therefore refers a "subject of attention" rather than to a "problem" (Barbier, 2006: 35–37). Given that I apply her typology in interpreting the process of construction of "problems" on which social workers concentrated in the process of institutionalising their field, I consider the notions of "subject of attention" and "problem" synonymous in the given context.

the then up-to-date, "natural" and more complex problem of cultural heterogeneity of the national entity's population. For me, this way of defining the problems which, according to the expectation of the elites and the public, should be the focus of a modern helping profession, was typical of the modern process of institutionalisation.

We can therefore conclude that an expectation arose in the modern context that a social worker should be a specialist in help with managing a partial aspect of the complex problem of cultural heterogeneity. This partial aspect can be shortly referred to as troubles of "the others" in interactions with the community and entities of public administration.

Understanding of the social worker's response to troubles of "the others" in interactions with public administration and community

Social workers were expected to respond as mediators to the above-mentioned troubles in interactions. The relevant authors describe the modern approach to their mediation task in two ways – as a means of satisfying the needs of the social system or as a technology of government.

Functionalists Wilensky and Lebeaux understand mediation, which they believe social workers routinely performed, as a means of satisfying the needs of the social system, for example its need for integration or continuation. Social work should aid integration and continuation of the system by mediating the resources available in the community (moral models, information, opportunities, services or support) to individuals and families who otherwise have a scarcity of these resources. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 286).

Authors with a Foucaultian perspective interpret mediation as a means which ensures government through actions of the state power and public entities towards "the others". As mentioned above, these actions could not be ensured without the agents of government entering the privacy of families, which, however, was protected by the ideal of autonomous family. Social work, with its task of mediating the action of public measures into the microsphere of everyday private life of specific families and individuals, became a means of surmounting this delicate barrier (Parton, 1994: 15–17; Howe, 1994: 517–519; Lorenz, 2006: 41–44).

From the perspective which interprets social work as a "technology of government", the mediation of resources to "the others" is accorded the role of a means of power. Parton (1994: 19) therefore uses the term "*investments in individual lives*" for the mediation of resources. From this point of view, social workers were expected to use the mediation of resources to families and individuals as a leverage by which the expectations of public entities influence

the private conduct of citizens. Through mediation of resources and various organisations' discourses into the life of specific families and individuals, social work was to endeavour to forge alignments between the personal projects of citizens and the image of social order, spread sought-after norms of living, bring about changes in behaviour and encourage families to overcome their moral failure. (Parton, 1994: 17–19; see also Howe, 1994: 517–519.)

Availability of resources and support for integration were to depend on the social workers' discretion as to whether the specific individuals were "the others" who could be (re)integrated or "the others" whose (re)integration was not possible (Lorenz, 2006: 43–44; Howe, 1994: 517–519). Dodson would say that the approach of "the others" to help depended on the social workers' judgement on whether their clients "could grow" or "could not grow" or whether they "wanted" or "did not want" to be "washed". It was necessary to "wash" those who "could and wanted", i.e. help bring their behaviour closer to the national standard and thus be able to overcome obstacles to interaction with various entities, especially with public and private organisations and people who lived in accordance with the national standard and the established lifestyle. For those who "could not or did not want to be washed", the social worker was expected to ensure control by providing them with living conditions and an appropriate form of care. Lorenz (2006: 44) notes that public entities and citizens often imagined this appropriate form of care as an asylum – work & shelter, institution or prison (Lorenz, 2006: 44).

Understanding the interaction between social workers and recipients of help

Similar to other institutions, the abstract pattern of addressing the problem in interactions between "the others" and community or public administration includes the concept of the institution's staff. The concept of staff usually comprises two ideas. The first is the idea of abstractly, impersonally designed types of parties involved in addressing the problem at hand. The second is the idea of the expected course of mutual interactions between these types of parties. Based on the relevant literature, the understanding established in the modern context is that social work staff comprise two types of parties involved in the welfare process.

One is a social worker who is expected to be employed by a civic or state-controlled organisation whose mission is to attain philanthropic goals or deal with citizens in matters of public administration. The authors agree that the predecessors of social workers were mainly volunteers who were active, especially in the late 19th century, in philanthropic initiatives. Social workers soon began to be employed by civic or state organisations (Lubove, 1968: 1–21; Parton, 1994: 16–18; Lorenz, 2006: 45; and other authors.). I believe that the idea of

social worker usually performing his work within employment began to shape in parallel with the above. Apparently this was in no way altered by the fact that approaches to participation of civic organisations and their employees in the delivery of the citizens' social rights enacted by the state developed in various ways in different countries (Lorenz, 2006: 45; and other authors).

It can therefore be concluded that in the nation states, where the state placed the provision of the enacted benefits or services into the hands of governmental authorities and organisations controlled by the state, the social worker could be typologically seen more as an employee of a state-run organisation. In those nation states where the state engaged civic organisations in the provision of the enacted benefits, the typology of a social worker would be more that of a civic organisation employee. Or perhaps also of an employee in general, no matter whether in the civic or state sector. Either way, the concept of a social worker probably was not one of a volunteer, a "pre-professional ancestor" of social workers described by Lorenz (2006: 44). It is uncertain whether Lorenz meant to say that social workers were, unlike their predecessors, "professionals" in the sense that they were employees rather than volunteers, or in the sense that they were trained specialists identified with the culture of their occupation and colleagues associated in the same professional organisation.

The literature which refers to the birth of the understanding of social work in the late 19th century and first decades of the 20th century describes a gradual increase in the number of professionally trained social workers (for example, Lubove, 1968: 22–54; Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 291–298; McLaughlin, 2008: 4–5). On the other hand, it does not mention whether social workers at that time were members of professional associations or chambers. The latter were set up later in connection with partial success of social workers' endeavour to obtain the status of a professional occupation for their vocation. It is difficult to tell whether and when the opinion that a social worker is not just an "employee" but rather an "employee organised in a professional association" became part of the abstract understanding of a social worker. Lorenz and other Anglo-Saxon authors, i.e. those I mostly refer to in this paper, use the term "professional" in two meanings without distinction. First, to refer to a worker from a "professional occupation" (see Greenwood, 1976 and the introduction to chapter 2) and second, when speaking about a person who works as an employee, in an employment relationship.

In the modern understanding typology, the other party, in addition to the social worker, involved in addressing the problem at hand is the individual or family that is "different"

because this individual or the family does not act in line with the obvious concept of a person as defined by the national standard.

Given what literature says about the modern concept of the relationship between a social worker and the recipient of help, we can conclude that in the contemporary understanding, the interaction between them should follow the "expert – client" pattern. Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová claim that from the perspective of this pattern, a social worker was considered competent and able to address the problems of the client who was seen as an incompetent layman. To help the "helpless" client, the social worker, taking on the role of an expert, gathers data about the situation of the former, diagnoses, formulates a solution concept, delivers therapy and assesses the whole procedure. The understanding of his interaction with the client can be called summarily as "catalytic" – the social worker is seen as a "catalyst" of certain reactions on the client's part without any change on the part of the social worker. (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14.)

It can be concluded that this model of interaction of a "competent expert" with an "incompetent client" corresponds with the above-described idea of the social worker as an agent of cultural homogenisation. In this concept, social workers assess eligibility for integration of "the others" whom they regards as incompetent in respect of the national standard.

2.2.2 In the arenas of negotiation – understanding of social work in the postmodern concept

Fawcett (2012) distinguishes *"postmodern"* and *"critical postmodern"* perspectives, because according to her, they respond differently to the relativisation of all positions and thought frameworks. According to her, "postmodern" perspectives deconstruct various thought frameworks, thus depriving them of privileged positions and questioning the possibility of accepting any of them as appropriate. "Critical postmodern" perspectives also understand deconstruction as a source of the non-privileged status of various thought frameworks. They do not refer to relativisation in general but rather to relativisation of the thought frameworks of the parties involved in a context or situation. They assume that the mutual respect of the parties involved in a certain situation, which follows from relativisation designed in this way, can be a starting point for negotiation. Within the negotiation, the parties involved in the given situation can take into consideration those of their identities and positions that they find relevant for the situation, and present them in the given context. Thanks to this, according to Fawcett, they can use negotiation to jointly distinguish

procedures which are acceptable and unacceptable in the context of the given situation (Fawcett, 2012).

In our opinion, the term "relativism which opens room for negotiation on the situation", which Fawcett distinguishes from "simple relativism", is analogous to Lyotard's idea of temporary stabilisation of the rules of debate through situational negotiation. Lyotard refers to negotiation between people who distrust "narratives" which describe present events as a process directed towards a future fulfilment of a generally accepted value that is waiting to be accomplished. These people do not have unifying ideas at their disposal. If they are faced with a problem, they set up a pragmatic alliance with those who, led by different motives, wish to assert an interest in addressing the problem. They do this repeatedly as new problems continue to emerge with the changing situation. This way they create temporary, thematic (problem-oriented) nets, across which they negotiate on the rules they intend to use in discussing their issue. This enables them to discuss it using their own rules that suit them at the given moment. (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176.)

If there is a unifying element, it is the idea that they want to control the rules of the discussion they are involved in. According to Lyotard, they manage to put this idea into practice in a special-interest association which, following its own rules of discussion, seeks a way of formulating and expressing the common interest for which they temporarily brought themselves together in the given situation. Fawcett analogously formulates an idea of negotiation in which relativisation of all positions enables the parties to consider the positions of the other parties and thus reach the conclusion that a procedure is appropriate for the given situation. We consider that Payne (2012) refers to a similar idea when he uses the term *"permanent negotiation"* and Howe with his *"participatory conversational mode of reasoning"* (Howe 1994: 525). Lorenz analogously speaks of constant negotiation on differences.

I believe that the concepts discussed by Lyotard, Fawcett and other above-mentioned authors highlight the fact that postmodern relativism and de-hierarchisation of parallel thought frameworks generate the functional necessity of situational – starting yet again with every new theme or problem – negotiation on the rules of discussion and the participants' ideas of how to proceed in the given situation. A provisional negotiation – one which starts again with every new situation – is "functionally necessary" according to the said authors. This is so because, first, there is no other way, under the conditions of postmodern relativisation of different views, of reaching agreement on a joint procedure in a specific situation and ensuring recognition of the relevance of social work's specific contribution to the resolution

of specific situations (Lorenz, 2006: 99, Payne, 2012). The second reason is that from the viewpoint of critical postmodern perspectives, the usefulness of social work, and hence recognition of its contribution, is conditional on the application of a participative strategy[16]. The latter is, according to the authors who look at the matter from critical postmodern perspectives, a principle inseparable from negotiation under the conditions of relativisation, and hence validity, of parallel thought frameworks (Howe, 1994: 525; Fawcett, 2012: 171–172).

For me, the idea that there is a functional necessity of permanent negotiation suggests that permanent situational negotiation is a key prerequisite for institutionalisation of social work in postmodern society. It can also be seen as a key context in which institutionalisation of social work in postmodern society does or may take place. In every new situation, by repeated application of their own thought framework in negotiation with the other parties involved, social workers in postmodern situations do (Payne, 2006: 154–159, 2012; Růžičková, Musil, 2009) or may receive (Lorenz, 2006: 99) temporary but repeated recognition of their view of existing problems and their contribution to their resolution. Payne (2012) observes that by *"permanent negotiation, social workers construct their roles, their identities and boundaries between helping occupations both within and outside their organisations"*.

If permanent situational negotiation is a key to recognition of social work, then the *"arenas of negotiation"* in which social workers, according to Payne (2012), negotiate on their roles, identities and boundaries with other occupations, is the context in which today's institutionalisation of social work does or may take place. According to Payne (2012), three particular arenas are relevant for social work. The first is characterised by negotiation among the recipients of help, the social worker and the agency. The second arena is delimited by negotiation among advocates of political interests, authorities promoting certain rules of the social order (including the welfare state) and participants of ideological discourses. The third arena of permanent negotiation on roles, identities and boundaries of social work is seen by Payne in the interaction between the agency and the profession. Elsewhere, Payne (2006: 154–158; see also Růžičková, Musil: 2009) identifies a fourth arena, which is characterised by negotiation on the approach to a theme (case or situation) and its solution in a multidisciplinary context. Somewhere in these arenas there are impulses that generate, or may

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[16] In addition to functional necessity, some authors explicitly emphasise (Fawcett, 2012; Howe, 1994), and others indirectly admit (Lorenz, 2006; Payne, 2012) that the participative nature of permanent situational negotiation coincides with the value-based emphasis of social work on respect for the positions of recipients of help and other parties involved in their life situations or other agents participating in the process of help.

generate, infinitely repeating processes of provisional formulation, legitimisation and standardisation of patterns of addressing the problems which are typical of social work.

Impulse

I shall elaborate on the assumption of the relevant authors – as justified above – that modernity gave rise to the problem of cultural heterogeneity of nation-state populations, where social work established itself as a method of managing problems in interactions between "the others" on the one hand and community and entities of public administration on the other. I would therefore like to find out what is or can be the impulse for an analogous process in a postmodern society in which the institution of a mediator between the conform majority and "the others" was not established during modernity.

I do admit that a postmodern analogy of the modern institutionalisation of social work need not take place at all in the present-day context. Nevertheless, the development of modern-type societies led to the emergence of a specific field of activity focusing on problems in interactions. I am therefore asking whether people in postmodern society construct an analogous, albeit differently structured problem. Is it so that an abstract idea of an activity focusing on a problem analogous to the modern problem of interactions with "the others" has been crystallising in the postmodern conditions without being inspired by the modernity model? The relevant authors do not ask "whether", but "in what form" the mediation role of social work will continue in the postmodern conditions (see, for example, Parton, 1994: 29; Lymbery, 2001: 380; Lorenz, 2006: 101; and other authors). Does it mean that they believe the modern pattern will continue to be influential or do they think that an analogous pattern will emerge again in the postmodern conditions, differently and in a different form, independently from the modern model? Answers to these questions are unknown to me. With the knowledge of a possibly erroneous conclusion, I shall assume that in postmodern society, there are impulses[17] for the emergence of an analogy to the idea of a problem in interactions and ways of managing it. I therefore seek in the relevant literature for reasons for the above.

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[17] The abstract idea of social work can obviously be taken from a different cultural environment. I assume, however, that its recognition as a practically applicable means of resolving the problem is conditional on the experience of society, which adopts the abstract idea, with the problem, or with situations in which people experience the problem (see Berger, Luckmann, 1991: 75). An abstract idea of the solution which is taken from a different cultural environment may bring attention to the problem or encourage a tendency to construct it socially. This, however, can occur collectively provided that people have, or believe they have, experience with the given problem.

The relevant authors mention three such impulses. First, functioning of institutions being conditional on intercultural understanding (Lorenz, 2006: 115). Second, managing life under postmodern conditions being conditional on individualised life-planning (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008; Lorenz, 2006: 101–104). Third, impacts of managerialism in helping organisations on the life of users of help (Parton, 1994: 29; Dustin, 2007; and other authors)

According to Lorenz, the conditions of functioning of institutions have changed in a society of multiple identities, where it is impossible to expect understanding which would stem from a broadly shared standard. Communication within a culture has become intercultural communication of people with individualised identities (Lorenz, 2006: 106). It should be added that such people follow and express situational interests formulated temporarily within thematically oriented nets or pragmatic alliances (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176). The individualisation, temporariness and situational nature of personal perspectives means that people who would interpret the contents and subject of their discussion in the same way come to communicate only rarely.

According to Lorenz, the conditions for the use of usual institutions have changed under these conditions. This is conditional on intercultural understanding. Without such understanding, people with different identities and with temporary, situationally-conditioned interests are unable to use institutions such as help with securing material living conditions, ensuring human and legal rights, establishment of links where the parties involved can rely on mutual responsibility, etc. The ability of people with different identities and temporary, situationally-conditioned interests to use the above and other institutions depends on their mutual understanding, which is posited on acceptance of the premise that others are different. (Lorenz, 2006: 101–115.)

Lorenz (2006: 101) interprets the intercultural nature of all communication and its effect on the use of institutions as an impulse for a change in social work. In his concept, social work is to become or becomes a means of intercultural understanding which has become part of every interaction.

The assumption that the functioning of institutions is conditional on understanding among people with different perspectives is also valid in postmodern society where the modern idea of social worker as a mediator has not been very successful. Here, the multitude of identities limits understanding among those who act according to established patterns of interaction. We therefore assume that attempts at overcoming this type of limitation may be an impulse for formulating the idea of a mediator who helps people negotiate understanding where a lack of it prevents them from establishing or experiencing relationships using normal patterns of

interaction. Whether they are patterns of personal, helping, public, administrative, business or other interaction.

The subject of individualisation of identity is related to another probable impulse for the emergence of social work. As stated in section 2.1.2 above, relativisation of collective patterns of identity and broadened choice of various identities, especially by electronic means, has made individualised life-planning a means of preparation and fulfilment of every individual's life course. Lorenz (2006: 102) and Navrátil, Navrátilová (2008: 126–127) point out that this situation deprives people from traditional patterns sanctioned by authorities that formerly provided and "prescribed" a clear direction to people. Navrátil and Navrátilová therefore consider that social work should take on the task of helping with life-planning those people for whom creating and effectuating a personal life strategy is difficult without authoritative patterns. For many people it is not easy to choose from a chaotic choice of role models; to consider the risks accompanying the choice; to base the personal strategy of their own life on personal choice and further development of the chosen models; to make decisions accordingly; to negotiate on the arrangement of relationships with people and organisations so that these relationships, as a minimum, do not obstruct realisation of their personal life plan. (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008.)

Navrátil and Navrátilová consider that these troubles are the reason for adjusting social work to new circumstances of life. I am asking what the existence of troubles with life-planning means in terms of forming and adopting an understanding of social worker in a society which has no historic model for such an idea. I consider that from this perspective, troubles with personal planning of one's life in a culturally heterogeneous environment may become an impulse for the emergence and acceptance of the idea of a facilitator of forming and implementing life strategies in interaction with a culturally heterogeneous environment.

Parton and Dustin lead us to ask another question: Can the impulses for crystallisation of the idea of social worker's mediation role come to exist as a response to the consequences of the procedural approach[18] to the distribution of social services for their recipients? In countries where social work as an occupation was established in the modern context,

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[18] A social worker who applies the procedural approach expects that the recipient of the service will approach him with a clearly formulated requirement concerning a pre-defined problem. The worker considers it appropriate to respond to the problem in a predetermined way, i.e. by performing a set procedure or performing a procedure selected from among several set procedures. If the client's requirement is not related to a problem which is determined by rules, the worker considers it appropriate to pay attention only to a problem determined by rules, to reduce the client's requirement to that problem and disregard the remaining part of the client's requirement, i.e. his other problems. (Musil, 2013b.)

procedural approach began to be applied in the 1970s in connection with managerialism. Parton (1994)[19] and Dustin (2007) interpret this process as part of postmodern development.

Parton considers the context in which proceduralisation of social work asserted itself to be a consequence of criticism of the welfare state discourse, called *"welfarism"* (Parton, 1994: 24). The latter, according to him, was influenced by political neo-liberalism, whose position was consonant with the arguments of a range of other critiques of welfarism such as civil libertarians, academics, feminists, socialists, ethnic minorities and other community and interest groups, none of whom would identify themselves with the new right or neo-liberaliasm (Parton, 1994: 25). This criticism from various sides led, according to Parton, to questioning of the authority of the thought framework of social work which emphasised a "rehabilitative intervention". According to critics, the rehabilitative approach did not produce the outcomes promised by its supporters and it failed in regulating the risks faced mainly by children and young people.

A discourse for which Parton used a term taken from Johnson, *"welfare pluralism"*, began to establish itself to the detriment of the authority of the rehabilitative approach to social work. According to this discourse, the agents of social services policy and superiors of social workers placed emphasis on monitoring the risks of actions and both individual and family responsibilities. The core of social work gradually began to lie in assessing the risks and allocating scarce resources in an individualised way, particularly with a view to controlling the dangerous and supporting the isolated and neglected. Emphasis on plurality of providers, minimisation of services provided by the state, use of informal sources of care, contractual arrangements, inspection and participation of the so-called consumers in decision-making has gained ground in the sphere of social services. According to Parton, the services policy has become an arena for a plethora of localised and partial interests pursued by local and partial policies. The role of social workers shifted from direct provision of help to care management. (Parton, 1994: 25–30).

Dustin characterises care management as a purchase of social services from the public budget with a view to satisfying approved needs of the consumer at acceptable costs of

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[19] Smith and White (1997) refuse Parton's postmodernist interpretation of proceduralisation of social work in England. The authors explain their understanding of Parton's individual postmodernist propositions and raise arguments that question them. They interpret proceduralisation of social work in England as a consequence of the dictate of central state power and its policy interwoven by economic liberalism. They interpret social work in England as a profession with a capacity for action. Unlike Parton, who proposes relativisation of the authority of knowledge of social work in the context of (not only) neo-liberal criticism of its rehabilitative approach from various sides (Parton, 1994: 22–29), these authors do not explain why social workers are unable to effectively apply their alleged capacity for action. The arguments raised by Smith and White against Parton's propositions undoubtedly deserve to be discussed, but this would exceed the thematic scope of the present chapter.

acquisition of the services on the market. The purchase is made by the care manager who, based on criteria set by the employer, assesses consumer needs and decides which of them can be justifiably satisfied based on the set criteria. He determines an individualised "service package" which should satisfy the approved needs of the given consumer and ensure that the costs of purchase of the services are acceptable for the relevant budget. The proposed service package is usually subject to approval by the superior; the care manager subsequently selects a provider from a range of organisations in the governmental, non-governmental and private sectors and makes contractual arrangements for the supply of the services to the consumer. He keeps continuous, standardised electronic records of the performed activities and keeps track of their temporal and financial demands using the set standards. (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors.)

On the basis of her own research, Dustin shows that the role of a care manager in everyday practice does not fully comply with the above-described expectations of the superiors. She ascertained that care managers indeed assess consumer needs using eligibility criteria; they purchase predefined types of services falling within their cost limits and they spend time by recording prescribed activities and financial costs thereof. At the same time, however, they provide consumers with help that their superiors believe should be done by contractual service providers. Care managers arranged for interactions between consumers and providers; they represented consumers in their negotiations with "budget keepers" regarding inclusion of services in the "package"; provided for integration of services from various providers; represented consumers in negotiations with them and supervised the quality and comprehensiveness of the services provided to a specific consumer. (Dustin, 2007: 57–119.)

From the viewpoint of the assumptions regarding the postmodern context of institutionalisation of social work, Dustin's findings can be interpreted as a display of relativisation regarding the validity of the thought frameworks of all the parties involved: while the superiors relativise social workers' occupational understanding of help to consumers, the latter and social workers, in the role of care managers, relativise clear validity of the superiors' expectations. According to Dustin's findings, care managers do this because they understand "consumers" as "clients", i.e. people in need of help. According to them, clients have an excessively limited choice of services due to the superiors' economising on costs. They need help with clarifying their needs, deciding on the possibilities offered, they need to learn about their rights and need help with exercising them, they need help with accepting changes, etc. (Dustin, 2007: 81–100).

In other words, based on their experience with consumers' responses, care managers believe that consumers need to be guided through the process of mediation of services, but they do not receive this help. This type of experience seems to be a possible source of considerations on the part of care managers and their "clients" regarding the social worker's role as a guide through the process of mediation of services.

This assumption is, however, disputable. According to Dustin, care managers are led to regard consumers as "clients" who need guidance, because they know the concept of case social worker. Many of them had a practical personal experience with this concept in the past. In other words, they notice gaps in the system of care management because the understanding of the social worker as a guide was previously acknowledged in the society where they live and its abstract model is available to them. Despite this reservation, I consider that experience with clients' responses to gaps in the procedural approach to the distribution of social services may lead to considerations regarding guidance through the process of mediation also in a society where the abstract model of social worker as a guide is not common. In the Czech Republic, for example, there are groups of helping workers from various organisations and occupations who meet to discuss ways of mediation of comprehensive help to clients and seek ways of overcoming administrative and organisational obstacles to provision of this type of help (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87; Nepustil, 2011: 77; and other authors).

Problem currently addressed by social work

On the basis of the relevant literature, two views can be taken to characterise the understanding of the problem or problems to be addressed by social work in the postmodern context. The first is in terms of the substantive nature of problems. The second is concerned with the ways in which social workers look at problems of material nature in the postmodern context.

In substantive terms, the relevant authors point to the problems of social exclusion. According to them, social exclusion may occur for three reasons. The threat of social exclusion may occur, first, due to a lack of communicative competence of individuals in intercultural negotiation. Secondly, it may result from inability of people to form a specific idea of their proper life. Thirdly, social exclusion may be the result of proceduralisation of the provision of help. These three reasons for social exclusion are mutually related in the postmodern context.

As mentioned above, Lorenz refers to the functioning of institutions which is conditional on intercultural understanding. In his opinion the latter can be attained through intercultural

communication. A problem occurs if the parties to the communication are not able to engage in intercultural communication:

> *"If it is impossible to overcome the differences between culturally constituted positions communicatively, it becomes impossible to constitute a society from individuals, each with their own identity, whilst allowing these individuals the freedom to be different"* (Lorenz, 2006: 106).

This, I believe, means the following in the language of the theory of postmodern society: Limiting an individual's option to follow his own ideas of his proper life would prevent him, in a society of multiple options where authoritative life patterns are not trusted, from taking options, engaging in the situational negotiation on roles and relationships and fulfilling temporary arrangements on the same. Such an individual would be deprived of the option to enter the arenas of negotiation and would therefore become socially excluded. However, social exclusion need not be due to an external limitation of individual choice. It may also result from the individual's poor communication skills in clarifying the mutual differences with others and, thus, the ability to negotiate on accomplishment of his ideas about life and relationships with people. A lack of this ability would cause social exclusion even if the individual's ability to negotiate were not limited externally. I believe that in the above citation, Lorenz formulates a problem which can be called "social exclusion as a consequence of a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation".

If the inability to constantly negotiate and understand mutual differences were to affect a large number of individuals, society would face the problem of "disintegration due to a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation": *"It becomes impossible to arrive communicatively at a sufficient level of commitment by individuals to each other and of solidarity among people characterised by ostensible differences"* (Lorenz, 2006: 106)[20].

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[20] It might be assumed that Lorenz's interpretation is not postmodern in the strict sense of the term. Lorenz explicitly bases his considerations on the Habermasian idea of integration of a community through communication (Lorenz, 2006: 104). Lyotard points out that Habermas' concept is modernist because it follows Hegelian logics of integration of all elements of everyday life and thinking into an organic totality or Kantian logics of synthesis of the language games of knowledge, ethics and politics into a whole of a different order (Lyotard, 1993: 18–19). Should Lorenz's vision of forming solidarity through intercultural communication follow this Habermasian logic, this would not be consistent with the assumed relativisation of all thought frameworks, fragmentation and individualisation of identities on which Lorenz bases his case regarding the interconnection between intra- and intercultural communication (Lorenz, 2006: 104–106). This inconsistency, however, is not typical of Lorenz's arguments. Lorenz refers to Lyotard's criticism of Habermas (Lorenz, 2006: 109) and adopts a situational understanding of the formation of solidarity through intercultural communication. His concept is therefore consistent with the above Lyotard's concept of temporary stabilisation of the rules of discussion through situational negotiation (Lyotard, 1993: 175–176), rather than with the Hegelian organic totality or Kantian synthesis of language games of a different type into a totality of a different order. I am led to this thought, amongst other things, by Lorenz's statement that *"the necessity of* [constituting] community

Social exclusion caused by a lack of communicative competence in intercultural negotiation occurs if people are unable to explain to each other the differences in ideas of their proper life and the consequences of these differences. While they have an idea of their proper life, they are unable to put it into practice in interaction with their social environment.

However, there are also people who do not have a clear idea of a proper life. Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008: 131) point out that some people are threatened by social exclusion because they are unable to independently answer the question of *"how to live and experience an authentic and perhaps even happy life"*. Their social inclusion is not limited because they are unable to clarify mutual differences with other people. Instead, they are at risk of exclusion because they are unable to form or clarify their own ideas of proper life and, as a result, have nothing to clarify in interaction with others.

There is also another pitfall waiting for people who find it difficult to form independent ideas of their proper life or are unable to negotiate the accomplishment of these ideas through intercultural communication. If they approach helping workers with a view to resolving the consequences of their difficulties in life-planning and intercultural negotiation, they may hear that this is a type of help which social workers do not provide. Their employers do not expect them to endeavour for intercultural understanding which would enable those asking for help to clarify what is important for them and what they need help with. They do not even ask social workers to mediate this understanding to other people, e.g. providers of help etc.What they find out is that the helpers' task is to assess the risks accompanying the actions of the person requesting help, limit these risks by an intervention where appropriate and monitor whether the intervention was successful (Parton, 1994: 24–30). They may also find out that the task of the helping workers is to arrange pre-determined services in the cheapest possible way in order to satisfy pre-defined, approved needs, and not necessarily all the needs that the applicant for help expects to be satisfied and may be unable to negotiate. (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors.) If the helping workers' roles are designed in the way described by Parton and Dustin, people usually do not receive help with overcoming a lack of direction in life, lack of communication abilities or lack of understanding with other people and organisations (e.g. other providers of help). In that case, procedural help will confirm the exclusion of those who approached it because of exclusion.

[through the act of communicating] […] *gives the task of grounding the self without reference to essentialism some minimal prospect of success"* (Lorenz, 2006: 104). I consider that Lorenz is rather inclined here to adopt the above view of "critical postmodernism" and situational participation (see Fawcett, 2012).

Social workers thus face the problem of "a lack of mediation of intercultural understanding between applicants for help and providers of help". If mediation of intercultural understanding is a prerequisite for social inclusion, a lack of it can be seen as a factor leading to social exclusion. Parton characterises this problem by quoting Bauman, according to whom the most distinct type of social division in the postmodern conditions lies in a tension between *"autonomously conceived self-definitions and imposed categorizations experienced as constraining and incapacitating"* (Parton, 1994: 29). We can only repeat what has already been said. According to the relevant authors, the restraining categorisation mentioned by Bauman often occurs in helping organisations because social workers or their superiors attempt to manage the uncertainty which follows from relativisation of their positions by returning to the bipolar thinking of modernity (Dustin, 2007: 28–30; Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489; Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 14–15, 18–20; see section 2.1.2 above).

The above problems of a lack of life direction, difficulties in intercultural communication and a lack of understanding with others in a culturally fragmented environment are formulated in literature in a manner which corresponds to the above modern concept of "instituted" problem (see 2.2.1 above). They are constructed from the viewpoint of the specialised theory focused on help with problems in interactions. Their construction directs the specialist's attention to intercultural interaction as a partial aspect of a more comprehensive, "natural" problem of social exclusion. They are formulated so as to apply to the established focus of social work on problems in interactions and so that, in turn, (potential) social workers can specialise in support for interactions in a culturally fragmented environment.

However, this delimitation is not consonant with the findings of Růžičková and Musil on how social workers in the postmodern context define the scope of their attention. The social workers they interviewed in the spring of 2009[21] reported that they wanted to address *"certain issues"* together with people from various organisations, regardless of *"whether they are psychologists or social workers"*, or *"psychiatrists"* or other helping workers. They used the term "certain issues" for the current problems of a target group (e.g. drug addicts) or the current lack of a type of help (e.g. case integration) These findings can be interpreted as a sign of inclination of the interviewed social workers to focus on problems that Barbier, cited above (2006: 36–37), would call "natural". Their interest in *"consulting"* psychologists, psychiatrists and other helping workers on these problems can be seen as an indirect

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[21] Růžičková and Musil (2009: 3) conducted non-standardised, in-depth interviews with thirteen helping workers who were qualified in social work and held the position of "social worker" or considered themselves social workers at the time of the inquiry. The objective of the inquiry was to answer the question of how the interviewed social workers viewed the option of pursuing a common goal collectively, as social workers.

indication of endeavours to address links among individual aspects that are obvious to people with various qualifications (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 83, 86–87.)

To me, the idea of a shared focus on various aspects of "natural" problems is also present in Payne's illustration of the construction of the role of social workers in a medical facility. Payne (2006: 154–159; 2012) says that social workers negotiate their role over and over again, case by case, in multiprofessional settings. The latter, according to Payne, are established inside the given organisations "in the course of events" so that people from various occupations involved in them (e.g. social workers, carers and psychologists) can jointly use their specific knowledge in addressing mutually related aspects of everyday problems. According to Payne, social workers, like workers from other helping occupations, enrich the joint approach to the problem by their specific knowledge, expertise and skill. According to Payne, each such person's practice represents an alternative and these various alternatives balance one another.

The above interpretation of the findings made by Růžičková and Musil and Payne's findings leads me to conclude that the postmodern context gives rise to the tendency of people with specialist training to understand the problem they deal with from the perspective of their qualification, as a partial aspect of a more comprehensive, natural problem. This thought seems to be supported by the assumption put forth by Lyotard (1993: 175–176) that in the context of relativisation of all perspectives, specialists do not bring themselves together based on inclination to an authoritative truth or perspective, but rather situationally, depending on what subject they find topical.

It therefore appears that in the postmodern context, social workers – like workers from other specialisations – have a tendency to consider the problems they address to be partial aspects of more comprehensive, natural problems. While this thought coincides with the above assumptions of the theory of postmodern situation, it will require empirical verification.

Understanding of the social worker's role

The relevant literature defines two different types of understanding of the role of social worker in postmodern society. One type represents a description of approaches to social work in helping organisations that are influenced by the above discourse on "welfare pluralism". Following on from Parton (1994: 26), I will refer to this type as the "idea of a care and family life manager". The other type of idea of the role of social workers follows from reflections on the problems of people who are threatened by social exclusion due to a limited negotiating

capacity in an environment of individualised identities and multiple options. I will refer to it as the "idea of facilitator of intercultural negotiation".

Literature provides an empirical description of combinations of the two types of ideas of the social worker's role (Dustin, 2007, see above; Musil, Janská, 2011; and other authors). The two can therefore be seen as limit types[22] with the assumption that the two ideas compete in practice or that there are attempts at interconnecting them in various ways. Thus, by describing the two types, we endeavour to express the idea that in the postmodern space, concepts of the role of social workers result from negotiations in which different approaches are mutually combined or compete.

Parton provides a typological description of the idea of care and family life manager. He says that in the context of "welfare pluralism", social workers are not constructed as case workers (Parton, 1994: 26; see also Dustin, 2007: 4). According to Parton, knowledge of resources and nets has become crucial for them and the main activities of someone who should be a social worker today are...

> *"... monitoring and inspection ..., assessment* [of risks or needs[23]]*, planning, care management, negotiation* [and] *coordinating* [care packages]*, using information technology, and operating the law and procedures ... more and more time is spent on administration; in meetings; on writing reports; and on liaisons to* [scarce] *resources – rather than on direct work with clients or, as they are now constructed, users and consumers* […] The management of information itself becomes the central rationale for policy and practice, from those in central government to professionals on the front line" (Parton, 1994: 24, 26).

Characteristics of the idea of social worker as a facilitator of intercultural negotiation can be found in Navrátil, Navrátilová and in Lorenz (2006). These authors formulate ideas of the tasks of social work that would help people overcome their lack of competences in interactions with a fragmentary social environment, thus limiting their social exclusion, which accompanies this condition. Navrátil and Navrátilová (2008: 132–133) formulate the idea of help to people whose understanding of partial options and related decision-making risks is limited by a lack of ability to form their own ideas of proper life. Lorenz (2006: 99, 175)

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[22] I use the term "type" for a crystallic formulation of a specific configuration of characteristics that occur, simultaneously and with various intensities, in empirically recorded cases. I use the term "limit types" for two or more crystallic formulations of different configurations of characteristics that, in the eyes of their author, represent limit points of the presumed space in which there is a likelihood of a diverse variety of empirical configurations that, in various ways and with various intensities, put together the present characteristics included in the crystallically formulated configurations placed in the assumed limit points.

[23] Dustin (2007: 6) says that in terms of care management, protection against risks *"is constructed as one of a possible range of needs"* If the care manager ascertains in the process of assessment that a child needs protection from risk, he will mediate satisfaction of this need through preventive work provided by healthcare, education services and the voluntary sector.

provides reasons for a vision of reconciliation of solidarity and respect for differences in identity. In doing so, he indirectly proposes a concept of help for those who do have ideas of a proper life for themselves but are unable to put them into practice because they lack the communicative competence to enter the arenas of negotiation to engage in intercultural negotiation.

Combining the ideas of Navrátil with Navrátilová and those of Lorenz leads to a concept of the role of social worker who helps people negotiate the utilisation of partial options in the accomplishment of their life plans in two different ways. On the one hand, he empowers the individual to formulate a vision of himself. On the other hand, he helps create conditions that enable individualised situational negotiation regarding the utilisation of specific options.

Navrátil and Navrátilová assume that a social worker should help individuals with finding a sense of direction in life. They therefore expect him to help people *"plan their life course in a network of opportunities and risks"* and thus manage the uncertainty created in them by the pressure of options or lack of resources (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008: 132–133). (Lorenz, 2006: 175) understands help with life-planning as part of support for the individual's *"personal mastery"*. This involves, according to Lorenz, *"communicative competence in every interaction"* which, in the context of individualisation of identities and relativisation of all thought frameworks, has to do with intercultural communication (Lorenz, 2006: 101, 98–115).

The above Lorenz's vision of reconciliation of solidarity and respect for differences in identity can be seen as a formulation of the idea that the social worker's role will include, in addition to support for people's personal ability to find a sense of direction in the network of opportunities and risks, also support for their right to be different while being treated as equal. This, according to Lorenz, should be aided in two ways – within the case at hand as well as in terms of integrating people in the community.

Within individual cases, social workers should facilitate situational and temporary arrangements regarding the meaning of individualised identity of specific people and the meaning of cultural differences between them. According to Lorenz, these arrangements are a prerequisite for success of every helping intervention. He considers that without mutual understanding of individualised perspectives and situational interests of the helping party, the recipient of help and other parties involved in his interactions, it is impossible to negotiate a useful goal and method of help. For example, satisfying material needs in the form of care may be entirely ineffective if the provider and recipient of the service fail to negotiate understanding regarding the needs of the former and possibilities of the latter. In the world of

individualised identities, it is impossible to rely on mutual pre-comprehension that would rely on a generally accepted idea of what the recipient of care needs. Indeed, any "general" assumption is very likely to fall outside the individualised expectations of someone who lives his life plan. This applies both to help consisting in the provision of social aid benefits and, for example, to advocating the rights of the recipient of help before authorities, in business relations, etc. (Lorenz, 2006: 98–115, 175.)

In terms of people's interaction in a community, it is not reasonable to expect in the postmodern context that people with an individualised identity can integrate themselves into the community by adopting other people's values without mutual adjustment. Social workers should therefore enter the negotiation on community bonds related to the interests of those receiving their help, and they should work, on a case-to-case basis, towards ensuring that these bonds are based on situationally and temporarily negotiated ideas of mutual responsibility and claims of the parties involved. In this manner, social workers can support people's ability to manage mutual differences in both public and non-public negotiations on specific topics in a community. They can simultaneously prevent rules of interactions created without consideration of the rights, ethics and individualised interests of people in the community. (Lorenz, 2006: 99, 175.)

Dustin empirically described ideas of social worker's role that share the above characteristic as "care and family life manager" and those as "facilitator of intercultural negotiation". The care managers she interviewed in the years 1998 to 2000 assessed – along the line of "welfare pluralism" – consumer needs by approved criteria and purchased pre-defined types of services within specified cost limits, etc. Simultaneously, along the line of the idea of facilitator of intercultural negotiation, they accompanied the consumer in negotiations with the "budget keepers" and providers of contractual services in order to help consumers clarify and express their rights and needs and enable providers to understand the needs of those who consume their services. (Dustin, 2007: 57–119, see above.) As social workers, officially in the role of care managers, i.e. in practice, "in the course of events" – during negotiations on the interests of individual consumers – they formulated a more comprehensive idea of care manager, as the one who facilitates understanding and negotiations between the consumer and the providers regarding the purpose and manner of use of those services which the social worker, in the role of care manager, mediated to the consumer.

Payne (2006: 4–12) believes that there is an infinite series of ideas of the social worker's role that are based on combining characteristics of different concepts of social work. He

claims that *"every case and every social work action contain elements of* [different [24]] *views"* (Payne, 2006:18). He seems to suggest that ideas of social work in the present-day context are situational, or situationally negotiated and temporary. Social workers who officially act in the role of care manager create some of the notionally infinite series of ideas of their role independently of their superiors (for example, Dustin, 2007: 66–67, 70; White, 2009; and other authors), others with the superiors' aid (for example, Dustin, 2007: 68, 87, 97; Evans, 2009; and other authors) and yet another in both ways at once (for example, Clark, Newman, 1997: 95–120; Musil, Janská, 2011; and other authors).

Understanding the interaction between social workers and recipients of help

Ideas of the role of social worker as a care and family life manager (in short, "manager") and facilitator of intercultural negotiation (in short, "facilitator") differ in the ways in which the interaction between the helper and the recipient of help is understood. Combining these two concepts means to deal with the question of whether and, if so, how to reconcile the unilateralism, which is typical of the manager's understanding, with the symmetrical approach to interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help, which is characteristic of the facilitator's idea.

Dustin describes a typologically pure concept of unilateral interaction between the care and family life manager and the recipient of help. Potential openness to the idea of "consumer", as the recipient of help provided by the care manager is called, is usually limited by the superiors' expectations. Superiors expect that care managers will contractually mediate exclusively the satisfaction of approved consumer needs, i.e. those needs that were pre-defined by law or through the superiors' orders. At the same time they expect the care manager not to exceed the set cost limits for the services that the approved needs are to satisfy. They also expect care managers to purchase the services from providers with whom the superiors arranged a block contract in advance and in a manner they consider advantageous. According to Dustin, the above expectations mean that the defining of consumer needs is more resource led than needs led. (Dustin, 2007: ix–xvii, 37–68; and other authors.)

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[24] Payne (2006: 12–20) uses a triple typology of *"therapeutic", "transformational"* and *"social order"* views of social work that mutually overlap in practice. This typology reflects the long traditions of social work and, as such, in practical terms it is not a reflection of the response of social work to the problems of postmodern society. I therefore cannot use it directly for the present discourse. On the other hand, I do identify a response to the postmodern context in the understanding of the links among the above three types of views. Payne (2006: 15, 18) says that „*these different views fit together or compete with each other"* and *"every case and every social work action contains elements of all three views"*.

Under the given circumstances, social workers in the role of care managers respect that consumers have a personal concept of their unsatisfied needs, but they assume that some of their needs cannot be satisfied. While they do admit the question of how to satisfy consumer needs, the primary question for them is how to help consumers decide within their limited possibilities. (That is, when three types of needs cannot be satisfied: needs that are beyond the definition of approved needs; needs that would be "too costly" to fulfil; and needs that cannot be satisfied through services purchased by a block contract.) They must ask how to manage situations in which they should say: *"Oh, sorry, you can't have that."* (Dustin, 2007: 86–88).

It can therefore be said that superiors expect care managers to build on a pre-defined range of possibilities and ensure that consumers accept the purchased services even if their needs remain unsatisfied. Care managers voice their criticism of this task. In setting up an individualised service package, they refer to their awareness of the possibilities framed by the employer's expectations while de-prioritising their personal understanding of consumer needs. This is where their understanding of the interaction with consumers is unilateral. They comment on this by saying: *"We should use the term 'partner', but the systems are not in place to make people feel they are partners."* (Dustin, 2007: 97.)

The concept of "family life manager" also assumes a unilateral approach to the situation and needs of the family. According to Parton (1994: 24), this concept inherently involves the expectation that social workers will regard assessment and limitation of the risks that accompany the behaviour of family members as their primary task. In the role understood in this manner, the task of social workers is to assess, using previously given instructions, the degree of risk, and hence suitability or unsuitability of behaviour of family members (Parton, 1994: 25–26).

The unilateral approach to the interaction between the "care and family life manager" and recipients of help as developed in practice does not correspond to how the understanding of the same role was declared by the proponents of "welfare pluralism". The latter, according to Parton (1994: 25), showed that *"the participation of consumers should be central to decision making"*. According to Dustin (2007: 81; and other authors), the declared intention was to increase consumer choice. Research has shown, however, that it was impossible to proceed very far with this intention because care managers are expected *"both to assess needs and represent ... the funder of services"*. According to Dustin's findings, these two aspects of their role were in conflict. Care managers formulated it as a conflict between what they thought they were expected to do and what they in fact did. Their role was limited to assessment of approved needs and purchase of services. They found themselves in the

purchaser role and were therefore expected to focus their attention on services rather than their users. The duration of their contact with consumers was limited accordingly and there was a lack of time for discussing usable services and rights of consumers that would create grounds for their decisions. Consumer choices were limited by block contracts with large suppliers of cheaper but standardised, less adjustable services. Unmet needs were not being documented and, as a result, there was no background for establishing those services that were not available. Sometimes the required services were *"not on the menu"*. Thus, the declarations of the proponents of "welfare pluralism" concerning a co-deciding user led to the *"false impression of an ‚empowered user'"*. The so-called consumers did not became partners. (Dustin, 2007: 69–99; see also Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15.)

The subjects of Dustin's research address the above tension between the officially declared and experienced understanding of the interaction with the recipients of help in that they regard the recipients of help as *"clients"*. This means they understand them as people who *"need to be helped"*. Care managers therefore approach interaction with them as a relation of imbalance of power between an *"expert"* and people *"who had a problem that was so great that they were not able to make choices or that they forgone the right to make choices"*. (Dustin, 2007: 95–97.) This "returns" them to the modern, unilateral understanding of the "competent expert – incompetent client" relation (for more on this, see section 2.2.1).

In terms of the theory of postmodernity, this "return" can be interpreted as an attempt of care managers to manage uncertainty. Uncertainty is created in them by the tension between the officially declared understanding of the consumer as a partner and the employers' pressure to reduce the range of needs of supposed consumers, regardless of what the latter actually wish. The shift towards the modern understanding of the relationship of between a helping expert and an incompetent client sparks hope in care managers that as "powerful experts" they will help helpless clients in managing the tension between their needs and the limited service options. It should be pointed out that the care managers' return to the idea of an expert is a response to their superiors' attempt at managing fears of their own. These fears are due to the emphasis of the subordinate care managers on the process of interaction with consumers instead of the economic outputs of their work. Employers fear that this tendency of care managers will worsen the cost/benefit outcome, which is the centre of their attention.

Those "below" create uncertainty in those "above", where managing the uncertainty by those "above" creates uncertainty in those "below"; they are taken by surprise when they are unable to deal with consumers according to the official doctrine, i.e. to take them as partners in decision-making. Those "below", i.e. care managers, respond to this by "returning" to the

unilateral expert approach, which paradoxically allows them to avoid an even more unilateral suppression of individualised perspectives of service users. If care managers consider themselves experts, they attempt to accompany consumers through the process of negotiation and change, on a case-to-case basis, both the superiors' decisions regarding whether needs can be approved or not and the providers' approach to the meeting of these needs.

If the above interpretation gives the impression of chaos, it has served its purpose. It is a confrontation with the experience that well-known and rather clearly formulated ideas can attain unexpected meanings in the context of relativisation of perspectives. In terms of understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help, it seems particularly interesting that a unilateral approach where the social worker is an "expert" may become a means of exercising an individualised personal perspective of the "client".

The exercise of an individualised personal perspective of the recipient of help is an important part of the understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of his help, as formulated by the authors of the concept of "facilitator of intercultural negotiation". According to them, intercultural negotiation requires that the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help be symmetrical (Navrátil, Navrátilová, 2008: 133; Lorenz, 2006: 106–108). Thus, it is required that the recipients of help be understood as *"experts on their own lives"* or *"experts by experience"* and the process of help conceived as communication between two experts (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 15, 18). In this approach, the recipient of help is seen as an expert who has enough information about his life. Despite being informed about his life better than others, he may still lack instruction for proper behaviour and may lack resources for using the available information. It is hence the helping expert's task to provide or mediate these "ingredients". (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 18–19). Nečasová, Dohnalová and Rídlová (2012: 18) consider that the understanding of the interaction between the helping person and the recipient of help as interaction of two experts is appropriate in the context where relativisation of all thought frameworks supports their parallel validity and respect for *"otherness"* (see also Lorenz, 2006: 107).

In practice, the idea of two co-operating experts may be in conflict with the above effort of employers to proceduralise social workers' dealing with the recipients of help in order to prevent the time-consuming, and hence costly, multi-cultural communication between them. The idea of symmetry may also be in conflict with the above-described tendency of care managers to manage the consequences of proceduralisation of their decision-making by following the pattern of an expert helping a helpless client. In addition, the idea of

collaborative partnership between two experts may also collide with social workers' fear that the recipients of help will abuse the power conferred on them by the partnership with a view to acting unilaterally. Led by this apprehension, social workers may resort to more paternalistic patterns of conduct where they could feel relatively safe from the potential unilateral conduct of the recipients. (Nečasová, Dohnalová, Rídlová, 2012: 21.)

It can therefore be assumed that neither of the two typologically pure patterns of interaction between the social worker and the recipient of help is likely to be followed directly. In different situations, both the unilateral and symmetrical approaches to the interaction meet circumstances that generate doubts (for example, the recipient's tendency to apply pressure, or rather the opposite, his inclination to reach agreement; uncompromising attitude of the superior or, on the other hand, his openness to negotiation, etc.). These and similar circumstances differ by situation. Every case and every social worker's action may become an arena in which the parties involved situationally negotiate, in the course of events, on various combinations of different approaches to interaction between the helping person and the recipient of his help.

2.3 Legitimation and standardisation of an abstract understanding of social work

The above patterns of behaviour, whose culturally diverse variations have become known as "social work", are related to the managing of the effect of interactions among people with different cultural orientations on society or the life of people in it. We face the question of how, according to the relevant authors, the modern and postmodern versions of these patterns attained, attain or may attain legitimacy and become standard ways of managing the above problems. In other words, how the idea that acting according to the interaction pattern called "social work" is appropriate in terms of the values, rules and other ideas accepted by individuals and groups in society was, is or may be spreading in modern and postmodern society, and how acting according to these patterns became, becomes or may become an imitated, obvious and routine part of life for these individuals and groups.

Legitimacy is based on, and standardisation usually stems from, substantive compatibility of the relevant pattern of managing unresolved problems with people's understanding of such problems, or people's conviction that there is a link between the solution pattern and their understanding of problems. I addressed this substantive part of the interpretation of legitimacy and standardisation in section 2.2 above where I discuss the impulses and problems that led or lead to the creation of the pattern of behaviour called "social work". In this section I will discuss the ideas of the relevant authors about the processes that led, lead or may lead to the

conviction of people in modern or postmodern society that the relevant pattern or patterns are an appropriate and routine way of addressing the problems constructed by them. We will therefore discuss the ways of forming legitimacy and standardisation of the modern pattern of "mediator of interactions of the others with the public sphere and community" (see 2.3.1) and, subsequently, the postmodern combinations of the patterns of "care and family life manager" and "facilitator of intercultural negotiation" (see 2.3.2).

The relevant authors' ideas of legitimation and standardisation of the patterns are mutually related (see chapter 1 above). I will therefore describe them in parallel.

2.3.1 Modern version: legitimation and standardisation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community

The modern understanding of legitimation and standardisation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community is centred around the notion of consensus. Modern authors are convinced that it is spontaneously present in the web of social links (Wilensky and Lebeaux, Lubove), while postmodern commentators of modern development (de Swaan, Parton, Howe, Lorenz) see it as a social construct whose emergence was stimulated by the elites, and they therefore perceive it as if it were someone's "project".

It is stated in section 2.1.1. that according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, social work was a response to the practical ("functional") need to mediate a sense of direction in the national consensus and the "jungle" of specialised organisations to immigrants and "the others" in general. This functional need, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, led to the emergence of a specialised activity which we called, in section 2.2.1., as mediation of interactions of "the others" with the public sphere and community (hereinafter "mediation of interactions of 'the others'"). It seems that the above need for a sense of direction in the national consensus and the "jungle" of specialised organisations was the impulse for the emergence of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others". However, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux, it was not sufficient for recognition of this pattern of behaviour as an appropriate means of managing the problem of cultural heterogeneity of industrial society.

For the mediators of interactions of "the others" to specialise in the meeting of the relevant functional need, they first had to gain reputation as members of a specialised profession. In the eyes of Wilensky and Lebeaux, a broad consensus in national industrial society regarding the proper standard of behaviour of a member of any profession is the initial precondition for reputation of this kind. The pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" may become legitimate, according to the two cited authors, if people who wish to specialise in the

mediation of interactions of "the others", form an autonomous professional organisation. The latter must clearly delimit the specific activities of its members and regulate access to the performance of these activities in a manner ensuring that the workers from the occupation act in accordance with generally accepted standards of proper professional conduct. This will make the professional organisation a guarantee in the eyes of the public and the elite that the members of the organisation act in accordance with the consensual expectations of the national entity. Under these circumstances, the existence of a national consensus creates grounds for those specialised in the mediation of interactions of "the others" to gain appropriate reputation and, as an organised profession, obtain legal authorisation to exercise their specialisation and a legally guaranteed monopoly for their specific activity. (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283–285, 299.)

The standards of proper conduct of a member of a profession include, according to Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 285), first, technical competence, i.e. exclusive mastering of scientifically justified and specialised knowledge and skills that are understood as a prerequisite for the provision of high-quality services. Secondly, it is observance of the expected principles of dealing with clients. These include *"impersonal"* conduct which avoids emotional involvement; *"impartiality"* displayed in the provision of a high-quality service to everyone regardless of the social worker's personal sentiment; and finally, motivation by the "*service ideal"* where the worker devotes to the client's interests to other interests whenever the former and the latter are in conflict. Wilensky a Lebeaux (1965: 298–303) point out the analogy of the above standards of proper conduct in medicine and social work in the United States in the mid-20th century.

In my opinion, two characteristics of the above ideas of legitimation of social work in modern society are particularly worth noticing: first, the meaning of conformity in relation to consensual expectations and, second, relevance of the status of the occupation as an indication of legitimacy.

The above interpretation points out, on the one hand, that the understanding of modern society as one which is based on a "broad consensus" leads to the idea that legitimation of social work as a specialised profession is conditional on conformity with nationwide consensual expectations, or that legitimacy of the social work profession is identified (illogically but appropriately in terms of personal feelings) with the above type of conformity. Emphasis on conformity may seem trivial to those who regard society as a consensual structure.

However, the absolutely obvious need for conformity to obtain legitimacy is relativised by assumptions regarding postmodern society. According to them, social workers should endeavour for legitimation of their activities in a fragmented society where, instead of "big" consensuses, there is a plethora of individual situational consensuses. This view gives rise to the thought that the understanding of legitimacy as conformity may be appropriate only for a society of modernity where people trust the dominant interpretations of the world and the future[25]. It thus seems that the term "conformity" may become a useful means of understanding the processes of legitimation of social work specifically and only in the modern context.

The interpretation by Wilensky and Lebeaux further clarifies that the modern theory of professionalism includes the assumption that certain status indications are a display of legitimacy and conformity towards nationwide consensual expectations or standards (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 283). According to Wilensky and Lebeaux, social workers who convince the public and the elites that they act in accordance with the standards of a member of the profession can gain the prestige and legal guarantee for monopolising their specialisation. Wilensky and Lebeaux (1965: 283) assume that monopoly has to do with power and income. I consider that the advocates of the consensual interpretation may apply the assumption regarding the close links among legitimacy, conformity and status with such obviousness that they may in fact confuse legitimacy and status.

Confusing or identifying the ideas of legitimacy, conformity and status may also be misleading in modern society where (according to theoretical assumptions) people trust the dominant interpretations of the world and the future. In modern society integrated by the national consensus, people may gain influence if they act in a non-conforming way but with the image of legitimacy, or non-conforming behaviour may become so common in that society that people lose sight of the lack of its legitimacy in everyday course of their lives. However, it is always possible to point out the consensually adopted ideas of proper behaviour.

Theory has it that this possibility is absent in the postmodern context. The reason is that there is no consensus that could be taken by people to accept a single standard of behaviour as

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[25] I believe that trust in the dominant lines of interpretation of the world and the future characterises the modern authors of functionalist and conflictualist theories. Metaphorically speaking, both Parson, referred to by Wilensky and Lebeaux, and Marx, can be thought to propose that society can "function" as a whole if it inherently involves (normal) people's conformity with the order trusted by (normal) people in terms of values and rules. In this respect, functionalists and conflictualists differ in their understanding of how such an order arises in society and in their view of legitimacy of the order in the capitalist society. On the other hand, they are at one in that a sound society cannot go without an order accepted and followed by a majority which does not show signs of a lack of social adaptation.

proper, to jointly appreciate conformity with that standard and to generally grant influence to those who act in a conforming manner. In reality, the influence which follows from acceptance of a certain type of behaviour and its expected benefits is respected only temporarily. It is accepted by only a limited circle of members of one of a long series of special-interest alliances who make joint efforts to address an individual situation. As a rule, conformity with this situationally accepted behaviour is not a source of acceptance and influence in the eyes of agents from other special-interest and situational alliances. The members of each of these alliances jointly negotiate on the solution to a given situation and they temporarily perceive everyone else from the viewpoint of the solution they have temporarily negotiated. At the given time they therefore have a tendency to view the behaviour they negotiated among themselves within their alliance as proper behaviour for the given situation, a standard of proper behaviour for all people, including members of other temporary alliances.

It therefore becomes a rule that agents from one situational alliance (which we identify as alliance A) may gain power in society and the ensuing status indications through behaviour which agents from other situational alliances (OTHER alliances) do not consider legitimate because of their own idea of proper behaviour. The conformity by the members of alliance A with a behaviour which appears illegitimate to the members of OTHER alliances may bring power and other status indications to members of alliance A. On the other hand, conformity with the standards of proper behaviour negotiated in OTHER alliances need not bring similar influence and status indications. As a simple illustration, successful members of fictitious alliance A rely on quantitative presentation of their projects in grant procedures controlled by advocates of quantitatively designed research. The approach of the members of alliance A and the approach of the (fictitious) selection committee may appear illegitimate to members of other alliances who consider it appropriate to take a quantitative or qualitative approach to research depending on the subject of study. However, the approach which they find problematic brings financial support, and hence prestige etc., to the members of alliance A.

Thus, conformity, legitimacy and status become disjoined; one ceases to be the prerequisite for another. In terms of the endeavour to understand the postmodern processes of legitimation of social work, the inadvertent tendency to assume that there is a tight link among legitimacy, conformity and status could be misleading.

However, the modern interpretation of legitimation of social work assumes that legitimacy, conformity and status are closely linked. This, in my opinion, explains why modern lines of interpretation emphasise organisational unification of social workers, which they consider a

prerequisite for attaining status indications (reputation and legally guaranteed monopoly) by the occupation. According to them, organisational unification is to ensure that the behaviour of workers in the occupation becomes standard and conforming in terms of the expectations of the nationwide consensus. Anglo-Saxon literature describes two models of organisational unification which strengthened in the past the conformity of social workers with the nationwide consensual expectation, giving them acceptance and power. In the first model, the instrument of unification of social workers lies in the formation of their autonomous professional association. In the second model, the unification instrument is represented by reorganisation of the conditions for the professional activity of social workers carried out by the state, which accompanied a change in the concept of the remit of public authorities.

Lubove (1968: 131) describes the effects of unification into an autonomous professional association as follows:

> *"... a professional group could not maintain its solidarity or the confidence of the public as long as training procedures, the level of minimal technical competence, and ethics were left to the individual practitioner.* [American] *Association* [of social workers established in 1921] *described the raising of training and personnel standards [...] concerted effort to persuade the public of social work's professional character and to heighten the social worker's awareness of herself as a member of professional community [...] endorsed the need for an ethical code [...] expressed interest in [...] salaries, opportunities for promotion, and agency personnel policy [...] The forging of a group identity [...] despite this diversity had been a feat of no mean proportion [...] than [...] acculturation and control."*

According to McBeath and Webb, 1991: 747–748), analogous changes in the behaviour of social workers and in their status were brought by the unification of social workers incited by the state's reorganisation of their role in public agencies. In England of the 1970s, this reorganisation resulted in a *"triumph"* of the generic concept of (the training of) social worker as a *"multi-purpose skilled enabler and facilitator"*. At the time in question, the generic concept established itself in connection with the organisational unification of social workers under the Social Service Departments. Social workers had previously operated in specialised agencies as administrators of isolated laws which regulated help to isolated target groups. After the reorganisation, as employees of local social service authorities, they were to provide comprehensive assistance to clients with various problems in line with diverse, specialised legal provisions. According to McBeath and Webb, the establishment of the generic concept was "*important in giving a greater professionalism to social workers... and identity to the field of social work."* According to them, the unified approach helps social workers "gain power and status once they become a unified group and they would have to

assume […] responsibility for professional standards, ethical behaviour, client commitment and advocacy on behalf of those they served …".

Lubove, as well as McBeath and Webb, interpret the organisational and ideological unification as a step towards standardised actions, strengthened public trust and improved status of social workers. As we believe, the concurrence of these changes can be interpreted, in accordance with the above-mentioned assumptions of Wilensky and Lebaux, in that the organisational unification made it possible to present to the public a more wholesome picture of the social worker, whose conformity with the nationwide consensus regarding the standards of behaviour of a professional serving the public was guaranteed by his membership of a trustworthy organisation, i.e. a national professional association or public agency.

From the perspective of a postmodern observer, Lorenz discusses in detail the legitimising content of those standards of proper behaviour of a member of the profession which, as we mentioned above, is called "technical competence" by Wilensky and Lebeaux. He speaks about the conditions of legitimacy of social workers' decision-making regarding competence of "the others" to meet the standards of proper behaviour by a member of a modern national entity. According to him, acceptance by the elites and the public is conditional on social workers' ability to translate the national standard into a professional language (Lorenz, 2006: 33). The way in which the social worker formulated the standard of behaviour of a member of the national entity represents one of the standards of technical competence of a member of the profession.

Social workers' decision-making was seen as legitimate by the elite and the public to the extent they translated the standard of proper behaviour of a member of the national entity into a system of professionally substantiated criteria and to the extent they applied these criteria to decide "objectively". In doing so, social workers, according to Lorenz, built on an understanding of *"normality"* defined as *"mental health"* and *"social adjustment"*. They understood both of these displays of normality as conditions whose definitions and attributes were determined on the basis of a systematic observation of the relevant behaviour. From this perspective, "mental health" and "social adjustment" were regarded as phenomena that could be objectively recognised on the basis of demonstrably identified attributes. Knowledge of these attributes made it possible to set criteria and social workers were able to use them to "objectively" ask the following question: Should "the others" be treated and cared for because they deviate from the standard due to deteriorated mental health, or rather educated and culturally integrated because the deviation of their behaviour from the standard is due to a lack of social adjustment? (Lorenz, 2006: 31–34; and other authors)

Recognising the circumstances that cause "otherness" according to attributes determined by observation allowed the public and social workers to believe that the attributes of a more or less complete "mental health" or "social adjustment" were identified "objectively" and "impartially" in clients (Lorenz, 2006: 33). The fact that the conclusion they made was evaluative, or measured against the idea of what is appropriate, could, and indeed did, slip their attention. "Mental health" and "social adjustment" were seen as a precondition for compliance with the standard of proper behaviour of a member of the national community. Unlike Lorenz, the modern context did not see this standard as a specific national convention. The public and social workers saw this convention as an obvious idea of proper behaviour of every individual, rather than a construct which was derived from a (more or less authentic) national tradition in order to heighten the loyalty of nation state citizens. (Lorenz, 2006: 28, 31–36; and other authors.).

Lorenz assumes that professional understanding of the attributes of "normality", "mental health" and "social adaptation" and approaches to managing them used by social workers became an obvious and routine part of the picture of modern man and society for nation-state citizens. However, Lorenz and other relevant authors fail to discuss explicitly how this occurred in social work. We consider that the modern-context interpretations of legitimation of social work involve an implied assumption that the adoption of professional ideas of normality and related notions occurred somewhat automatically, just because helping professionals and the public were equipped with a shared comprehension. Lorenz (2006: 31–33) assumes that this shared comprehension was rooted in the generally accepted picture of national standards of proper behaviour, a widespread idea of the problematic nature of cultural heterogeneity, or threat from "the others", and a belief that the participation of professionals in the project of cultural homogenisation is or should be a *"function of reason"*.

This assumption by Lorenz may be justified but it seems incomplete. It is likely, on the one hand, that social workers' professional ideas regarding normality and approach to work with normality could be a professional "translation" of generally shared – and hence known to laymen – standards of behaviour and attitudes to "the others". It can therefore be assumed that thanks to the shared comprehension, which was based on attitudes shared by laymen and professionals, the public spontaneously adopted the professional ideas of normality. On the other hand, this assumption does not explain how the public acquainted itself with the professional translation and practical application of its usual ideas in order to feel confident that social workers assess normality and its attributes "objectively", i.e. rationally and on the basis of substantiated assumptions, without moralising (Lorenz, 2006: 33; Lubove, 1968: 97)

or without prejudicial reasoning (Lubove, 1968: 103–105, 112). In other words, independently of established ideas whose substantiation is unknown at the time they are applied.

Theory assumes that legitimation of a pattern of behaviour involves mutual stimulation with the pattern's standardisation in the process of its institutionalisation (see chapter 1 above). This means that people accept, and knowingly adopt, a pattern of behaviour if they begin to experience it as an obvious part of life in society and if they become accustomed to its routine use in specific types of situations. (And vice versa, if people accept the usefulness of a pattern, this enhances their tendency to act routinely according to that pattern.) From this perspective, fulfilment of the premise of researchers into modern professionalisation that legitimation of the pattern of mediator of interactions of "the others" is conditional on scientific nature and rationality of its application (Wilensky, Lebeaux, 1965: 284; Lubove, 1968: 106; and other authors; Lorenz, 2006: 33; and other authors) would depend on the actual existence of two assumptions. First, the general public consensually expects, and perhaps wishes to believe, that social workers assess normality rationally or objectively. Second, the general public has acquainted itself with the arguments of social workers and obtained experience with the rationality and objectiveness of its practical application, either personal or communicated.

The first of the two assumptions is discussed above. The answer to the question of how the second assumption could be satisfied (if it ever was satisfied) is proposed by de Swaan. He describes the process of acceptance of the helping professionals' view by laymen and refers to it as *"proto-professionalisation"* (de Swaan, 1990: 99–108; and other authors.). I consider that in the context of proto-professionalisation, modern general public was able to acquaint itself with the notions and methods of classification that were used (objectively, according to Lorenz) by social workers and learn to use them to find a sense of direction in everyday life and to categorise everyday experience.

According to de Swaan, in the process of their professionalisation, workers with a specialisation begin to interpret certain *"troubles"* of people as *"problems"* which they treat as professionals. They create theories to describe and classify those problems and construct methods to treat them. They introduce training courses to teach about their theories and treatment methods and establish organisations that regulate collegial co-operation and professional practice in dealing with those problems. (De Swaan, 1990: 100.) We can analogously assume that specialists in the mediation of interactions of "the others" began to identify people's troubles with "the others" as problems with "normality". They created, or adjusted to their needs, theories of *"social pathology"* (Lorenz, 2006: 35) in order to be able to classify normality problems as problems of "mental health" and "social adjustment". They

constructed methods of "integration" of those lacking social adjustment and "care" procedures for people with a mental deficit. They established training courses and, somewhat later, social work schools. And they established voluntary groups, civic organisations and, supported by the state, they set up organisations that began to employ the mediators of interactions of "the others".

According to de Swaan, professionalisation continues in that *"professional classifications and conceptions of troubles as problems that may then be categorized and treated by members of a certain profession are next adopted by outsiders"*. This occurs first among laymen who are socially close to the profession, e.g. members of adjected professions, assistants and clients. Their insight into the language of the profession further spreads among laymen through conversation, reading and learning. This way, laymen *"adopt fundamental stance and basic concepts"*, i.e. the instruments used by the members of the respective profession. *"People redefine their troubles as ... problems suitable for treatment* [by members of the respective profession]". The division of labour that established itself among helping professions becomes a guide for them to categorise their everyday troubles. In this way, laymen become *"proto-professionals"* and the whole process can be analogously termed *"proto-professionalisation"*. (de Swaan, 1990: 100–101.)

Proto-professionalisation directly contributes to legitimation of the profession in that the public learns in the process to name, perceive and live everyday experience in a manner which respects the delimitation of problems and manners of treating them constructed by professionals. In terms of legitimation of social work, this would mean that the public of modernity learned to understand everyday troubles with "the others" as problems of "normality". It would thus learn that the difficulties with "the others" to which people normally tend to respond emotionally can be "objectively" termed as consequences of "mental dysfunction" or "lack of social adjustment". The general public would thus attain the language of social work and begin to make sense of its responses to the displays of "mental dysfunction" or "lack of social adjustment".

Proto-professionalisation assists legitimation of modern professions also indirectly in that, according to de Swaan (1990: 101–108), laymen begin to understand adopted terminology and classification of everyday troubles as *"self-evident"* and *"indisputable"*. Some recommendations from the members of the profession change into laymen's everyday habits. (For example, some laymen *"became more cautious in handling conflicts, referring to general rules rather than directly to their own interests and feelings"*.) Laymen also become more likely to consider the professional intervention of the members of the profession as a

routine response to the relevant types of problems. Laymen begin to accept not only the need for help from the profession, but also a general need for professional help as such, regardless of the problem they face (they begin to regard themselves as "clients").

In short, the picture of the everyday experience of laymen and the picture of the problems to which a profession refers become *"reciprocal"* in the process of proto-professionalisation (Berger, Luckmann, 1991: 74–77). The same happens, in the process of proto-professionalisation, with the laymen's and professionals' ideas regarding the manners of addressing people's everyday troubles. If the ideas of the problem and actions leading to its resolution are reciprocal, according to Berger with Luckmann (1991: 74–77), people begin to perceive them as a standard, self-evident and routine part of the outside world. If we accept the idea of proto-professionalisation described by de Swaan, we can assume that the idea of "normality", which occurred by translating the national standard of proper behaviour into a set of "objectively described" attributes of "mental health" and "social adjustment", was thereby transformed into a standard (repeatable, self-evident, routine) part of the picture of modern people's world.

2.3.2 Postmodern version: legitimation and standardisation through situational negotiation of patterns of behaviour of the social worker

We have stated above that in terms of the theory of modern professionalisation, the occupation appears to be legitimate insofar as its members convince the public and the elites that they offer a useful way of addressing a serious problem. It is considered that the public reached this conviction in the modern past because the members of the occupation passed on to the clients, and subsequently another circle of people involved, a domain-specific way of naming the problem and manner of addressing it. Convincing the public of the usefulness of the way of addressing the problem offered by the occupation opened the way for an ideological and legislative discussion of public-policy players of the nation state, during which the occupation and its members were granted (and sanctioned by the state) a monopoly on addressing the problem in an occupation-specific way. Thus, the occupation and its members were gaining influence and other status indications for which the monopoly opens – or helps open – the way.

As I noted above (see 2.3.1), we consider that this type of interpretation of modern professionalisation relates legitimation of social work to, or almost identifies it with, the gaining of the status indications of a professional occupation. From this perspective, public and legislative discussion on the grating of monopoly and other status indications appears to

be the central arena for negotiations on legitimacy for social work. However, Payne points out that this assumption of the theory of modern professionalisation ceases to be justified:

> *"In the 20th century social work became involved in a discourse of professionalization, but the understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of developing a profession changed.* Thus, the discourse became less concerned with the formation of a professional status, but by ways in which knowledge and relationships with other professions are managed ... The important thing is to analyse the discourses about what this particular profession is and how it interacts with others." (Payne, 2006: 185–186; see also Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 492.)

"Multiprofessional settings" (Payne, 2006: 159) became the key arena for negotiations on social work's legitimacy.

Růžičková and Musil ascertained, in the above-cited research, that the interviewed social workers found the idea of a collective action of all social workers unrealistic. It is desirable, they said, *"that people experience the social worker as a* […] *competent person who would provide them with qualified help"*. However, they did not believe that a correct discussion could take place across the community of social workers, which would lead to attainment of the desired condition. They rather endeavoured to attain it together with people from various organisations and with different domains of qualification (psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, etc.), with whom they shared interest in helping people from the target group. It made sense for them to *"consult"* these people on subjects related to (the ways of) help to the target group in question. They placed emphasis on discussion according to rules that they were able to control in terms of formulation and observance. In this respect, they referred to the rule of mutual respect between advocates of different positions, rule of common selection of topics, rule of relevant discussion, etc. (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 88–89.)

The participants of the research conducted by Růžičková and Musil described the arena for negotiations on the legitimacy of social work as social structures that they thought were characterised by specialisation in (the ways of) addressing the problems of a target group (i.e. "natural problems" – see section 2.2 above) and co-operation of experts with different fields of qualification. As mentioned above, Payne (2006: 159) refers to these social structures as *"multiprofessional settings"*. To avoid the term "professional", which belongs to modernity, I will refer to them below as "multi-occupational nets".

They may take various shapes and forms. As a starting point for describing their diversity, we propose distinguishing between two types – "case" and "thematic" multi-occupational nets.

The composition of a "case multi-occupational net" changes from case to case, depending on what types of specialised knowledge are found appropriate by the parties involved as a

means of addressing the specific situation. "Case" is the characteristic subject of attention of this type of a multi-occupational net, and workers with various fields of qualification are brought into the net by their involvement in addressing the case or situation. Payne (2006: 158–159) gives an example of this type of a net, formed within an organisation by the medical doctor, nurses, social workers, hospice patient and his wife. In addition to the recipients of help, case multi-occupational nets are entered by helping workers from one or several organisations (Musil, 2012: 69–70).

We consider that the multi-occupational case net should be distinguished from the "cross-occupational thematic net". Within this net, workers with various types of specialised knowledge together discuss theoretical, methodological, strategic, economic and other aspects of work with a target group, or the way of providing help. Instead of a certain case, attention of this type of a multi-occupational net focuses on a set of questions related to a certain theme. Workers with various qualifications are brought into the occupational thematic net by variously motivated interests in participating in the discussion of a subject. Experience with participation in a multi-occupational thematic net is described by the above social workers interviewed by Růžičková and Musil.

We assume that there exist, or may exist, multi-occupational nets that combine the characteristics of case and thematic arrangements.

Růžičková a Musil (2009: 86–87) interviewed members of several multi-occupational thematic nets. They used the word *"occupation"* or *"professional organisation"* for their nets and stated they felt *"occupationally related" to their members.* One of them said: *"*[…] I do not really feel like a social worker and I am rather at one with the addictology profession […] *I am so saturated by my occupation that I no longer feel the need to meet* [with social workers]." For the approached social workers, a multi-occupational thematic net is, among other things, an arena for negotiating on their own identity. Based on the accounts of the members of these nets, we can formulate the assumption that the identity a social worker negotiates in a thematic net involves two dimensions. This is, firstly, identification with the discourse of social work and, secondly, identification with the "occupation". The participants in the research conducted by Růžičková and Musil used the word occupation to refer to the group of people from their thematic net and the discourse negotiated by that group.

The interviewed persons expressed their identification with social work by wishing that the clients experience that the social worker is a competent person (should have "a minimum of three years of post-secondary school studies in the area of social work"), who would help them in a qualified way. According to them, this could allow social workers to gain *"respect",*

which would "help them make sure that our work makes sense". (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86.) It can be concluded that they felt to be social workers who wanted to gain recognition for their occupation and existential satisfaction for themselves.

In our opinion, they expressed their identification with the "occupation", which they considered to be their multi-occupational thematic net, by claiming that "they profile themselves more by the occupation than by whether they are psychologists or social workers", and it is important for them *"to meet with colleagues from the whole country because this is the point from which they somehow derive their identity"*. (Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87.)

The interviewed were unable to express the importance of meeting in the multi-occupational thematic net ("occupation") for the formation of their identity. As mentioned above, they *"somehow"* derive from it their identity. We consider that they used this vague term to say that the multi-occupational net had a meaning for them as an arena of negotiation regarding application of their own discourse of help in which they can gain *"respect"* for and find for themselves the "meaning" of that specific discourse. In a multi-occupational thematic net, they can *"consult"* people with different discourses of help who can be expected to appreciate the effort to help people from "their" target group and appreciate the specific contribution of social workers to the jointly negotiated discourse or the practice of helping the group. They can negotiate with these people in various situations on the means and ways in which they, as social workers, can contribute to resolution of the target group's problems. This helps them realise how their contribution to the situationally negotiated resolution of a certain topic differs from the contribution of others. In this way, they can gain recognition for the specific knowledge of their field of qualification and become aware of themselves and their role in the comprehensive process of addressing the natural problems of the target group they are interested in.

Dustin has found out that social work gains reputation not only in thematic, but also in multi-occupational case nets. Dustin (2007: 103) observes that managers in certain organisations opined that *"in a multidisciplinary setting, it is very clear to me that doctors and district nurses and people like that regard social workers as fellow professionals"*. One social worker expressed his analogous experience as follows: *"If we are pulling together the psychologist, the consultant, the psychiatrist and the occupational therapist, and if we were not professional ourselves, how could we perform the role?"* (Dustin, 2007: 104).

It can therefore be assumed that in the postmodern context, social workers gain legitimacy for their specific way of help by negotiating their contribution to the discourse of multi-occupational nets. Typologically, this path to recognition takes two basic forms that can

presumably be variously combined during the social worker's career. The first type leads to recognition of the specific contribution of social work through negotiation of the social worker's contribution to the discourse of a thematic net. The second type of path to recognition of the specific contribution of social work consists in gradual negotiation of participation to the addressing of a series of specific situations in case studies. The composition of both thematic and case nets is temporary and variable and the social worker may engage in a series of nets of both types during his career. The temporariness and variability of case nets is more obvious because the situations of individual recipients of help tend to be variable and different cases may therefore require the involvement of experts with different specific knowledge. Some cases may require the involvement of a medical doctor, others ask for a lawyer and yet another for an occupational therapist or priest. These variations in the composition of multi-occupational case nets may occur relatively quickly. In these variable structures, the recognition of social work's specific contribution is therefore conditional on considerable adaptability and ability to improvise on the part of the social worker.

Payne describes the process of legitimation of social work in multi-occupational nets; he says the following about those involved in multi-occupational nets, including social workers:

> "[…] *all professionals* [involved] *are their area of practice in any multiprofessional setting; they do not just bring a professional label that defines a sector of responsibilities, they do not just bring their well-honed knowledge, expertise and skill but their practice represents alternatives and balances to each other.* They represent their profession by what they do." (Payne, 2006: 159). "[…] *develop knowledge together with others in relationships, so that they are part of the creation of understanding and accept the value of the process of social work rather than the content".* (Payne, 2006: 158)[26]

This type of legitimation is characterised by taking place within *"everyday negotiation"* on a case or theme, i.e. a specific situation. The social worker's contribution to the shared discourse of those involved in a multi-occupational net is embedded in his specialised knowledge; however, is not directly derived from the established content of that knowledge

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[26] The relevant part of Payne's sentence on page 158 literally reads: „[…] to develop knowledge together with others in relationships, [to become] *part of the creation of understanding* […]" (Payne, 2006: 158) In fact, the text is designed in such a way that Payne first gives the above recommendation taken from Healy ("to develop knowledge together with others, to become part of the creation of understanding"), and subsequently demonstrates on an example that social workers do follow this recommendation in practice (Payne, 2006: 158–159). By this example, he intentionally creates the impression that social workers indeed "develop knowledge in mutual relationships with other professionals, as a result of which they become part of the creation of understanding". We therefore took the liberty of placing the sentence from page 158 after the sentence from page 159 and formulate it as an empirical statement rather than a recommendation. This allowed us to disregard certain details provided by Payne in favour of concentrating on his interpretation of the process of legitimation of social work within the multi-occupational arrangement of co-operation.

but rather experience with *"what is successfully done"* (Payne, 2012). This idea of Payne's is conveyed, in my opinion, by the above sentence that they "accept the value of the process of social work rather than the content". In a multi-occupational net, social work does not win recognition through a convincing terminology and sum of knowledge but rather by flexibility and useful situational application.

Consequently, a pattern of the social worker's behaviour becomes legitimate insofar as it has been negotiated by the members of the multi-occupational net and found appropriate to their shared understanding of the situation (case or theme) being addressed. A pattern of the social worker's behaviour negotiated in this manner becomes an institution if the social worker and the other members of the net expect that the pattern could prove successful again in an analogous situation (when addressing a similar case or theme). This does not mean, however, that it will be seen as authoritative and valid without further modification the next time an analogous situation is negotiated. It is likely that the members of the (more or less modified) net will look at it as one of several alternatives, the validity of which is questionable and its application must be discussed again. They will probably negotiate a new, different understanding of the new, albeit analogous, situation. The social worker will be forced to negotiate on the new application of the previously "proven" pattern and reformulate it so that it is found appropriate to the new situation (case or theme) during discussion with the other members.

I consider that from the above perspective, we can formulate two types of conditions of legitimacy of social work in the postmodern context. The first one is related to the social worker's contribution to the resolution of the situation dealt with by the multi-occupational net. The other type of condition pertains to the social worker's actions in the multi-occupational net.

Recognition of the social worker's contribution to resolution of the situation
According to Payne, the social worker's steps can be accepted as valid provided that he contributes to the resolution of the situation he is dealing with together with the other members of the multi-occupational net in a way which is later evaluated as something *"that is successfully done"* (Payne, 2012, see above), or alternatively, something regarding which the social worker convinces others that it can be done successfully and it is then appreciated by others as successful because they believe in its success.

The members of every multi-occupational net formulate their own measures of what is done successfully. If we take into account the temporariness of these evaluations which

individual nets – transforming from case to case – negotiate over and over again for every new situation, their variability seems endless. However, the relevant literature can be interpreted in that this variability is created during the situational negotiation in a notional space which delimits at least the following five types of measures of what is done successfully:

- practical help has been successfully provided to specific individuals,
- interactions that were previously problematic have been successfully mediated,
- the requirements for performance, effectiveness and budget control have been successfully met,
- the disobedient have been successfully channelled into proper behaviour, which resulted in less vagueness and lesser risks,
- the specific knowledge and original contribution of the members to the resolution of the existing situation has been presented in a way which the members accept.

In the postmodern context, according to the relevant literature, different members of multi-occupational nets measure what is done successfully using one, but often several, of the above five criteria.

McBeath and Webb formulate the assumption that the members of multi-occupational nets measure what is done successfully in terms of whether specific individuals were provided with practical help. They explain that in the postmodern context, practical help is understood as help to specific individuals which need not be and is not justified by the provision of the service in the name of society and the state. In postmodern social work, according to these two authors, *"what most are agreeable to is the immediate satisfaction of needs and desires at a unilateral level"*. (McBeath, Webb, 1991: 759.) Other authors provide evidence that things are seen in this light by both members of multi-occupational nets and social workers. Payne (2006: 158–159) shows that members of multi-occupational nets consider it a success story when social workers contribute with their knowledge, which is specific and unusual for others, to mutual understanding and practical resolution of people's troubles. (Payne illustrates this argument on the example of recognition shown by the doctor and nurses towards a social worker for her contribution to a practical resolution of the dilemma of a married couple; they wanted to stay at home after the husband's serious illness but feared the wife would fail as a caregiver.) Růžičková and Musil (2009: 85–86) established that the social workers approached by them considered the *"endeavour to help the client in one way or another"* to be one of the preconditions of legitimacy of their contribution to the work of multi-occupational nets.

Reasons to assume that members of multi-occupational nets find it important whether they managed to mediate problem-free interactions are presented by Dustin (2007: 129, 134–139) and Lorenz (2006: 115). According to Dustin (2007: 129, 134), case managers preserve, despite proceduralisation of their role, *"elements of traditional social work, that is, mediation, negotiation, integration and surveillance"*. It can therefore be assumed that case managers will decide whether their negotiation with users and providers of help was successful based on, amongst other things, the changes in interactions that were successfully mediated between them. Dustin (2007: 134–139) observed that some case managers consider it successful when they manage to adjust the needs of users on the one hand and the offer of the providers, co-ordination of services and budgetary decisions of their superiors, on the other hand. Lorenz (2006: 115) proposes that, in the context of individualisation and relativisation of all perspectives, it is not possible for an individual to use an offer in the pursuit of his personal life plan unless he manages to mediate mutual intercultural understanding for the intentions of the party that wishes to use the offer and the interests of those who provide the offer or influence the conditions of access to it. It is analogously reasonable to assume that it is impossible to co-ordinate the expectations of users with the offer of providers unless there is successful mediation of mutual understanding of the different views of the users, budget holders and providers of help regarding the needs of users, ways of satisfying them and funding options. Case managers have experience with the consequences of differences in the perspectives of users, budget holders and providers (Dustin, 2006 84–90, 134–139; and other authors) and it can be expected that their idea of successful mediation includes success of intercultural negotiation.

McBeath and Webb (1991: 759) and Dustin (2007: 129–134) show another type of aspects relevant in measuring what is done successfully. According to them, emphasis is placed in the postmodern context on social workers' ability to meet the requirements for performance, effectiveness, budget control, and hence also calculability. Based on these aspects, social work is considered successful if it economises on funds or derives maximum benefit from funds spent. This occurs, in the eyes of social workers' employers, if they meet the performance limits for their work and cost limits for the purchase of services, respond only to the needs contained in a check list, dedicate attention and time only to those inputs and outputs that can be monitored and audited, and report these inputs and outputs in a calculable manner.

The fourth aspect for measuring what is done successfully is the question of whether the disobedient have been placed under control, the vagueness of their responses has been

reduced and whether the risks potentially accompanying their responses have been mitigated (Howe, 1994: 527–530; Parton, 1994: 25; and other authors). These criteria of successful social work first asserted themselves under the pressure of the media and social legislation makers in work with families and children; later they were also applied in work with delinquents (Howe, 1994: 529) and people with mental disabilities (McLaughlin, 2008: 81–99). Dustin (2007: 88–90) claims that case managers were frustrated when they were forced to define the needs of users in a limited way in order to keep them within the budgetary limits of the organisation. In our opinion, this finding can be interpreted in that one of the tasks of case managers is to regulate the risks that could be introduced into the organisation's budget by vague behaviour of all service users in the negotiation on the contract. Howe (1994: 527–530) explains that in this context, the term "behaviour control" is not understood as modification of inappropriate behaviour by rectifying its causes. According to the author, it involves *"treating the act rather the actor, the offence rather than the offender* […] *Change […] is to be achieved by external compliance and not by internal insight. The disobedient are required simply to conform.* The individual's social performance is all that matters."(Howe, 1994: 527.) From this perspective, it is seen as a success when the social worker negotiates (contractual) conditions with the disobedient under which the disobedient conforms (Howe, 1994: 528).

Acknowledgement that the proposed definition of the situation and the corresponding approach to its solution may be successful depends on more than just what the social worker proposes. It also depends on how he proposes it. If the social worker wants to achieve recognition of his specific knowledge of the current situation and his contribution to its resolution, he must present his proposals in a way which the members of the net consider legitimate, or he must convince the members of the net that the manner in which he presents his proposals is appropriate to their contents and deserves respect. Typologically speaking, in a specific net, the social worker can meet with members who recognise three types of arguments[27]. Some accept "evidence-based arguments", using evidence which is obtained by an external observer and is considered valid for all situations within a category. Others recognise "arguments based on interpretation of the situation in question by the parties involved"; this kind of understanding is considered to be valid only for the given situation. Yet another group accepts arguments that are based on a combination of the above two types of arguments. It is likely that the members who measure what is successful by compliance

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[27] This typology is based on the findings obtained in the discussion of appropriateness of what is called practice based on evidence for social work (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 478–483; Dewe, Otto, 2011b; see also Lorenz, 2004). More detailed evaluation and interpretation of that debate would exceed the limits of this text.

with the requirements for effectiveness and calculability or by the limitation of risk are more prone to accept evidence-based arguments. It can also be assumed that those who measure what is done successfully by the provision of practical help to individuals or by mediation of problem interactions will take account of arguments that are based on interpretation of the situation by the parties involved.

I was inspired to formulate these assumptions by a summary of a debate on appropriateness of evidence-based practice, presented by Witkin and Iversen (2008: 480–483). According to them, the central idea for this debate is that evidence-based arguments promote proceduralisation and limitation of participation of recipients of help, while arguments based on interpretation of the situation by the parties involved allow participation and promote consideration of the situational context in an endeavour to resolve a situation. This leads to the assumption that the kind of arguments which social workers take in negotiating their role in multi-occupational nets, or which they are forced to take due to the expectations of the other members of the same net, has an effect on proto-professionalisation of the public. If social workers use evidence-based arguments, these arguments stem not from the parties involved in the situation, but from the authors of published studies and methodologies. Recipients of help therefore do not participate in the formulation of the net members' ideas regarding the recipients' situation and its resolution. They do not become members of the net, and therefore "only" workers from other disciplines become acquainted with the terminology of social work. If social workers use arguments based on interpretation of a situation negotiated by the parties involved in it, these arguments are derived from the recipients of help. In this case, the recipients of help participate in the formulation of the net members' ideas regarding the recipients' situation and its resolution. They thus become involved in the net and the terminology of social work is transferred to them too. The ability to recognise which of the above kinds of arguments the other members of the net accept and the ability to appropriately modify or defend one's own line of argument may hence be important for the recognition and application of the social worker's contribution within the net as well as for transferring social work's specific knowledge to the public.

It is common that in measuring what is done successfully, actors of multi-occupational nets deal with the question of how they should, in their understanding of the appropriate contribution of individual members of the net, combine several incongruous types of the above criteria, and sometimes even further criteria. The situational understanding of what should be successfully done, negotiated by social workers, therefore tends to be the result of a compromise between hardly compatible types of expectations.

For example, Dustin (2007: 133–136) found that case managers experience a *"conflict"* between their focus on the interests of individual service users and the superiors' emphasis on the use of available resources by all members of the target group. According to Dustin, superiors try to set the criteria of users' eligibility for the service so that the available resources are distributed evenly to all individuals. Frontline workers, on the other hand, weigh the interests of the users they represent on an individual basis and attempt to see them as a "whole person" rather than a fragmented set of disparate needs of a "typical member of a group". This means, in our opinion, that case managers in specific situations negotiate and apply ideas of what should be achieved that variously combine the criteria of "conformity with budget control" and "help to individual people".

Lymbery also points out that various types of criteria are combined. According to him, in the interest of credibility, social workers must perform their task procedurally and impersonally as the superiors require of them, and simultaneously, to attain credibility in the eyes of users, they must identify the drawbacks of the prescribed procedures and promote alternative views of the organisation of services (Lymbery, 2001: 379–380). We can therefore assume that social workers address the tension between the expectations of the superiors and those of the users by combining the requirements of effectiveness and limitation of risks on the one hand and expectation of practical help or mediation on the other hand.

The above illustrations of combining various criteria of measuring what is done successfully highlight that a social worker cannot expect that the success of his actions will be measured using constant criteria. Instead he should be prepared to adjust his contribution during negotiation in changing situations based on what diverse evaluation criteria will be applied in relation to his actions by other members of the net in question. From this perspective, a definite and constant concept of the specialised role of a social worker is not an institution in the postmodern context. On the other hand, situational negotiation of a continuous wave of new variations of this role and the contribution of the way this negotiation is designed in the changing situations become an institution. A social worker who knows how to do something will not attain recognition of the contribution of social work. In contrast, a social worker who is able to negotiate a situational form of what he can do while taking into account what the other members of multi-occupational nets expect of him, will attain recognition of his contribution.

Social worker's eligibility for situational negotiation of a role

Witkin and Iversen characterise the behaviour of a social worker in a multi-occupational net. The two authors deal with the question of how social work can attain recognition in a situation where no answer is taken as the right or best answer without further negotiation. Under these circumstances, legitimacy of the social worker's actions is conditional on his ability to improvise as he *"resolves into action through dialogue and relationship"*. To do this, he needs *"versatility"* and ability to *"respond […] with imagination to the prospect of living without securities, guarantees, and order"*. (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 492.) In other words, legitimacy of the social worker's actions depends on his ability to repeatedly negotiate and implement the role he is expected to play in diverse situations – in addressing specific cases or in looking for access to specific themes.

The need for negotiating his role in the course of events and in changing situations is pointed out above by Payne. Witkin and Iversen add that in doing this, the social worker must rely on himself. He applies his specific knowledge, and can achieve recognition for his contribution, by responding to the constantly new situations (cases or themes) and negotiating on their definition and resolution with the members of the nets that usually change their composition with every new situation. If, under these circumstances, he is to negotiate a solution to the changing situation in a dialogue with the other members of the net and taking into account the existing relations among them, he must rely on his own imagination and improvisation rather than act mechanically, indiscriminately according to established orders, routine procedures or "reliably" proven patterns. The latter must be adjusted on a case-by-case basis to the characteristics of the given situation and its interpretation as negotiated among the members of the multi-occupational net in the course of events.

Fragmentation

We can assume from the above that legitimation of the contribution of social work through negotiation in multi-occupational case or thematic nets occurs fragmentarily. Social workers negotiate their roles and contribution separately through the specialised, and hence differentiated, environments of individual nets. This leads to legitimation of diverse patterns of behaviour. These patterns are established as individual elements of comprehensive responses of diversely oriented multi-occupational nets to specific natural problems. They are hence designed so as to take account of the multi-occupational and more comprehensive discourse of the specific net and situation rather than just the general aspects or theories of social work. While the latter may exist and be respected, they are applied and modified in the nets in interaction with the knowledge of specialists with a different focus. This means that

the legitimation of the patterns of behaviour of social workers does not take place integrally in an enclosed, specialised environment of the "profession", but rather separately in diverse, usually multi-occupational nets.

The fragmentation resulting from this manner of legitimation of patterns of social workers' behaviour is described by Howe:

> *Social work is allowed to fragment into various bits which break off and go their separate ways. Each fragment evolves and re-generates under the organizing power of its own philosophy and values.* The knowledge bases which inform each field also become increasingly different and independent, indicating a possible breakdown of social work's *[...]* attempts to unify itself philosophically, theoretically, professionally, educationally and organizationally." (Howe, 1994: 524–525).

Howe formulated this description of fragmentation of social work from the viewpoint of the Foucaltian idea of the unifying effect of the discourse of (state) power. He therefore does not see transformation as a consequence of a separated negotiation of legitimacy of social work patterns in temporary multi-occupational nets. Instead, he regards it as a consequence of a weakened unification power of legislature and public policy of the welfare state, the weakening being due to general relativisation of the authority of universal theories and truths. Before this relativisation occurred, people trusted the idea of a generally valid or dominant truth. Thus, according to Howe, in the hands of social legislators the universal theories of social work could play the role of preface for the discourse of the welfare state which, through its power, determined the language and ideas of social workers from all fields of personal social services. From this point of view, Howe assumes that the weakening of the discoursive power of social policy of the state caused a part of the original discourse to break off from the whole. By "broken off" parts, he refers to social work performed in various fields of the welfare state, the discourses of which have became disconnected without the unifying effect of the discourse of state policy. The fields (work with the family, children, delinquents, people with mental and physical disabilities, elderly people, immigrants, etc.) continue to exist in the administrative sense, but according to Howe, their discourses became diversified.

In my interpretation of the postmodern legitimation of patterns of conduct of social workers, I do not consider fragmentation a consequence of the weakened unifying power of the welfare state. (In our opinion, reduction of the state does not result in differentiation. I rather believe that it reduced the need for multi-occupational nets and other actors of civic society to act autonomously despite the state.) I assume that fragmentation occurs as a result of separated situational negotiation of social work's contribution in addressing specific natural problems in diverse multi-occupational nets. Even so we regard Howe's description of

fragmentation as an ingenious picture of fragmentation of social work discourses. We may have different views of the impulse, but our understanding of the postmodern fragmentation of social work is analogous.

For me, the "broken-off part" has a different meaning. Howe uses this term for the disjoined discourses of social work "fields" that formerly existed as an integral part of the consensually designed welfare state. I consider that the "broken off", or rather "emerging", parts of social work are the multi-occupational thematic nets that crystallise "from below" and independently of the state. In Czech society, it is less common that these thematic nets focus their attention on formerly existing "domains" of the welfare state. They rather target natural and newly emerging problems of the target groups to which, according to the members of thematic nets, public administration formerly paid no attention or fails to pay appropriate attention today. This applies to the problems of target groups such as drug addicts, foreigners, some minorities, clients of medical facilities, people with multiple problems and the like (see Růžičková, Musil, 2009: 86–87).

If the above assumptions regarding fragmentation of social work are justified, social workers cannot expect that other social workers have the same ideas of their role. If they meet, in a multi-occupational net, with social workers from different "fields" of public administration or from other thematic nets, they must situationally negotiate with them their contribution and their role in the same way as with medical doctors, psychologists, lawyers, nurses and carers. It is no longer realistic to conceive a network of social workers with homogeneous knowledge of the occupation who apply the same discourse in negotiating their role and contribution to the resolution of a given situation. (Given the experience with the lack of modern institutionalisation of social work in Czech society, it is necessary to note: "if it ever was realistic at all".) Social workers seem to have become (or have always been) an inhomogeneous group of people who apply their specific discourse of help in diverse ways. They seek legitimacy of their role and their identity among those who deal with specific problems. For them, "occupation" primarily consists not in social work, whose discourse of mediation of interactions they use to a greater or smaller degree, but thematic nets with more complex, and hence different discourses.

In some social workers, this situation creates feelings of uncertainty that, according to Witkin and Iversen, they attempt to eliminate by returning to the modern patterns of control over their status. Therefore, they stress the "scientific expertise" of social work, exclusivity of knowledge and terminology of the occupation, control of their professional associations over access to the vocation and similar aspects. (Witkin, Iversen, 2008: 489). We believe that an

example of attempts at constructing certainty in an uncertain situation is provided by the arguments of Smith and White (1997), who question the picture of fragmentation of social work formulated in parallel by Howe (1994) and Parton (1994) and declare that social work continues to be a strong profession. McLaughlin (2008: 122–126; and other authors) points out that not only social workers, but also the representatives of the state (in the UK), respond to the fears and feelings of uncertainty with the use of modern means of regulation of the profession. According to McLaughlin, in the postmodern context they began to see social workers and their dealing with the recipients of help as a risk and strengthened the legislation on mandatory registration of social workers. In terms of what Howe says above, they did so in a situation where the unifying power of the legislation and public policy of the welfare state weakened under the influence of relativisation of the authority of universal ideas of social work.

3. Education topics and preparation of social workers for postmodern institutionalisation

We arrive at the central question of this chapter: "On what topics should the education of social workers concentrate to ensure they are able to negotiate and develop, in multi-occupational nets, their specific contribution to the resolution of up-to-date topics and situations of recipients of help and thus gain recognition in the postmodern society for routine use of social work?" I believe that the above-stated understanding of postmodern institutionalisation of social work gives rise to the need to cultivate with students those topics that are related to social worker's co-operation with other members of multi-occupational nets. This includes, in my opinion, especially the following two topics: "identity of social work and its mission in postmodern society" and "negotiation of the role and contribution of the social worker together with other members of multi-occupational nets. In view of the arguments provided above, I believe that the other members of multi-occupational nets include the recipients of help, workers in other helping occupations and social workers, who refer to mutually different discourses.

I consider that emphasis on the above two topics changes nothing in the need to teach social workers how to help those who need their help. That is, to cultivate with students their specific knowledge and "technical" apparatus of the social worker. It is my experience that this topic is the usual central point for those who design and implement the curricula in social work studies. I consider that less attention is paid to the context of knowledge and "technical"

apparatus of the graduate and his or her ability to improvise and independently apply the specific knowledge of the occupation in contexts of multi-occupational nets that are situational and oriented on natural problems.

Improvisation, which seems essential for gaining recognition for oneself and for social work as such, is conditional on strong anchoring, which in turn makes it possible, with some level of skill, to promptly develop variations.

A social worker who is not certain about his specific mission and not sure what he can offer that others cannot, would be inclined, in interaction with workers from other helping occupations, to take ownership of the other parties' missions. He would not be able to offer anything to the recipients of help without being led by an order which, however, is not expected to exist in the context of situational negotiation. If he did not know himself what aspect of a given problem, different from the aspects emphasised by the other members, he wanted to "enter" into the jointly created picture of the situation which is to be resolved, he would probably become an incompletely qualified assistant helping to implement the goals of workers from other occupations. (Which happens to social workers relatively often, e.g., in their relation to medical doctors – see Simpkin, 2005.) This would, however, have two consequences. In the short term, the picture of the situation being addressed by the net in question, and the manner of its resolution, would be unknowingly deprived of the dimension or dimensions that are dealt with by social work. The solution would be less comprehensive and the quality of the service provided to the recipients of help would be lower. In the long term, the members of the net would not be offered the specific contribution of the social worker and social work would not receive even a fragment of legitimacy in the given net.

Therefore, in my opinion, improvised situational negotiation requires that the social worker apply a clear idea of his identity and knowingly follow a mission, in order to have an idea where the other members of the net should focus their attention and for what purpose the social worker and the other members should jointly apply, in an improvised way, their technical skills. Reflection on the possible concepts of social work and, if possible, a clear idea of social work's identity and mission in postmodern society should become the starting point of his studies and practice. Reflecting on the identity of social work, he can readily develop variations of a topic appropriate to the situation which is being negotiated and to the relationships that exist within the net in question.

To be able to readily develop variations of the central topic and mission of social work accepted by him as valid, he needs to apply a number of skills: Interpret the situation which is being addressed from his perspective, i.e. from the perspective of social work. Understand the

perspectives and interpretations of the situation of other members of the net and the differences between them. Understand how others construct their understanding of what should be done successfully, and hence what others expect him to do. Identify potential tensions between his interpretation of the given situation and the interpretations made by others. Identify potential tensions between his idea of what should be done successfully and what is expected by others. Identify the arrangement of relationships between members, e.g. the arrangement of their personal authority and inclination to dominance and inflexibility, or partnership and openness, estimate the effect of mutual formal and informal obligations that regulate relationships among members outside the net, their behaviour in the net, etc. Decide whether he accepts, or will try to modify, the ideas and expectations of others. On the basis of all the above, and perhaps more, findings, observations and decisions, formulate and continuously complement his contribution to the resolution of the situation so as to make it appropriate to the situation and viable at the same time. Select, implement and continuously complement his communication strategy in the net. Etc.

The social worker should do all this readily, depending on the degree of urgency of work accepted by the members. For example, Payne (2006: 158) states that workers from other occupations and recipients of help have a tendency to question the technical knowledge of social workers *"because it is perceived to be non-technical"* by them. If this situation occurs, the social worker must expect that aspects he considers complex will be trivial for others and they will not be willing to pay time and attention to them.

Thus, in order to manage the role of a party to situational negotiation, the social worker should be trained in it. If this is not done, his chance to assert himself personally, and gain recognition for the contribution of social work to the resolution of situations as they come, will depend exclusively on his personal capabilities. The latter are likely to be highly differentiated and can therefore be (and probably are) too volatile to form a basis for legitimation and standardisation of social work.

I consider that knowledge of the aspects of identity of social work and communication proficiency in their situational application are prerequisites for the social worker's ability to enrich the picture and idea of resolution of the situation currently addressed by those involved in the respective net. Education should help ensure that the social worker takes ownership of a mission, is able to express it in the descriptive language of the relevant situation and can convey it comprehensibly. Then, in my opinion, he can attract attention of others to those aspects of the situation being addressed that represent the mission and knowledge of social work but slip the attention of people with a different personal or professional perspective. In

this way he will enrich the approach to the resolution of specific situations and help troubled people manage life in present-day society. If education helps ensure that the social worker does all this repeatedly, his personal professional fulfilment can contribute to legitimation of social work as a specific part of multi-occupational discourses of help.

4. Conclusion – unclear question of postmodern birth of specific knowledge and identity

The considerations of the above-cited relevant authors include the obvious assumption that a specific identity, specific knowledge or specific contribution of social work exist and act in the postmodern context. Payne believes that the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work is a source of its specific contribution for the actions of multi-occupational nets (Payne, 2006: 156, 184; and other authors).

If we compare the above-mentioned theoretical constructs of an abstract pattern of social work in the modern and postmodern contexts (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above,) we find out that the cited authors construct each of the two contexts differently, but understand the identity or specific focus of social work continually. Their understanding of modern and postmodern identity include identical elements. The first of these is the focus on mediation of problem interactions. The second is the expectation that social workers will help manage those obstacles to a mutually acceptable course of interactions that follow from the cultural differences between the parties involved in them. I therefore consider that these two aspects are the core of the cited authors' ideas about the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work as well as the specific contribution of social workers to the postmodern discourses of helping work. It can be assumed that despite the fragmentation of social work, they attribute to its diverse offshoots a shared focus on mediation of problem interactions which absorbs, when necessary, modification of cultural barriers to the resolution of practical[28] problems by those involved in the interactions.

The assumption that the focus on mediation of problem interactions and potentially also modification of cultural barriers in the course of them is a matter-of-fact specific feature of social work appears to be a heritage of the development of social work as a modern profession. Authors from countries where social work became established as a modern profession during

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[28] In the arguments presented by the above authors, modification of cultural barriers to mutually acceptable responses of the parties involved is not understood as reduction of the mediation of interactions just to its cultural dimension. Lorenz (see section 2.2.2 above) considers that modification of cultural barriers is a prerequisite for the resolution of the substantive content of problem interactions. According to him, the purpose of mediation of a change in interactions lies in an appropriate solution that could be blocked, amongst other things, by cultural differences.

the 20th century consider the question of specific contribution of social work to the postmodern discourses of helping work either answered or answerable. They do not ask the question from where and how the specificity of social work in the postmodern context emerges (if not already present).

This question arises, e.g., in Czech society, and may arise in other societies where modern professionalisation of social work did not occur. While the word social work is used there, its ideological and practical meaning remains unclear and blurred. The idea of the specific identity and specific knowledge of social work has never been formulated and has never established itself in societies of this type. Some social workers become involved in multi-occupational nets but they are often rather uncertain about the substance of their specific contribution to their discourse. If they try to follow on from the above-mentioned traditions of the modern social work profession discussed in literature, they encounter a situation where the members of nets with other fields of qualification and recipients of help often do not expect that social workers could or should bring any specific contribution to the resolution of the problems "on the table".

If people in societies where modern professionalisation of social work did not occur experience troubles that are elsewhere managed with the help of social work, the above situation may bring difficulties to those who are unable to manage these troubles as well as to society as a whole. It is conceivable that, somewhere, modern professionalisation of social work has not occurred because society has other institutions for managing the difficulties that are elsewhere delegated to social work. If this is not the case, we believe it is appropriate to ask whether and how the described situation could be changed: "How, if at all, a formerly non-existent idea of a specific focus of social work emerges, is accepted and routinely used in the postmodern context?"

I consider that it is reasonable to formulate three scenarios of how the ideas of the specific identity, knowledge and contribution of social work developed in societies where the modern acceptance of the social work profession did not occur. I will refer to these scenarios as "zero", "parallel" and "mixed".

The zero scenario follows on from the premise that postmodern development depends on the past and from the implicit assumption of the above-cited authors that social workers derive their specific contribution to the postmodern discourses of helping work from the modern universal idea of a specific focus and role of social work in society. This idea became established by way of modern professionalisation and the public accepted it at a time when people still had confidence in the idea of a single truth. Social workers and the postmodern

public accept this comprehensive picture out of inertia and the fragmentary development leads not to its destruction, but inner differentiation. True, postmodern fragmentation leads to diversification of the "broken-off parts" of social work, but these remain within the focus on the mediation of problem interactions which was established earlier, during modernity. Social workers with various profiles can extract from it their ideas of their specific contribution to the discourse of multi-occupational nets.

However, this scenario is not feasible in societies where modern professionalisation has not taken place, the abstract idea of social work has not been accepted and social workers therefore have nothing to follow up on. Here, the fragmentary attempts at formulating the specific contribution of social work take place in the context of general vagueness of the term "social work" to which people attach non-descript, and hence unspecific ideas. (For example, they use the term "social work" to refer to social services that are not occupation-specific because workers from various helping occupations participate in their delivery, etc.) Under these circumstances, the fragmentary ideas of the specific contribution of social work that, according to the assumptions of the zero scenario, need a historically established older model, cannot occur. The idea of an accepted specificity of social work remains nil because the fragmentary attempts lacked a comprehensive framework and each took a separate path. It is also possible that social workers did not find their specificity because, instead of their own, unformulated identity, they adopted established ideas of the specific contribution of other, earlier established modern occupations (such as psychology, psychiatry, law, etc.).

The "parallel" scenario is built on the premise of discontinuity. This means that the conditions of modern professionalisation were radically replaced by the postmodern context and the specificity of social work must be sought without referring to the patterns established earlier, whose universal validity has ceased to be worthy of trust. In this respect, the development is "typologically pure" according to the logics of postmodern institutionalisation. Each social workers negotiates, in different multi-occupational nets, his own original and specific contribution, by taking his own path. However, in doing so, he respond to analogous impulses and problems that are brought by the same postmodern society. He mediates his contribution to the resolution of these impulses and problems to other helping workers and recipients of help in the course of negotiations in individual nets. The natural problems of the various target groups and individuals that social workers respond to have some common characteristics – for example, they are related to a lack of intercultural understanding among people with individualised identities, etc. This means that social workers – each in his own way – seek for their contribution in different multi-occupational and thematic contexts, but all

respond to analogous impulses and problems. They will reach, independent of one another and in parallel, an analogous formulation of the specific contribution of social work. The recipients of help and helping workers with a different field of qualifications gradually acquaint themselves with this contribution as they negotiate on the resolution of problems with social workers and they see the practical form of their contribution as they jointly implement the results of the negotiations.

The "mixed" scenario is based on the premise that institutionalisation of social work does not take place in a typologically "pure" context. Different identities of social work emerge in a society with postmodern features and are negotiated in various multi-occupational thematic nets. This differentiation of identities confirms the general vagueness of ideas of social work, which was left in society by unaccomplished modern professionalisation of the occupation. The public is accustomed to what it considers an obvious thing – monolithic and long-established modern professions such as medicine or law, and it therefore does not take seriously something as indistinct and blurred as social work. The need to establish itself alongside professions with a modern status can lead social workers who operate independently in various multi-occupational nets to endeavour to promote a clear and universal definition of social work. Although social work becomes spontaneously established along fragmentary paths, social workers will still begin to look for ways to present a clear self-definition to the public in an attempt to become a clear part of people's everyday world.

Literature does not offer arguments in support of any of the three above scenarios. We do not know whether any of them will prevail.

In terms of the purpose of the above proposal to integrate the study of knowledge and "technical" apparatus with a reflection on the identity of social work and training of its improvised application during the negotiation of multi-occupational nets, the zero scenario seems the least favourable. I expect that if the proposed thematic composition of social work studies is implemented, it will promote legitimation and routinisation of the utilisation of the methods of help by which the graduates of modified studies can contribute to the discourse of help in multi-occupational nets. This could ensure that people in difficult situations routinely receive help which is not available to them at all or is available randomly. The zero scenario would not make it possible to fulfil this purpose. This does not mean, however, that the initial assumptions of the zero scenario are unjustified.

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