

CUPRINS

MARGINALIZED YOUTH - MODELS OF INTERVENTION and EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

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A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON CURRENT ISSUES OF MARGINALIZED YOUTH

O PERSPECTIVĂ MULTIDIMENSIONALĂ ASUPRA TEMELOR ACTUALE PRIVIND TINERII MARGINALIZAȚI

EDITORIAL

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This thematic issue of the Social Protection of Child is hosting a number of articles that are the outcomes of the Erasmus project HEI HIP presented in the following pages. The efforts of 10 partners (5 universities and 5 organisations in the social field) to design a co-created module for interprofessional competence to be piloted in the higher education institution has resulted in documenting and reflecting on the current issues of **wicked problems** (as a characteristic of society) and **marginalized youth** (as a social group).

The subject of *marginalized youth* is framed in the context of *wicked problems* that every society is facing and trying to overcome – either by a social model to support different groups of vulnerable people, either by the everyday work of practitioners and different professionals in social field that address one-by-one cases, individuals, contextual situations of challenged lives.

The ideas expressed in the articles we are going to introduce are mapping a European perspective on how societies (represented by professional groups or state institutions regulating occupations and functions of practitioners) and different institutions and organisations acting in the respective fields are working on responding to social issues / group characteristics / individual situations. These extreme poles of action – social level, individual level – are offering a wide space of interpretation at local, contextual level, leading to design various ways of performing social intervention practices. From these actions that can be seen as fragmented and causing very heterogenous

practices, innovation arises and this is a way to produce changes and upgrades of theoretical understandings, policy frameworks, regulatory procedures to the benefit of end-user: vulnerable groups, marginalized and at-risk youth. So there is a sense in encouraging interpretations and modelling by practice of normative regulations with maybe one condition: the right practitioner at the right time of the situation that the vulnerable individual is facing.

In the first paper, Mark Taylor is introducing the Irish society perspective on social professions. The issue is practicing a discourse that is not reflected fully in the operational field of the respective profession (in this case, social care field).

The co-creation model is widely presented from 2 perspectives by the team from Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences – Simona Gaarhuis and Martin Stam. One approach is looking at the field, being there, sensing and presecing the cooperative way of thinking on issues and choosing the right approach. The other one is supporting a reflection on how practitioners are learning to get better in their way of intervention with cases they deal with and it is framed by a set of questions that have been answered through a field research. The co-creation perspective is accompanied by a study case also from Amsterdam – the project MyCoach (author Anouk Smeenk).

From Spain, we get the insight of a more concrete situation of intervention, in the form of a training design piloted in the higher education

system. The innovative approach is partnership between university and social organisations in designing a fit-for-purpose training design to expose the students learning social professions. The article is presented by University of Valencia - Almudena A. Navas Saurin, Fernando Marhuenda Fluixá, Míriam Abiétar López, Elena Giménez Urraco.

The overview is enriched with a Danish perspective on two educational approaches at grass roots, both of them in the higher education vocational institution. One is about using service-learning as a practice task for students getting qualified as social workers/social pedagogues (Gordon Vincenti, VIA University College) and one is getting to the bottom line of training social field practitioners – the human touch, the personal development level contributing to give strength and personal value to the professional competence which is a lifelong development process (Jesper Kjær

Jensen, ASV Horsens). These complementary visions on training professionals to get ready and address wicked problems in the day-to-day practice life is the key message to be taken by anybody aiming to train anything anytime – mind the context and the tasks where you perform and mind yourself for why and how you perform.

We hope that the picture we draw for our readers will encourage them to see beyond perfect societies and perfect practitioners, perfect social models and perfect support measures different countries have to respond to wicked problems and vulnerable and marginalized groups. Instead, a co-created and co-designed perspective is offered to show that we are developing ourselves as professionals and society as we go, think and reflect critically and get together in finding what is best for different people in different contexts, still keeping the mind on the big framework.

THE PROJECT HEI HIP: HEI INTER-PROFESSIONAL MODULE – CO-CREATED BY MARGINALIZED YOUTH, PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS

PROIECTUL HEI HIP: MODUL INTERPROFESIONAL CO-CREAT DE TINERI MARGINALIZAȚI, PRACTICIENI ȘI STUDENȚI

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The project that frames the thematic issue of this volume is a Lifelong Learning Programme centralized - Erasmus Multilateral Action partnership consisting of 10 organisations from 5 countries.

The purpose of the partnership is to continue and add value with an intellectual output to a previous Leonardo daVinci partnership project that was developed between 2011 and 2013. The partnership *Strengthening Inter-Disciplinary and Inter-Organisational Practice towards Social Inclusion in Europe* created the opportunity of getting to know each other and discuss possibilities of cooperation between the participant organisations.

Working interdisciplinary and interprofessionally in social professions was the focus of the project and the partners have gathered information about how these competences are trained, developed, practiced and taught in initial and continuous training of practitioners in social field, as well as during the on-the-job training / in-service training in each country.

The work done in the Leonardo project and research on the topic show that:

- there is a growing number of marginalized youth with wicked problems all over Europe. EU statistics clearly shows that there is a growing number of youth that are without a job and/or education and in risk of exclusion
- no European country have found lasting and working solutions for solving their wicked problems
- problems with marginalized youth have many of the same reasons in the European countries e.g. socio-economic background;

lack of supporting networks and social skills and not least lack of system adaptation to youth with special needs, e.g. education of social workers.

This suggested that a solution co-created in a European context could be the answer. So the idea came up to design a specific module dedicated to train competences to practitioners that will enable them to respond the profession demands in working with marginalized youth and facing wicked problems. It was planned that these competences should be included in the initial training of the future practitioners as it consists the basis for acting as a social worker/ social educator/social pedagogue and performing in critical situations at work.

In this line, the Erasmus project was designed to continue the good partnership between the organisations involved. The current composition of the project is made up of 5 universities and 5 practice partners - organisations active in social work that are also involved as practice partners for universities' bachelor programmes. These "partnership couples" are

- VIA University College, Denmark – ASV Horsens
- IT Sligo, Ireland - North Connaught Youth Services, Ireland
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences Netherlands – BOOT-Community store for Education, Research and Talent development
- University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Romania – DGASPC/ General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Sector 1, Bucharest, Romania
- University of Valencia, Spain – Iniciatives Solidàries.

The aim of this new project is **to improve the ability of current and future practitioners (current students) in the social field to work inter-professionally and inter-sectorally so that they can innovatively work towards new solutions to wicked problems involving marginalized youth.**

The project will design and pilot an **inter-professional module concept for students** by co-creation between marginalized youth, professionals in social field, students, academic teachers. The module will be accompanied by a **Guide for Lecturers** and an **Anthology** for students, other professionals, university teachers to use be used as a content support in teaching and learning interprofessional competence, understanding wicked problems and marginalized youth issues. Also, a project website aims to present both the project and resources developed on the way, with a blog to share project experiences to design and implement the module.

1. The Module Concept

The Module concept will contain different kinds of modules for teaching inter-professional collaboration in an innovative way that can be put together. The concept consist of three phases and those interested to plan a module can pick and choose the elements that fit their particular group of students and make it as long as it is possible for them to fit into their lesson plans. They will just need at least 1 day from each phase of the concept to create a module, so it will be possible to plan a module of only 3 days or up to six weeks based on this concept. The number of participants that the modules can be planned for will be flexible. The concept will likewise be suitable for planning a module of 1-2 weeks for an international summer school and it can easily be used for in-service training as well.

The three phases of the Module Concept are:

A. Theoretical approach:

- Knowledge about different models of the welfare state in European context

- Marginalized youth & “wicked problems”
- Social innovation – what, why and how?
- Ethics and values

B. Methodological approach:

- Action research – all stakeholders are involved in the process

- How to facilitate innovative processes

C. Reflections on education and practice:

- How to implement innovative processes in education and inter-professional work.

The concept will qualify students and current practitioners to work innovatively, inter-professionally and inter-organisationally with “wicked problems” for the benefit of social work with marginalized youth. It will be co-created by Social Service staff, marginalized youth, lecturers and students and when the specific modules will be delivered all of these stakeholders will participate. Many different stakeholders from diverse countries will look at the different “wicked problems”, work on them together and hereby bring innovative ideas for finding new inter-professional solutions. The development of the concept will focus on how to create an innovative environment – a practice scenario – where inter-professional skills (personal, professional and contextual) can be trained and facilitated and co-created solutions can be formed in collaboration between the participants: students, lecturers, practitioners and youth.

2. Guide for Lecturers

The Guide will guide lecturers from outside the consortium who wish to plan a specific inter-professional module based on the Module Concept. It will consist of guiding principles regarding theoretical and methodological approaches and a presentation of very concrete facilitating tools combined with specific lesson plans from the modules that will be run by the partners during the project as pilots of the concept. The pilots will be of different duration. Potential users of the Guide need to find relevant participants and challenges and convert the concept to a meaningful plan in the specific local context.

3. An Anthology

This book will present the theoretical and methodological background for both the Module Concept and the Guide for Lecturers. Lecturers can use this as teaching material when they deliver the finished modules. Furthermore the anthology can be used separately in curriculums for traditional teaching in innovative thinking and approaches without the training part.

These results are achieved by a set of activities that are now in progress:

- a research study
- developing the module concept – version 1
- writing the Guide for Lecturers – version 2
- writing the Anthology – version 2
- piloting the module and evaluation
- final versions of all products, dissemination and exploitation of results.

The project has passed 2 years from the time allocated: 2013 – 2016 and is currently finishing the **research activity** which results are the base for designing the module and the resources accompanying the concept.

Every country has been studying own collaboration approach in the field of social work. The aim is to document the inter-professional relationships in the field of social work and social education practice to substantiate the design of the Module Concept for students in initial professional training at HEI's. The research creates the base to produce a concept where both practitioners and marginalized youth are involved in the creation of it and then implement it into the university curricula as an innovative approach to develop professional competence to address current challenges in social work and social education.

The research will focus on identification of main perspectives of subjects (students, marginalized youth and practitioners working in the field) about:

- How are the conditions for marginalized youth in Europe at the moment? (increase of numbers, increased difficulty to access jobs/ education etc.). This is needed to put the

module concept into the relevant context that it will be carried out in.

- How to involve service users/marginalized youth and practitioners in the co-creation of the learning space for students and how to involve these actors during the delivery of the module for students? Everybody talks about involving them but how do you do it in practice? There are many questions. For instance the power balance and power relations in a group of students, service users and practitioners. For instance there are power relations between service users and the staff from the social services as the staff has a huge say in the service users' everyday life. With what tools can you shift the power balance? These tools are part of what the partner meetings will experiment with.
- What is the expected profile of a practitioner in the social education/work field? What competences and skills do practitioners and marginalized youth expect the students to have when they finish their studies?
- What is the learning potential for practitioners in the social field participating in the delivery of the module? How do we make it attractive enough for them to consider it as an alternative to other in-service training offers? The delivery of the module is dependent on Social Service institutions participating with staff and service users.

The current issue of Social Protection of Child is dedicated to present part of the results the project team has achieved so far: documenting realities in partner countries about wicked problems and how to work with marginalized youth facing them, models of intervention in social institutions and organisations, approaches in education to teach and train future practitioners working with marginalized youth in a wicked problems context.

More about this project: <http://www.viauc.com/projects/hip/Pages/hei-inter-professional-module.aspx>

COMPETENCE AND IRISH SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE: DIVERGENT POLICY NARRATIVES

COMPETENȚE ȘI PRACTICI ÎN ASISTENȚA SOCIALĂ IRLANDEZĂ: DIVERGENȚA DISCURSURILOR DE POLITICI

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Abstract. *The Irish State is creating regulatory frameworks for social professionals. A regulatory framework for social workers was established in 2011; a framework for social care workers is expected before 2017. The issue of competent social professional practice is a key element addressed within these frameworks. At the same time, the Irish State has already issued a policy framework setting out requirements for training competent social care workers. By analysing how competence is constructed within frameworks regulating social workers and training social care workers, this paper examines how the Irish State is likely to frame competence for social care work practice. Specifically, by considering regulatory and training frameworks as policy narratives, the paper suggests Irish State policies may offer divergent positions on the social status of social care workers and on the moral dimensions of the social care work role. In particular, this paper suggests that different institutions of the Irish State formulating policy concerning social professional competence employ different conceptualisations of the socio-philosophical term 'freedom'. Consequently, this difference leads to different organs of the State mapping out quite different frameworks for what constitutes competence in social professional practice.*

Statul irlandez crează cadre normative pentru profesioniștii în domeniul social. Un cadru de reglementare pentru lucrătorii sociali a fost stabilit în anul 2011; un cadru pentru asistenții sociali este așteptat înainte de anul 2017. Tema profesionistului competent în domeniul social constituie un element cheie care își găsește răspuns în aceste cadre normative. În același timp, statul irlandez a emis deja un cadru de politici cuprinzând cerințele de formare a competențelor pentru asistenții sociali. Analizând cum este construită competența în conținutul cadrelor de reglementare a profesiilor sociale și a formării aferente, articolul prezintă modul în care statul irlandez definește competența pentru practicarea profesiilor sociale. Specific, considerând reglementările profesiei și cerințele de formare profesională ca discursuri de politici, articolul sugerează că politicile statului irlandez se pot situa pe poziții divergente privind statusul social al asistenților sociali și dimensiunile morale implicate de acest rol profesional. În mod particular, articolul sugerează că diferitele instituții ale statului ce structurează politici privind competențele profesiunilor sociale angajează diferite conceptualizări ale termenului socio-filosofic de "libertate". În consecință, această diferență implică faptul că diferite organisme ale statului vor proiecta diferit cadre pentru ceea ce constituie competența în practicarea profesiunilor sociale.

Key words: Narrative Policy Analysis; Competence; Irish Social Care Policy and Practice; Narrative Positioning; Social Professions

Introduction

Two Irish state agencies are significantly moulding our understanding of what constitutes competent social care work practice. CORU – Ireland's first multi-profession health and social care regulator – announced in spring 2014 the

creation of a regulatory framework for practising social care workers. If CORU creates a framework similar to the one put in place for social workers (CORU, 2011), a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers is likely to emerge, with the issue of competent practice constituting an important

element. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), an education and training awards organisation, is another Irish stage agency determining how competence in social care work practice is framed: awards standards for social care work were published in 2010 (Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC), 2010) establishing general standards of competence which must be achieved prior to qualifying as a social care worker. As competence is a constitutive element of any social practice (Shove et al., 2012, p. 14) and as a regulatory framework for social care workers is still to be finalised, it is therefore a suitable time to consider the State's approach to competence in social care work, not least because competence is a contested term.

The substantive aim of this paper is to examine how the Irish State may frame competence for social care work practice, by analysing how competence is conceived within the regulatory framework for social workers and the training framework for social care workers. As social care work is a profession which can empower and liberate service users (Lalor and Share, 2013, p.13), one of the paper's theoretical aims is to examine the State's framing of competence concerning the kind of freedom promoted, in terms of social care worker role parameters and the impact of social care worker actions on service users. The other theoretical aim examines how the Irish State frames the social status and role of social professionals in relation to competence. By social status I mean a socially defined aspect of an actor influencing the nature of her or her social relationships including their rights and duties towards others (Eriksen, 2001, p.49). A role is defined 'as the dynamic aspect of this status, that is, a person's actual behaviour within the limitations set by the status definition' (Eriksen, 2001, p.50). In this regard recent policy debates (Taylor and Bogo, 2013) concerning the meaning of competence are relevant; specifically, competence within social professional practice may have more restrictive or expansive dimensions, echoing to some degree Berlin's (1969) distinction between positive and negative freedoms.

To address both the study's substantive and theoretical aims, a narrative analysis was

undertaken of CORU's (2011) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers and HETAC's (2010) Awards Standards – Social Care Work. Esin (2011, p.92) notes that narrative analysis encompasses a range of approaches. The analysis undertaken for this study considered three narrative aspects of these policy documents: the positioning of social professionals; the moral agency of social professionals; the employment of master narratives in relation to competence. Bamberg (1997, p.337) demonstrates various 'positioning' strategies in narrative inquiry, one of which concerns examining the ongoing relationship permutations between characters in a story (e.g. leader or follower; active or passive agent; protagonist or minor character). Specifically, what is of interest in this study is how do Irish policy documents situate social professionals and competence in relation to other stakeholders, in particular service users. Narrative analysis also provides an opportunity to understand how stories locate individuals as moral social beings. In this regard, Sarbin (1986) suggests that stories offer a guiding principle for human action in that narrative structures influence our understanding of the social world and our making of moral decisions. Of interest in this study is what moral identities do Irish policy documents propose for competently acting Irish social professionals. Finally, if the positioning and moral identities of social professionals can be located in policy documents, it is also likely these constructions can be located within broader master-narratives (Gray, 2001). Such master-narratives may not be explicitly acknowledged or even recognised by policy developers, but at the same time may denote the socially available narratives employed by them to represent their understanding of ideas such as development or freedom in society. Of interest in this study are the master narratives employed by policy makers which set out the type of freedom advanced by competently performing social professionals in Ireland.

In summary, three research questions are considered in this paper:

How do Irish policy frameworks position the social status of the social professional?

How do policy frameworks frame social professionals as moral agents?

What master narratives do these policies employ in relation to social professional competence and freedom?

In the next section I review some current issues concerning competence and the social professions, before introducing the Irish State's policy on competence in social professional work as set out in training and regulatory frameworks. I then examine the narrative analysis vis-à-vis positioning. Thereafter, I present the answers to these three research questions before discussing the findings.

Competence and Social Professions

As there has been little analysis to date concerning how the Irish State constitutes competence within Irish social care work, I examine how the concept has been considered in social work in UK, Canada and USA. Competence is a complex concept; its meaning and impact on social work training and practice continues to evolve. O'Hagan (1996, p.5) suggests definitions 'range from the unhelpful... to the slightly more helpful', but at its centre lies a notion that competence 'involves the ability to do something successfully or efficiently' (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2014). O'Hagan (2007, p.14) advances that theories related to behaviourism and functional analysis influenced the framing of competence-based education and training (CBET) in modern US and UK social work programmes. For example, the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) govern the competency-based approach to social work education in the USA; competences are viewed as education outcomes, specified in particular behaviours which can signify variations in performance levels (Taylor and Bogo, 2013, p.6). Holloway et al. (2009, p.4) note the intention of EPAS is to ensure 'the public is clearly informed about what social workers can be expected to know how to do'. Illeris (2014, p.114) suggests that competence's current manifestation stems from a 1970s North American approach to human resource management. He proposes that competence has replaced qualifications, to 'highlight the human factor of

the workplace' (Illeris 2014, p.114). This view of management draws heavily on functional analysis, an approach - sympathetic to behaviourism - which concerns itself with specifying the purposes and tasks of organisations and occupations. The presence of functional analysis can, for example, be witnessed in the creation of UK's National Occupational Standards in social work. In this regard, Taylor & Bogo (2013, p.6) suggest the focus in UK social work education 'has been on the process of selecting competencies and related specific behavioural or practice indicators and developing effective methods of assessment'. Such a perspective can be seen as an attempt to classify what social workers do and to quantify the impact of their actions, a process very much in-synch with new managerialism and work-measurement frameworks. Or in the words of O'Hagan (1996, p.13), 'output, the quality of output, and, the measurement of output, are primary goals in managerial technical rationality'.

A number of tensions nevertheless remain concerning the meaning of competence, its use and assessment. There is disagreement over the area of analysis for competence: should the focus be on job-related and/or person-related areas of competence (Woodruffe, 1991)? There is disagreement over judgements concerning competence: is it a 'binary concept' in the sense that a practitioner's actions are/are not competent (Eraut, 1994, p.118) or should it be seen as a developmental phenomenon, ranging from basic ableness to excellence in performing roles and tasks (Cheetham & Chivers, 2005, p.54), which corresponds with a view that practitioners become more experienced over time? These two perspectives are evident within competence frameworks for social workers in England. On the one hand, the Standards of Proficiency, developed by the social work regulator, Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC), outline 'what a social worker in England should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their social work training' (Health & Care Professions Council (England) website, 2014). On the other hand, the College of Social Work in England created the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), which delineates the capabilities needed by social workers at

different levels of their careers. There is also disagreement concerning the best way to assess competence. Knight and Page (2007) suggest two alternatives. On the one hand, assessors could design complex assessment models such as the Canadian Objective Structured Clinical Examination model which can assess meta-competences (e.g. higher-order thinking and reflective capacity) and procedural competences (e.g. skills needed to carry out basic tasks). On the other hand, assessors may be more interested in 'wicked competencies' which are context-driven, difficult to define, with different assessors placing value on different kinds of knowledge and skills. Finally, there is disagreement on the constitutive elements of competence. On the one hand, the Canadian Objective Structured Examination model identifies skills needed to perform procedural competences or tasks. On the other hand, the Irish State regulator of education and training programmes delineates between knowledge, skill and competence in its guidance framework for training social professionals. In this paper, I primarily focus on the issue of understanding and analysing the Irish State's conceptualisation of competence.

Competence in Social Care Work - Irish Policy Context

The Irish State has created two policy frameworks to direct our understanding of competent social professional practice. A framework for training competent social care workers is outlined in Awards Standards for Social Care Work (2010). The Irish State has still to produce a regulatory policy framework for practising social care workers that addresses the issue of competence. For the purposes of this paper I therefore consider the State's framing of competence for practising social workers, which is outlined in Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers (2011).

Competence and the Education and Training of Social Care Workers

The Qualifications (Education & Training) Act 1999 led to the creation of National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) and the Irish Higher Education and Training Awards Council

(HETAC). These bodies devised award-making policies and criteria for education and training programmes, and identified general standards of knowledge, skill and competence for students to acquire before receiving an award. HETAC developed generic and discipline-specific award descriptors for programmes as diverse as science, art and design, nursing and midwifery, and architecture. Award-level indicators and award-type descriptors (NQAI, 2003) informed how standards were devised. HETAC published Awards Standards for Social Care Work (AWARDS) in 2010, and these identified general standards of competence, skill and knowledge that students must acquire before receiving a social care work degree. Achieving minimum intended learning outcomes on social care work degree programmes signifies that students have realised these general standards. No specific guidance, however, was provided by HETAC on the assessment of standards or learning outcomes in social care work education. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) replaced HETAC in 2012. QQI makes awards based on HETAC standards, while it develops its own award standards and processes.

Competence and Regulation in Irish Social Professional Work

CORU was created as a result of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005. It consists of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and a range of professional registration boards. CORU's role 'is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals' (CORU Website, 2014). CORU announced in 2014 the creation of a registration board for social care workers. The social care work registration board is likely to develop a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers. The code is expected to lay down standards of ethics, conduct and performance expected of registered social care workers. While no code yet exists for social care workers, a Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers (CODE) was created in 2011 by the Social Workers Registration Board at CORU. The term

'competence' is chiefly mentioned in two different ways within this Code. First, it is listed as one of five social work values (i.e. 'Competence is professional practice') (CODE, 2011, p.4) informing the code. Second, the Code lists 23 social work duties, and competence is primarily linked with performing two professional practice duties: duty 22 where social workers act 'within the limits of professional knowledge, skills and experience' and duty 23 where social workers 'keep professional knowledge and skills up to date'.

Considering brevity, the following acronyms have been created for this paper: AWARDS (2010) signifies Awards Standards for Social Care Work; CODE (2011) signifies Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Workers.

Research Design and Methods

Narrative inquiry was the methodological approach employed to consider the Irish State's framing of competence for social care work. Willig (2012, p.153) suggests that all narrative research is based on the theoretical premise that telling stories is fundamental to human experience: by constructing narratives people make connections between experiences and come to understand these experiences in a way that becomes meaningful for them. From this perspective can policy frameworks, such as CORU's (2011) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers and HETAC's (2010) Awards Standards – Social Care Work, be considered as stories? Are they not just a set of principles and administrative procedures devised by bureaucrats? However, if the policy frameworks such as the ones under review can be understood as narratives, they permit us to focus 'on the centrality of narratives in understanding policy issues, problems, and definitions' (McBeth et al., 2007, p.18). Arguably, social policies can be considered as narratives because they can share a similar structure. For example, O'Connor & Netting (2011, p.2) view social policy analysis as a process involving the determination and review of social problems and actions to resolve them; this perspective finds sympathy in Yorke's (2013, p.x) thesis that every

narrative shares a unifying structure in presenting three issues (i.e. problem arises; journey to overcome problem; resolution of problem). At a more technical level, Stone (2002) has looked at the role played by devices such as characters, plots, metaphors, and rhetoric in policy narratives to ascertain the nature of social relationships between actors, including changes over time in the make-up of power coalitions.

To address the paper's three research questions I drew on Bamberg's (1997, p.337) account of various 'positioning' strategies in narrative inquiry. First, narrative inquiry can reveal a narrator's position in relation to other characters within a story (e.g. leader or follower; active or passive agent; protagonist or minor character) and these positions can change over time. Given that a primary concern of this paper is to analyse how competence is constructed in Irish State policies for social care work, considering policies as narratives in relation to this positioning strategy allows for an examination of how policies position social care workers in terms of designating their rights, duties and actions towards others. Or put another way, my narrative examines how two policy documents are likely to shape the social space in which social care workers operate. Second, Bamberg (1997) suggests positioning can be examined in terms of how the narrator wants to position themselves to a direct or indirect audience. In this regard Bamberg's (1997) perspective finds resonance with Riessman and Lee (2005, p.394) insofar as stories are communicative practices and can convey how individuals perform their identities and for how they want to be known. The focus of this type of narrative analysis centres on 'who an utterance may be directed to, when, and why, that is, for what purposes?' (Riessman, 2008, p.105). One way of considering how people want to be conveyed is in terms of the moral identity they wish to convey to others through narratives, as narrative structures offer a way to guide our understanding of the world and our moral decision-making (Sarbin, 1986). While AWARDS (2010) and CODE (2011) reveal respectively the moral identities of HETAC and CORU as education and practice regulators, of interest in this paper are the moral identities which these agencies wish to construct for social professionals. In other words, AWARDS (2010)

and CODE (2011) can be seen as narratives which mould the moral identities of social professionals to act/not act in certain ways. Of interest is whether these policy frameworks create similar or different visions of social professionals as moral agents. Bamberg (2010, p.10) suggests different narrative analytic approaches can be combined to paint these pictures. And these approaches can be revealed through a structural examination of stories (Mishler, 1986), a key aspect of which is to distinguish ways in which authors employ narrative devices to make stories convincing. Third, Bamberg (1997) suggests that positioning can be analysed in terms of how narrators employ public discourses to justify actions which are undertaken. While these public discourses can be viewed as social or cultural discourses, Somers (1994) distinguishes these types of discourse from even broader 'meta-narratives' such as those of progress, human rights or freedom which are generated by societies. In turn these meta- or master narratives (Gray, 2001) are drawn down by individuals in personal stories to account for their actions and serve their subject positions and moral identities. What is of interest in this paper are the types of master narratives employed by CORU and HETAC to construct the positions and moral identities of competent social professionals.

Findings

How Do Irish Policy Frameworks Position The Social Status And Role Of The Social Professional?

The range of knowledge which social professionals need to have at their disposal is a key attribute defining the nature of their social status and role. AWARDS (2010) and CODE (2011) agree that certain kinds of knowledge underpin competent social professional practice, but disagree on the constituents of this knowledge. Given this variability, it is not surprising that both frameworks propose different types of actions which competent social professionals can perform. The AWARDS' (2010) approach to training competent social care workers was guided by NQAI (2003), which set out four domains of competence. NQAI (2003, p.22) defined competence as 'the process

of governing the application of knowledge to a set of tasks and is typically acquired by practice and reflection', with its unique feature being the effective execution of knowledge and skill in human situations. NQAI (2003) acknowledged that competent practitioners draw on different kinds of knowledge, including procedural, declarative and self-knowledge (e.g. awareness of attitudes, emotions and values; self-efficacy). While procedural and declarative knowledge can be learnt, it is recognised that competent performance also depends on 'innate characteristics' of practitioners, an aspect of performance which may not necessarily be taught. CODE (2011), in contrast, marks competent social workers as agents with a more limited range of knowledge at their disposal. The CODE (2011) sees declarative and procedural knowledge informing social work competence. Social workers, for example, need to understand procedures dealing with referrals. The CODE (2011) does not refer to practitioner self-knowledge or knowledge acquired through reflective practice, thus suggesting a limited narrative of professional learning and practice.

Not surprisingly, as the AWARDS (2010) and CODE (2011) envisage competent practitioners with different kinds of knowledge defining their capacity to act, both frameworks offer different accounts in terms of the range of actions which competent practitioners can undertake. The AWARDS (2010, p.5) proposes that social care workers may have to act 'effectively and autonomously in complex, ill-defined and unpredictable situations or contexts requires higher levels of learning'. In contrast, the CODE (2011, p.10) suggests a more conservative approach in that social workers 'should only practise in fields in which you [they] have education, training and experiences'. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the AWARDS (2010) position the role of the social professional in a more dynamic, autonomous and creative way than the CODE (2011) envisages. Arguably, the AWARDS (2010) create a more tolerant story of social professional work.

How Do Policy Frameworks Frame Social Professionals As Moral Agents

As CORU's remit is 'to protect the public', it is not surprising that this goal influences CORU's perspective on practitioner competence and on how practitioners should behave. Riessman (2005, p.5) suggests if narratives are understood as communicative practices, they can be analysed to ascertain how their narrators want to be known. Arguably what CORU is trying to picture through the CODE (2011) is its own moral identity as a regulatory agency and the moral identity of competent social workers at practice. Bamberg (2010, p.10) suggests different narrative analytic approaches can be used to do this work, and in constituting the moral identities of competent social workers through the CODE (2011), CORU utilises structural and performance narrative features.

Structural examinations of narratives can take different forms (Mishler, 1986), but a key aspect is to distinguish ways in which authors employ narrative devices to make stories convincing. CODE (2011) employs particular syntactical stylistic devices to tell the reader how social workers should act. By exercising language as a series of prescriptive commands, Sections 22 and 23 of the CODE (2011) spell out the elements of competent social work practice, covering areas such as inter-professional relationships, service users' rights, social workers' knowledge limits and supervision arrangements. In both sections, social workers read language in the form of directives with repetitious sentence clause structures: 'You must act...'; 'You should only practise...'; 'You must meet...' and 'You must seek...' These syntactical devices taken together evoke the power of the regulatory agency to dictate how competent social workers should behave. By not following the prescriptions outlined in Sections 22 and 23 of CODE (2011), social workers will not perform as competent practitioners, running the risk that they could harm service users and so act in immoral ways. CODE (2011) creates a moral framework for social workers to adopt through issuing a series of commands.

HETAC, in contrast, pitches a different moral compass for competent social care work. The AWARDS (2010) are less concerned with the relationship between social professional practice and harming service users. Instead the focus is

on creating competent social care workers continuing to develop in their moral identities as practitioners. This vision is achieved in the AWARDS (2010) through forging a sophisticated competence framework. Specifically, competence is broken down into four sub-strands within the AWARDS (2010): context; role; learning to learn and insight. Each sub-strand contains both generic (i.e. common across all disciplines) and discipline-specific elements. Competence is first outlined in the 'context' sub-strand, where it is acknowledged that competence cannot be separated from practice contexts. The more complex and less routinized the practice environment, the greater the need for social care worker to engage with 'higher levels of learning' (AWARDS, 2010, p.5). Becoming professionally competent in the 'role' sub-strand addresses the importance of social spaces and involves the learner joining and participating in groups. This requires the learner to apply social skills, understand group tasks and play multiple roles. The 'learning to learn' sub-strand highlights the importance of developing critical thinking strategies, with the learner coming to understand the limits of their own knowledge and the value of learning processes. The final sub-strand 'insight' recognises the importance of workers reflecting on internal and external experiences to develop new insights to aid them in the performing their work role. The AWARDS (2010) offer an in-depth mapping of what constitutes competent social care work practice across a number of domains and across a number of education and training levels. While the sub-strands are open to interpretation, the AWARDS (2010) position the social care worker as a more autonomous and less procedure-driven professional than the CODE (2011) allows. The intricacies which individuals need to come to terms with within the sub-strands suggest the AWARDS (2010) picture a social professional determining and more in control of his moral identity than the vision on offer in the CODE (2011).

What Master Narratives Do These Policies Employ In Relation To Social Professional Competence And Freedom?

A meta-narrative concerning the upkeep of freedom is present in AWARDS (2010) and

CODE (2011), but subtle differences emerge regarding whose freedom is emphasised and the type of freedom promoted. CORU's goal, as outlined in CODE (2011, p.3), is 'to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registered social workers'. The framing of competence within the CODE (2011) appears aligned with a meta-narrative of safeguarding the general public's negative freedom in the sense of protecting people from the harmful actions of others or the State (Berlin, 1969). The constituents of competent social work practice, as outlined in Sections 22 and 23 of the CODE (2011), prescribe competent practice actions which need to be performed by social workers to safeguard these negative freedoms. So while the CODE (2011) directs a social worker's social status, role and moral identity, it does so with the general public primarily in mind, namely protecting the general public from social work malpractice.

The AWARDS (2010), by contrast, offer a different representation of freedom, the substance of which can be located within the four sub-strands addressing competence: context; role; learning to learn and insight. What we find there is a more nuanced representation of freedom. Instead of viewing service users in a decontextualized abstract or a nebulous other in need of protection, the 'context' sub-strand acknowledges that competence cannot be separated from practice contexts, in that the more complex and less routinized the practice environment, the greater the need for social care worker to engage with higher levels of learning. The AWARDS (2010) vision of competent practice is one where the practitioner effectively and creatively demonstrates and deploys knowledge and skills through interactions with others. This work sometimes occurs in unpredictable situations, with practitioners having opportunities to develop as a result of interacting. The focus in the AWARDS (2010) is very much on producing competent social care workers, yet there is an implicit sense that social professionals as a result of acting competently will benefit society and service users. The AWARDS (2010) therefore appear aligned with a meta-narrative primarily promoting the positive

freedom (Berlin, 1969) or capabilities (Taylor, 2012) of practitioners to flourish within their social practices. These actions in turn promote the positive freedom or capabilities of individuals or groups to flourish within society.

Discussion

The findings suggest Irish State policies offer different stories concerning what constitutes competent social professional work practice. The CODE (2011) proposes that social workers need to be able to perform a limited number of functions to ensure the general public is protected from harm; taken together these functions, informed by declarative and procedural knowledge which needs to be learnt, constitute the elements of competent practice. In contrast, the AWARDS (2010) map out a sophisticated set of generic and discipline-specific competencies, expressed across a range of cognitive, social and pedagogical domains, which values knowledge as a catalyst aiding practitioners to become more competent. The CODE (2011) and AWARDS (2010) ultimately adopt different stances on the value of knowledge in social professional practice, a difference finding resonance in other jurisdictions. Moriarty et al. (2011, p.1351), for example, found UK employers, universities and regulatory agencies distinguished 'between those who view qualifying education [for the social professions] as a development process and those who view it as an end product'.

The CODE (2011) and AWARDS (2010) propose different narratives for what constitutes the 'moral' social professional. While CORU's position appears laudatory in that its primary emphasis is safeguarding service users from abusive social professional practices, it also, at the same time, through the CODE (2011) limits the role of social professionals to a set of functional tasks, a positioning which is open to criticism. For example, Munro (2011, p.137) argued that too much prescription for social workers not only diminishes professional responsibility, it also reduces job satisfaction. In contrast, the AWARDS (2010) recognise that social professionals work 'in complex, ill-defined and unpredictable situations or contexts' and acknowledge that discretion and autonomy form

part of competent social care work practice. If this is the case, moral social professional practices are informed by individuals making autonomous and discrete decisions - not just by actors following social institutional rules and procedures. Drawing on Smith (2005), it therefore could be argued that the AWARDS (2010) prioritise competence arising from professional discretion, leading to increased individual expertise and professional confidence, whereas the CODE (2011) favours competence arising from procedural systems, undermining individual expertise and professional confidence.

CORU and HETAC draw on different master-narratives of human freedom. The CODE (2011) aligns itself with a meta-narrative where the negative freedom of people is protected from social workers, most of whom work for statutory agencies. The AWARDS (2010) tell a life-affirming story about nature and benefits social care work in which the capacity of social care workers to develop and flourish in their practice to aid others is encouraged. The AWARDS (2010) bear witness to a meta-narrative involving a positive freedom – explicit for the social care worker, implicit for the service user. The AWARDS (2010) focus more on facilitating the capabilities of social professionals to perform a range of tasks for and with service users. The distinction at play here

aligns with Eraut's distinction between competence and capabilities. Eraut (1994, p.118) suggests competence can be seen as 'a binary concept – one is or is not competent in a range of roles and tasks'. A close examination of CORU's prescriptions on competences can be seen in this regard. On the other hand, Eraut (1994, p.118) also suggests that competence can be viewed in terms of a practitioner's capability to develop and potentially act over time, a perspective more in line with AWARDS (2010).

Conclusion

The CODE (2011) and AWARDS (2010) convey different stories of what constitutes a competent social professional. They draw on different master narratives of freedom to inform different representations of a competent social professional. These representations emphasise different capacities to act, different responsibilities and roles, and different moral identities for social professionals. By creating the CODE (2011) and the AWARDS (2010), the Irish State has therefore devised inconsistent policy frameworks to direct competent social professional practice.

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CO-CREATION IN COMPLEXITY A PLEA FOR OUTREACH RESEARCH¹

CO-CREAREA ÎN COMPLEXITATE PLEDOARIE PENTRU CERCETAREA DE TEREN

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Abstract. *The Dutch social welfare state is about to change from a ‘the nanny state’, which has proven to undermine important capacities of citizens, into a new concept of individual responsibility in a participatory society. The transition from a welfare state to a participatory society is a complex process: professional institutions will have to learn new ways of working, private enterprise will enter the social domain, neighbourhoods will reinforce social democracy by developing tailor-made solutions that are suited to their life world, representative democracy will have to learn to deal with these expressions of the will of the people. In this article, we have presented the two-sided research design that we developed for answering the question about how and what professionals and other participants of outreach social work practices learn from innovating their own practices. We distinguished five strengths the representatives of which all have to learn to play new roles in order to improve democratization and enabling the citizenship of citizens in vulnerable situations. Without outreach research, it would not have been possible to expose the connection between the learning of representatives of these strengths and other transformation processes on an individual, team, and systemic level. This underlines the importance of outreach research for successful innovations in the social field. In our opinion, our two-sided research design is a precondition for the co-creation of these relative autonomous strengths and the connectedness of each of these three levels.*

Statul olandez al bunăstării este pe cale să se schimbe din „stat-bună”, care a dovedit că subminează capacități importante ale cetățenilor săi, într-un nou concept al responsabilității individuale într-o societate participativă. Tranziția de la stat al bunăstării la societatea participativă este un proces complex: instituțiile profesionale sunt nevoite să învețe noi modalități de funcționare, întreprinderile private vor intra în domeniul social, cartierele vor reinstaura democrația socială prin dezvoltarea de soluții personalizate particularităților vieții lor, democrațiile reprezentative vor avea de învățat să răspundă voinței poporului. În acest articol este prezentat designul dublu-fațetat al unei cercetări desfășurate pentru a răspunde unor întrebări despre cum și ce învață profesioniștii și alți participanți la munca de teren din domeniul social din inovarea propriilor practici. Au fost identificate cinci capacități pe care reprezentanții tuturor (organizațiilor n.t.) vor trebui să le învețe pentru a practica roluri noi, astfel încât să îmbunătățească democratizarea și cetățenia activă a persoanelor aflate în situații vulnerabile. Fără cercetarea în teren nu ar fi fost posibilă identificarea conexiunilor între învățarea acestor capacități și alte procese transformatoriale la nivel de individ, echipă, sistem. Este relevantă astfel importanța cercetării în teren pentru succesul inovației în domeniul social. În opinia autorilor, designul dublu fațetat al acestei cercetări este o pre-condiție pentru co-crearea acestor relativ autonome capacități și puncte tari, precum și în interconectarea celor trei niveluri.

¹ This article is based on the article about the research design of a multi case study of four educational cases I wrote for International Journal Of Qualitative Studies in Education (2013b). This research design also formed the basis for a multi case study of six social work cases (published as ‘Geef de burger moed’ (2012)) and of three social quarter teams (is still ongoing). Both publications were used as a pad for my lecture for NOSMO, HvA en Andragogenkring in 2013. The article presented here elaborates on the findings of the social work and social quarter team case studies.

Context: research method, problem and goal setting

As researchers at the WMO workplace at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (hereafter referred to as HvA) we are partly financed by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. It finances thirteen WMO workplaces all over the country. They study all together more than a hundred practices in which this transition to a participatory society is taking place. The Amsterdam WMO workplace focuses on outreach work practices. Outreach social work tries to improve the lives of citizens in vulnerable situations by starting from their capabilities, perceptions and needs. We study outreach social workers who – according to new policy (the Social Support Act, 2007) and decentralizations in the social domain since 2012 - are trying to deal with the changing circumstances and use them as opportunities for innovating their workplaces. We meet service users, customers and clients, together with peer-experts and volunteers, professionals, organizations and governments that are trying to innovate their practices by stimulating people's 'own strength', self-reliance and social and economic participation (Stam et al 2011; Stam 2012). These citizens in vulnerable situations live in the five most deprived city districts of Amsterdam, officially earmarked as belonging to the forty most deprived city districts (the so-called 'Vogelaarwijken') in the Netherlands. Six of our studies are about social work practices with young mothers, former homeless people, people with mental health problems, people suffering from addictions, loitering youths and the lonely elderly (2009–2012); three studies are about social community teams in deprived city districts with clients suffering from poverty and social exclusion, domestic violence, rearing problems etc. (2012–2015). The last three studies have not yet been completed. Because our research focuses on the capabilities, perceptions and needs of the people involved we refer to it as outreach research. The goal of our studies is to answer the question: How and what do outreach social workers and other participants learn from innovating their own practices? For more theoretical information about the methodology see other article in this issue.

In one of the five work conferences about the methodology of practice-based research (at HvA, autumn 2013) we presented our outreach research design which captured the complexity of innovations in the social domain and the learning of the participants in these innovative practices (organized by NOSMO, HvA and the circle of adult educational theory). The methodological question which accompanies this goal is: How can outreach researchers capture the complexity of these learning and development processes? This research design and some of the outcomes are presented here.

What we encountered contradicted the usual categorization of success factors. This was understandable because of the transformation of social work practices that had taken place, in which many uncertainties and surprises occurred. In such circumstances, it does not make sense to give the primacy to the outcomes of theory in the research. We had to give the primacy to the practice. This meant that we followed the course of events and the experiences of the people involved in these practices. Studying complex innovations requires divergent inductive thinking, which cherishes the unique and that which has not yet been categorized. Acknowledging the unique and uncategorized as a source of knowledge creation requires a research design which embraces uncertainty and surprise. It should enable us to capture ongoing processes of inventing, correcting, adjusting and transforming practices.

Such explorative research – based on uncertainty - should focus on what improves process competencies such as reflecting, coaching, connecting, and transforming (Kruiter & Kruiter, 2013). The design should match the dynamics of a *complex* process. This is quite different from *complicated* processes, which are intricate but the course and termination of which can be predicted. In the practices we wanted to study, new principles are shaped and invented along the way. The way this happens cannot be repeated and be placed in a zero position as if they started at a beginning (which distinguishes them from complicated processes). We agree with Kahane (2004) who says that complex processes are complex in three ways: