

THE ISSUE OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN SOCIALLY EXCLUDED LOCALITIES THROUGH THE LENS/APPROACH OF SOCIAL WORKERS

A QUESTÃO DA EXCLUSÃO SOCIAL EM LOCALIDADES SOCIALMENTE EXCLUÍDAS ATRAVÉS DALENTE/ABORDAGEM DOS ASSISTENTES SOCIAIS

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ABSTRACT

The article presents insights related to the issue of social exclusion from the perspective of social workers operating in socially excluded localities within the Czech Republic. We consider cultural-historical aspects, socio-economic, political, and ethical factors as the main aspects of this issue. Nowadays, however, not only socially disadvantaged individuals are at risk of social exclusion, but also a significant portion of the majority population due to economic or political reasons. The exploratory study provides findings from interviews with social workers, with the main goal being to obtain reflections on the performance of the profession by social workers who are dedicated to working in socially excluded localities and to reflect on the needs and problems of these specific areas.

Keywords: change, prevention, social exclusion, social workers, socially excluded location, society.

RESUMO

O artigo apresenta insights relacionados à questão da exclusão social da perspectiva de assistentes sociais que atuam em localidades socialmente excluídas na República Tcheca. Consideramos aspectos culturais-históricos, fatores socioeconômicos, políticos e éticos como os principais aspectos dessa questão. Hoje em dia, no entanto, não apenas indivíduos socialmente desfavorecidos correm risco de exclusão social, mas também uma parcela significativa da população majoritária devido a razões econômicas ou políticas. O estudo exploratório fornece descobertas de entrevistas com assistentes sociais, com o objetivo principal de obter reflexões sobre o desempenho da profissão por assistentes sociais que se dedicam a trabalhar em localidades socialmente excluídas e refletir sobre as necessidades e problemas dessas áreas específicas.

Palavras-chave: mudança, prevenção, exclusão social, assistentes sociais, local socialmente excluído, sociedade.

Introduction

The term "social exclusion" refers to a situation where individuals, families, households, or entire subpopulations are excluded from certain social relationships and interactions, and from the operation of social institutions that are accessible to the majority of society. This terminology originated in the 1980s and 1990s in Western European countries, often replacing the term "poverty", which focuses more on the lack of material resources and does not adequately reflect the quality of social relations. Social exclusion emphasizes the broader dimension of the lack of involvement of an individual or group in society (Hirt, Jakoubek, 2006).

According to the research "Analysis of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic" (Čada et al., 2015), a socially excluded or endangered locality can be defined as a place where more than 20 people live in unsatisfactory conditions.

Social marginalization occurs when a person faces a complex spectrum of problems, including unemployment, discrimination, low qualifications, limited income, inadequate housing, ill health or family breakdown. These problems are interconnected and form a continuous circle from which it is difficult or impossible for individuals in conditions of social exclusion to escape (Čada et al., 2015).

Places affected by social exclusion have recently appeared in many Czech cities, but also in some municipalities. These may include complete neighborhoods,

streets, one or more houses, dormitories, or other structures in or near these cities and towns.

The characteristics of socially excluded localities refer to specific conditions that affect the daily life of the inhabitants of these areas. In most cases, these are places where individuals and families facing extreme financial insecurity are concentrated, which may be due to the lowest incomes and dependence on social benefits. The long-term unemployment of these residents further deepens their economic instability.

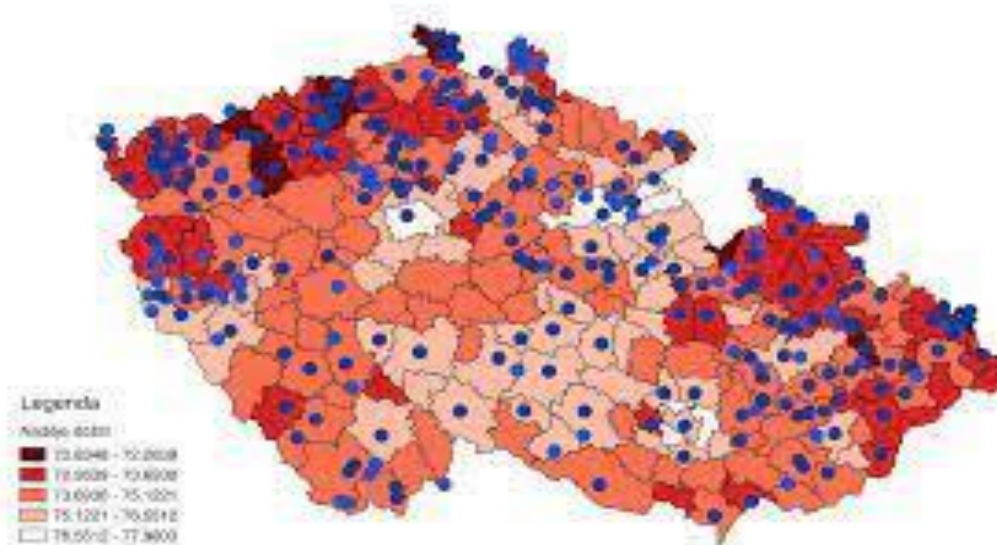
These people have limited access to institutional assistance, which increases their vulnerability and can cut them off from support they could otherwise use. There is frequent isolation from wider society and social life, which contributes to the creation of a closed environment where people share similar difficulties.

Typically, socially excluded locations are places where tenants who have difficulty paying rent and other services, or are perceived as "problems" are evicted. Living in these locations can be frustrating for residents and accompanied by an overall feeling of lethargy. Many are unable to help themselves, often due to a lack of understanding of social norms and the environment in which they live.

Such a lifestyle leads to insecurity and a sense of threat. The inhabitants of these localities often perceive changes and new things as a threat, which creates an environment where it is more difficult for them to break out of the vicious circle of social exclusion (Matoušek, Křišťan, 2013).

Socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic - social exclusion describes a situation where not everyone has equal access to opportunities and services that enable them to lead a decent and happy life. This includes not being able to participate in making the rules of the society in which they live (Day, 2021).

Giant. 1 – Map of socially excluded locations in the Czech Republic (Čada et al., 2015)



According to the Analysis of socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic (Čada et al., 2015), a total of 606 socially excluded localities and approximately 700 hostels were identified. However, not all hostels serve only socially excluded persons, some are intended for migrant workers or as temporary housing for residents who do not meet the criteria of social exclusion. The total number of these locations has almost doubled compared to 2006, from 310 to 606. In the South Bohemian Region, 38 socially excluded locations were identified in 2014, which also corresponds to the increase in the number of residents in these areas. It is estimated that the total number of inhabitants in socially excluded localities varies between 95,000 and 115,000. For the South Bohemian Region, this would mean 2,000-2,600 inhabitants in these localities.

The increase in socially excluded people can have several causes, one of which is the economic crisis, which has led to the deterioration of working and economic conditions in some regions. However, a more significant factor seems to be the very reproduction of socially excluded populations, when new generations grow up in an environment of social exclusion without a significant chance to break out of this cycle.

The extent of social exclusion across the Czech Republic worsened year-on-year in terms of the index of social exclusion – if in 2021 there were 450 municipalities at risk (category 8 or more points), in 2022 there were nine more, namely 459. Aggregated index of social exclusion at the level of regions then he confirmed that the most burdened regions of the Czech Republic have long been the Ústecký, Moravskoslezský and Karlovy Vary regions. Nevertheless, the analysis clearly showed that the other regions also have above-average burdened municipalities on their territory, which are often located in the so-called inner peripheries. In 2022, the most threatened municipalities were in the Moravian-Silesian Region (59), the Ústeck Region (55), the Central Bohemian Region (48), the Olomouc Region (47) and the Pilsen Region (44) (Lang, 2024).

In recent years, people living in socially excluded locations are moving more often to remote municipalities with limited infrastructure, and thus social exclusion in the Czech Republic is becoming less of an urban phenomenon. Different types of localities face different integration policy challenges. Small rural localities often suffer from poorer physical building conditions, where schools do not use many inclusive tools and the range of services for residents of excluded localities is limited.

In larger rural locations and small urban locations, which are usually made up of individual apartment buildings, the situation may be similar. Larger rural locations often have poorer physical condition of buildings and may be inhabited by more Roma. Big city locations often have problems with crime, variable availability of services and inclusive programs at schools, and we also often encounter hostels here (Páchová, Bittnerová, Franke, Rendl, Smetáčková, 2018).

Theoretical foundations and background

European framework for socially excluded localities

The European Union actively complements and supports measures of member countries in the area of social inclusion and protection. This includes a wide range of policy measures aimed at preventing poverty and social exclusion, modernizing social systems and promoting the social inclusion of different population groups, including children, people with disabilities and the homeless.

In the European Union, there are more than 120 million people at risk of poverty, i.e. social exclusion (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. European Commission, online, 2024). Although there are constant efforts to reduce this number, it remains high. Unemployment is also one of the most fundamental problems in the social field within European countries.

The European Pillar of Social Rights is a key policy document that provides 20 principles and rights aimed at promoting fair labor markets and social security. The goal is to create a strong social Europe that is fair, inclusive and offers opportunities for all citizens.

The Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights sets out specific measures to be implemented by 2030, including increasing employment, supporting adult education and reducing poverty. The European Semester and the Social Protection Committee are key mechanisms for monitoring and coordinating the implementation of social policies in the EU.

Financial support for the implementation of political reforms is provided by European structural and investment funds, in particular the European Social Fund Plus and the Recovery and Resilience Instrument.

The European Platform for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion serves to achieve this and other goals. Basically, it is a common tool for individual governments, institutions of the European Union and other stakeholders. As part of achieving the set goals, the Commission organizes meetings (EU Stakeholder Dialogue meetings) of stakeholders and non-governmental organizations, social partners, entities operating in the field of social affairs, academic staff, foundations

and international organizations. A conference (The Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion) is also held regularly, thanks to which there is communication between policy makers, stakeholders and people who have been affected by poverty or social exclusion. The aim of these conferences is to evaluate progress in achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, to review the activities of the platform for the given period and to propose activities for the next period (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. European Commission, online, 2024).

Although, we can support Daněk and Klugerová (2023) thought who recognizes inclusive education as a tool of social exclusion.

Although there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals, we can see some progress. Since 2014, household incomes have been growing in most European Union states. In 2016, a decrease of 5.6 million persons at risk was recorded compared to 2012. In 2017, the historical minimum of severe material deprivation was reached. In 2012 it was 49.5 million, in 2017 only 33.4 million (Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion. European Commission, online, 2024).

According to the most recent Eurostat data, 22.4% of people in the entire European Union are at risk of income poverty. As for threats by gender, it is 23.3% of women and 21.6% of men. Age is also an important factor. Among persons under 18 years of age, the number at risk is 24.9%, and in the second risk group of persons over 65 years of age, 18.2%. In the case of the category divided by economic activity, this is 12% of employed persons and 64.9% of unemployed persons (Czech Statistical Office, online, 2017).

Socially pathological phenomena in the context of socially excluded localities

Recently, there has been a significant increase in phenomena that are considered socially pathological. This trend includes a wide range of undesirable to unacceptable phenomena, each of which carries a certain degree of social danger. The issue of these phenomena, including addictive behavior, delinquency, criminality, organized crime and the like, is not limited to the territory of the Czech Republic; these are serious issues with global reach (Fischer, Škoda, 2009).

Social pathology can be understood as one of the branches of sociology whose term was introduced by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). He looked for parallels between social and biological pathology, specifically between the structures and functions of the biological organism. On the other hand, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) perceived social pathology as the science of morbid and unfavorable facts, actions and behaviors that deviate from established social norms. However, prevention is the most effective means of combating socially pathological phenomena, while social structural changes are considered the most effective within social engineering. This approach seeks to eliminate the roots of social problems such as unemployment, poverty, conflicts in society, suicide, divorce, etc. In contrast, social work actively deals with the issue of social pathology both theoretically and practically, providing social services that address individual, group and society-wide social problems (Urban, Dubský, 2008).

Among socio-pathological phenomena, in the context of our professional topic, we can include: criminal activity. Socially excluded areas generally show a higher crime rate than the national average, which is caused by the concentration of phenomena associated with living in social exclusion. These factors are primarily poverty, indebtedness, limited possibilities of application in everyday life and various forms of addiction (e.g. gambling, alcohol, drugs). Crime in these localities is often specific, often imaginable as a pyramid model, at the top of which are persons abusing the complex living conditions of socially excluded residents, such as usurers, drug dealers, fraudsters or pimps. Most of the residents of these locations often become victims of the criminal activities of these individuals. This crime often remains hidden from the police. Many crimes, especially theft, arise as a result of other crimes, such as raising money to pay interest for moneylenders or for slot machines that are connected to the drug trade. Residents of socially excluded areas generally have low legal literacy and mistrust of institutions, including the police and courts. A number of sociopathological phenomena, such as alcoholism or abuse of women and children, appear directly in families. These residents are also frequent targets of hate speech by far-right supporters and face potential physical attacks and other forms of hate violence. Nevertheless, there are several measures that can

significantly contribute to improving the security situation in socially excluded localities at the city or village level. These measures include an effective social service with an assistant to communicate with the police and other authorities.

Drugs – in the most excluded locations in northern Bohemia, the problem of drug addiction persists, especially in the area of marijuana and meth. The Ústí Region is the second most affected region in the Czech Republic in terms of the estimated number of problem drug users. The situation is aggravated by the long-term unfavorable social climate near the borders, which leads to the trafficking of narcotic substances and the financing of families through the sale of drugs. New job opportunities and growth in the average wage in the county can bring an increase in users who can afford drugs. Mayors from the Ústí Region draw attention to escalating problems, including syringes on the streets and students under the influence of drugs. Socially excluded localities are still breeding grounds for drug dealing, usury and debt, while the influence of larger meth factories is growing. In these areas, we encounter the problem of Roma drug users, who show a young age at the start of use and a lack of information about the dangers of drugs. Fentanyl, a highly addictive synthetic opioid, poses a new threat, especially given its cheap availability. Experts warn of the possible spread of this drug and the increasing risk of overdose. The opioid situation in Europe is also worrying, especially with regard to the shortage of heroin from Afghanistan, which may lead to an increase in the supply and demand for fentanyl (Wágner, 2023).

Alcohol – social risks associated with alcohol consumption, which are demonstrably correlated with alcohol consumption, can have an impact on lower work productivity or long-term unemployment, lead to homelessness, interfere with the completion of education, and cause problems in the family, such as divorce, child neglect. They can also include financial difficulties and involvement in criminal activity (Urban, Dubský, 2008).

Indebtedness and poverty – persons living in a situation of social exclusion often show indebtedness, which is associated with low legal awareness and insufficient economic and financial literacy. These persons are located in a closed economic environment, where there are characteristic phenomena such as usury,

loans from non-banking institutions, "quick loans", mortgaging movable property in order to obtain money, and a specific flow of information (limited access to common information sources, incompetence in manipulating them, easy creation and spread of incorrect interpretations and myths). This situation leads to the fact that many socially excluded individuals find themselves in a vicious circle of debt, with interest and fees associated with debt growing at a rapid pace (Lang, Matoušek, 2020).

The risk of poverty can also affect individuals who do not meet social norms and are in conflict with the law, institutions or the state. Such individuals include youth with disturbed upbringing, people who avoid work, criminals, and individuals with drug or alcohol addiction. Employees with low qualifications and low incomes, those released from prison, individuals after divorce, people addicted to addictive substances, members of ethnic minorities, migrants, women with small children and the disabled are most at risk of this risk (Duková, Duka, Kohoutová, 2013).

Unemployment - Persons affected by social exclusion are in an unsatisfactory situation on the labor market in the Czech Republic. The main factor preventing their participation in the labor market is the lack of job opportunities. These people usually only have a basic education. A significant phenomenon among them is illegal work, with which approximately 80 percent of this group has experience (Čada et al., 2015). Another significant manifestation of social exclusion is the complicated entry into the labor market. High unemployment in areas affected by social exclusion, together with the low level of qualifications and education of many individuals, leads to their real unemployability. This condition often leads to the creation of life strategies based on income from social benefits, indebtedness, illegal work or even criminality (Lang, Matoušek, 2020).

Preventive programs

Social exclusion can be done much easier and faster than reintegration. Social exclusion can be prevented by using similar procedures and means as in the process of social integration. Prevention is a key element of an integrative approach and can save significant effort and resources in the future.

The Agency for Social Inclusion is the Organization for Social Inclusion and is a means that the Government of the Czech Republic uses to provide assistance to municipalities in the process of social integration. Its task is to connect entities at the local level so that they cooperate in the integration into society. It supports a superior approach and connects the activities of public administration and the non-profit sector (Kandler, 2021).

Social services and field social work – residents of localities affected by social exclusion face a wide range of difficulties that they often cannot cope with on their own. Among the frequent problems of clients are unemployment, dependence on social benefits, insufficient or no income, threats to housing, limited social mobility, insufficient legal awareness and difficulties with institutional communication. Failure to address these issues can lead to deepening social exclusion and, in some cases, even criminal activity. Social services are a key tool to address this situation.

Social service field workers establish contact with socially excluded individuals, identify their needs, find solutions and work together to improve their situation. Long-term cooperation with clients brings benefits not only to them, but also to their families and the wider community.

Most localities affected by social exclusion are currently insufficiently covered by the offer of social services. Through its activities, the agency tries to support the development of these services so that they better meet the needs of the population and are available to those who really need them. In the field of social services, the Agency promotes a superior approach and active cooperation between public administration and the non-profit sector. An important goal is to create a functional network of social services and ensure cooperation between providers and other actors. The agency focuses on developing the professionalism of social

service providers and emphasizes prevention and work in the field. It tries to minimize social exclusion and contribute to the overall solution of this problem.

The agency actively supports the creation of new social services and provides municipalities with support in planning their offer, researching the needs of residents and finding financial resources. In cooperation with local partners, it strives to create effective measures and initiatives leading to changes in legislation for the benefit of people living in socially excluded locations (Chovancová, 2023).

Debt counseling – the increase in indebtedness and the related over-indebtedness of households represents a serious long-term problem throughout the European Union. This phenomenon has a wide impact on other areas such as unemployment rate, quality of housing, access to health care, education, crime, recidivism and other social problems. It is also often a major cause of social exclusion for individuals and families and contributes to social and health problems and threatens the basic needs of children. The problem of increasing indebtedness of the population is currently urgent in the Czech Republic as well. More than 10% of the adult population is faced with foreclosure, in total more than 5 million foreclosure proceedings are conducted (Šeda, 2023). The situation is exacerbated by the fact that most people in foreclosure face multiple foreclosures at the same time, which has serious economic and social consequences. In addition to the necessary changes in legislation and the administrative system, the prevention and solution of excessive indebtedness of the inhabitants of municipalities plays a key role. They can take a number of measures to help reduce the debt and foreclosure burden of their residents. These measures include, for example, financial education, debt counseling, public education, etc. Support and assistance in the area of indebtedness can be the first step to a positive change in the life situation.

Crime prevention – socially excluded areas are generally associated with a higher crime rate than the average for the whole country. The main cause of this phenomenon is the concentration of problems associated with social exclusion, such as poverty, indebtedness, lack of opportunities to apply in everyday life and addictions (for example to gambling, alcohol or drugs). Crime in these locations often has a specific character. It is often a pyramid, where at the top are those who

take advantage of the difficult situations of the residents of socially excluded areas. These include loan sharks, drug dealers, con artists and pimps. Most of the residents of these localities become victims of the criminal activities of these individuals. This crime often remains hidden from the police. Many crimes, especially theft, are the result of other crimes, such as raising money to pay loan sharks or to play slot machines for drug dealers.

Residents of socially excluded locations often have low legal awareness and distrust of institutions, including the police and courts. Sociopathological phenomena such as alcoholism or abuse of women and children appear in families. These residents are also often the target of hate speech from the far right and are at risk of physical attacks and other forms of hate violence.

Nevertheless, there are a number of measures that cities and municipalities can take to improve the security situation in socially excluded locations. These include successful social services such as assistance for communication with the police and other authorities, the possibility of concluding coordination agreements and solving security issues through communication platforms involving all relevant entities. Preventive programs and the offer of leisure activities for children and youth from socially excluded locations also play an important role (Hubková, 2023).

Leisure activities – in order to achieve the social rise of people living in an environment of social exclusion, it is important to provide them with meaningful opportunities to use their free time. This is especially true for children and young people, so that they have an alternative to aimlessly spending time on the streets, which carries the risk of pathological and illegal behavior. These options include various leisure activities such as interest and educational groups, community and low-threshold centers, clubs, sports activities, competitions and more. Of course, it is possible to organize leisure activities for adults as well, for example various activities in "Creative workshops", sports events or cultural events (Kandler, 2021).

Offer of services and programs for children and youth from excluded locations

1. Community and low-threshold facilities for children and youth
2. They provide a free space for meeting, education and leisure activities for children and youth. They offer diverse programs such as music workshops, art workshops, sports activities, educational courses and counseling. It offers its services as an outpatient or field service (Matoušek, Kříšťan, 2013).
3. Clubs and social centers
4. They organize thematic events, workshops and regular meetings that strengthen social ties and develop the skills of children and youth. These institutions often also offer psychosocial support and counseling.
5. Sports activities and competitions
6. They provide the opportunity to participate in various sports activities and competitions, which promotes health, discipline and teamwork. Sports clubs often provide membership for children and youth from less privileged backgrounds.
7. Interest and educational rings
8. These clubs offer the possibility of developing specific skills or interests, such as language courses, science experiments, art workshops or programming.
9. Creative workshops and artistic activities
10. They encourage creativity and self-expression through visual arts, theater, music or film. These activities help children and youth develop their talents and at the same time boost their self-confidence.
11. Mentoring programs
12. They offer individual support and mentoring for children and youth who need personal support and motivation in their development. Mentoring relationships can be the key to personal growth and success in life.
13. Programs social integration
14. They focus on strengthening the social skills, communication and self-confidence of children and youth from socially excluded environments. These programs support inclusion in society and overcoming barriers.
15. Psychosocial support and advice

16. It provides space for individual consultations and therapeutic support for children and youth who are dealing with personal difficulties or crisis situations. This service helps manage stress, resolve conflicts and build healthy interpersonal relationships.
17. Lunches to schools
18. This is a program organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic.

This catering project provides children whose parents are facing financial difficulties the opportunity to eat free of charge in school canteens. It cooperates with all regions in the Czech Republic, and successful implementation requires the involvement of all schools. The financing of the project comes from the European Aid Fund for the poorest people through the Operational Program of Food and Material Aid. The goal is to support families in a difficult financial situation who cannot afford to pay for their children's meals in school canteens. This program is intended for children between the ages of 3 and 15.

Results

The main goal of this research probe is to obtain a reflection on the performance of the profession of the social workers themselves, who work in socially excluded locations and thus reflect the needs and problems of these specific locations.

The motive for choosing this goal and partial research questions of the survey probe was the effort to establish an open and confidential relationship with the respondents and the possibility of long-term investigation and research to deepen this topic.

Qualitative research - specifically an interview - was chosen as the research strategy. Interviews are very popular and often used qualitative research tools. Above all, because it is a method that allows not only to capture the facts, but also to penetrate more deeply into the motives and attitudes of the respondents (Gavora, 2010). Through the interview, a close, in the best case, friendly relationship between

the researcher and the interviewee is established. Thanks to this relationship, it is possible to achieve results and information that will present the respondent with all his characteristics, fears, anxieties, or on the contrary joys, the better we will understand the questions related to the investigation. The rationale for choosing a semi-structured interview is mainly due to the flexibility offered in this form. The researcher has a lot of space to use various options, creative proposals, own preparations and ideas and enough time, which leads to the quality of the questions asked, their analysis and the resulting findings in the form of detailed information and obtaining reliable data. Also from the point of view of the personal and assumed confidential relationship between the researcher and the interviewee, which is also based on Gavora (2010).

The rationale for choosing a semi-structured interview is mainly due to the flexibility offered in this form. The researcher has a lot of space to use various options, creative proposals, own preparations and ideas and enough time, which leads to the quality of the questions asked, their analysis and the resulting findings in the form of detailed information and obtaining reliable data. Also from the point of view of the personal and assumed confidential relationship between the researcher and the interviewee, which is also based on Gavora (2010) - Face-to-face contact with the researcher should be a guarantee that the respondent will "open up" more.

A series of questions for a semi-structured interview was created immediately after the completion of the theoretical part of this professional work. Their number and composition were designed rationally, purposefully, so that the structure, meaning and their importance were preserved. They became such a pillar to which it was necessary to return several times, to deviate from the topic, to other questions unrelated to the content. The answers to these questions, which were continuously modified, supplemented and adapted to specific situations, give the reader a clear idea of this issue. From the statements made on the basis of the openness and willingness of the interviewees to share their feelings and experiences.

Questions-circles intended for interviewing respondents

Circuits:

1. Characteristics and target groups of social exclusion
2. Life situation of clients and work goals
3. Methods of social work in localities
4. Family and children's education

Interview questions:

1. – 4. Questions of a personal nature (age, education, occupation, duration of work in localities)
5. What does the concept of social exclusion mean to you?
6. What is the main content of your work?
7. Which socially excluded locations do you visit?
8. Could you tell me about the target group of residents from these locations?
9. How do you perceive clients from socially excluded locations in Šumperska?
10. What do you perceive as the main problems of your clients?
11. What do you think mainly causes your clients' problems?
12. How do clients' living situations affect you?
13. What is your main goal when working with clients?
14. Describe to me what methods you use when working with clients?
15. Is there a method that has proven most effective for you?
16. You definitely set some goals for the intervention. Do you think you are achieving your goals?
17. Have you encountered the fact that the client moved from a socially excluded location to better conditions?
18. Can you remember any success you have had in working with people from a socially excluded location?
19. What do you think the ideal future of clients should look like?
20. Are families with children or childless individuals more likely to live in these locations in Šumperska?

21. In your opinion, what influence does a family in an excluded locality have on their children's school attendance?

22. Do these children attend any low-threshold facilities?

23. Do some facilities also provide tutoring for children from socially excluded locations?

The average length of each interview was around 90-120 minutes. With regard to the aforementioned research ethics, all interviews were conducted on neutral ground, in quiet parts of a cafe or park. Always at the request of the respondent, so that he feels good and there is mutual support and building of trust.

The recordings of the interviews and additional data were subsequently transcribed, and all answers were evaluated through its thorough analysis. Coding was used for this. All interviewees were assured of confidentiality and agreed to the research (all were provided with the final edit for viewing). Consent to the recording of the interview was also secured, that the information obtained would only be used for purposes related to the research probe. In these directions, the responsible researchers are committed to the maximum moral approach and ethical behavior with the participants of the survey probe.

Table 1 – Categorization of data:

INVESTIGATED CONVERSATION (CATEGORIES)	ASPECTS OF CODING	CONVERSATION CODING ASPECTS (CODES) EXPLORED
Basic information about the interviewees		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - brief description - age - employment - education - family - hobbies
Description of target characteristics of clients in socially excluded locations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - characteristic - way of life - location - conditions of life
Problems in a socially excluded locality		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - education - employment - illegal work - housing - large family - state social support benefits
Goals/requirements of people living in a socially excluded locality in relation to social workers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stabilization - schooling - escort - economy - maintenance
Family influence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inappropriate pattern - laziness - negative perception - tutoring

Characteristics of the respondents - the selection was not random. The requirement was adequate education, which demonstrates the ability to perform the job position of a social worker. Another criterion was the length of experience, which was set at the lower limit of 1 year. And the key criterion was the personal experience of working as a social worker in socially excluded localities within various regions throughout the Czech Republic. In total, at least 50 respondents were approached through personal contacts and social networks. A total of 15 respondents participated in the interviews. Of these, there were 10 women, aged from 29 to 55 years, with a length of experience from 1 year to 18 years. Furthermore, 5 men, aged 27-55 years, with a length of experience from 1 year to 15 years.

Presentation of found information and data

Brief presentation of partial findings in the context of the aforementioned categories:

1) Description of the target characteristics of clients in socially excluded localities - the interviews showed that in these socially excluded localities, which we can describe as segregated localities, large families with children live for the most part than individuals themselves. Furthermore, the ethnic mix of the population is evident here, it is not only the Roma population, as we might assume. Of course, these are specific localities, in some there are more Roma and in others mixed residents prevail. Respondent R2 + R 4 + R 5 + R 7 + R 11 states that the greatest concentration of the Roma population is in hostels. In most cases, these are hostels and houses that are not suitable for living and are inhabited by larger families. A smaller number are panel houses. Most of the localities have disappeared, this phenomenon occurs here to a lesser extent, people leave for cheaper housing in neighboring municipalities, where, however, there are not enough job opportunities. Some clients cooperate more, some less and some not at all. It depends on whether they are directly referred to the help of social workers. This fact did not surprise us, as we are experts who also know the practical level of the issue and move in the field itself.

2) Problems in a socially excluded locality - here we can point to the problems that plague the majority of the segregated population. Of course, the core of the problem lies in education and the motivation for it. If the majority of individuals from these locations have never seen their parents work, it is quite clear that they themselves will not be sufficiently motivated to go to work or finish school. Most children finish primary education and their parents send them to the labor office. This will provide the family with additional "income", which then results in a certain dependence on the benefit system. If this is how the family works for many generations, they see no reason to go to work. This is related to patterns in the family as well as the need to make a difference or be beneficial to society. If they already come from a socially excluded environment, it is mainly the financial side of the problem. Most families are not able to manage their finances well and get into debt.

Another problem is certainly unsuitable housing, when they either live in unsatisfactory conditions or choose hostels where they pay exorbitant amounts. We also found out from the respondents that there is an obvious abuse of a difficult situation by hostel owners. A large family, consisting of perhaps 10 members, lives in a room where it can barely function. However, they require a price per night for each member separately. On the other hand, however, most of these residents cannot maintain order in the hostel or its surroundings and in many cases destroy the building's equipment. This situation is then difficult for both parties. Most clients request municipal apartments, as they are more affordable for them. In the event that they are already known in the vicinity of the village or locality, however, they do not want to provide them with these apartments precisely because of the destruction of property and the inability to maintain cleanliness. Tenants from among the working population do not agree with the granting of these apartments either, as these individuals are associated with prejudices and no one wants them as neighbors.

Some localities implement various projects that have a unified goal, which is that these people have long-term employment and that social problems do not grow in the place. With this style, they want to provide them with a solution to the issue of debt relief and housing, which is very difficult for them. From the beginning of the project, it was difficult to teach citizens work habits and compliance with working hours. The city covers the costs from subsidies from its budget.

3) Goals/requirements of people living in a socially excluded locality in relation to social workers – the majority of local residents demand from social workers accompanying activities in the area of handling social benefits, visits to offices and other institutions. In many cases, they do not have the proper knowledge and capabilities to handle these things themselves. I consider social workers to try to improve or maintain the housing conditions of local families and residents as another necessary activity, as the issue of poverty for these individuals is related to the increase in housing prices. It is necessary to teach individuals to manage the finances that the family has and not to take away from the main needs of family members, especially children. In many cases, social workers try to motivate the

family in question so that it does not get bogged down in learned patterns, which are often passed down from generation to generation. They also emphasize children's schooling, so that the children have at least some vision of a "better" future than their parents and then enter the labor market. We take it as an important insight that, as workers in helping professions, we should try to approach clients as equals, not judge them for their difficult life situation and try to understand the cause of this situation. Unfortunately, we live in a time when it is very easy to fall from a certain standard into unsatisfactory conditions, as families often take out loans/mortgages without thinking. Social workers consider the ideal state to be for the family not to stay in hostels, for all allowances that are eligible for the family to be taken care of, and for the family to lead the children to attend school and not condemn education and consider it as a life investment, ideally as a priority.

4) The influence of the family - in this area, we tried to find out what influence the family has on the education of children from localities threatened by social exclusion. From interviews with social workers, we found out that families have a negative influence on education. The family either does not consider education important or does not have sufficient resources to help the children with school preparation. The problem is that the parent is either an alcohol and drug user or is benevolent in the upbringing of their children. Some families will excuse a child from class if he doesn't want to get up or in recent years the excuse was the covid situation. Furthermore, a certain part of parents are not even able to accompany their children to school and complete school preparation, and they do not want to take their children even to low-threshold centers that offer these possibilities. Most schools offer tutoring, unfortunately some parents do not cooperate with the school at all.

Evaluation of the exploratory probe

The main goal of the survey probe was to find out and describe **the main problems and needs of socially excluded localities – specifically, their residents.**

It is evident from our survey that the main problems are education and the family's approach to education. We also list here the problems of high unemployment, which is evident in most cases - places. Unemployment is related to illegal work (without an employment contract, money paid immediately in hand without a document/confirmation), to which a large part of the population resorts. The lack of funds is linked to the dependence of the local population on the benefit system and indebtedness. We also see a big problem in the inability to manage finances in the family. One of the problems is also large families, for whom it is very difficult to find suitable housing. Families often live in hostels where they pay exorbitant amounts and deprive children of basic needs. Living in hostels is considered inappropriate by social workers after raising children. Finding housing in municipal apartments is problematic, as individuals often destroy apartments and landlords do not want them in apartments, or energy prices are too high.

What forms of assistance do social workers provide in excluded locations?

In localities threatened by social exclusion, several institutions and services provide assistance to these residents. The main forms of assistance that residents require from social workers are accompanying them to the authorities and assistance in processing benefits and social contributions. They also try to improve housing conditions so that clients do not become homeless, or supply material equipment to homes. Some services also provide food aid, which they bring to families. Some families request help with the school preparation of their children. Tutoring for children is provided by low-threshold centers and other activation services. This is primarily a segment of social services.

What core goals do social workers consider to be the main ones in socially excluded localities?

Among the main goals, when working with local residents, most social workers consider it to teach the local individuals not to actually need any services. They emphasize that these individuals learn to manage the finances they have at their disposal. So if they don't want to work, show them why they can't come out with finances, where their money flows and how they can save. Furthermore, so that these residents are not dependent on other aid systems. Last but not least, that they remain in their places of residence, because in many cases, changing housing is a mistake, as sometimes they cannot find another one. They also try to show them the reasons why children are not sufficiently prepared for learning and that they can use the services that offer them this. Mainly to show children that they can live better than their family if they want and try. Furthermore, social workers also try to defend the rights of these segregated residents in public. Most of them advocate a friendly and individual approach to clients.

What influence does the family have in education and schooling on children from socially excluded locations?

In the last part, we wanted to find out what influence the family has on the education of children from these locations. In our research, it was found that the family has a negative influence on their children and the subsequent preparation and adherence to schooling. The core of the problem lies in the fact that families often do not consider their children's education important and see school as a necessary obligation. These are family patterns that often repeat themselves over generations. Children therefore end up, often with basic education and even incomplete basic education, at employment offices. We also see a problem in the fact that parents often excuse their children from school lessons out of convenience. However, another problem is in a single-parent family, when only one parent is in charge of the children and cannot handle the preparation. Since these are often large families, the coronavirus was also a problem. Families did not have the resources to provide online tuition. However, they could use low-threshold centers that offer tutoring and help with teaching preparation. However, in the survey it was found

that for some families these centers are far away or they are not interested in using this service. In many cases, children have unexcused absences and parents face legal prosecution within the body for the social and legal protection of children and youth.

Social exclusion and socially excluded localities are evident in almost all regions of the Czech Republic. The resulting topic is large families that are at risk of social exclusion. Another problem is the inability of families to manage their finances and dependence on benefits. Most of this population does not work and has never seen previous generations work. They often ask social workers to accompany them to the authorities and help them fill out the relevant forms. Individuals who have never worked can get involved in helping the city, city work, thus learning the work regime and reintegration into the labor market. It is beneficial for both parties (a person from a socially excluded locality and the city/state administration). In the matter of children's school attendance, several conclusions flow. In most cases, the family has a negative influence on the education of their children. Most parents do not consider education as an important value in life. Therefore, it does not appeal to children to attend school and do their homework properly. Unfortunately, a large part of them leave their children at home, and the child misses classes, which he then has a hard time catching up on. There are low-threshold clubs in cities that also offer tutoring facilities for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. As I learned, some workers consider them to be visited, others the other way around. According to some, the reason is the distance from these locations and hostels, when parents are unable to bring their children to the club. In many cases, they are not even interested. On the other hand, from a professional point of view, we know that in some regions there is sufficient help and support from organizations that deal with social exclusion. Among the workers we met as part of the exploratory probe, we admire their approach to this target group of people. In many cases, this work is very demanding and it is easy to get burnout syndrome.

Discussion

Most of the clients that social workers attend to have become residents of excluded localities mainly because of their financial situation. The lack of money stems from long-term unemployment, indebtedness and the need to pay high amounts for foreclosures. Another reason for living in an excluded location are rent debts, which arose from the inability to pay the fees associated with the use of the apartment due to improper management of the family. These problems might not be so significant if housing and service providers were to investigate the causes of breach of payment obligations and collect the owed amounts immediately after the debt was incurred. Not only would this prevent the accumulation of owed amounts, but also there would be no reduction in payment morale.

The perception of the quality of housing is very subjective and tolerance is higher among those persons/clients who have already known worse housing, or do not know better. In connection with the condition of the apartment, client satisfaction also varies according to the type of location. It emerged from all the interviews that a big source of dissatisfaction is the state of the common areas, which are neglected, not maintained, and often dirty. In addition, there is vandalism by some tenants and their visitors (demolished doors, windows, defaced and destroyed mailboxes and walls). It is difficult for informants to enforce order among their neighbors, and so this state suffers silently. Another obstacle is the need to pay high deposits for rental apartments and the allocation of city apartments using the so-called envelope method. Most residents of socially excluded locations do not have such high capital, so other accommodation becomes unattainable for them. In addition to financial factors, the prejudices and discriminatory practices of apartment owners can also play a role in housing. However, a lack of funds was identified as a fundamental barrier between the residents of a socially excluded location and decent housing, which stems from the need to pay high amounts for foreclosures and long-term unemployment.

Long-term unemployment is one of the basic mechanisms of social exclusion. The causes of unemployment include low social competence, insufficient education

and qualifications. Poor health, discriminatory practices of employers and the imposition of foreclosures can also play a role, when, in the case of legal employment, the residents of the locality would be deprived of their income by the executor. Due to the low level of education achieved, clients usually perform the lowest paid jobs (cleaning, auxiliary work on construction sites, etc.). After analyzing the interviews, we believe that women are at a greater disadvantage in this area due to the occurrence of early pregnancies already after finishing elementary school or during further studies. These women not only do not have a chance to get anything other than basic education, but they also cannot get experience and work habits, because immediately after completing or interrupting their studies, they stay at home with the child. A very difficult situation occurs for single women.

Considering that the attitudes are set humanistically - not only in relation to clients, users of social services, children, pupils, students ..., as stated by (Němejč, Smékalová, Kříž, 2019), "teaching aids have become a standard part of the educational process and their appropriate integration into education provides countless opportunities for teachers and pupils, from student activation, their better motivation to learn, more vivid explanations of the subject matter using illustrative examples and much more" we should also think in the context of the pedagogues or social workers themselves and provide them with wide opportunities in development and professional support.

Children do not have the opportunity to properly prepare for school, they do not have suitable housing or material conditions for this (absence of a desk or a quiet work space for learning). Although the parents of the children perceive education as a value, they do not believe that their children could succeed and obtain a higher than basic education, or a vocational school. They do not motivate their children to study. In addition to an inappropriate and unstimulating environment, the absence of positive role models and the insufficient language level of both children and parents are also a problem. Children often copy the educational status of their parents and usually receive only basic education, sometimes even incomplete.

The absence of prospects for leaving the locality is associated with resignation to the job search and adaptation to risky or pathological behavior. This leads to deepening of social exclusion, deterioration of relations with the environment or loss of contacts with society. Moving away from the majority society is intensified by the subjective perception of one's own difference, feelings of "abnormality" and inadequacy.

Social workers also draw attention to the loss of client contacts with the company, which is closely related to exclusion from social networks. Clients have many acquaintances within the excluded localities, but more formal relationships (secondary social networks, i.e. contacts to the majority company) are missing or lacking. Clients from socially excluded locations remain closed within the location or move from one excluded location to another. They also lack close people to whom they could turn in times of crisis.

In difficult moments of life, it is possible to contact a number of organizations, but awareness of available help and other institutions (anti-debt and social counseling, crisis assistance, low-threshold community centers...) is minimal.

Conclusion

Social exclusion is a much easier and faster process than reintegration. Social exclusion can be prevented by applying similar approaches and tools as in the process of social integration. Prevention is an important component of an integrative approach and can save considerable effort and resources in the future. It is necessary to build not only a support advisory network, but primarily to build a positive attitude - positive relations between social workers and residents of socially excluded localities. To support not only trust in the social worker, taking into account the personal and professional setting, but also in the institutions for which the social workers work. It is necessary to turn the existential uncertainty of clients in socially excluded locations into long-term plans that are based on their own goals, needs and reflection.

The issue of social exclusion is related to the interaction between individuals, social groups and social systems. We consider cultural-historical, socio-economic, political and also ethical aspects as the main aspects of this problem. Nowadays, however, it is not only socially weaker individuals who are at risk of social exclusion, but we never know whether we ourselves will not end up in these circumstances. Therefore, it is necessary to address this situation and try to eliminate the effects of exclusion, and not ignore the situation.

Motivating the public to take an interest in what is happening in the village or city and to actively participate in discussions about further development, or to contribute their opinion, local or expert knowledge to current problem solving, is not at all easy. However, it can be said that the more organized the public is in a given municipality or city, the easier it is to address them and their subsequent involvement. A wide variety of civic associations, sports clubs, gardeners, theater groups, etc. are natural partners for the management of municipalities. Already based on their activity, they represent a certain opinion or interest that should be taken into account when making decisions. The involvement of these groups makes it possible, in contrast to the unorganized public, to create local partnerships, i.e. a kind of institutionalized platform for cooperation between the town hall and representatives of local non-governmental actors.

In the context of our issue, the support of community social work, which is a relatively new tool for mitigating the effects of poverty and social exclusion, is also crucial. It is an approach that involves the residents of excluded localities themselves, they are its actors and are jointly responsible for its process. People become active, competent, and acquire new skills with the help of work. They learn to cooperate and actively participate in improving the quality of their lives. It is a different approach from social work, it works with the whole group and its goal is to improve the quality of life in socially excluded locations. Community work is currently applied in several localities and has proven to be functional. It is not yet uniformly methodically anchored nor is it defined by any law. In the future, the Agency for Social Inclusion is interested in working together with non-profit organizations to define community work, create a general methodological approach

and negotiate at the central administrative level for the recognition of community work as one of the tools to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Social exclusion is currently an increasingly discussed topic. Although states are trying to fight poverty and social exclusion, the number of socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion is still high. Within the European Union and its member states, measures and goals are being created to help reduce this number.

Understanding between the actors of the institutional network and the clients – people from the excluded locality – plays a fundamental role. Both parties must know perfectly the goal, which must be shared and understandable for both of them. The global goal is integration, and the sub-goals of the activities that lead to it are mainly debt relief, finding a job, securing housing, getting an education, improving health, etc. Without a declaration of willingness and motivation on the part of the client, the measures will never be effective. A socially excluded person must participate in the formulation of his interests and goals, otherwise the process of integration will fail or become social engineering.

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