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CONSTRUCTION OF ‘GOOD’ AND ‘BAD’ MOTHERHOOD DURING THE STUDY OF CRITICAL REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORK WITH FAMILIES AT SOCIAL RISK

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The article presents the analysis of a case study which is a part to a more extensive study carried out under participatory action research methodology. The aim of the article is to reveal how positioning of “risk family” woman through conversation with social worker and mother about social work process with family deploys different categories of motherhood and social worker’s positions.

PHENOMENON OF FAMILIES AT “SOCIAL RISK” IN LITHUANIA

Social work practice and social services are becoming an increasingly significant object of scientific research. According to Žalimienė (2006), there are researchers in the Western Europe and the U.S. who focus specifically on studying social welfare, while in Lithuania, this field has remained practically unstudied and unanalyzed. Only few scientific studies in Lithuania focus particularly on the analysis of experiences of social work with families at social risk. Meanwhile, foreign authors provide a lot of extensive conceptualized information about experiences of participants of processes of social work with families at social risk. As the number of families facing poverty is probably going to increase due to economic recession, activity of social workers for work with families at social risk is going to keep its relevance (Motiečienė, 2010).

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Families receive aid through social services, either basic or special, all sharing the same notion of social service. The aim of social services is "to ensure conditions for a person (a family) to develop or improve abilities and capabilities necessary to solve existing social problems without any additional aid, maintain social relations with the society, and help overcome social exclusion" (Žin., 2006, No. 17- 589, Article 3, part 2). Municipalities are the organizers of social services, while the actual need for social services is assessed by social workers (Motiečienė, 2010).

Lithuanian legal acts define a family at social risk as a family raising children under 18 with at least one of the parents having an alcohol, drug or psychotropic substance abuse problem, gambling addiction, lack of certain social skills to know how to or to be able to take proper care of children, who uses psychological, physical, sexual violence against his/her children, spends children monetary support for other than the family's interests, thus posing danger to the children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral development and safety (Žin., No. 17-589, 2006, Article 2, part 7).

Data by the Department of Statistics suggest that there were 10904 families at social risk raising 23335 children in total in Lithuania in 2010. The most common reasons why families at social risk are added into this statistics are alcohol addiction and lack of social skills. Fewer families are added into the statistics for inadequate usage of monetary support and permanent child custody (Socialinis pranešimas (Social report), 2010-2011). 630 social workers worked with families at social risk in Lithuania in 2009 (Socialinis pranešimas (Social report), 2009). The mentioned statistical data show how relevant and important it is to study this field in order to ensure more effective results of social services for families at social risk.

By applying the concept of social tension fields, Kondrotaitė (2006) analyzes the situation of families at social risk that unfolds through negative factors of social risk: poverty, unemployment, limited potential to participate in the Labour market, alcohol abuse, crime, child neglect, prolonged dependence on social support etc. The author suggests that in Lithuania, families at social risk become a negative social phenomenon that tends to be considered on the national level by focusing on a seemingly sole solution – monetary social support. As the country has been struggling against economic crisis in the recent year, monetary support has drawn criticism, while the role of social workers for work with families at social risk has been emphasized more (Motiečienė, 2010).

In Lithuania, the term family at "social risk" is associated with the term "multiproblem" family used in the literature on social work and in social work practice. The term of multiproblem family implies that the family has more than one problem. These problems are both internal and external. Internal problems of a family include conflict relations, confused roles and lack of positive interaction between family members. External problems are related to unequal distribution of resources in the society and imperfections of economy, education, health and other domains. Such a family may not be aware of available services or has had negative

experience in seeking for or using them. A multiproblem family is even considered to have developed a certain survival instinct to avoid contacts with organizations providing social services, and will ask for help only when they have faced actual crisis (Kaplan, 1986).

Kaplan (1986) reveals such family's attitude towards social workers providing social services and argues that social service providers can sometimes deepen family crises if the services are uncoordinated or aimed exceptionally at one member of the family. Such families tend to have internal anger being unable to solve problems on their own. Such anger may be transferred on social workers as a defence reaction. In such a situation, social workers or a whole team working with the family must understand the aim of social services they are supposed to provide and attempt to build trustful relations with the recipient of social services, i.e. the family. Johnson (1998) defines social work with families at social risk as provision of constructive social and psychological aid to a family with the aim to empower it and cultivate in it and help maintain the skills necessary for social functioning.

Kaplan (1986) considers it to be natural that internal crisis appears in the family as soon as social workers become involved. Analysis of social workers' attitude towards families at social risk implies dealing with such concepts as stubborn, hardly susceptible to change, inadequate, distrusting, unmotivated, hopeless and difficult, i.e. not able to establish contact. At this point, it is important that social workers who provide social services and the family share mutual wish for change and establish positive relations with social organizations of the community. Social risk families often tend to have negative expectations about the social service system. The feeling that certain decision making powers seek to limit individuality of a person or a family makes them resist the existing system (Motiečienė, Naujanienė, 2011).

CRITICAL AND CONSTRUCTIONAL PARADIGMS IN SOCIAL WORK

The aim of contemporary social work practice is adequate response of social workers to the rights and needs of recipients of social services. Such approach was expressed by critical theory supported by theorists of social work in 1960 to 1970. Critical theory spoke widely about “discourse of opportunities” that is constructed from natural social experience. Fook (2003) emphasises that social workers who follow this perspective are interested in systemic development of social work practice by identifying various forms of knowledge and various ways of creation of social work knowledge. In Lithuania, however, critical theory of social work is viewed in a rather limited way. Analysis described in this article is based on one of the models of social work based on the critical paradigm – the structural social work practice model. Advocates of this model aim to answer the question “how wealth and power in

the society construct and define the weaker ones?" (Healy, 2005, 24; according to Martin, 2003).

A social worker with critical way of thinking aims at increasing his/ her clients' consciousness, helps them identify the causes of their problems related to inadequate social structures rather than clients' personalities (Healy, 2005). Personal problems are seen as consequences of daily structural problems poverty, unemployment, insecure environment etc. Practitioners of social work act as mediators and perform intervention in solving daily social problems. Being even stronger advocate of the ideas of critical paradigm, Denzin (2002) argues that clients of social workers become the products of structural problems of neoliberal politics and consumer capitalism.

Social worker must work with a client under the principle of partnership, meaning that recipients of social services should be involved into decision making process as active citizens when such decisions are related to their personal lives (Healy, 2005; according to Dalrymple, Burke, 1995). Social work with families at social risk must be performed by constantly stressing the importance of values and social justice, and not blaming clients for their difficulties, meanwhile social workers, on the opposite, are encouraged to apply multidimensional analysis that involves the dimensions of personal, cultural and structural oppression experienced by the family (Healy, 2005).

Dahrendorf (1996) talks about marginal class constructed of main characteristic features, namely, weak connections with Labour market, children whose parents are not married, drug or psychotropic substance abuse, prolonged dependence on social support and criminal activity, usually demonstrated by men. Other authors state that targeted problems of families at social risk are neglect, lack of care, alcohol abuse, prostitution, crime, drug abuse, depression, psychosis and other problems (Matos, Sousa, 2004). Emergence of such families as social constructs is linked by Dahrendorf (1996) to unequal distribution of life opportunities. Such distribution is the result of power structures, where there are those with the power to create laws and to evaluate situations of separate groups of society on the basis of these laws. The only solution is seen as minimization of unequal distribution.

Subjective experiences of families at social risk are socially constructed by the participants of the system of social services through mutual interaction. Family at social risk in social work practice can be viewed as a social construct that, in turn, causes certain conflict between different groups of society. Therefore, the study presented in this article is based on constructivist perspective among others.

The main idea in social constructionism is that the "reality" which people ascribe to "worlds" is constructed (Naujaniene, 2007). Social constructionism raises numerous topics that have emerged during the development of constructive social work. Constructionism requires developing a critical position taking into consideration our own interpretations of world view. It is comprehended that social world is the product of social processes that reveals that nothing is naturally

given or determined by the nature. Moreover, social categories and concepts created by us are different from the ones created by others when viewed from historical and cultural perspectives in specific contexts and cannot be judged as being more true than others or vice versa. According to Burr (1995, 3-5), what is considered “truth” is a product of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other.

Knowledge about the world is developed during daily spoken interaction between people (Parton, 2003). From the perspective of social constructionism, things are subjective in that sense that they

“are always already imbedded in the language used to refer to them” (Gubrium, Holstein 1999, 289). Language is one interaction and it is actually the main kind through which people construct what it is considered “truth” at any given moment. Language orders people’s perceptions and makes things happen. Even more, language or social texts actively construct a version of objects, events and categories existing in the social world (Potter, Wetherell, 1987). As such professional experience could be disclosed by the effect of language and other symbolic forms (Layder, 1994, 87). Additionally, the way people use language can be thought of as a form of action (Burr 1995, 7). In that sense language along with other kind of interactions between people are considered practices through which people share their versions of knowledge about the world and construct “reality”. Moreover language is seen as not only constructing “reality” but, with an emphasis on the rhetorical form of language, actively changing it (Parton, 2003, 6).

According to Parton (2003), emphasis on reflection lies at the core of constructionism as an attempt to rephrase someone’s thoughts and turn them into a question by watching the constructs of alternative topic and perception of experience appear. Reflectivity in social work implies the necessity of dialogue between a social worker and a client. A social worker as a professional must develop family’s activity by purposefully guiding it into certain direction. Social worker must also raise consciousness of the families and their ability to express their experiences by arguments rising from their life experiences. It means that the social worker should seek that the family at risk becomes active, because only active people are able to overcome difficulties rising in social environment, find the reasons to the problems and resources to solve the problems (Motiečienė, 2010).

According to social constructionism, meanings of experience are constructed in a context and are variable phenomena that develop from interaction between the participants. Client’s resistance means his wish to control his life (Motiečienė, 2010) or the fact that the social worker has intervened too much or in a wrong way (Naujanienė, 2007a). Meanwhile, rhetoric of social workers about a client’s resistance ascribes the client to the category of “bad” clients and blocks social worker’s ability to reflect, which usually ends with failure to find common language with the recipient of the services (Naujanienė, 2007a).

Family is socially constructed but may manifest itself in a multitude of forms. According to Dominelli (2004), new forms of family contribute to family stigmatization and labelling, among others, into “good” or “bad” families. She disapproves of such categorization by arguing that not all parents possess equal resources to raise children (Dominelli, 2004). Yet, people to whom social workers provide services are actually positioned by categorization and stereotyping. From a social constructionism perspective, categorization and stereotyping could be considered as social practices which are rhetorically externalized by words, by the naming of “client” as well as the meaning the name carries. Categorization has manifested as much in social work theory as in actual practice. Different social work theories, such as the psychoanalytical or behaviorist approaches or radical social work, produce a multiplicity about how the client has been a focus in social work research (Juhila, et al. 2003, 12-13; in Naujanienė, 2007). Based on the ideas of Gubrium and Holstein (2003, 6), categorization is necessary as a way to understand the multi-faceted experiences of people. Categories allow a familiarization with specific details that are characteristic of one or another matter (Naujanienė, 2007).

The aim of the article is to present the study with the intention to reveal how positioning of “risk family” woman through conversation with social worker and mother about social work process with family deploys different categories of motherhood. Experience of the recipient of social services is chosen to be viewed as episodic. This article addresses the way a woman's category of “mother” is created through the language of participants of social work process as they reflect the experience of recipient and provision of the services and what positions and actions are related to such categories. This also allows revealing how the rhetoric of a social worker as he/she describes a “mother” positions the social worker as a professional and what consequences it has on social work practice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article presents the analysis which is a part to a more extensive study carried out under participatory action research methodology. During the research, both the researcher and the interviewees, i.e. social workers and families at risk, were involved in the process of critical reflection on the experience of provision and recipient of the services. The research was based on the premise that a phenomenon was understood through reflection, a necessary element of the participatory action research. According to Kidd, Krat (2005), participatory action research can be explained both theoretically, and practically as a research involving participation (being a part of something that is shared) and action (disclosure of change and making it practically applicable). The research was carried out at one of the major Lithuanian cities, at the places chosen by the interviewees through March and

April 2010. Interviews with social workers were held at the places offered by them: at social workers' homes, one interview was held at a researcher's workplace, other interviews took place at social workers' workplaces. Families participating in the research invited the researcher to their homes, and interviews were held in home settings. Data analysis covered records about a certain family at risk from the family's "case" and a transcript of the research interview recorded on a voice recorder. Voice recorder was used to collect the data.

The article provides analysis of the interviews with one social worker who worked with a family at social risk and with the mother of the family. A single-parent family with the mother as the head of the family was chosen for the analysis. Another criterion was the stage of the process with the family based on the premise that the beginning of process defines the progress of further work. By using the method of open coding (Glasser, Straus, 1967), categories to which the interviewees ascribe different meanings were identified. In this study these were the categories of 'good' mother and 'bad' mother with the intention to demonstrate practical implications of such categorization and how this leads to encouragement of changes in clients' lives for the theoretically acknowledged aim of social work practice – to empower clients to be personally responsible for their lives. Another aim was to critically review the process of the participatory action research that presumably empowers the interviewees through "raising of consciousness". Interviews with the interviewees are considered to be social constructs that emerge from interaction between the researcher and the interviewees. For this study the research interviews were based on the 'active interviewing' concept (Holstein, Gubrium 1997, 113-114). This concept means that interview is not viewed in the conventional manner, which presumes that, if the interviewer asks questions properly, the interviewee will provide the desired information. Participation in an interview involves work that makes meaning, that the interviewee is seen as producing knowledge together with interviewer (Naujaniene, 2007). Text interpretation by the researchers is provided along with the speeches of interviewees *in vivo*, in order to maintain direct connection with thoughts expressed by the interviewees. Speeches of interviewees are provided in quotation marks in the text of interpretation, and in italics if presented as separate paragraphs.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF 'GOOD' AND 'BAD' MOTHERHOOD

Analysis of the interviews has revealed that both the social worker and the "risky family" mother sought for the researcher's understanding during conversations with the researcher. The former wanted the researcher to understand why she provided the services to that family. The mother, in turn, wanted the researcher to understand

why she became the recipient of the services. However, in order to reach their aims, the interviewees used different rhetoric. We first provide the analysis of the interview with the social worker and use additional records from the “family case” to reveal insights that stimulate change in social work practice. The second part of the analysis is dedicated to the analysis of the researcher’s interview with the mother.

In her narration about inclusion of the family into the list of service recipients, the social worker was rather explicit and named the children rights protection specialist under whose instruction she had included the family in the list”

They told me there was a family whose need for services had not been identified yet. You have to assess and identify this family’s need for social services [from the interview with the social worker].

The expression “this family” without any specification allows assuming that giving bold instructions to assess this family without any further explanations to social workers is a usual practice of the children rights protection specialist. The social worker has not received any explanations why the family has been assigned to the social worker for work with families at social risk, which becomes clear from further conversation as the social worker tries to make a guess that “maybe because they want to see how it all goes”, because the family has been participating in the social support system for some time:

She used to live in a charity home and the family received child support for school. The support has been suspended. <...> I must see the family’s situation, as they have been receiving the support for a long time, there must be a break as others also need money. This is why it is necessary to find out if this is not going to affect the children, if the mother will be able to support the children on her own and take care of their material well-being [from the interview with the social worker].

Thus, the family received child support for school, but now, as “others also need money”, the support has been suspended. The support has been suspended not because the family’s financial situation has improved, but just because “they have been receiving the support for a long time, there must be a break”. There is no further elaboration on what “a long time” should mean, though later conversations with the mother reveal that it is the period of two years. So the social worker is involved into provision of aid as a monitor and is supposed to identify whether the mother “will be able to support the children on her own and take care of their material well-being” in the event that the family’s financial situation becomes worse [from the case files].

In general, having looked at the history of inclusion of this family into the social service system, one might notice that the family has become the recipient of the

services after suspension of its social support. Further analysis of the interview reveals that the support has been reduced, not suspended. Nevertheless, in this case the support enabling the family to manage on its own has been replaced with the services intended for mere “monitoring” of whether the family will survive.

The social worker's duty is to monitor “until the situation about the suspicions is clear” [from the case files]. This monitoring task involves the social worker's visits to the family and communication with the mother and children, as there is no man/father in the family. What happens during this communication? Analysis of interview with the social worker reveals social construction of mothering during the process of “monitoring”. This construction creates two opposite categories of mother with opposite meanings. The first category is a ‘good’ mother. What meanings construct the category of a ‘good’ mother in the social worker's language and records of the family's case? ‘Good’ mother is, first of all, caring:

The mother takes care of her daughter, dresses her neatly, takes to and from kindergarten on time [from the case files, kindergarten teacher's narrative].

I have been informed by the kindergarten that the girl is active, dressed in clean clothes, no problems have been identified [from the interview with the social worker].

Social worker's expectations were satisfied as the ‘good’ mother “was filling up an application for a scouting club” [from the interview with the social worker]. ‘Good’ mother listens and doesn't object to what the social worker says to her. Social worker instructs the mother what a ‘good’ mother must do:

Take the children to see their therapist for disease prevention and treatment, for vaccination. I asked her to pay more attention to her son, to attend parent meetings and take interest in the child's extracurricular activity [from the interview with the social worker].

‘Good’ mother has seemed to be “quite normal” to the social worker. Being normal is understood as the mother's “talkativeness” and openness, when mother “hides nothing” and is willing to share with the social worker her concern about her 12-year-old son's behavior.

‘Good’ mother's household is neat and, according to the social worker, “conditions at home are perfect, there is not a single doubt about it” [from the interview with the social worker].

‘Good’ mother knows how to keep balance between work and caring for children, because “she works part-time at a kebab stall and is registered at the job centre, she is practically at home all the time” [from the interview with the social worker]. Social worker does not question how the family manages to survive when mother is “practically at home all the time”. Maybe it is so because ‘good’ mother “knows the

system, knows how to receive social support, whom to address” [from the interview with the social worker]. And this is identified as family “independence”.

‘Good’ mother is also constructed as the one who obeys social worker’s instructions, or as the social worker puts it, .she is inclined to communicate”:

She accepts what you say to her and is willing to do everything; we’ll see what happens in future [from the interview with the social worker].

Nevertheless, the last phrase reveals that though the mother and her family is ‘good’, certain suspicion remains and she is not trusted. Social worker’s role as one of the “monitor” is related to monitoring of the mother, and the category of ‘bad’ mother is being created during the process of monitoring as well. Construction of a ‘bad’ client is an important object of research on social work (Naujanienė, 2007). This category is defined as clienthood, “when the client does not behave like a ‘good’ client should” (Juhila, 2003, 86).

It is the category of ‘bad’ mother that justifies “monitoring” function of the social worker. According to Žalimienė (2006), “social worker or social service provider provides the services that help their clients live without these services, forget about the providers and start planning, organizing personal lives and acting in the social environment on their own”. This approach implies that social worker should direct his/her efforts towards making a ‘good’ mother stronger rather than monitoring a ‘bad’ mother. Still, in her attempt to justify the need for *her* work with the family (not the needs of the family), the social worker uses her professional rhetoric to create the image of a ‘bad’ mother.

The first element is alcohol. Social risk families are usually associated with alcohol consumption. It is therefore not a coincidence that in this study as well the construct of a ‘bad’ mother was primarily related to alcohol consumption. The social worker said:

I go there one day and I see a friend, a bottle of champagne on the table, and it is 3 p.m. yet. I think that during the day the child might see it <...> when I go there another day, I see a bottle of beer on the kitchen table [from the interview with the social worker].

The social worker was outraged because “the child might see” those bottles. She registers the fact of the bottle and the fact that it was daytime. Moreover, the mother is ‘bad’ because a friend has visited her, and there is a bottle of champagne on the table, which leads to a conclusion that both of them have been drinking the champagne. By specifying the time of the day “3 p.m.” she seems to emphasize the bad nature of the action and to imply that another time of the day may have been more adequate. Another fact that creates the image of ‘bad’ mother is the bottle of beer on the kitchen table. These “bottles” prompted the social worker to “visit

and monitor them more often”. Moreover, the social worker found the “mother’s” appearance “suspicious”.

The mother raises children alone, so the social worker does not say anything about a husband or a partner. But there are the children, and a ‘bad’ mother must have a ‘bad’ child. The story of a ‘bad child’ is created with the help of the school social worker. What does a ‘bad’ child do? A ‘bad’ child “mingles with children from the neighborhood who do all sorts of things”. The social worker does not care to explain what “do” and “all sorts of things” mean. The child’s age and the fact that teenagers need to communicate with their peers are also not mentioned. There is just a professional diagnosis that the ‘bad’ child shows “problematic behavior”. And, according to the social worker, “mingling” with children from the neighborhood is the problematic behavior. Moreover, the ‘bad’ child “goes to the mall after school to just hang around and doesn’t go home”. This is also ascribed to problematic behavior. Problematic behavior becomes worse as the ‘bad’ child states that he doesn’t want to attend a scouting club”.

When I came, the mother was filling up the application for a scouting club, when I came the other day and saw the child, I asked him if he liked it and he said he didn’t and wasn’t going there anymore. [from the interview with the social worker].

During the interview, the social worker did not emphasise that the child had his opinion and was able to clearly express his wishes. On the contrary, refusal to attend the scouting club becomes associated with “problematic behavior”. Thinking in “diagnoses” is also present in the conversation about the girl who goes to the kindergarten and is described by her teacher as “open, sincere. She likes being in smaller groups of friends and is less open in the whole group activities” [from the case files]. In the narrative of the social worker this girl is constructed as “having certain problems”, “sometimes asking inadequate questions” and the social worker starts talking in “diagnoses” viewing the girl as the representative of the girls from homogeneous risk families who “talk like adults” rather than a unique personality. This is presented as something bad, though during the same section of the interview the social worker seems to contradict herself and reproaches the mother for “being too kind to the children, not disciplining them and spoiling them”. So the ‘bad’ mother doesn’t know how to set limits and spoils her children, “And the consequences are already here”. Again the social worker fails to explain what the consequences are by supposing that the consequences are ordinary and do not differ from the ones in other families at risk.

I suspect the children grow without any limits, maybe being too good to her children the mother does not discipline them and spoils them. And the consequences are already here [from the interview with the social worker].

Thus, the bottles of light alcohol at the wrong time of the day as the social worker puts it and mother's "suspicious" appearance are the factors that determine the need for a social worker to intervene into the life of this family, and this is the way a position of 'bad' mother is constructed. Moreover, 'bad' mother has 'bad' children, the son's behavior is just "problematic" and the girl "has certain problems". Furthermore, according to the social worker, "the child needs to visit a psychologist regarding her behavior", and she agrees with the mother that the social worker will arrange the visit and the mother will take the child to the psychologist.

Analysis of the interview with the social worker has revealed that the narrative of the social worker is not quite specific about the family and is full of professional "clichés/diagnoses". When talking in "diagnoses", the object is not the mother but a 'bad' mother that is always there in "those" families. There is no referral to uniqueness of a client's situation, client's personality emphasised by the social work theory in the rhetoric of the professional.

The woman is included into the system of support without any clear motives, just because her family is "suspicious". And it is exactly at this point when everything, even the woman's close connections with her father, becomes her weakness rather than strength and leads to making conclusions that she wouldn't be able to live on her own "if not for her father". The woman's life has to be the way the social worker thinks it should be, and the social worker clearly takes the position of a controller. According to the social worker, the woman cannot go to her friends' during the day – such action is treated as not taking care of her 12-year-old son.

The child comes home from school, she goes to her friends' and the boy is left free, she doesn't take care of him and we have to clear up the situation [from the interview with the social worker].

Besides acting as a controller and a monitor, the social worker acts as a detective because she has to "monitor and watch – maybe the problems hide somewhere else", because the client is a 'good' mother who "receives social support, has applied for monetary child support, has completed mother skill training. She has also taken care of food aid packages". Thus, she is a 'good' mother, but still something is "suspicious" and 'bad' mother is constructed to justify social worker's supervision, control and suspicions.

Rhetoric of another interviewee – the mother – was quite different during her conversation with the researcher. The mother has started with her family's life story. The story has revealed that the mother and children suffered from her husband's neglect, alcohol abuse and violence. She tried to make her husband move away from their apartment through the Court. The process was complicated and lasted for a very long time, so she decided to move to the crisis centre.

I took the documents, all necessary things, daughter and son, some clothes and we left. I was looking for a place to stay and then moved to a crisis centre, a charity home. <...> lived there for about two years, the Court made a decision to move him out. I submitted the documents for children maintenance [from the interview with the mother].

The woman's story was hard and yet heroic as she had overcome a lot of hardship until she could live with her children at her home. Woman's active behavior can also be noticed in her narrative about her home that she had to clean up after her husband:

Everything was broken, destroyed, there was no furniture, no repair works, no doors, everything looked awful, only frames were left of the gas stove, refrigerator – all the metal parts had been sold [from the interview with the mother].

From the mother's narrative it becomes clear that it was not the first time she encountered with social workers and received support from them. Her husband has been aggressive and had been using violence against the woman when under alcohol influence. In order to protect her children from such an environment, the mother used to take the children to the charity home, where a social worker once noticed violence mark on the woman's face. This was her first encounter with a social worker:

<...> I couldn't do anything, he used violence, police came, he said he was registered there and that was it. I moved to the charity home because I knew there was such a home. My goddaughter and my son used to attend day centre there. Once, when I took my son there

<...>a social worker noticed that I had changed, lost weight and had a bruise [from the interview with the mother].

When talking about her children, she says usual things about them. In her narrative, she positions herself as a good and loving mother:

Yes, you are the one who suffers, but your children see it. This is the worst. When he starts cursing, the children hear it. When I saw my son repeating his father, I got really scared. He was playing with my godson and said: "Now I will come home drunk...", and he started replaying what he saw at home. I noticed that and I got scared. The games were what he saw around him [from the interview with the mother].

The interview with the mother has revealed that the mother managed to agree with the son about the scouting club and he likes attending it. Yet, he refused to go to the day centre arranged by the social worker.

He told the social worker he attended the scouting club and was not going to go to the Old Town [from the interview with the mother].

The mother also related involvement of the social worker for work with families at risk to the suspension of child support. Family income is very low (the figure of less than 600 litas was named), but the support still has been suspended and the woman has not objected and even accepted the suspension:

They had been giving me the support for quite some time, somewhat 2 years, and then the inspector said that other families also needed support. I said that they did what they could, other families might be in worse situation, so this was right. I received the money in February for the last time and then the social worker arrived. She told me she got a letter instructing her to monitor if the family needed support. She asked if we had no objections to her visiting us [from the interview with the mother].

When talking about recipience of the services, the mother was not inclined to think these were necessary. Still, her previous experience with social workers seemed to have guided her to accept the support. The mother is concerned about her son's behavior and sees the helping hand in the social worker who could help her with her son. She did not name neither monitoring, nor control in her speech about the services. She associated the services with the meaning of information. When talking about the services, the woman stated that:

There's no need for these services, as I know quite well where to go, what to do when your income is lower than 525 to receive food aid packages. I have already taken care of the EU funded support for food products, heating and hot water, so for the moment I have the experience of it and I know everything.

Independence and activity were very clear in the woman's speech. During the interview, the woman even told us that she could consult other families who faced the same difficulties as she had. When talking about herself, the woman constructed her image as the one of a 'good' mother. 'Good' mother is independent, active, understanding and focused for her children. She remained on a heroic note when describing her financial situation:

Well, maybe it's harder now to cope with the finances, but it is possible to live when you have arranged all the allowances. I can even take the children out to have pizza time to time, if I save for it the other day. I don't want my children to not be able to say they have been somewhere, children share about the places they have been to, and I want my children to see things [from the interview with the mother].

Interestingly, support is reduced as others also need support, though the family is very close to the poverty level. As the support has reduced, they are prescribed with “social monitoring” to identify the family’s need for the services. However, the interview with the woman has revealed that she doesn’t need any services, and her problem is the finances. So the family needs support instead of which they receive the services. In other words, financial capabilities are limited to see how the family going to survive.

FOR CONCLUSIONS

The social worker and the woman who is the “risky family” mother have demonstrated different narrative discourses about their experiences of the system by critically reflecting their experience of provision and recipience of the services. The social worker has introduced the client into the service system and plans further strategy of support, thus emphasizing disadvantages of the recipient of the services and expressing distrust in the client’s resources. Social worker’s rhetoric that constructs the position of a ‘bad’ mother is dominated by the discourse of negative attitude towards families at social risk that prevails in the society, when these families are viewed as a homogeneous group with typical personal problems: incapability to take care of own children, risky personal behavior, including alcohol consumption. Such structural problems as unemployment, poverty, imperfections of legal and social protection systems etc. have not been identified in the social worker’s rhetoric. Social worker ascribes only the meanings of obedience and compliance with the social worker’s instructions to the position of a ‘good’ mother, thus expressing paternalist nature of social work. This leads to self-establishment of the social worker as a controller and a monitor. Empowerment of the client, encouragement of development for client’s strengths, psychosocial advice to the client is not present in the rhetoric of the interviewed social worker.

Rhetoric of the interviewed mother discloses the position of a ‘good’ mother and does not contain any prevailing paternalistic obedience. ‘Good’ mother is active, she understands the system of social security, questions the necessity of the services and sees the causes of her problems in the existing structures of the system: unemployment, poverty. Still, a ‘good’ mother with good experience of participation in the system of social security is able to find sense in the services provided to her and identifies the necessity of psychosocial advice to her as to a single parent. ‘Good’ mother ascribes meaning to the social worker positions as of the informer and mediator between the client and other specialists. The mother does not identify the need for social worker as a monitor and controller.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Social work with families at social risk is one of the most complex areas of social work in Lithuania demanding that social workers demonstrate both critical thinking and knowledge of specific micro level interventions. Analysis of the case presented in the article has revealed that it is necessary that social workers are given an area for professional improvement, where the way of thinking dominated by the prevailing discourse could be externalized, discussed, and strategies of actions to empower the client could be planned.

Case analysis has also prompted several simple recommendations to practitioners. First of all, even if instructions to start work with a family have been given, a social worker must start his/her work with respectful attitude and listen to the client's needs rather than the order by the children rights protection specialist. Social worker must ask the family about the services they need and about any proposals the family might have from their perspective of service recipients. By establishing a dialogue based on cooperation and trust, a social worker must aim at minimizing family's disadvantages and maximizing available resources or strengths. Power implied by the social worker's position must be exercised through social worker's professional ability to build cooperative relations that empower the client to change, rather than through control and monitoring.

RÉSUMÉ

CONSTRUCTION SOCIALE DE LA « MAUVAISE » ET DE LA « BONNE » MÈRE À L'ISSUE DE L'ÉTUDE DE RÉFLEXION CRITIQUE SUR LES EXPÉRIENCES EN TRAVAIL SOCIAL AVEC DES CATÉGORIES

DE FAMILLE À RISQUE

La Lituanie comptait en 2010 10904 familles à risque social pour un total de 23335 enfants. Le terme de famille « à risque » est associé en Lituanie à celui de famille à « problèmes multiples » utilisé dans la littérature et la pratique en travail social. L'article est basé sur des paradigmes critiques et constructivistes. Le point de vue défendu dans l'article est celui qui voit dans la famille « à risque » une construction sociale issue de la pratique en travail social qui, en retour crée des conflits entre différents groupes sociaux. Le but de l'étude est de révéler comment la femme d'une « famille à risque » par ses entretiens avec l'intervenant social et la mère sur le processus de travail social avec la famille, déploie différentes approches de la maternité. L'article propose l'analyse d'une étude de cas faisant partie d'une étude beaucoup plus vaste, élaborée selon une méthodologie de recherche

action participative. Il s'agit de l'analyse de l'entretien d'une intervenante sociale travaillant avec une famille à risque avec la mère de cette même famille. Au cours de cette recherche ont été élaborées les catégories de

« bonnes » et « mauvaises » mères. La travailleuse sociale et la mère issue d'une catégorie de famille à risque après une réflexion critique sur les services rendus et reçus ont fait état de différents discours narratifs sur leurs expériences concrètes du système. La rhétorique de la travailleuse sociale présidant à la position de la « mauvaise » mère est dominée par le point de vue négatif qui prévaut dans la société quant au discours sur les catégories de familles à risque social, vues comme un groupe homogène ayant ses problèmes personnels typiques, alors que la nature structurelle des problèmes est ignorée. La rhétorique de la mère participant à la recherche révèle la position de la « bonne » mère qui est une femme active qui comprend le système de sécurité sociale, qui s'interroge sur la nécessité des services et voit les raisons de ses problèmes dans les imperfections des structures existantes.

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Article II

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CONSTRUCTING SERVICE DISCOURSES IN LITHUANIAN FAMILY SOCIAL WORK

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Straipsnyje pristatoma dalis disertacijos tyrimo duomenų. Tyrime dalyvavo 25 socialinės darbuotojos. Paslaugų diskursai buvo naudojami kaip metodas analizuoti kasdienes socialinių darbuotojų patirtis. Tyrimo duomenys atskleidžia, kokie paslaugų diskursai dominuoja socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje ir kaip praktikai konstruoja šeimos, gaunančios socialines paslaugas, konstrukta.

Keywords: *Social Constructionism, Service Discourses, Family Social Work, Social Services*

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, family social work is constructed through the analysis of social service discourses from the social workers' perspective. Recent research shows how social workers are dealing with complex and fluid issues, as well as the societal uncertainty in their work with families (e.g., Spratt, 2009; Menéndez et al., 2015). Based on earlier studies, it is vital to analyse family social work in different contextual settings. Societal, political and organisational contexts affect the preconditions of social work, but social work also needs to operate within structures (e.g., Pohjola et al., 2014). This paper provides insights into the Lithuanian family social work. The focus is on what kinds of features construct family social work by analysing social workers' discourses. This analysis continues the research of Eidukevičiūtė (2013), who analysed family social work practices in transitional Lithuanian society. This researcher aimed to deepen the knowledge about child protection services in Lithuania, the father's role in child care and the mother's performance in it. According to Eidukevičiūtė (2013), social workers are still struggling in the field of family social work. This study continues the research tradition in the field of family social work, paying attention to the different contextual settings where family social work is conducted.

The Lithuanian government has stated that family policy is a key component of its mandate where (Social Report, 2014). The Council of Social Work plays a

very important role in providing guidance on how to implement the government's policy in the field of family social work. The European Commission Council (2015) provides recommendations for the implementation of the 2015 National Reform Programme, which should concentrate on the people (30% of the total population) who are at risk of poverty. The council recommends working on active Labour measures and the development of other services, which are still limited (European Commission Council, 2015). The main target problems and challenges of the current family social work are domestic violence against children, different kinds of addictions and lack of social and parenting skills.

In this paper, service discourses in Lithuanian family social work are analysed through social workers' accounts of their work and cases. In Lithuania, family social work is equated to social work with "families at risk". The phrase "family at social risk" is associated with the phrase "family with multiple problems" that is used in the academic literature on social work. Lithuanian legal acts define a family at risk as one that needs basic or special social services, whose parents are raising children under 18 years old; are suffering from alcohol, drug or psychotropic abuse problems or a gambling addiction; lack certain skills to know how or be able to take care of their children; use psychological, physical or sexual violence against their children; and spend monetary support for expenses other than family interests, thus posing dangers to their children's physical, mental, spiritual and moral development and safety (Žin., No. 17-589, 2006, Article 2, part 7). A family from which a child is taken and placed under temporary care is also listed in the Register of Social Risk Families with Children. These definitions broadly describe how social issues connected to families are constructed in society and how social work's role in social problems and families is perceived. Family lives form a moral area where people's identities and professional aims are constructed. Moral understandings are shaped by social constructions of the child, the adult, parenthood and family life. A central moral imperative concerning the requirement for a responsible adult is to prioritise the needs of the children (e.g., Ribbens et al., 2000). In this paper, families are viewed as receivers of social services under family social work without the label of "social risk families". The aims are to increase the knowledge of how family social work can be observed in different contextual settings and to continue the discussion about social workers' challenging role of maintaining a balance between families and societal structures (e.g., Pösö et al., 2014; Guidi et al., 2016). Specifically, this paper reveals service discourses in the field of family social work and presents how social workers are constructing the family who is receiving social services. This research adds new knowledge about what kinds of service discourses are recognised in Lithuanian family social work.

This paper is based on qualitative interviews with social workers, which were conducted from November 2014 to November 2015. The study involved 25 professional social workers employed in social service centres. The social workers

were asked to reflect on their everyday work experiences in different situations while working with families. The data analysis leans on the ideas of social constructionism and utilises the approach of discursive psychology, considering the features of service discourses described by Healy (2005).

The next section presents a short contextual description of the family policy and social services in Lithuania. The third section defines the principles of constructive social work practices with families and highlights service discourses according to Healy's (2005) description. Next, the methodology and the results concerning family social work are discussed. Two constructions are introduced – the *consumer rights movement's discourse* and the *psychological discourse on family social work..* The final section presents the concluding remarks.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND: FAMILY POLICY AND SOCIAL SERVICES IN LITHUANIA

The Social Report 2014–2015 states that the successful implementation of family policy is one of the strategic goals of the Lithuanian government (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2015). The European Parliament encourages its member countries to guarantee each citizen's basic right to access sufficient resources to obtain social support and social services so that each person and family would keep their dignity and participate in social services delivery. The accessibility and accountability of social services are highlighted (Guogis, 2015). The Ministry of Social Security and Labour plays a very important role in the implementation process while financing various projects in the family welfare area. It coordinates finances, makes decisions and expects the active participation of families, too.

Over the 2014–2015 period, the ministry carried out two main activities while implementing the family policy. First, it made efforts to strengthen families and ensure their wholesome functioning. Second, it was involved, although indirectly, in the preparation and acquisition of methodical information. One of its main strategic aims was to reduce domestic violence. It was seeking to ensure violence prevention activities through the delivery of professional support for the victims of domestic violence. To implement the action plan, which was created for the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims 2014–2020, the plan was approved by Order No. A1-462 of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania on 24 September 2014. Key actions were foreseen (information campaigns, support for the nongovernmental organisations' projects, data collection, training for specialists, supervision, etc.). Various national events for families were also organised.

Implementing the family policy requires professional social workers.

In this regard, on 10 July 2014, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania accepted new amendments to the Law of Social Services. According to the international practices, it was accepted that social work should be performed only by social workers who had completed their education in social work study programmes.

Based on the data provided by the Department of Statistics, 9.930 families raising 19.668 children were listed in the Register in 2014 (<http://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?id=1655&status=A>). Comparing the changes in the number of listed families over a five-year period shows a trend towards a small decrease, as follows: 10.904 in 2010, 10.604 in 2011, 10.389 in 2012, 10.235 in 2013, and 9.930 in 2014 (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2015). However, the demographic changes and the huge increase in the number of migrants should be taken into account when considering the decreasing number of families listed in the Register. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour established 84 additional positions for social workers in 2014. The total number of job positions for social workers was 717.5, and each social worker served an average of 14 families (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2015). A social worker and a worker from the child protection office decide together when to continue or when to stop the social service delivery. The social workers are employed in social service centres or in other types of organisations in different municipalities of Lithuania. They play a meaningful role in implementing the family policy in child daycare centres, while implementing projects (financed by different funds and government aid) for both children and families.

CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES

McKie et al. (2005) argue that social work with families is fundamental for their welfare and crucial for economic development, while the family remains a central institution in the building blocks of social, economic and political life. In this research, family social work is approached through social constructionism (e.g., Burr, 1995; 2015).

The social world as a product of social processes is full of different bodies of knowledge, which can be understood and interpreted differently by each person in his or her situated circumstances. Social constructionism takes a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge.

For example, practice with families could appear in different discourses and meanings, where only one truth does not exist. Knowledge is a result of interactions, where relationships and cultural and historical specificity are considered very important. For example, the notion of family has changed over the decades and has different meanings in different contexts (Burr, 2015). Regarding the Lithuanian context, the family in constitutional law is understood as a union of a man and a

woman who are officially married. Other forms of the family exist, but their union is not considered a family according to the law.

Burr (2005) points out how all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative and how knowledge is sustained by social processes. Constructions are bound with power relations. While concentrating on interactions and social practices, social constructionism stresses the role of language as a form of social action. Knowledge is something that people create and validate together.

Constructivism stems from the idea that reality and nature are a result of economic, social and linguistic conventions created between people and communities. In this research, family social work is understood as a social practice. It is created and recreated in different settings and encounters among social workers, families, other professionals, around communities and institutions. People are regarded as active participants who construct and reconstruct each other's experiences, for example, through the mix of conceptualisations, meanings, explanations, narratives, dialogues and talks. This study seeks Parton's (2007) thoughts on how constructive social work practice can be a predominant response to the growing risks and changes in its field. Constructive reflects a positive approach because the Latin word *construct* means *build* or *put together*. The central part of this approach takes language and listening, where a participant has a strong agency and important role in the process, where meanings, understandings and matters of negotiation are considered. The aim of constructionists' ideas is to release the narratives that were formed by powerful stories and language. Parton (2003) also argues that knowledge is a result of daily spoken interactions among people. Postmodernists perceive language as a tool to present reality, where the ideas and symbols of words are used. Social workers who seek postmodernism ideas would think about how theory contributes to rather than reflects the social world. In this regard, social workers do not become technical workers but professionals who are able to think critically and apply professional decisions and skills to help clients improve the quality of their lives (Pozzuto, 2007).

When social workers deal with families in trouble, it is seldom possible to set a single goal for the process. Assessing and working practices include balancing among diverse needs, recognising risks and delivering services, help and support. Social workers consider working methods and interventions, given the available time and other resources (Milner et al., 2015).

During the service delivery process and the social practices with the families, social workers construct and interpret their clients' needs and responses. Social workers should take into account the dominant service discourses because these reshape their actions and the decisions they accept. As presented by Healy (2005), dominant discourses are about biomedicine, economics and law, while service discourses come from psychology and sociology disciplines. The third type of discourses in interaction comprises alternative discourses, which concentrate on consumer rights movements, religion and spirituality.

At this point, it is useful to discuss service and alternative discourses, which come from psychology and sociology and use a holistic approach. First, the ideas and features of psychological discourses are analysed. Social work concentrated on psychology discipline from the 1920s to the 1950s, when psychodynamic ideas were used to build a common base for social work practice (Healy, 2005). After 1950s, modern professional social work was related to religious movements from the nineteenth century. The first social work educators, such as Mary Richmond, did not consider psychological discourses but focused on sociology and economics and created the base for social work on these ideas. During the 1980s to the 1990s, ideas from psychology in social work received a lot of criticism. In response, theorists brought new ideas from radical and social action perspectives. This meant that social workers integrated structural and cultural injustice issues into social work practice (Healy, 2005).

Returning to the psychological discourses' ideas about social work, the emphasis was on self-awareness, which was an essential component of effective social work practice. Social workers who provide services for different types of clients should first understand their own emotions' origins and the way they emerge. It is called self-knowledge in reflective practice. Recently, psychological discourses about social work have been expanded and mixed with the ideas from other psychological discourses. New ideas are associated with scientific knowledge about the management of people's problems, highlighting psychological tools for categorising client groups at risk and transforming dysfunctional behavior (families at risk, vulnerable children, drug and alcohol abusers, etc.). These developments have made cognitive behavioral therapy a central axis (Healy, 2005). Nowadays, psychological discourse has expanded the role of human services, involving early intervention practices. Psychological discourses are criticised much because they do not involve social, political and cultural factors. Healy (2005) states that the emphasis on empathy and mutuality can be misleading because the statutory responsibilities stress regulation, guidance and official procedures.

Alternative service discourses focus on the consumer rights movement, spirituality and religious discourses. Alternative discourses are related to a holistic response to human needs since the above-mentioned discourses are linked to human sciences. As Healy (2005) argues, consumer rights movements have challenged the dominant constructions of service users as passive recipients to promote the recognition of social service users as active players in determining their needs. Consumer rights discourses state that social service participants have the rights and capacities to fully participate in determining their needs. These discourses aim to reconstruct dominant constructions of the "normal" and the "abnormal", where words such as "equal" and "different" are dominant. These alternative discourses are discussed later in the analysis of social practice cases while working with gypsies, arguing that they are rights-bearing citizens. The consumer rights discourse is more oriented towards

the needs of the community than toward psychological treatment. This discourse is a case of social inclusion implementation through the social service delivery process.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was conducted to explore service discourses in the field of family social work. Qualitative research has many characteristics, but usually, it is explanatory, fluid and flexible, providing contextually sensitive data (Mason, 2007). A qualitative study was chosen to enable the researchers to more deeply examine the social workers' daily practices with families that were seeking help. The background of the research methodology is based on interpretive–constructivist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Reality is understood in its multidisciplinary forms and in the constructions of thoughts, which are based on social experiences and are formed in specific contexts. The researcher and the research participant are interactively related, so the discoveries are relationally based (e.g., Denzin; Lincoln 1994; Burr, 2015). The main theme of the research covers service discourses in social work practice with families. The research question is as follows: How do professional social workers construct family social work when they are providing social services for families?

The data gathering follows the idea that the social world is socially constructed by using language, and this world could be explored by analysing social workers' accounts and by interpreting the discourses. In seeking the ideas of social constructionism, the research becomes a civil, participatory and collaborative project, which connects the researcher and the research participant by a moral dialogue (Denzin, 2002). In the collection of the research materials, the guiding principle was *generating data*. The interviews were used as a primary method of generating the data. The preparation for the interviews took time. First, specific literature regarding the research topic was analysed, and basically, an idea and a research question were formulated. Before moving on to the research field, Mason's (2007) book was analysed step by step, and an intellectual research puzzle was done. Thus, the main research question was divided into subquestions, each with a set of different ideas and topics for the questions to be asked. The documentary sources were also analysed, including the Acts of Parliament, research reports, books and publications available on the Internet and on databases.

The data were collected in the three largest cities of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda) from November 2014 to November 2015. These cities were chosen based on the largest number of families who were receiving social services. Seven interviews were conducted in Kaunas, twelve in Vilnius and six in Klaipėda. In total, 25 social workers from the statutory social service centres were involved in the study. To reach social workers who fit the criteria, an informational email was sent to the heads of the social service agencies. The selection criteria for the social workers were as follows: 1) earned a bachelor's degree in social work, 2) had a minimum

of three years' job experience in the field of family social work and 3) was working in a statutory agency that provides social services for families at the time of the recruitment. The heads of the agencies presented the research aim and criteria to the social workers, and those who volunteered to participate were enrolled. Afterwards, the researchers received email messages from the heads, with the mobile phone of each social worker. Next, the researchers' contacted the social workers, provided them with more detailed information and gathered their informed consent forms to participate in the research. The researchers were also totally flexible and asked the participants to select their available schedule and preferred place for the interview. Basically, most of the interviews were conducted in the social workers' workplaces and several in public areas, such as a park or a coffee shop. The study complied with general research ethics guidelines (e.g., Peled & Leichtentritt, 2002).

All the interviews involved face-to-face and one-on-one interactions, generally in the social workers' offices. Each interview was designed in a flexible manner and structure, which allowed the researchers and the interviewees to discuss unexpected topics about the practices in family social work. The structure and the content of the interviews varied with different social workers. The researchers played an active role as reflexive participants and co-producers of the knowledge. The researchers' role was also recognised from an ethical viewpoint. Their academic and social backgrounds and ways of thinking affected how and what kind of knowledge was produced in their interactions with the social workers (cf. Mikkonen et al., 2016). Hence, the length of the interviews varied from 1 hour and 17 minutes to 2 hours and 30 minutes. The interviews were transcribed immediately after they were finished. The transcriptions totaled over 500 pages.

Discourse analysis was chosen as the method of analysis. Mason (2007) states that discourse analysis covers a range of things, where some forms are associated with postmodernism. The analysis was started by reading and re-reading the transcribed texts. Next, the text was coded according to the service discourses that were theoretically described by Healy (2005). During the analysis process, the constructionists' sensitivities and assumptions about language, interactions and society, as well as the theoretical underpinnings and the research question, were taken into account. This article concentrates only on the service discourses, particularly on the consumer rights movement discourse and the psychological discourse. They were constructed together with the social workers during the analysis of their cases. The interpretations were formed during the discussion about the research conducted.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the analysis of the service discourses constructed during the research. Four excerpts from the data analysis are included. These

excerpts describe the general ways of constructing family social work from the research material. The family social workers provide different cases of their everyday practices, but these excerpts are chosen due to their detailed presentation of the current situation in the Lithuanian family social work, especially while working with Roma families. Three additional excerpts reveal how the social workers construct the “family” in the framework of psychological discourse.

CASE OF CONSUMER RIGHTS MOVEMENT’S DISCOURSE

Social constructionism aims to reveal narratives that combine powerful stories and language. Thus, the first excerpt is about the consumer rights movement’s discourse. Social Worker Number 13 presents a case about a Roma family and her actions in working with them. She is working with several Roma families. She regards herself as able to work with Roma families because it is easy for her to find ways to work according to their cultural traditions and social context. She reveals that Roma families respect her as a social worker because she supports and accompanies them everywhere. Excerpt 1 presents how together, the social worker and the researcher construct a case of social practice while working with a Roma family.

Excerpt 1. Case of consumer rights movement’s discourse

R: Researcher

SW13: Social Worker Number 13

R:	1	What do you like in family social work?
SW13:	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	I really like everything. For me, everything is new now because I came after my maternity leave. I started to work with Roma families, and I didn't before. I was working in another part of the city and didn't work with Roma families before. [...] I hadn't encountered how they were <u>isolated</u> ; [...] I felt and saw <u>how people were looking</u> at us. [...] I was going with them to school [to see] how they were accepted; they were <u>directly sent away</u> . First, I didn't say that I was a social worker because the Roma <u>family was complying</u> . The mother said, "I was sent away; my children <u>weren't</u> on the list to start attending primary school, one in the first grade the other in the second". I said that it could not be happening; <u>I had never been faced</u> with such a situation. Really, a month before, I was <u>sent away</u> together with the entire family. Later, I said that I was a social worker. Everybody got lost, really. For them, it was really shameful at that time to submit an application form and to be told that there were no places for them. They started to <u>prevaricate</u> . But I know that according to the <u>law</u> , [the children of] this family have a priority to be enrolled in that school because they live nearby. I found out everything. In fact, they really discredited that mother.

R:	17	Were the children <u>enrolled</u> in school?
SW13:	18 19 20 21 22 23	Yes, they were. [...] Now I am able to see what is going on; every- body is [reporting] that we are <u>integrating</u> , but [the] reality is ... (silence). But I <u>couldn't believe</u> that it was possible in education. A head of a school sent away [the children] from the classroom and did not accept them. She said that she [could] not accept all the Roma families in Lithuania. But I came only with one mother. It was really awful for me. I couldn't believe [it] for a week, for two weeks; I wasn't able to grips with the reality.
R:	24	What were your actions in that case?
SW13:	25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35	[...] to tell the truth, I <u>was crying</u> , but then, I came back. I was thinking that with my character, I could hit the school head with my handbag. [...] I said that this was going on in a <u>statutory institution</u> , in school. [...] A student practitioner was with me; she was also shocked. I told her to write a reflection for me about that case, and we talked. But it was not only in school; it was the same when I was <u>accompanying</u> them to fill in personal documents. They were <u>illiterate</u> . When I said that [they were] not able to write [for] themselves, they started to explain. [...] But how they can [learn to] write if they are not able to [have access to] the educational system. After that, I <u>organised a meeting</u> in my workplace, and we involved other colleagues. But you know, I got a personal call on my mobile phone from my relative who was working in that school, and she told me: "Please be good; do not come again with Roma families, and do not cause any shame to us".

This excerpt, taken from the beginning of the interview, shows how a social worker reflects on her professional experience of everyday work with a Roma family. The researcher asks the question about what the interviewee likes in the field of family social work, but her answer is totally about the complicated situation she has experienced (lines 1–16). The consumer rights movement is related to the specific development of communities of people who have other life experiences and capacities (Healy, 2005). The excerpt indicates that a Roma family has a specific life experience when the children are trying to be integrated into the educational system (lines 18–23), and their incapacity to write makes them isolated as a community. The social worker constructs her actions, talking about the service users' rights according to the law (lines 14–16). She knows the system and starts to develop critical consciousness within her agency (lines 31–33).

As Healy (2005) argues, the consumer rights movement also aims to develop services to empower and to respond to the service users' needs. In this case, the social worker is trying to empower her clients by accompanying them everywhere in the statute institutions, even where personal documents are to be filled in (lines 29–30), usually, in the police stations. The social worker advocates for the Roma family by knowing the law and using it as a vehicle for promoting and protecting the service users' right to education, as stated in the above-mentioned case.

Another statement of this consumer rights discourse is that social service participants could be active agents of change. There is a public stereotype that Roma families are illiterate. In the above-mentioned case, it is analysed that Roma

families are isolated from the educational system, and their access to literacy is prevented by statutory bodies. A social worker is deconstructing cultural stereotypes during her social practices, which she experiences in her social work with a Roma family.

This consumer rights movement discourse highlights the way in which a Roma family's right to education is constructed through the powerful groups (school community). In this case, power is observed in the ability to make decisions (head of the school). However, the power can be deconstructed when the social worker has specific knowledge. The social worker knows the law well and is able to resist.

Usually, the consumer rights movement discourse pays attention to constructing the consumer identity around specified characteristics (Healy, 2005). This discourse moves beyond a narrow construction of clients' needs, highlighting an expansive recognition of the needs with the aim of promoting social inclusion and as Healy (2005) would say, "Celebrating the diversity". In celebrating the diversity, first of all, little forms of resistance should be discussed, such as the social worker's actions to gain the rights of a Roma family. The second step is to construct a public discourse and start to talk about it openly.

CONSTRUCTED CASE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

The psychological discourse is illustrated with three excerpts from the social workers' accounts about families. Social constructionism ideas have been agreed on, specifically, the social world is full of different bodies of knowledge and interpretations about these, the social world is not static, and a single true one does not exist. In this part of the analysis, excerpts from how the social workers construct categories of families are presented.

Excerpt 2. Case about how a social worker describes a family

R: Researcher

SW6: Social Worker Number 6

R:	1	How do you describe the families for whom you are providing social services?
SW6:	2	Well, if I draw a general picture, it would be a <u>sad family, without perspective, without</u>
	3	<u>aim, passive</u> . They are <u>accustomed</u> to such a lifestyle. This is about the majority, not about
	4	single cases, which are usually better. Anyway, they are used to <u>such a lifestyle</u> , which
	5	comes and goes from <u>generation to generation</u> .

Healy (2005) explains that social workers are expected to affect rehabilitation of dysfunctional behavior, for example, the behavior of a drug or alcohol user. The

categorisations in this discourse are visible when social workers construct a family as “normal”, “abnormal” or “at risk”. Social workers try to treat and to improve the family’s functioning when they provide social services.

Analysing the social worker’s rhetoric about how she constructs a family, a pessimistic attitude is recognised in her description. She states that a general picture would be of sad family members who have no perspective for a better life. A family is described as “abnormal” because its members are accustomed to such a lifestyle from generation to generation, where they have no goals for the future. According to the description, a pathological discourse is constructed.

Family functioning is related to the experiences gained from generation to generation. The social worker explains that this situation will be the same for the children in the future, and the label is attached. However, turning to social constructionism, her opinion can be contested by arguing that nothing is naturally given or determined by nature. Children as active participants and social service users are able to create their own lifestyles. A critical position on this case is required, considering our own interpretations about the world.

The next short excerpt explains how the social worker constructs a typical “social risk family”. As Healy (2005) states, a categorisation related to risk assessment is typical for psychological discourses.

Excerpt 3. Case about how a social worker describes a family

R: Researcher

SW8: Social Worker Number 8

R:	1	How would you describe the families for whom you are providing social services?
SW10:	2 3 4 5 6	[...] I have had one <u>typical social risk family</u> for a long time. There are three little children. At this time, they are pre-schoolers. The mother does not have any daily living skills, parenting skills, is indifferent, apathetic; she has no addiction, but she does not have social skills and does not communicate with anyone. She is from an institutional foster care. There is a huge mess at home. A mess. [...]

The construction of a typical social risk family is analysed as a social category, which is constructed by the social worker. “Reality”, which people ascribe to “worlds”, is constructed and could not be considered static and unchangeable. The social worker psychologises the situation in a family, and only the weaknesses of the mother’s behaviour and lack of social skills are highlighted. The language is used in this manner, which reveals how the social worker thinks and talks about the “typical

social risk family”. This construct should be externalised, and the strengths of the families could be expanded and revealed in everyday social practices.

Excerpt 4. Case about how a social worker describes families

R: Researcher

SW10: Social Worker Number 10

R:	1	How would you describe the families for whom you are providing social services?
SW10:	2	For example, the majority of the <u>families are not full</u> , yes, not full; alcoholism is not the main problem. Basically, there is <u>social inactivity</u> and a <u>lack of social skills</u> . [...]. Not full families, yes, but I also have <u>exceptional women</u> .
	3	
	4	

The social worker labels some mothers as “exceptional women”, and such reasons as social inactivity and lack of social skills are contrasted to such a label. The social worker explains that families usually have inadequacies although alcoholism is not the main problem. However, considering why the social worker is using such words as “lack of social skills” and “alcoholism” (lines 2–3) could be related to a dominant law discourse. The rhetoric and the process of constructing families also depend on regulation, guidance and official procedures. “Social risk families” are mentioned in the legal acts of Lithuania, for example, the Law of Social Services (2006).

The psychological discourse emphasises the importance of self-understanding, empathy and strengthening capacities. Social workers should first understand themselves to know their own emotions and the way these emerge. Reflection plays a significant role because in using it, it becomes possible to use knowledge in practice. The cognitive behavioral therapy model has become dominant in the field of family social work. Psychological discourses are mostly related to social casework practice with service users (Healy, 2005).

DISCUSSION

According to Spratt (2009), it has become very popular in the New Labour Party’s policy to invest in socially excluded populations, such as poor families and disadvantaged children, who are experiencing the risk of social exclusion. Special initiatives, social investments and interventions throughout the benefits system have enabled the clients’ participation in the Labour market and has become a key model to solve issues in the field of family social work in the United Kingdom. Special attention is given to community-based services. Spratt (2009) states that an investment in our children is an investment in our future. As mentioned, the

Lithuanian government's strategic goal is to strengthen families, but it has paid little attention to early intervention services to prevent problems among parents and families who are experiencing different kinds of risks.

Buchanan (2007) also mentions "zoned" areas, which have become barriers for vulnerable families. These "zoned" areas create limitations for families and children in need to access new services. As our research shows, sometimes, these areas are the schools, which act as barriers for Roma families. Nowadays, it is popular to talk about Roma families' integration into society to avoid exclusion, especially when people discuss the school environment. The research data show that power relationships exist between the authorities in schools and social agencies. There is also a need for social work research that will explore how families themselves, throughout their life stories, talk about the particular risk of social exclusion. Research about service discourses could be carried out, involving social workers' home visits to children and families (Winter & Cree, 2015), where contemporary discourses' evidence-based measurements and relationship-based practices could be analysed.

Menéndez et al. (2015) conducted research about the assessment of the level of risk of families who were receiving protection services. Their research findings (106 mothers and 17 practitioners as participants) show that families are not a homogeneous group, and the level of heterogeneity becomes a vital factor when the level of risk is assessed. The data reveal that at-risk families are characterised as having educational and financial inadequacy and with significant chronicity. The present study's research data also reveal that the descriptions of families are more related only on the individual level, and the lack of social skills are mainly highlighted.

CONCLUSIONS

The data reveal that social workers construct family social work through the framework of psychological discourse, where personal behaviour and characteristics are highlighted. Social workers construct families as passive, using alcohol, lacking social skills, being apathetic, inactive and having inadequacies (usually mothers and children). A lot of negative words are associated with families who are receiving social services. The family is paternalised in the social workers' language.

The data reveal that in implementing an alternative service discourse (consumer rights movement discourse), it is useful to relate this discourse to the dominant law discourse. An analysed case of a Roma family shows that the social worker uses this discourse while defending the rights of the children growing up in a Roma family. The externalised power relationship between the social worker and the school head yields positive results, and the children's rights to education are safeguarded. The data show that moral issues are an important part of family social work, and they should be recognised in both social work education and practice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Initiate the development of early intervention services in the field of family social work. According to the psychological discourse in social work practice, it should be argued that early intervention services will help ensure the long-term well-being of families.

While constructing the concept of a family, do not individualise the personal characteristics and challenges they face. They could be described and based on social constructionism ideas. The family could be observed in different social practices by analysing social, political and cultural contexts.

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PASLAUGŲ DISKURSŲ KONSTRAVIMAS SOCIALINIO DARBO SU ŠEIMA PRAKTIKOJE

SANTRAUKA

Šiame straipsnyje socialinis darbas su šeima yra konstruojamas re-miantissocialinių darbuotojų, dirbančių su socialinės rizikos šeimomis perspektyva. Šis straipsnis atskleidžia, kokie paslaugų diskursai dominuoja socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje ir kaip socialiniai darbuotojai konstruoja šeimą, gaunančią socialines paslaugas. Tyrimo metu gauti duomenys prisideda prie žinių kūrimo apie socialinio darbo su šeima paslaugų diskursus Lietuvoje. Straipsnyje pristatoma tik maža dalis disertacijos tyrimo, kuriame dalyvavo 25 socialiniai darbuotojai iš trijų didžiųjų Lietuvos miestų – Vilniaus, Kauno ir Klaipėdos, duomenų. Tyrimas atliktas 2014 m. lapkričio – 2015 m. lapkričio laikotarpiu. Tyrimo dalyvių buvo prašoma pasidalinti turima patirtimi, teikiant socialines paslaugas šeimai. Tyrime buvo taikoma kriterinė dalyvių atranka. Duomenų analizė remiasi socialinio konstrukcionizmo idėjomis ir pasitelkia diskursyviosios psichologijos požiūrį, analizuojant paslaugų diskursus, aprašytus pagal Healy (2005). Duomenų analizės dalyje pristatomi du paslaugų diskursai: alternatyvus ir psichologinis. Tyrimo duomenys atskleidžia, jog socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje dominuoja psichologinis paslaugų diskursas. Socialiniai darbuotojai socialinę darbą su šeima konstruoja per asmens elgesio ir šeimos charakteristikos prizmę. Šeima konstruojama kaip pasyvi, vartojanti alkoholį, neturinti socialinių įgūdžių. Ypač išryškinamas silpnos motinos vaidmuo. Alternatyvus paslaugų diskursas šiame straipsnyje yra analizuojamas per romų tautybės šeimos teises gauti švietimo paslaugas savo vaikams. Analizuojant alternatyvųjų paslaugų diskursą išryškinami galios santykiai, iškilę socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje tarp skirtingų įstaigų specialistų. Duomenys taip pat atskleidžia, kad moralės dalykai socialiniame darbe su šeima turi būti analizuojami tiek socialinių darbuotojų rengimo procese, tiek praktikoje. Pasiremdamos kitų šalių patirtimi, straipsnio autorės pateikia rekomendaciją inicijuoti ankstyvosios intervencijos paslaugų plėtrą socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje, kas užtikrintų ilgesnę šeimos gerovę bei sumažintų poreikį šeimoms gauti ilgalaikes socialines paslaugas.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: socialinis konstrukcionizmas, paslaugų diskursai, socialinis darbas su šeima, socialinės paslaugos.

Article III

Motieciene, Roberta, Laitinen, Merja & Skaffari, Pia (2018). Interpretative repertoires of roles of FSWs' in the context of Lithuania. *Tiltai*. 1, 13–26.

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FAMILY SOCIAL WORKERS' INTERPRETATIVE ROLES REPERTOIRES IN THE CONTEXT OF LITHUANIA

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to describe family social work through analyzing the roles of social workers. Qualitative research was carried out in three big cities of Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 family social workers. A discursive psychology approach was chosen. Family social workers' interpretative roles repertoires appear among professional, public and organizational discourses. The results showed that family social workers categorise professional roles in relation to different everyday practices that depend on situated language use in the contexts in which they take place.

Key words: roles, family social worker, social services, discourse psychological analysis

Introduction

This article is part of a larger study on Lithuanian family social work (Motieciene, Laitinen, 2016). In this article, discursive constructions of the roles for family social workers are analyzed and described. The on-going ideological and structural change have had a strong impact on professional social work broadly. These changes have shaped social work settings and the related professional functions and operational roles. In the end, they have also affected the professional identity and roles of social

workers (Vainninen, 2011). In Lithuania, family social work is a popular topic of public discussions because of its moral and interventive nature. There are almost 800 social workers who are working with families at risk in Lithuania. They are trying to reduce the number of children living outside their homes in institutions and to empower families to take care of their children, so that they will be able to thrive at home (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, 2016).

In Lithuania, family social work practices take place mainly in clients' homes. When providing social services for families, a home-based model is applied. This model has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, Trotter (2015) highlighted that, in some cases, families may miss office-based consultations, but on the other hand, families feel more comfortable and safe at their homes. In addition, in a home context it is easier for social workers to see interactions between family members. This can provide opportunities for the social worker to reduce power imbalances between family members and offer a sense of increased partnership within families. However, the home context demands that social workers give attention to security and safety.

Trotter (2015) states that when a social worker is working with involuntary clients, the key aspect of direct social work should be the clarification of roles. Family social workers should be clear about their roles as case managers, case planners or problem solvers. He analysed the problem of the social worker's dual role based on social control and helping, which affects, what is negotiable and what is not. In addition, he stated that mutual understanding, analysis of clients' expectations and support from the organisations in the work with involuntary clients is possible when all professionals involved understand their own responsibilities. Sometimes, social workers may feel powerless to influence the situations, which flows from the organisations (Trotter, 2015).

Postle and Beresford (2007) discuss the social worker's role as an advocate through the lens of political participation and empowerment. A social worker's role is not only to replicate forms of paternalistic and patronizing provisions of social services, but rather to give support and work alongside people, bearing in mind such issues as choice and empowerment, which lead to an emancipatory role. Accordingly, Beckett and Horner (2016) have suggested that the roles of the social worker can be broken down into three role groups: advocacy roles, direct change agent roles and executive roles. The development of a multi-dimensional professional identity of social workers includes a variety of sub-identities with different approaches to work: the professional identity of a family counsellor/ client counsellor, a catalyst for welfare, the provider of social resources, a social crisis worker, a developer and a professional with specific expertise (Vainninen 2011).

In this paper, our aim is to analyse Lithuanian family social workers' roles. The research question is as follows: what kind of roles do social workers take and are given in family social work? In order to respond to the research question,

qualitative research was carried out with 25 family social workers from different cities in Lithuania. In the methodological part of this paper, all of the process of data gathering is presented. Semi-structured interviews were used as a tool to talk with the family social workers. Research data were analysed according to Potter and Whetherell's (1992) guidelines on how to analyse discourses, or as they view them, "interpretative repertoires," that are used as flexible resources in social interaction. This research adds new knowledge about family social workers' constructed roles in their everyday practices with families who are dealing with different kinds of social problems. The next section of the paper presents a short description of possible roles in the field of family social work and social services. Later, the methodology and findings are discussed. The final section ends with concluding remarks.

THE ROLES OF FAMILY SOCIAL WORKERS

The International Association of Schools of Social Work and the International Federation of Social workers (IFSW) (2014) provide a global definition of social work.

"Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing".

The definition highlights key aspects of the social work profession: the emphasis on human rights, social justice and social inclusion. Considering these aspects, the role of a social worker as an advocate requires direct dialogue between practitioners and clients. Clients' active participation can promote the realization of social justice. Postle and Beresford (2007) carried out a qualitative study with people who were actively participating in formal political activities, and also with persons such as peace protestors, people with disabilities and the elderly. The findings of the research highlighted the importance of forms of advocacy as a crucial part of the social worker's role. Acting as an advocate, a social worker builds capacity within different groups of people who use social services, and thus enables them to live autonomously.

Family social workers operate in different structural systems within society, such as family systems, organisational systems, and political systems in their daily practices. This means that the social worker is in the middle of different power flows and expectations, which affect the social worker's role in governing families'

needs of help and support. This is stated in the Law of Social Services (2006). The core aim is to strengthen the family so as to support the parents' ability to take care of their children in home settings. To contextualize the Lithuanian family social work situation, it is very similar to the situation Ferguson wrote of eleven years ago, in 2007. The author discussed different forms of personalization within dominant social work discourses in the UK. He argued that most social work clients have modest ambitions and he considered this through the lack of accessibility of support resources, saying that the choices that were available were limited, especially for clients named as "involuntary". This means that families are more dependent of publicly provided social services in all sectors: social, education, health, housing, transport, etc. For a social worker, this mean "doing more for less," and a sense of powerlessness rises in such social work practice conditions. This affects not only clients but also the practitioners.

Mason (2012) has paid attention to the roles of the social worker, especially as an interactor, which emphasise relationships between the social worker and a client. Her research results with 20 families disclosed that professional relationships are influenced by mutual and open communication, which cover trust; openness; a sense of secure, shared goals; practical support; understanding the needs of parents and reliability that means being available when help is needed.

Many social workers are employed by the state and they are performing the functions, which are defined by the laws and government regulations (Beckett, Horner, 2016). Authors state that, sometimes it happens, that clients do not recognise what kind of role a social worker is performing. The consequence might be that the client does not understand what is happening and why. Authors suggest that the roles of the social worker can be broken down into three groups: advocacy roles, direct change agent roles and executive roles.

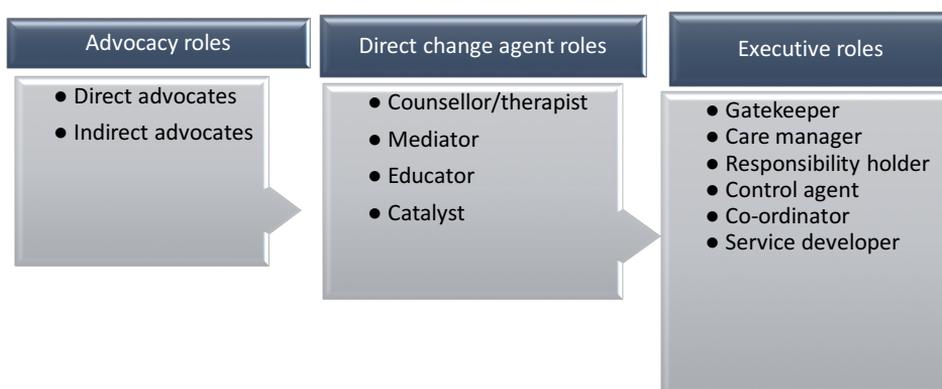


Figure 1. Roles played by social worker (Beckett, Horner, 2016, p.33)

Social work as an advocate can be performed in two different ways, but a key mission of this role is to empower the client to be able to defend their lives, family members, opinions, and rights. The social worker who is performing as a direct advocate is speaking on behalf of the client, while an indirect advocate is working to empower the client to advocate for herself/himself on their own behalf. Direct change agent roles are about “real” social work, where a change is essential and the main aim of direct social work practice. It can consist of different aims; for example, educating to gain new skills or mediating between families. A social worker as a catalyst can utilise different methods and approaches, such as group or community social work. In addition, it should be emphasized that often social workers are not performing only one role: they can be acting as a counsellor, mediator or educator at the same time.

Executive roles are connected to external resources, like material resources, legal powers or services provided by others, not about direct interaction with a client. Social workers can be seen as gatekeepers of public resources. A gatekeeper's function is to determine eligibility of resources. In Lithuania, a context for this is when the social benefit could be divided as cash and a money card with limited allowance for what a family is able to buy. This is if a family social worker sees that a family has problems with the use of financial resources. Then the family social worker could recommend for the social support office to divide social benefit into two parts: half of it into cash, and the rest going into a money card. With this card the family can buy food, clothes, shoes, medicines, pay for external services such as the children's kindergarten, heating, electricity and other essential things, but not alcohol, tobacco or lottery tickets.

Responsibility holder is a role, where a parent asks a social worker to be together with him or her in an official meeting with other professionals. In most cases this is in being together with a client during family case reviews with a child rights specialist. In other words, it is protecting in the best way the clients' interest in decision-making arenas, such as courts. Social worker can act also as the control agent – this is about handling and forcing boundaries of behaviour to protect parents and children from harming themselves or others. On the macro level, media and politicians often discuss through this role lens about family social workers in the context of Lithuania.

Finally, of the possible roles of family social work that appear in the context of Lithuania, it could be said, using Reynolds (2007) text, that different identities/roles are available by different ways of talking. This is keeping with the idea that family social workers roles are contextually changing.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was conducted to explore family social workers' roles. Qualitative research has many characteristics, but usually it is explanatory, fluid and flexible, providing contextually sensitive data (Mason, 2007). A qualitative study was chosen to enable the researchers to more deeply examine the social workers' daily practices with families. The background of the research methodology was based on an interpretive-constructivist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Reality is understood in its multidisciplinary forms and in the constructions of thoughts, which are based on social experiences and are formed in specific contexts and social interactions. The researchers and the research participants are interactively related, so the discoveries are relationally based (e.g., Denzin, Lincoln, 1994; Burr, 2015; Phillips, Jørgensen, 2002). This paper covers roles of social workers in social work practice with families. The research question is as follows: what kind of roles do social workers take and are given in family social work?

As mentioned above, discursive psychology approach was chosen in order to design the research. First of all, research question were outlined where the focus goes on family social workers discursive constructions of their performed roles. In order to access different and varied discursive practises, the researcher (first author) invited 25 family social workers who matched the sampling criteria. The average age of participants was 36.64 (range 26–57).

Even discursive psychologists are mostly interested in the production of naturally occurring materials, such as everyday conversations, scientific texts or media texts, the researcher decided to move on natural conversations. Later, semi-structured interviews were carried, and thus allowed for the researchers to be sure that all themes on the interview schedule were asked. An interview on natural basis is considered as a way of creating the meanings that are created in social interaction by the research participants. The data were collected in the three largest cities of Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda) from November 2014 to November 2015. These cities were chosen based on the largest number of families who were receiving social services. Seven interviews were conducted in Kaunas, twelve in Vilnius and six in Klaipėda

To reach social workers who fit the criteria, an informational email was sent to the heads of the social service agencies. The selection criteria for the social workers were as follows: 1) a bachelor's degree in social work, 2) a minimum of three years' job experience in the field of family social work and 3) working in a statutory agency that provided social services for families at the time of the recruitment. The heads of the agencies presented the research aim and criteria to family social workers, and those who were interested were invited to take part in the research. Afterwards, the researchers received email messages from the heads, with the mobile phone of each social worker. Next, the researchers contacted the family social workers and

provided them more detailed information. The researchers were also totally flexible and asked the participants to select their available schedule and preferred place for the interview. The study complied with general research ethics guidelines (e.g., Peled & Leichtenritt, 2002).

All the interviews involved face-to-face and one-on-one interactions, generally in the social workers' offices. Each interview was designed in a flexible manner and structure, which allowed the researchers and the interviewees to discuss unexpected topics about the practices in family social work. The researchers played an active role as reflexive participants and co-producers of the knowledge. The researchers' role was also recognised from an ethical viewpoint. Their academic and social backgrounds and ways of thinking affected how and what kind of knowledge was produced in their interactions with the social workers (cf. Mikkonen et al., 2016). Hence, the length of the interviews varied from one hour to two and one half hours. The interviews were transcribed immediately after they were finished. The transcriptions totalled over 500 pages. Both questions and answers were transcribed and analysed.

The first step after transcription was coding in order to identify the themes, which appeared after text fragments categorisation. The themes appear not only from theoretical reading but also directly from the reading of the interviews. The technique of *crisis points*, which allowed us to move further with an analysis, was chosen. Crisis points, as Phillips and Jørgensen (2002) wrote, are the moments when the signs appear that indicate something is wrong with an interaction. Thus, they are the signs which can reflect conflicts between discourses. An analysis of the data was done through the lens of discourse psychological analysis, following the authors Potter and Whetteral, who combine two different theoretical perspectives, such as Foucault theory on discourse, power and the subject, and an interactionist perspective. They call this a synthetic perspective, which unites the two first perspectives. When analysing the data, all the time the focus was on coherence, so as to reach the fruitfulness of the data. The research findings involving the extracts from the semi-structured interviews are provided. The results of the research are not only provided for the interviewed family social workers, but also could be targeted for all family social workers who are providing social services for families in need.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this part of the paper the interpretation of the discursive constructions of the family social workers roles are presented. All the data were analysed in detail. Next, we will illustrate through extracts role categorisations, which family social workers are performing. The researcher is marked as R and the family social workers are marked with the number provided by the researchers, for example, SW4. The

researcher and the research participants are talking about the roles in the settings of family social work practice. All the family social workers are working in statutory institutions, which provide social services for families at risk.

EXCERPT 1.

R: Researcher

SW4: Social Worker Number 4

R:	1	What role as a social worker you perform?
SW4:	2	A mediator, a helper.
R:	3	Where you have to mediate?
SW4:	4 5 6 7 8 9	<i>To mediate</i> between institutions. Between neighbours, <...> community. At the same time you are giving <i>a consultation, support</i> to the client. Simply, I am strengthening client, showing them their strengths, that there is not so bad is it could see. Just to enhance, that a client doesn't pass, doesn't do something or start to abuse something in order to a situation would be inadequate. Just not to frighten, but <i>to advise them</i> . Simply you are a helper. Simply, a person, who wants to help you, even when a complaint or information about that particular family is provided. Simply to protect, maybe <i>a defender</i> .
R:	12	What kind of family social workers' roles you recognise in society?
SW4:	13 14 15	Oh, here in the society, it is not known. We could be the workers who are working during the evenings or weekends and at the same time the acrobats, and the mothers, and the aunts, the teachers, differently. It is an image, that a social worker will solve all the problems.
R:	17	Do you assign such roles to yourself?
SW4:	18 19	The same (laughing). I have to jump with various gymnastic tricks between one institution and another in order to solve a problem. You need to be able to present a situation where you are.
R:	21	Who are that acrobatic tricks?
SW4:	22 23 24 25 26	Well, if somebody is explaining you social support system, saying that a law is such, or I am trying to explain, that such a law could be understood and applied differently. Why I should do this as a social worker alone, when I am working in a team. They also could be equivalent. But they have more power, they could contribute and tack between the law and the clients. This causes that I have to do the binders. Simply, I don't want to be <i>a keeper</i> .

EXCERPT 2.

R: Researcher

SW2: Social Worker Number 2

R:	1	What kind of family social workers' roles you recognise in society?
SW2:	2 3 4	So, members of society expect everything from a social worker, I do not know, but maybe that will be able to do miracles. I do not know, but ... that family will be educated, toughed, trained and that we will create the conditions to live for them. The society expects everything.
R:	5	What is the situation in direct practice?
SW2:	6 7 8 9 10	Just look that is provided in media! They talk that we are doing nothing, just checking if a milk is bad, that we are just looking or searching for something, taking children from parents. One of our lady (client) was on tv. People believe. Now I was reading the comments on Internet, what an opinion is about us. <...> Know, I can't, TV doesn't know the situation. But it is very bad that child right specialist do not advocate family.

EXCERPT 3.

R: Researcher

SW3: Social Worker Number 3

R:	1	What kind of family social workers' roles you recognise in society?
SW3:	2 3 4	The roles for me? Maybe, society is informed just a little, they are thinking, ohh a social worker who works with family at risk, should be a <i>helper</i> , a <i>controller</i> a bit, who will come to the family home and quickly adjust everything.
R:	5	What role as a social worker you perform?
SW3:	6	I like myself as a <i>family helper</i> . <i>Advance giver</i> , in that sense somehow a <i>bit observer</i> , a <i>controller</i> .

EXCERPT 4.

R: Researcher

SW12: Social Worker Number 12

R:	1	What role as a social worker you perform?
SW12:	1 2 3	It's like <i>helping</i> and <i>assisting</i> and <i>representing them</i> and <i>participating</i> in many places. Informant, many of these roles are. I don't know, but maybe also as a manager like a <i>life manager</i> . I am coming in their homes and <i>readjust their lives</i> .

All the provided extracts are accounts that refer to “roles” of family social workers, which go through the three categories, such as *advocacy* roles, *direct changes agent* roles and finally as *executive* roles. Family social workers talked about inferiority;

as it is, they are constructing their professional roles in the conditions of being in a lower status or quality than others professionals, especially child rights' specialists (excerpt 1 and excerpt 2). The provided excerpts draw on a *roles repertoires*. All the accounts are based on power relations between different institutional settings. These are recognizable power relationships between clients and family social workers, between team members, and in one case that was discussed, through the lens of mass media.

In the *roles repertoires*, family social workers roles are determined in hierarchy order. There is a sense that family social workers keep themselves in a lower position than other professionals. In extract 1, the family social worker is constructing her role as *care manager*, which leads to an executive role. Basically, this type of role mostly distinguishes social work from other caring professions in that there is the focus on change not as a result of personal interaction, but on recruiting external resources from one kind or another (Beckett, Horner, 2016).

In extract 2, the family social worker is moving from the pronoun *I* to *they*. She is saying that child rights' specialists should advocate her family in mass media; meanwhile one of the most important roles of social workers is *advocacy* roles. In this case if the family itself is not yet ready to advocate for itself, the family social worker is acting as *an advocate*, when helping the family to be able to defend their rights in other institutional settings. Crisis points in this case were recognised.

Also, in all the provided extracts, save one, family social workers are focusing on others with somehow unrealistic functions, tasks which are provided for them from the society. This leads to a misunderstanding as to how to solve the social problems with which families have to deal. These social problems are seen as family issues, not as a result of social structures in which such problems as unemployment and poverty are determined. In such circumstances these *roles repertoires* could be seen in the frame of blaming culture discourse. The expectations in Lithuanian society are that family social workers should control families' lives, but the in a law social workers' functions are defined totally different. . Family social workers are working with families not to control their lives, but to help them deal with the issues they are facing.

It is important to state that the roles of family social workers could be analysed at different points in the interview extracts. Family social workers draw on different discourses in different contexts and settings. If we will turn on *roles repertoires* to the *direct change agent* roles, the context of home should be considered. In home settings, family social workers usually are performing *direct work roles*, which are performed in practice through some form of structured conversation or interaction with the client. As Beckett and Horner (2016) noted in such circumstances, family social workers could negotiate between different roles such as: *communicator, listener, negotiator* and *supporter*.

From the extracts provided above, family social workers saw themselves as performing these roles, but no one research participant indicated that in working

with families counselling them, using systematic family therapy or actively working with groups or community. Thus, direct work roles also are named as *direct change agent* and this is not about only one individual person. If we take a broader look, each individual is a human of each society. An individualistic approach in this case should not be a core, because the *direct agent role* could take the form of mediating between individuals in order to solve conflict or to find new solutions to problem solving.

Nowadays, more and more in contemporary social work practice discourse, *executive roles* such as *gatekeeper*, *care manager*, *responsibility builder*, *control agent*, *co-ordinator* and *service developer* are recognised in broader settings than only families' homes. Beckett and Horner (2016) state that executive roles also could be named as *indirect change agent* roles. For example, in excerpt 1 the family social worker provides a case when she has to discuss with others what belongs to the family she is working with (excerpt 1, lines 18 – 19). Excerpt 3 and Excerpt 4 disclose *roles repertoires* through the role of *control agent*. Control means the power to influence peoples' behaviour, which regulates or enforces boundaries of behaviour in order to safeguard vulnerable people, either from being harmed themselves or from harming others (Beckett, Horner, 2016). Looking back to the extracts provided above, a *controller* role by research participants is discussed in the families' home settings; law discourse is not taken into account. This goes to, that family social workers are using this role with misunderstanding of that real meaning of *control agent* role. This is not about checking and visiting at all. As Beckett and Horner discussed, this "*control agent*" role is associated with one professional group such as the police, but not social workers. They emphasized that allocation of this term is culturally specific. Keeping in mind that social work as a profession in Lithuania is counting only twenty five years, there is a need of time to change working traditions in the family social work practice. Mostly, in social work discourse about family social work practice, *control agent role* is a central component of what family social workers are doing from the society view point.

By concluding the analysis of *roles repertoires* it should be noted that roles could be performed differently in each practical cases. This is the same with a discourse, which are flexible, not stable, moving, context bounded. Family social workers use discourses rhetorically in order to accomplish forms of social action in a particular context of interaction. Discourses function as a resource of argumentation, differ in each argument by which social workers shape their professional roles. Shaw and Lunt (2012) stated that practice research support the researchers to give a meaning to the experiences of practitioners. The researches in social work are associated with the actions more than the prior experiences. The focus goes on new knowledge creation with the aim to improve social work practice. The main idea of these authors are that it is impossible to create a set of rules under which social workers should organise their work. The models of practice, the interventions or even official regulation of social services for families at risk is influenced by the wider service discourses.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the discursive object, “the roles” of family social workers, are constructed situationally and contextually in multiple ways through the lens of psychological and sociological service discourses. Family social workers described their roles through three discourses: *professional*, *public*, and *organisational*. First, when a social worker holds a subject position as a professional social worker, the *roles repertoires* are formed through the individual level and direct partnership with the family member. The roles, like a defender, a consultant, a gatekeeper and a teacher are recognised in the professional discourse.

Second, results show also that social workers’ subject positions are defined through public discourses, the media, and the Internet. These *roles repertoires* are constructed through cultural values, attitudes, myths and societal demands. Social workers seldom feel familiar with these roles, because the main characteristic in them is controlling. If the main constructed role is a controller, it holds an assumption that the family social worker does not have any regular working hours and s(he) should be able to solve all complexities that arise within families. Because public discourse is strong and it reaches citizens broadly, it hinders professional *roles repertoires*. Social workers are trying to take their subject positions in the conflicting role situations. Public discourse does not recognise the professional aspect that family social workers are controlling the process of help or intervention plans, not individual family members’ lives.

Third, results show that social workers’ subject positions are defined through organizational discourse. Family social workers are working within different organisations, where different inter-professional power relationships exist. The results showed that family social workers are feeling less powerful than other professionals. In addition, the results show that family social workers are not aware of executive roles and their real functions, which normally could be assigned to family social workers. It is noticed, that such roles, according to the family social workers, should be taken by others, but not by them.

It is important that professional discourse would have strongest position among these three discourses, because two others has many negative consequences for social workers. For example, in broad Finnish survey (n = 817) nearly 11 per cent of social workers in the public social welfare services reported experiencing moral distress. They were less willing to continue in their post, were more frequently on sick leave and had positive work-related experiences less often than their colleagues who did not experience moral distress. (Mänttari-van der Kuip, 2015.) In these cases, social workers are not able to promote social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people, as they wish on the base of their professional education.

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Article IV

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The constructions of everyday ethics in Lithuanian family social work practices

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Abstract. The aim of this study was to shed light on family social work through analyzing the insights of Lithuanian social workers about the ethical questions that emerge during their daily practices. Social workers' ethical considerations are analyzed in the framework of "doing ethics." Ethics work also pays attention to the broader political and social contexts behind the processes that happen within families. Our qualitative research was carried out in three of the largest Lithuanian cities: Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 family social workers. The research findings showed that family social workers construct ethical questions through discursive themes, such as the dignity of the client and societal inequalities – especially poverty issues and social control and support. Ethical dilemmas arise in the settings where social workers do evaluations and make decisions, and where actions require professional knowledge.

Keywords: social work ethics, situated ethics, family social work practice

Introduction

This paper is part of a larger body of research focused on family social work in Lithuania (Motieciene and Laitinen 2016; Motieciene, Laitinen and Skaffari 2018). As previous articles were focused on discourses on social services and the interpretative repertoires of the roles of family social workers in the context of Lithuania, this article focuses on ethical questions in the context of the daily practices of family social work. We have approached ethical questions in settings where the evaluations, decisions and actions of social workers require professional knowledge, and where individual and societal levels intertwine (Banks 2012).

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Nowadays, effective and measurable solutions are appreciated, and the accountability of social workers to politicians and decision-makers has increased (Banks 2004). Often, the results of social work are estimated based on how effective family social workers are as professionals or how effective the social services agency is, which causes ethical dilemmas for the practice of family social work. Calculating human suffering or social work interventions through euros or time spent with clients does not provide a base for ethically sound and effective family social work. This paper is among the studies in which the ethics of the professional practices of social work are analyzed (Banks and Williams 2005). Family social workers must deal with the many and sometimes contradictory interests of their clients as well as other experts and professionals working with the families. In this paper, the everyday ethics of family social workers are approached as *doing ethics* through the interdependent moral spheres in which family social workers' ethical considerations take place: the personal, professional and public or social spheres. Banks (2016) broadens ethics work to include emotion, identity, roles and responsibilities.

Our research question is as follows: what kind of ethical questions must family social workers consider when providing social services in clients' homes? This research partakes in the discussion of professional ethics in social work, particularly in a Lithuanian context. We hope to provide deeper insight into social norms and ethical dilemmas, specifically the ethical questions stirred by family social work practice (Banks 2004).

First, we illustrate the contradictory context of family social work based on international and national research findings. After that, we describe the theoretical principles of everyday ethics in family social work. Later, we report the data collection and analysis process. Our findings explore the insights shared by social workers about the ethical dilemmas in their daily practices. We summarize the main arguments based on family social workers' ethical considerations.

The Contradictory Context of Family Social Work

The literature on social work has shown an increasing interest in the discussion of ethical challenges and decision-making in the context of family social work during the last couple of decades (Clark 2000; Banks 2009; 2012). Social work is a part of broader public policy, and social workers have a central role within welfare systems, which aim to care for, support and empower but also control people (Dominelli 2004). This means that everyday ethics in family social work practice are very important for social workers both on the institutional and societal levels. On the one hand, social workers must understand political issues; on the other hand, their choices as practitioners are determined by legal actions – for example, the Law on Social Services (2006). The professional ethics of social work highlight family social

workers' responsibilities to their clients and their environments (Clark 2000; Banks 2012). A social worker has to think about ways to promote human well-being, find new ways of living, motivate their client to make changes and support them as an agent and citizen in the community. Social workers' responsibilities also become visible through the social issues that are seen in family social work practices, like poverty, child abuse and neglect. Responsibility is a central part of professional ethics, as is the capability to analyze families' issues as structural problems in a specific society (Clark 2000; Banks 2004; 2012). An analytical approach is needed because of the morality-laden nature of child and family social work. For example, claims and concerns of child abuse can arouse moral panic. Hence, it is important that social workers raise public awareness of and pay attention to how a community's reactions can affect their practices (Cree, Clapton and Smith 2016). Additionally, it is important that social workers are aware of how the ideologies of society and the consequent moral and strategic shifts in governing can cause clients and their problems to be interpreted through a lens of moral conservatism (Stanford 2008). Therefore, social workers need to question the neoliberal ideals of society by invoking the core principles of social work and the realities of children and their families (Stanford 2010).

Several studies have shown this contradictory character of family social work in the context of Lithuania. For example, Mazeikiene, Naujaniene and Ruskus (2014) wrote about how Lithuania's government assumes that the state must take responsibility for its citizens. However, individuals and families experience a lack of adequate services. This research opens up important considerations – for example, how could a social worker act on a professional level considering what can be offered to families that face poverty, housing issues and must sustain themselves on low salaries. This area opens up such ethical dilemmas as access to equitable resources in society.

De Long Hamilton and Bundy-Fazioly (2013) explored the experiences of child welfare workers and students in working with child neglect. They stated that when a family is defined as a multi-problem family, they usually receive fragmented services provided by different social services providers. But what of societies like Lithuania, where there is a lack of such services? The expectation is to safeguard child rights, but social workers are dealing with a lack of resources in order to respond to this expectation. The Lithuanian context can be analytically related to a study by Featherstone, Gupta, Morris and Warner (2016) concerning the British context, especially public discourses about the effect of poverty on individuals' failings rather than structural inequalities. They state that the dominant discourses about poverty should encompass multiple features from the social model – that is, when discussing inequalities on a societal level, economic, environmental and cultural contexts should be included.

Nygren, Naujaniene and Nygren (2018) did comparative research on the topic of family social legislation in Lithuania and Sweden. The notion of the family was

analyzed on three levels: the constitution, the general family policy and the child welfare policy. The authors concluded that Lithuania is recognized as a *refamilialized welfare state*. According to Hantrais (2004), refamilialized welfare states have a common feature of moving from strong state involvement to a minimal level of state involvement. Meanwhile, in the child rights protection system, defamilization policies are viewed poorly because of the focus on strengthening child rights (Nygren, Naujaniene and Nygren 2018). This study confirmed previous research showing that Lithuania is strongly affected by neoliberal ideologies, placing more responsibility on families and individuals.

Everyday Ethics in Family Social Work

Ethics are the core of family social work. They provide answers to many normative questions, such as how one should behave and live one's life (Banks and Williams 2005). Ethics relate to moral theory, which can be approached through deontology (duties, principles and rights), teleology (consequences) and virtues (focus on motivation and characteristics) (Bibus 2013). Moral-philosophical arguments are essential in forming social work practices. Such principles as ontological equality, respect, self-determination, freedom, communality and duty are derived from them. These values are linked with the fundamental notion that the client is a thinking, goal-setting being, an equal and an expert in their own case, who cannot be helped they decide not to accept help. Freedom is not restricted merely by prohibitions and limitations; one's actions can also be limited by a lack of resources. Action is required to fortify communality. People have obligations to consider and respect each other's goals. (Urponen 2003.)

In this research, these values – as well as the legislation where ethical methods and guide-lines are incorporated into the principles of professional ethics – provided the framework for ethical family social work questions and considerations. In encounters at the homes of families, values are not made concrete nor are ethical guidelines applied in a straightforward manner; they are made, created and reinterpreted in varying circumstances (Banks 2004). We do not send family social workers to discuss the nature of moral issues with philosophers (Banks and Williams 2005); instead, we connect empirical analysis to contextual ethics (Banks 2004; 2016). We see that ethical principles and features of agency (Clark 2000), such as respect, knowledge, skill, legitimate and authorized social workers, relationships based on trust, collaborative, accountable, shared responsibility, clear communication, reputability and a creditable agency are important in constructing everyday ethics in family social work. Human needs are the roots of values, and the function of norms is to protect these needs (Borrmann 2010). Clark (2000) noted that in the field of family social work practice, families' needs are not only physical care and safety but

include housing, health, education, loving parenting and social relationships outside the family.

Banks (2016) has developed a framework for ethics work. This goes beyond the concentration on ethical issues, problems, dilemmas and individual decisions. Ethics work also highlights the practical accounts of the ethical dimensions in political and social contexts and looks at how they are co-constructed in those frames. The next stage of the ethics work speaks about role work, which was discussed in the previous part of this research (Motieciene, Laitinen and Skaffari 2018), wherein family social workers' roles are constructed through the lens of everyday practices while providing social services.

Banks (2016) also speaks about the emotional aspect of social work. Feelings of ambivalence are present in daily practices. On the one hand, family social workers must respect human rights, dignity and the right to self-determination, but on the other hand, professionals have to perform social control functions, especially regarding child protection. Clark (2006) states that a non-judgmental attitude is a good way to work with individuals, groups and communities. Ethical social work practice consists of three main elements – interests, feelings and rights – with respect as a key principle of morality. It is important to understand

that respect is not based on rationality; it is more interconnected with senses and emotions. Banks (2016) highlights the importance of creating an identity as an ethically sound pro-

fessional. Family social work is primarily done through speech, interaction and behavior to construct various personal and social identities. For example, on the organizational level, the previously mentioned identities could be constructed between the manager of the social agency and the individual social workers. This aspect of ethics work relates strongly to the ideas of Foucault (1997) about the care of the self. In addition, some features of virtue ethics are visible.

The next part of ethics work is, according to Banks (2016), reasoning work, which means performing and explaining moral judgements. Justice highlights the importance of responses to acts of injustice, seeking fundamental human rights (freedom of speech, privacy and a right to life), individual needs and equality, especially in the provision of basic goods. Family social work is constructed through dialogue. Those dialogues could happen between family social workers and their clients, between family social workers and their managers or between managers and politicians.

Finally, Banks (2016) talks about performance work. This means that the work done by family social workers should be visible to others. Alternatively, Clark (2002) would say that citizenship is the upper individual level and flows from the community. Family social workers are always situated between clients and the official bodies that are structured by legal implications and directly influence the lives of clients. For example, Meysen and Keely (2018) analyzed child protection

systems across different countries to explore the practical and ethical dilemmas that occur when providing services in non-clinical settings for individual families. A major focus was on child physical abuse and neglect. The authors discussed the high expectations of the professionals, insufficient resources and widespread mistrust of the system in public discourses, which are the pitfalls commonly analyzed in the media.

Everyday ethics are not static phenomena; they constantly change and renew themselves. Steckley and Smith (2011) stated that social work practices can become strained very quickly when a culture of blame exists in society. It is important to see everyday ethics as a key part of professional life (Banks 2016). The Statement of Ethical Principles (IFSW, 2018) highlights that social workers should work in accordance with the highest possible standards, adhering to principles such as the recognition of the inherent dignity of humanity and the promotion of human rights and social justice in relation to society and their clients. Similar aims are included in the new version of the Lithuanian National Code of Ethics for Social Workers, which came into effect in 2017. The first statement of the Code is that social workers, by their practice alone, are saying that each human should have the right to live with dignity, that society should be democratic and civic, and that human rights and social justice are essential in social work. These codes can come true only through the daily actions of social workers.

Methodology

In order to explore ethical considerations in the field of family social work, a qualitative study with a social constructionist approach (Burr 2015) was used. The data was collected in three of the biggest cities in Lithuania: Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. Twenty-five research participants from statutory social service agencies took part in the study. Participants were involved on a voluntary basis after being given permission by the administrations of their respective agencies. The heads of the social services agencies were introduced to the research aim and the key questions; later, an invitation to participate was sent directly to family social workers, while some of them were contacted by phone. All potential research participants were willing to participate in the research. The data was collected using semi-structured, dialogical interviews (Phillips and Jørgensen 2002).

The data was transcribed step-by-step, through listening, writing and checking. In total, over 500 pages were transcribed. Interviews were analyzed with careful attention to the details of the speech between the interviewer and interviewee, looking for ethical considerations in family social work practice. Ethical considerations relating to confidentiality and professional roles were analyzed in previous articles. In this part of the research, the data were first coded on the basis of the accounts given by

social workers concerning ethical problems and their considerations in confronting a family's need of help. Each of the 25 social workers described several ethical considerations from their daily practices. In the second phase, three discursive themes were elaborated, which are related to ethical considerations regarding the dignity of the client and societal inequalities, especially issues of poverty and social control and support functions.

Table 1. The summary of coded discursive themes

Features of ethical question represented in the data	Discursive Theme	Definition of Theme	Ethical question to be considered
Sense of respect; following social work values in everyday practice.	Dignity of a client	Seeing each client first as a citizen and later as a client.	The value and role of clients in relation to the professionals' status and citizenship.
Seeking possibilities for supporting and compensating for poor living conditions; giving personal money and goods.	Poverty as an issue of societal inequality	Facing clients' poverty in the everyday work practice.	Confronting social problems, such as a lack of professional and structural resources to help clients.
Ambivalence; caring for a child's wellbeing; believing in positive changes and the positive power of a nuclear family.	Social control and support	Much consideration is needed when a child is taken from their family into statutory care. Seeking to respect the child's rights.	Confronting social problems, such as evaluation and decision-making in contradictory settings.

Source: compiled by the authors.

In the analysis, social workers' accounts are interpreted within the contexts (Phillips and Hardy 2002). Next, excerpts are provided to present the findings. In the quotations, the researcher is marked as R and the family social worker as SW with a number, such as SW8.

Research Findings

The excerpt below shows the family social worker and the researcher talking about the dignity of the client. It illustrates how social workers evaluate citizenship as a component of ethical principles. This means that clients have their own rights as individuals but are also influenced by community obligations.

Excerpt 1.

R: Researcher

SW8: Social Worker Number 8

1	R:	You mentioned social justice as a value in social work. This is also mentioned in the
2		National Code of Ethics for Lithuanian Social Workers. Could you please clarify this from
3		your point of view?
4	SW8:	If we are talking about the family...Uhm, all the time I am thinking, and I hope that my
5		colleagues are too, that it is necessary to feel respect for them. Whether or not you love
6		them, whatever their disadvantages, even if their principles are totally different from
7		yours and so on – respect is first. Do not expect anything from them, because they have
8		their own feelings, their own experiences, and for me, when a social worker is acting
9		from the role of a controller, it is not valuable. I consider that clients have the right not to
		agree or live as I would want to. They firstly are citizens [...].

This excerpt displays the view that the client should be seen first as a citizen. A family social worker treats the client with respect as a person. She portrays her client as a member of the society and highlights the ethical principle of respect as a must-share attitude among her colleagues. This family social worker discusses the client's rights to choose his or her lifestyle and points out that she is not expecting that the client will live as the family social worker wants. The National Code of Ethics for Lithuania Social Workers (2017) describe the provision of social justice and human rights as essential in social work practice. The respect for human rights in this excerpt shows that the family social worker understands her professional role and acts based on an empowering and supportive approach rather than a controlling and stereotyping one. This highlights the importance of how social workers analyze and define the family members as clients. Each of them is a citizen in a broader society and should be seen beyond their home setting. The values and roles of clients in relation to professionals' status and citizenship is not to be taken for granted, but should be regarded as an ethical question that has to be defined and redefined in every encounter.

Excerpt 2.

R: Researcher

SW1: Social Worker Number 1

The next two excerpts illustrate how family social workers operate in regard to some of the biggest social problems in Lithuania – poverty and social exclusion. The excerpts show situations where family social workers met their client families at their homes. The research data shows how family social workers are trying to help the families.

1	R:	Can you tell me how you work when you deal with poverty in a client's home setting?
2		
3	SW1:	[...] I have such cases. For example, a man had been raising a child. I went to visit him; I
4		saw that the child was sick and had a fever and, somehow, he had eaten a little food, but
5		it was, like, flour and various grains. I asked him [the father] what he was going to cook.
6		And, as I remember, it was spring, wet weather and very cold. Mhm, mhm. I didn't know
7		what to do, so I offered to cook pancakes for the child. He said that he hasn't any milk
8		and no money at all now – he'd spent everything on medicines. I felt so much pity that I
		gave my personal money [...].

Situations where a family social worker uses own their resources in order to promote human rights are an ethical problem. Structural social problems like poverty should not require social workers to share their own money. Broadhurst (2012) argued that the domination of neoliberalism in politics influences public services such as social welfare. Eurostat data showing the poverty level make sense regarding the economic discourse in Lithuanian society, where there is a lack of money for the basic needs of families, which, in turn, generates new psychosocial, behavioural and child protection issues. Social workers meet the ethical problem where societal structures pose multiple problems on an individual level. Many cases of psychological problems, behavioral issues and child neglect appear in such circumstances.

The next excerpt illustrates the same ethical problem. The global social work statement of ethical principles (2018) declares that social work professionals are challenging unjust policies and practices, and that they are responsible for sharing those issues directly with the responsible persons. Shared responsibility is very important in social work practice. It means that if there are no adequate resources, resources must be shared between the employers, policymakers and politicians.

Excerpt 3.

R: Researcher

SW16: Social Worker Number 16

1	R:	Do you have a case to share when your inner values were in conflict with your professional values?
2	SW16	Yes, many of them. For example, I have one case... A six-person family, a mother and
3		five children, are living in a room the size of my office. That means about 10 or 12 square
4		meters. Maybe 12, because one sofa is on one side, another on the
5		other side. The room has a porch, the family is living without running water, and
6		when I got this case, they did not have any electricity installed either. Thank God
		they have electricity now, but it is about seven hundred meters to the nearest well.
7	R:	How do they live in such conditions?
8	SW16	I don't know. Complicated.
9	R:	The family is receiving social services according to the poverty issues?
10	SW16	No. Due to a lack of social skills. Let me show you; I have a photo.
11	R:	(Family social worker is showing pictures). The house looks like a shack.
12	R:	But I notice that the children are dressed very nicely and neatly?
13	SW16	Yes, because I have taken things from my daughter to offer support to the moth-
14		er. For example, these shoes are my daughter's. A girl refused to go the school's
15		opening ceremony because she didn't have any shoes. When my daughter returned
16		from a time abroad and when she was leaving, I asked her to leave the shoes to that
17		girl. You can see (family social worker is showing a photo). Look how beautiful
18		she looks and how happy she is. She is smiling. [...] Pay attention to the rope and
19		how many washed clothes are on it. This family is a rare case, when water is seven
20		hundred meters from the home. In order to wash the clothes, you have to bring
21		it in summer and in winter time. The mother and the senior daughter are doing
		everything outside. The room is too small and overcrowded. I don't know if they
		can really live in these conditions.

This excerpt shows a family living under very poor conditions – without running water inside, with six people crowded in a small room. As a researcher, it is difficult even to analyze this case in the context of human rights. This case poses an essential ethical question regarding social workers' duties – how should they report this family's case? The family social worker did not open this case publicly; she found a solution by taking shoes and clothes from her daughter. A lack of attention to community resources is visible. The national code of ethics for Lithuania's social workers indicates that social workers should collaborate with each other, as well as with other specialists and organizations, in order to find adequate resources. This family social worker did not mention other actors – for example, charity organizations, non-governmental organizations or governmental organizations such

as municipalities – that would be able to provide social assistance for families who are living in such poor conditions. Although the accounts provided in excerpts two and three focus on individual family situations, it is apparent that family social workers' solutions, when working alone with their own resources, can only offer temporary solutions to families in need of help. These excerpts point out how important it is that ethics work includes performance work, which makes social work and its clients' needs visible to others (Banks 2016). Structural social problems need strong social reporting and structural responses – changes in the labor market, for example. Low incomes are a huge problem for families in Lithuania. According to the Eurostat data, in 2017, almost 30% of the population lived in poverty and experienced social exclusion in Lithuania, and 31.6% of children less than 18 years of age lived in such circumstances. According to Lithuanian scientists Lazutka, Žalimienė, Skučienė, Tamošiūnė and Šumskaitė (2008), the main reasons for child poverty are family members' working statuses, the households' compositions, benefits provided by the government and a lack of social services, especially in the childcare sector.

Excerpt 4.

R: Researcher

SW18: Social Worker Number 18

1	R:	Have you ever been faced with an ethical dilemma in direct practice?
2 3 4	SW:	Really, yes. Yes. Yes. You get such an inner struggle, you know? I understand that you cannot act differently, because it is my work, but, for example, I would like it if social workers weren't the ones who punish families.
5	R:	How can we avoid this?
6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	SW18:	I don't know... I think we need some additional measures which will help us and will bind parents to solve their problems in order that their child will be able to live together with them. It now happens in a such way they know that they are being observed, that a social worker is saying something, doing something, but nothing happens. Later, they are living as they wish. Until the critical moment comes. I, as a social worker, don't like such a mess; I invite child rights specialists to organize a case review regarding foster care, and it depends on the social worker. Now that I am talking with you, I am thinking that I don't want to behave in such a manner, because I see that it also damages the child rights. A child has a right to have parents. [...]
15	R:	What would your suggestion be like?
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24	SW18:	I don't know... Maybe an official order on a society level, which will influence the parents' non-positive behaviour. Because now I am feeling that they collaborate with us but do not pay attention to the actions they must take into account. You can motivate and motivate until finally they realize that the social worker is acting courageously. I have such cases when you visit families after a weekend, and you are informed that somebody has called the police [during that time]. And you see that the parents – when I am working – behave correctly, they do not drink alcohol or use drugs, but I have a feeling that they do this during the weekends. [...] I think that there should be a tool to safeguard child rights. Children are traumatized, and parents go in deeper depression and the result is that the family is destroyed. And it is true that the family social worker is also traumatized. Everyone feels bad.

The fourth excerpt shows how confronting social problems, evaluating them and making decisions poses ethical dilemmas for the social worker. This family social worker is questioning whether her actions are wrong or right. She says that she does not want to act in a controller's role, but she is concerned about a child's care because of their parents' alcohol abuse. Such a situation can be defined as an ethical dilemma. According to Banks (2012), it occurs when a social worker faces a choice between two equally unwelcome alternatives – which may involve a conflict of ethical values – and it is not clear which choice is the right one. This family social worker is describing a situation where a child's well-being, their parents' alcohol abuse, the child's custody, the parents' rights to their child, the child's right to his or her parents, the parents' responsibilities to offer a safe environment for their child to grow up, and the social workers' statutory mandate to secure the child's wellbeing are all at odds with each other. This kind conflicting situation demands ethics work, where the social worker is able to perform moral reasoning despite her or his emotions (Banks 2016). This family social worker approaches the emotional part of the decision-making with a strong comparison. She says that the decision will *traumatize* all the sides in this case.

This case can be analyzed in terms of its cultural context. In the Lithuanian constitution, Article 38 (Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, 1992) says that a child should be cared for by their parents until majority, and that the state protects and cares for the family, mother- hood, parenthood and childhood. In Lithuanian society, though, it was an enduring custom for people to not intervene or call the responsible institutions if, in their neighbor families, both parents abused alcohol in their domestic environments; consequently, the children would always be left to grow up under such circumstances. Often, the responsible institutions were called only after something dangerous would happen – for example, violent acts between the parents or against the children, unfamiliar persons visiting family or instances of drug abuse. After July 1, 2018, a new version of the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child came into force. Also, case management became compulsory as a method for family social workers who are working with families experiencing social risk factors. However, social norms and attitudes seem to be changing slowly.

Conclusion

The legitimacy of social work as a profession consists of three points: how social workers work within the law, the law itself, encompassing people and seeking to support human rights, and, finally, professional actions that must be guided by expertise so that the first two points can be effectively implemented into everyday practice (Clark 2000). Ethics work and moral reasoning are central components of

social work expertise (Banks 2004; 2016). Our findings showed that Lithuanian family social workers face multiple ethical considerations. Based on our data, we conclude that:

1. Family social workers confront the difficulties of families that generate from structural inequalities and cumulate into diverse social problems. Although this analysis was focused on the ethical considerations of social workers, it revealed broader ethical dilemmas concerning Lithuanian family social work practices. However, the roots of social work are in voluntary help; current professional social work practices cannot lean on the idea that family social workers ought to use their personal resources to help families survive lives shadowed by poverty and a lack of basic necessities. The lack of social services and inter-agency collaboration between public and non-profit organizations forces social workers to solve structural societal problems, such as poverty, based on their own abilities.
2. Family social workers are keen on emotional intelligence in their work with families. They pay attention to the feelings, emotions and personal characteristics of children and parents. At the same time, they strongly argue for personal and professional values – especially respect for the client and decision-making in conflicting situations. Family social workers view clients as active citizens with their own life experiences who have the ability to make decisions, even if they do not match the values of the family social worker. As Urponen (2003) states, clients have the right to accept help and to be experts regarding their own lives. The ethical dilemma here is that family social workers construct the dignity of their clients in every practical situation, and this is not considered as intrinsically important.
3. Family social workers face ethical problems that have many connections to the broader social, political and cultural contexts. However, they make decisions according to individual ethical questions. None of the informants mentioned discussing ethically challenging cases with their colleagues. Joint collegial discussions could advance family social work practices toward a deeper ethical foundation, to justify the decisions and actions in different cases. Through sharing, challenging ideas and negotiating, social work can further develop its ethic codes (Laitinen and Väyrynen 2011).
4. It is important to research family social work practices under the new Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of the Rights of the Child, which came into force July 1, 2018. Case management is now applied in social work practice. New ways of working in inter-disciplinary teams may raise new ethical questions about co-operation, evaluation, decision-making and the clients' positions in these multi-professional teams. These are topics for further research.

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