RECENZJE/REVIEWS

Torronen M., Borodkina O., Samoylova V. (2013). *Trust in reciprocal relationships – The construction of well-being*. In: M. Torronen et al. (eds.), *Empowering Social Work: Research and Practice*. University of Helsinki, Palmenia Centre for Continuing Education, Kotka: 8–19.

Reviewed by: Marzena Stachowicz

At the very beginning of this text, the authors write about its fundamental hypothesis: the social bonds between people have not disappeared, but there is more emphasis on individual choice today. This particular section refers to individualism and new liberalism. Despite the fact that the chapter is not long, it consists of three parts: Reciprocal Relationships, Trust in Human Relationships, and Cultural Understanding of Reciprocity. The structure of the text facilitates comprehension, highlighting the main aspects therein.

On the one hand, we can read that reciprocity can be understood in a positive way as something that strengthens interactions. On the other hand, the phenomenon of reciprocity can lead to a discussion about human selfishness. The authors remind us that reciprocal relationships are associated with well-being (understood as a combination of economic, cultural, and social capital). Therefore such an emotional state can be understood as part of an interaction with society as a whole. I would add that each of us is forced to establish cooperation with other entities. We do not live alone on this planet; we are not self- sufficient and fully independent. Part of the society produces something, another part sells it, and the vast majority buys it. One can naively claim that everyone is happy.

The personal experience of social and societal reciprocity is one of the most important factors in creating a sense of well-being. Nevertheless, the authors mention that research on well-being and welfare are incomplete. The need to understand reciprocal relationships has been highlighted by changes in the field of social services and healthcare: 'New liberal ideas stress individual choice and responsibility instead of solidarity and shared responsibilities' (p. 9). The value of the group has decreased in favor of the value of the entity. An interesting case is Russian society which is currently characterized by social disunity and weakness in both the traditional and new interpersonal structures. Reciprocity is closely associated with such concepts as 'sociability, social networks, social support, trust, community and civic engagement' (p. 10). In my opinion, thanks to these elements, we can see the positive aspects of reciprocity, leading us straight to an ideal model of society.

Nonetheless, the authors here mention that 'people keep social contact with those people who they think will be important to them should they encounter fragile situations where they will need help' (p. 11). This suggests that man is an economic being; we do not act selflessly. 'The things that bind people together include, for instance, mutually shared opinions, control of others, conciliations, negotiations, individual rights and respect for one another' (p. 12). These judgements might seem harsh, but, unfortunately, we cannot deny them. We can only blame nature and human instinct.

The concept of reciprocity can also be understood as a negative. Non-reciprocity is a certain kind of exclusion which deepens inequalities in a community. For example, people with various addiction or mental health problems often do not experience a reciprocal relationship; this, in turn, makes their problems bigger.

Reciprocity is connected with trust in human relationships as well as in the society as a whole. Such trust is the foundation for building a relationship based on reciprocity; reciprocal relationships cannot be built without trust for one another. We give something from ourselves, but also expect something in exchange. Intriguing is the statement that positive reciprocal relationships are created through experiences of trust. Here the content and implications of reciprocity as a concept are analyzed and discussed in relation to the concept of trust and how it builds or erodes robust relations between people.

We can say that trust is the core support structure for reciprocity. In fact, some researchers believe that trust is a precondition for social stability – without it we cannot expect a stable society. Trust is part and parcel of group or community identity affiliation which is also a natural consequence of sharing common interests. 'According to Sztompka, the prevalence of installation on confirmed and mutual trust leads to a "culture of trust" in society'. We can consider the culture of trust as creating the optimal conditions for social development.

The level of trust in a society can be measured and compared between different periods of time within the same country as well as between countries. The World Value Survey (WVS) examines values in European countries and one of their research projects contains questions such as, 'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?' (pp. 121-130). The results show how people in each country interpret their trust relationships.

According to the WVS results, Finland placed 5th in trust relations while Russia was in 29th place. This difference may be connected with the political system and the prevailing culture prevailing in each country – each presents different values. My supposition is confirmed by Sztompka's opinion that favors a "culture of trust".

As the concept of reciprocity contains both positive and negative aspects, the concept of trust is also twofold. The phenomenon cannot be so easily understood. When we think about trust, it should be noted that there are some positive aspects of mistrust. 'In a survival situation, the lack of support from the state has led many people from different social groups to seek their own ways and means of salvation' (pp. 56–59). The comparison used by the authors is not universal because salvation can be clearly associated with religion and beliefs. We can also speak about the mobilizing function

of mistrust: the absence of trust in somebody, leads to dealing with a problem on your own, and, subsequently, becoming independent and creative.

I believe that the most interesting sentence in this article is that 'Now, young people are willing to rely on themselves more, making choices and taking responsibility to a greater extent than older generations' (p. 10). Currently, most of the students I know take up a job, pursue their passions, help financially in maintaining the household and engage in the activities of various institutions. Young people are usually active, busy, and often overworked. A young person personifies everything that is associated with individuality, but does it mean that he is selfish at the same time?

In conclusion, the authors remind their readers that there is greater emphasis on individual choice and individualism in public discourse today. They also stress that this article wants to arouse more discussion on individualism and new liberalism. Still, I did not notice any special emphasis on these issues. There are some interesting threads connected with these two topics, but many need to be expanded because they are often only an introduction or allusion to something.

All in all, I completely agree with the statement that, despite individualistic features, there are still powers that make us collective actors: we can more easily trust those people with whom we ourselves can identify. I believe that man subconsciously interacts with people similar to himself. I think the authors of this article have done a great job. Their work stimulates thinking and the reading is pleasurable. The closing sentence of the article can be considered a recommendation for society: 'The society and the communities should act reciprocally, creating trustful relations' (p. 12). It can be said that this is the closing motto.

Brodzinsky D., Singer L., Braff A. (1984). *Children's understanding of adoption*. "Child Development", 55 (3): 869–878. DOI:10.2307/1130138.

Reviewed by: Marta Kamińska

This article is about understanding the phenomenon of adoption by children. In order to clarify this problem, the authors analyze 200 interviews conducted among adopted children as well as children not adopted at ages between 4 and 13. I believe that the number of interviews is sufficient to draw conclusions and the results showed a developmental trend in children's knowledge related to this subject. Ultimately, relatively few differences were found between the knowledge of an adopted and non-adopted child.

One of the most difficult sets of problems confronting adoptive parents are those dealing with the adoption revelation process: when and how should children be told the truth about their adoptive status in order to avoid later complications. Most adoption theorists and adoption agency personnel suggest the need to discuss this in the early stages of a child's life (usually between 2–4 years of age). These specialists suggest that parents begin with the simplest of adoption facts, gradually providing more and more information until the child comes to understand his or her unique family status.

Unfortunately, the literature on adoption is poor and contains only basic guidelines for parents. As such, parents are often quite confused or unsure about what information to provide at specific times and how to interpret questioning by their children. Yet, according to concepts regarding children's knowledge, their wisdom grows as a result of a slow increase in facts. This speaks in favor of the faith that many specialists and adoptive parents have that even small children can understand their own situation if, of course, parents share information about adoption by way of incremental facts.

This assumption – according to the authors of the text at hand – contradicts, among others, the results of the research they conducted. In the course of their study, the authors discovered that few children at the age of 6 understood anything about adoption. With increasing age, however, systematic changes occurred in the children's understanding of various components of the adoption experience. Nevertheless, the initial research carried out had weak points. First, the size of the sample was small, and, secondly, only children who were not adopted were examined. I think that such a study did not bring much to us because adopted children would likely be exposed to more knowledge about adoption.

The next study concerned developmental changes in both groups of children. This study involved 200 children aged 4–13 years (102 girls, 98 boys). Adopted and non--adopted children were matched for age, sex, and family socioeconomic status. All adopted children were placed for adoption before turning 2.5 years. Adopted children were queried in their homes as were half of the child subjects who were not adopted; the remainder was interviewed in a private school room. During the interview children were administered a series of open-ended questions concerning their knowledge about the adoption experience. Sample questions that were used in the interview were as follows: 'What does it mean to be a parent? Suppose two people want to become parents

– a mommy and daddy – what do they have to do? Is there any other way of becoming a parent besides "making" a baby? Let's suppose that a man and a woman wanted a baby and they decided to adopt one. What does this mean?' In my opinion, the questions are appropriate for children and can be adapted to the age of the respondent.

Following the open-ended interview, all children who displayed at least a basic understanding of adoption were administered a Q-sort task designed to evaluate their perception of the appropriateness of various adoption motives. In this task each child was shown a set of 25 index cards with adoption motives written on them. Children had to classify them as a 'good reason,' 'could be a good reason' or 'not a good reason' for adopting. After that, cards categorized as a 'good reason' for adopting were reviewed with the child. The child had to choose from them the best motive which was then excluded from the collection. Afterwards this procedure was repeated twice so that each child chose his or her own best three adopting reasons.

Summing up the results of the tests carried out, depending on the age of a child, the perception of adoption is different. Pre-school children do not understand much about it: they have a tendency to combine the concepts of birth and adoption. Among children between 4–7 years of age, there were clear shifts in awareness of the placement of children in adoptive families. The focus was on negative characteristics of the child, parental financial problems, or a lack of time to care for the child. With increasing age, financial problems became an even more important motive for placing children for adoption. Among children aged 8 to 11, the concept of adoption broadens. They begin to appreciate the uniqueness of this status and also understand possible complications resulting from it. A review of the research outcomes suggests that children in this period focus on the potential of a biological parent who might regain a child or cause a disruption in the life of an adoptive family. During the early and middle period of adolescence, children understand that adoption entails the legal transfer of parental rights from biological parents to adoptive parents. It is quite natural that children acquire new knowledge along with development. This also applies to awareness of the motivational grounds for adoption.

In the open-ended interview, for those young children displaying some knowledge of adoption motivation, most focused on parental emotional and nurturing needs (e.g., a desire to care for and love a child). Other motifs appeared with age. In particular, older children focused on the issue of infertility, family planning, and well-being. As it turned out, the difference in the awareness of adopted and non-adopted children is small. It follows that knowledge of the world, including adoption knowledge, results from a general process of construction and not simply from a gradual accumulation of facts presented by parents and significant others.

In my opinion, this article can be used by adoptive parents as support, but not as the only source for information about the transfer of knowledge to children about their status. The results of the conducted research and their clear presentation can be helpful for many people. Perhaps the acquisition and acceptance of facts will help reduce a fear among adoptive parents with reference to the difficult task of making their children aware of adoption.

Lundgre L., Krull I. (2014). *The Affordable Care Act: New opportunities for social work to take leadership in behavioral health and addiction treatment*. "Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research", 5 (4): 415–438.

Reviewed by: Karolina Szafron

The article under review is based upon the 2014 Aaron Rosen Lecture. The introduction contains data about 23 million people in the United States diagnosed with substance abuse – of that number only about 4 million enter treatment each year. The text is divided into different parts. Firstly, it describes the current system used in the USA, disadvantages within that system, and the significant demographic disparities in access to treatment. Curing addiction is subsidized by public funding or, for low-income individuals, by payment through Medicaid. Yet access to treatment is bad: some 20 million people did not receive any or were not at a specialized facility. The public does not pay attention to this problem and that is why treatment access is not available to everybody. Another reason are the disparities in access to medical care at all.

The biggest treatment gap is found among young adults alongside racial and/or ethnic minorities. What surprises me most is that African Americans and Latinos taking drugs are more exposed to negative consequences than Whites; African Americans are also significantly less likely to complete alcohol treatment. It is more expected that White people will receive addiction treatment than other groups. Nevertheless, most addicts will end their treatment after detoxification, not proceeding to the subsequent steps. Moreover, the problem is further linked to an inadequately trained or numerically insufficient workforce. Unfortunately, the biggest concern is the cost of the treatment which comes to $11,000 for 28 days.

Aiming to solve this problem, the authors refer to the ACA – the Affordable Care Act (also known as *Obamacare*) which integrates behavioral health and health care services. Its main aim is to expand access to public and private health insurance, to offer widespread health care, and to minimize gaps between need and availability of treatment. The proposal is to create medical homes in which patients are able to get mental health and substance abuse treatment together with other health services. As a consequence, the cost of addiction treatment might be reduced for a large group of individuals who did not previously have access to treatment due to costs; yet the availability of community-based care might go down, leading to reduced access to addiction treatment for local populations.

As an illustration of how integrated care would work, the Swedish model is presented. This one provides universal coverage for SUDs (Substance Use Disorders), but, more significantly, it is marked by no income limitations and no restrictions on the annual number of days for outpatient or inpatient treatment. The Swedish system employs clinical social workers to define individual needs for substance abuse treatment. They work in care centers often located in the neighborhood of other care settings and service providers – for instance, outpatient medical care centers, public employment

agencies, pharmacies, and public health nurses. The social workers are responsible for the integration of care including in- and outpatient treatment, primary care, the criminal justice system, and child welfare offices. They also screen patients and assess their mental health status. Nevertheless, we can also find negative opinions about the Swedish model in this article. Among other things, it criticizes the quality of worker knowledge. As we can read, the Swedish social work educational system has not kept up with training of their students who thus remain insufficiently prepared. Finally, we can read that the USA's social work educational programs need to significantly increase the education and training of their students; furthermore, social workers – who are able to successfully communicate with people with little knowledge about health – should act on decreasing the differences in access to addiction treatment.

In my opinion, this article illustrates how much we have left to do in order to increase the role of social workers in resolving addiction problems. The authors here shed a new light on this topic and make us more aware of what the foundation should be for social work. The text is expositional, so not only social scientists would understand what it is about. Still, I must emphasize that, at first, I could not find links between what the article is saying and the closely connected, new opportunities for social workers.

Nonetheless, the longer I read, the more I understood the concept of this text. It is really important to familiarize ourselves with the problem with which our society struggles. I do not think that many of us realize the enormity of the challenges we face. Social workers need to know how serious and big the problem is, not only to find ways to diminish it. This text presents the problem of millions of people, but it also describes how many changes the government needs to make in order to implement this idea. I cannot imagine how hard it would be to make this system work.

My biggest concern is about the financial side of this idea. How would the government provide enough money to create this kind of care centers? At the other end of the spectrum, we can ask another question: how would the program of study need to be expanded in order to prepare social workers to face, assess, and resolve addiction and other health issues. Furthermore, I do not think that, after reading this article, I know exactly how the authors see the ACA working for all social groups. It is not enough to say that social workers need to deliver integrated care to people, especially to vulnerable population groups; the article's author needs to tell us how to do this. The function of social workers in this system is, in my opinion, not adequately detailed. Are social workers eligible to perform as some kind of general practitioner who would have enough knowledge to provide advice to people with SUD? I think that the article tells us more about the problem itself and some ways to resolve it more than speak about great opportunities for social workers. There are many questions after reading this text, but I have to say that it is a good start to think about different ways raising the significance of social workers in addiction treatment.

To sum up, this article precisely illustrates the substance abuse problem, making us aware of the disparity between Whites, African Americans, and Hispanic treatment. It also describes the current system in the USA with its disadvantages. As a solution, we

can read about the ACA which is said to ease finding and providing necessary help to people with addictions. The model example is the Swedish one which shines a light on social workers as well-educated staff members in care centers.

I found this article to be greatly helpful in assessing the dimensions of the addiction problem. The biggest advantage of this text is that it is simply written so that not only the specialist would understand what the author wanted to say. Nevertheless, I cannot imagine the change that a government would need to implement and how hard it would be for students to gain enough knowledge to fulfill their mission properly. The careful reader may notice that this article leaves us with more questions than the answers. I hope that it was in the design of the authors to make us think more about the problem and its possible solutions. I find this text to be a good introduction to debates about addiction problems in society.

Fletcher J. (2017). *Gender-specific pathways of peer influence on adolescent suicidal behaviors*. "Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World", 3 (1): 1–10. DOI: 10.1177/2378023117729952.

Reviewed by: Katarzyna Strzałka

The phenomenon of suicide has been controversial in almost all types of societies for a long time, although it is often a taboo subject. For some, suicide is an act of courage, sacrifice, a kind of heroism, and for others it is a specific result of psychological pathology. We can consider this problem in various ways. Starting with issues related to faith, religion and personal beliefs, and ending with events occurring after the death of a suicide among his relatives, family and friends. In today's world, which is often ruthless, cruel – there are many potential reasons why people decide to take their own lives. This is most likely to occur when a person grapple with many problems at one time, for example: severe illness, heartbreak, loss of a loved one as a result of sudden death, loss of job, etc.

In the American countries, the phenomenon of suicides among children and adolescents is a large and still growing problem. Suicides are one of the most common causes of death among young people. There are many factors which cause that young people try to take their own lives, such as illness, heartbreak, bad school grades, poverty, lack of peers' acceptance, low self-esteem etc. Family and friends play an important role in the perception of oneself as valuable people in their youth. Many authors dealt with the research concerning a peers pressure on self-destructive behaviors. For example, through the introduction of quasi-experimental studies of high school students. There are studies concerning school structures which have a greater impact on behavioral changes among young people, including suicidal behavior. Young women are more sensitive, modest and shameful and they have closer friendship ties. Therefore, they are more exposed to nervous breakdown and self-destructive behaviors than boys.

The author of the article in the first chapter reviews the literature concerning conditions and causes of suicides and quotes several authors. in the first subsection the author refers to Abrutyn's and Mueller's research. These projects examine how exposure to the suicide deaths of significant others (e.g., friends, family or schoolmates) shape adolescent mental health and vulnerability to suicide by drawing on insights from social psychology, cultural sociology, sociology of emotions. They conducted research among a number of students who was a suicide's friend and had not been previously informed about his intentions. The author of the article believes that the results of Abrutyn's and Mueller's research are likely and the existence of the influence of peers also has a negative side. Previous studies that were conducted by other researchers did not bring valuable knowledge. This was due to the lack of appropriate methodology, keywords, specific and narrow research purpose. It is very important in these studies to focus on the effects of suicidal behavior flowing from a family connection. In the case of suicide committed by a family member, the danger of self-destructive behaviors within the family increases. Only a few researchers said about this influence, so this article and these

studies give a new important knowledge. Another point is that author presents gender differences in suicidal behavior and peer pressure. The girls are victims more often than boys because of closer ties between themselves. The author also refers to the others explorations, which results suggest a higher level of suicide in women due to a higher rate of psychological pain. In addition, women are more vulnerable to suicide attempts and self-destructive behavior because of more frequent contacts and friendships with women who influence themselves. The friendship environment affects suicidality for both boys and girls. Female adolescents' suicidal thoughts are significantly increased by social isolation and friendship patterns which they were not using. The author of the article also refers to one of the most popular sociologists and philosophers – Emil Durkheim, who is known throughout the world for his work entitled *Suicide. Study on Sociology* since 19th century.

In the second chapter, the author invokes data of a limited version of Add health. Add Health is based on education, research on health, addictions, moods, teen behavior and their results in adulthood. Research was carried out in schools in grades 7–12, then interviews were conducted with students a year later, six years later and 13 years later. The study was based on differentiation into the region, school type, urbanity. Add Health is attractive because it contains diversity socio-emotional and non-ecological outcomes. During the research, almost 30,000 students were surveyed. The presented results are shown in a table in a way that is not very legible, but the author easily analyzes the results, which makes it easier for the reader to realize. Specifically, these studies bring new and needed knowledge to literature on social impact on suicidal behavior in adolescence. Sometimes, the estimation of the impact of peers encounters obstacles because of the diversity between surveyed.

To sum up, an article entitled *Gender-specific pathways of peer influence on adolescent suicidal behaviors* did not make a good impression on me. I would like to say that it did not bring new, curious knowledge. This is an article from 2017, so I think that the author should not refer to the old research from 1995. The vocabulary in the article was quite difficult to understand. I did not find in it ant threads and sociological terms. The table number 1 is the easiest to interpretation, while the next ones are problematic because they are presented in a rarely used way. The positive fact is, however, that the analysis of the results is very clearly presented by the author. Therefore, we do not have to interpret the table ourselves, but it is enough to read the author's description. Taking everything into consideration I think that the article on which I based my review does not bring valuable information. The research, which the author referred to, was not shown in a transparent way.