

# ABSTRACTS

## **Márton Gerő and András Vigvári: Workfare policies, redistribution, power relations in a local context**

A widely accepted expectation that the crisis of the welfare state leads to austerity measures in redistributive policies. However, the scale of redistribution remains but the mechanisms, aims, and channels of redistribution are changing. According to these changes political aspects, such as maintaining the status quo or gaining more power, become increasingly important in the operation of the redistributive system. The authors show through two case studies how workfare policies are shaped by the power-structure of localities. Research was carried out by examining the data provided by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and interviewing the local actors responsible for the development and execution of local workfare policies.

The two settlements developed significantly different workfare policies and models. While one emphasizes the welfare roles of workfare policies and therefore develops a workfare system which targets the stable, maintenance tasks related to the everyday operation of the local authorities, the other understands the workfare system as a resource for community development. In this second case the workfare system aims to carry out rural and community development projects. The authors argue that the structure of the local workfare system is shaped by the local power-structure: the first settlement has a competing political arena, while the second one has a hegemonic political structure.

## **Márta Fekete: Dementia and social sustainability**

Dementia is a group of symptoms leading to the complete loss of ability to perform everyday activities, and it is affecting more and more people in aging societies like Hungary. Considering that it is not a curable disease, caring for people living with dementia is not primarily the responsibility of the health care system, but rather the social care system and the families. This is reflected in the cost ratios for the various forms of supply. However, from the perspective of society as a whole, not only economic factors are relevant. Dementia, as well as the challenge caused by other neurodegenerative diseases – although apparently affecting single families – has impact on the whole society, and many countries have already drawn up an action plan and even evaluated the results of their first programs. An indispensable part of maintaining individual and social well-being is a systematic, experience-based treatment of the problem of a disadvantaged community, especially if it has an intergenerational impact, as in the case of dementia.

## **Csaba Bálint, Péter Juhász and Imre Nyitrai: Training for leaders working in social services in Hungary**

As a unique innovation not only in Hungary, but also in Europe, a compulsory executive training was introduced in 2018 for leaders working in the field of social services. Semmelweis University was appointed to be the key and leading partner of the Government for planning, founding and realizing the programme. The antecedents of the programme date back to decades, thus it is inevitable to summarize the values and principles underlining the evolution of the programme. The decisions to embed the changes of the educational system in legal terms led to a long-term reform of the social service system, therefore the study also examines why the social executive programme has become an official training, and why the Central Education Programme is also important for quality assurance. The transfer of the innovation into daily practice was preceded by a number of researches providing scientific basis for analysis as well as resulting in decisive impact on the development of the central educational content and on the content development of the Semmelweis University's Social Executive Programme. A summary of the first experiences of the training are presented in this article for the first time.

## **Péter Győri: At the edge of the homeless world. Begging and scavenging homeless people**

Building on twenty years of empirical data collection, the paper analyses the characteristics of homeless people who engage in begging and scavenging. The analysis shows that homeless people who engage in these activities constitute a distinct subgroup of the homeless in terms of their housing, livelihood, socio-demographic background and everyday lives. In most of these dimensions, their position is more disadvantageous even in comparison to other homeless people. Besides street outreach services and certain daytime centers, the homeless assistance system, and in particular, homeless shelters have very little contact with them. Their visible everyday presence in public spaces might have a decisive influence on the public perception of the homeless, even though their characteristics are significantly different from those of the majority of homeless people.

## **Árpád Baráth: Cultural competence and social work**

Social work today faces new waves of racism, collective violence, trafficking in humans, slavery and international mass migration. The major challenge is re-thinking the notion of cultural competence in social work and enabling its practitioners for effective communication in multicultural environment. The article offers insight into the nature of cultural competence as a social construct, its measurement and perspectives of development in the realms of social work, by setting into the focus the higher education of this profession.