

Abstracts

Gábor Papp: Conformity and nonconformity among prison inmates – findings of an empirical research

The exploration of thinking patterns of prison inmates is justified for at least of two reasons. First of all, this is an important topic in its own right, such questions can be answered by means of it, as for example the group formation, opposition to out-groups and bound together within in-group, and factors influencing them. This issue is reasonable also, because world-view of inmates would significantly influence the life beyond the prison walls, since there is no reason to believe that those have already released from and those who have been yet in prison would vary from each other. Hereby it can provide usable information for prison practitioners and in general for those dealing with “prison subject”, in addition for opinion-shaper of criminal policy. The present study particularly focused on the first-mentioned aim, because the research which was based on cross-sectional design was conducted in a Hungarian penitentiary. The applied theoretical model and measures are very similar to the ones that had been used in earlier North American studies. This article is looking for the answer to the question “Which factors have influence on the (non)conformity to the society or rather to prison staff as its institutional representatives?”. Among these, we examined the roles played by position in prison, social background characteristics, criminal past and views, maintenance of contacts with people outside, post prison expectations, orientation toward staff and fellow inmates, as well as the time factor in conformity.

Árpád Baráth: Spirituality and social work

The aim of the paper to strengthen the knowledge and value base of contemporary social work theory and practice from the perspectives of spirituality, as a complex of higher order human values. The author calls attention to the historical roots and the diversity of meaning of spirituality in different religions, cultures, and in every-day life, and makes an attempt to draw a parallel between spirituality and diverse modalities of reflexive thinking. The article stresses the importance of spirituality both in theory and practice of contemporary mental health promotion, without which the social work practice (also) would become a bundle of soulless, meaningless, “prescription-like” realms of market-like services.

ABSTRACTS

Attila Varga: Old recipes with new ingredients. Social assistance schemes of the National Social Policy Conception

The study is analysing the recommendations of the National Social Policy Conception to the social assistance system. The working paper written by experts, but not discussed by the government, is trying to open a new chapter in the history of social benefits by introducing the guaranteed minimum income and other aids based upon it. Beside that the conception is immature, the proposed models are rather draft versions and lack the impact assessments as well, so the author is examining the proposals' main elements and the ideology behind them. The direction of the social policy outlined in the conception is differing from that of the measures and commitments taken by the government in the past year and a half, so the article is summarizing them as well. The author finds that the government actions and decisions are creating a basis for an 'order social policy', or rather an 'order poverty policy', which will further intensify social tensions and increase social exclusion in Hungary.

Máté Kanász-Nagy: Possibilities for harmonization of financial allowances for the needy in Budapest

The paper summarizes the results of a half-year investigation started in autumn 2009. I focused on the social assistance system of five districts in the capital which were compared on the basis of given focal points. The research was performed on three different levels: I aimed at the general description of the districts as well as the comparison and analysis of the social decrees and previously selected specific financial assistance. The sources to the analysis are from 2008 since more recent data were available only after closing the research. According to the starting hypothesis the Hungarian decentralized municipal social assistance system is not in the interest of the needy, ineffective and can only achieve partial results in the reduction of poverty. The hypothesis was tested by describing and comparing the selected districts. The analysis focused on one of the main system-specific characteristics of the social assistance scheme, on the decentralized administrative milieu. In the discussion the reform possibilities of this milieu were considered including the question of financing, managing, co-ordination as well as different types and sorts of allowances. Basically, I looked for the possibilities of harmonization between districts and social assistance systems, which I consider a basic means of reform. The wide range of harmonization opportunities can be defined as a new way not only for Budapest but also for the whole country to make allowances of the needy much more effective.

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