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 kasdienines socialinių darbuotojų patirtis. Tyrimo duomenys atskleidžia, kokie paslaugų diskursai dominuoja socialinio darbo su šeima praktikoje ir kaip praktikai konstruoja šeimos, gaunančios socialines paslaugas, konstruktą.

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 (205) 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 con- textually 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; Lincoln1994; 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 re- searcher 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 isolated; [...] I felt and saw how people were looking at us. [...] I was going with them to school [to see] how they were accepted; they were directly sent away. First, I didn't say that I was a social worker because the Roma family was complying. The mother said, "I was sent away; my children weren't 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; I had never been faced with such a situation. Really, a month before, I was sent away 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 prevaricate. But I know that according to the law, [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 enrolled 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 integrating, but [the] reality is … (silence). But I couldn't believe 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 was crying, 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 statutory institution, 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 accompanying them to fill in personal documents. They were illiterate. 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 organised a meeting 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 3 4 5	Well, if I draw a general picture, it would be a sad family, without perspective, without aim, passive. They are accustomed to such a lifestyle. This is about the majority, not about single cases, which are usually better. Anyway, they are used to such a lifestyle, which comes and goes from generation to generation.

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. How- ever, 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 typical social risk family 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 3 4	For example, the majority of the families are not full, yes, not full; alcoholism is not the main problem. Basically, there is social inactivity and a lack of social skills. […]. Not full families, yes, but I also have exceptional women.

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-under- standing, 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 be- comes 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 dis- course 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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ROBERTA MOTIEČIENĖ, MERJA LAITINEN

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 socialinį darbą su šeima konstruoja per asmens elgesio ir šeimos charakteristikos prizmę. Šeima konstruojama kaip pasyvi, vartojantį 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 alternatyvųjį 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.