

SMALL RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE FOR THE SOCIAL WORK IN ESTONIA

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Abstract

We have observed the four basic functions of the local government level in the context of contemporary social work which aims to empower an individual in the best possible way the person considers appropriate. There are several obstacles preventing the local government from being able to fulfil its duties. At the same time many actual risk groups remain out of the scope of the support system at all. The actions organized by the local government do not empower the individuals in their independent action in the society. The decision-making process follows the principle of collegiality and unfortunately, we can say, the decisions at the client level turn out to be politicised. The unclear situation and big differences in local government level continue because there is no control whatsoever over their activities and no evaluation of their methods from the point of view of social work.

Keywords: Function-based organization, local government, empowerment, Estonia

Background

Due to Estonia's historic, cultural and professional development the country is compared to the countries of the so-called Old Europe in a very unique situation. It is of utmost importance to define the targets of social work and carry it out in a situation where 30,2% of the population is either elderly or disabled people, 10-15% long-term unemployed. This challenges us to find a balance between national and local authorities, to empower individuals at the same time safeguarding their individual rights to support and assistance.

The development of local governments has been multi-directional in Estonia. The capital Tallinn, and its neighbours enjoy Estonia's success; other Regional Centres such as Pärnu, Tartu and Narva are "the towns, where life is good". In Estonia there are 226 local municipalities – 33 towns and

193 municipalities (townships) – and 151 municipalities to be considered as „small municipalities” (The Ministry of the Interior 2011).

A series of administrative reforms have taken place in Estonia during the past hundred years, therefore, perhaps, that the local government and local community can no longer be synonymous. Small municipalities consist only of the centre or village. The rural local government sustainability is connected with the number of residents, where they are working or they are unemployed, if a school and kindergarten exist, or not, how many kilometres to the Capital of the County, where are the public medical services located, and so on. According to Noorkõiv (2009) results of research, the local governments vary greatly in their in development. The impact factors the politics of the government and European Union, human resources and the regional environment at the meso-level, in the local municipality.

Administratively social work is organised in Tallinn and the county capitals, i.e. in the larger cities - separate structural units exist, which deal directly with clients. The research’s focus has been at the small, rural municipalities - where the practices of social work have become very independent due to differences in the education background, lack of harmonization of standards and quality requirements.

Since social work is in constant interaction with the environment (the social policy with historical-cultural impacts and human rights), the question arises, what types of factors influence the development of social work and social services in local government. In current time the consequence is the insufficient solidarity express in society, since start from independent time, the percent of the person who is excluding from state’s welfare schemes has increased. Therefore we must find the marginalized people, the groups who are behind the barriers; it is meant, however, to look for people, who are excluded from the social welfare system on the governmental level (Raudava 2013b).

The Theoretical Overview

Social work as concept is difficult because it refers to different meanings: 1) Social work as a specific profession in the social domain, 2) Social work as the umbrella of social professions, 3) Social work as branch or sector, 4) Social work as a common field of social action, knowledge and research (depending on contexts related to country, history and the different roots of social work (van Ewijk 2009; Denzin 2002). Social work is a product of modernism (Payne 1995, 15), the idea of social work’s theory is also modernist, because it says that we can reach a rational understanding of human begins and society and decide how to act consistently to change both people and societies according to our knowledge. According to de Carvalho and Lopes (2006) the social work occupies the position between two

different worlds, the economic/political (rational) and the life world (subjective). Social work is unique as it distinguishes itself by its needed multidisciplinary character in responding to the complexity of the social problems (Dominelli & Hackett 2011; Buzducea 2010; Dominelli 2008; Fook 2005).

The contemporary definitions of social work as a degree subject reflect its origins in a range of different academic and practice traditions'. These include: 1) North American traditions of social work; (Wagenfeld-Heintz 2009; Holosko 2003; Ramsay 2003; Reid 2001) 2) UK traditions of social work (Poppo 2006; Payne 1995: 2; Stark 2010) 3) European and international traditions of social work (Higham 2006). However, the social work practice shall not prevail over the European or American models; we are talking about Africa, Asia, and the Latin-American model too (Jordan 2008). Higham (2006) has argued that the lack of an entirely satisfactory or agreed definition of social work makes it more logical to take a comparative critical view rather than argue a particular definition. It is important to recognize that both the nature and purposes of social work are constructed within diverse social and political environments (Weiss-Gal & Levin 2010; Payne, 2005) and take rather different forms to different societies.

The key elements of social work practice include values, ethics, foundational knowledge and skills, and how these link to the processes of assessment and intervention. Today, there are big differences as far as the practice of social work in different parts of the world is concerned. It covers the wide range of activities starting from clinical social work, often being handed over to private service providers, to the community management, social policy and society development (Healy 2008; Hare 2004). Social worker focuses in his/her work on three main aspects: 1) definition of client's needs (Coulshed & Orme 2006, 43), 2) contribution to the maintenance of social institutions and 3) contribution to the preservation of the community (Payne 1995, 25) while ensuring the protection of client. In other words: social workers act on micro, mezo and macro level (Brueggemann 2005; Healy 2005). An appreciation and respect for diversity in relation to "race", culture, religion, ethnicity, linguistic origin, gender, sexual orientation and differential abilities.

Main methods of social work are: counselling and other ways of influencing for change, focusing on the interaction with client; crisis intervention and its techniques (Brieland 1977); psychosocial approach to social work, behavioural and cognitive theoretical social work, family work, working with groups; community-neighbourhoods work and networking theories; (Coulshed & Orme 2006; Means, Richards & Smith 2003); case management (Vass 2004, Skerrett 2000). Social pedagogy adopts a developmental model of practice rather than a welfare model (Göppner &

Hämäläinen 2007). Karvinen (1993: 157) considers the assessment of social work to be the most important method of social work.

The focus of social work is on promoting social change; the social work profession contributes to social change – there are a multitude of intervention domains depending on the subject problem area. One and the same instrument may be used as a means to innovate, to perpetuate methods of patronage in public/ private relations, or to strengthen the logics of an isolating service, depending on the cognitive and normative frames shared by actors. For example, the concept of empowerment needs the context; we find the research in health (Faulkner&Laschinger 2008; Patrick&Laschinger 2006); or the social services (Dowling 2009, Donaldson 2008). With the traditional concept of empowerment, power is viewed as something given by professional social workers, who seem to be more powerful, to service users, who are supposed to be powerless. According to postmodern thought-practitioners need to deconstruct the dichotomy of “powerful” and “powerless” and maintain a collaborative relationship with marginalized people, sincerely hear their voices, take a not-knowing and non-expert position, and value their expertise, wisdom, and experience (To 2009). The social work helping situation takes on a definition of targeting and confronting existential oppression, as the means to promote desired change (Dubicz 2010). Rankin (2006/2007) “strengths oriented social work practice incorporates empowerment as both a concept and a process.”

Contemporary European Social Work based collective responsibility, human rights and social justice. According to Frost (2008), European social work transcends its own (national) policy contexts because of the pan-European intellectual and ideological traditions and also the values, principles and ethics that underpin itself. The EU itself posts shared contemporary beliefs and values as collective:

The EU stands for a view of humanity and a model of society that the great majority of its citizens support. European cherish their rich heritage of values, which includes a belief in human rights, social solidarity, free enterprise, a fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth, the right to a protected environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and a harmonious blend of tradition and progress (Frost 2008)

The discussion for European social work, Lorenz (1994, 9) has established, the three perspectives: social work`s relationship with different dominant ideologies and political programmes as mediated by different types of welfare states and welfare regimes; social works`s relationship with different intellectual traditions in social science, psychology and pedagogy as escape from ideologies; social work`s potential relationship with service users and social moments. The way social work becomes involved in and defines its role in relation to societies that are in the process of greater

diversification tests the profession`s ability to the three perspectives. Forward, Lorenz (2009, 2008) argued, that European social work could find a shared platform and a core identity. Consequently, two divergent trends are currently discernible in European social work. One points in the direction of adjustment to the new social and political conditions that create new modes of steering and of governance at the political and societal level.

The local system and the territorial articulation of policies open up a field of tension between the enhancement of local resources, necessarily specific and diverse, and (political) horizon of equal rights (Choi & Woo 2011; Choi 2011; Bassoli 2010; Levin & Weiss-Gal 2009; Bifulco & Centemeri 2008; Skerrett 2000). However, social work has always been a vehicle of social justice and sometimes social work is means of raising political consciousness (Chu, Tsui, Yan 2009; 52; 847). Shaw (2010) argues that expansion of the understanding of the relationship between research and policy is helpful to social work research in that social work research is not necessarily or perhaps more accurately not primarily about researching for policy or researching policy directly. Social work research is more often focused on the effects of policy, or on the interventions into the social contexts and problems that are, or should be, the subject of policy.

The Professionals Need The Organization

The social workers need the organization, in Germany the social work (especially social education) has been strongly influenced and developed by the private organisations (church, Red Cross etc). and in England, the independent organizations in social work and social services field (Perlmutter 2006, Poertner, Moore & McDonald 2008; Poertner 2006) called the faith-based services organization (Smith 2007).

The main responsibility for the social services rests with highly autonomous local governments. ‘Welfare municipalities’ is a concept which has been used to underline the significant role of independent municipalities in the distribution of social services in the Nordic countries (Kröger 1997; Trydegård and Thorslund 2000). The concept of “welfare municipalities” describe municipalities as ‘agents for the welfare state policies’:

The concept of ‘welfare municipalities’ has been used to characterize the social policy construction of independent local authorities implementing national welfare policies. Have an inbuilt dilemma between two main principles: universalism and local autonomy.

Local and central government follow different rationales. While central governments have to take responsibility for directions the nation as a whole takes, local government is primarily concerned with the public services affecting citizens in their everyday life, whether it is refuse collection, road maintenance, or providing leisure facilities (Atkison & Joyce 2011; Craw 2010; Mitchell 2010; Clegg & Bailey 2008). According to the

European Charter of Local Self-Government and the Local Government Organization Act, local government is defined as the right, authority and duty of the democratically formed bodies of power to independently organise and manage local issues pursuant to the law and based on the legitimate needs and interests of the residents of the rural township or city, and considering the specific development of the rural township or city. Thus, the objective of the local government and the public sector is to create a stable environment for the population and to ensure the offering of public services.

The relatively new focus in a number of disciplines on governance as a perspective and research area has opened up greater possibilities for the use of organization theory in political and administrative analysis (Bevir 2010; Close & Raynor 2010; Cunliffe 2008; Cassell & Symon 1998). Organization theory offers a particular perspective on governance structures and processes, namely that analysis should focus on the organizations and interorganizational relationships on which governance structures are constructed and that animate governance processes (Dooley 2002; Hassard & Holliday 2000). Organization theory has aimed at developing approaches suitable for the analysis of all kinds of organizations; it offers the opportunity to analyze the wide variety of organizations that participate in governance within a single framework. Moreover, whereas most studies of governance either focus on political processes or on governance outcomes, organization theory aims at the relatively distinct goal of drawing conclusions about organizational structure, performance, and behavior.

Every organization functions on some basic principles and a particular structure, organizations are inseparable from the transactional contexts in which they are embedded (Scott 2004). How organizations function, and how they might be made to function better? Functions-based classification of records is the development and use of a classification scheme based on what an organization does, its functions and activities. This approach is also referred to as functional classification or business classification (Orr 2005). The function-based organization is usually anchored by a strong headquarters organization that sets policy and program directions and guidance.

Our understanding of organizational typologies is significant, even if the empirical validity of such typologies is still the subject of ongoing debate. Ahonen, Hyyryläinen & Salminen (2006) have configuration for the European welfare states at governance level, Ellingsæter (1998) analyzed the Scandinavian welfare states; however, the dates from post-communist countries are missing. On the one hand, in England, they are to provide and develop the personalized services, state Watson & Janice (2008), helping them achieve personal goals and aspirations in independent organizations

(Woodcock & Dixon 2005). Kanter & Brinkerhoff (1981), for configuration view, describe municipalities as “agents for the welfare state policies”.

The Function of Local Government is to Provide Social Services in Estonia

Estonia has a single-tier system of local government, with municipalities, boroughs and towns granted self-governing status in 1990. The main principle regulating local government is stated in the constitution, and stipulates that all local issues should in theory be managed locally and independently from central government, where this is in accordance with the law (Lõhmus 2008). The 21st century, the Constitution uses the term "local government" in three basically different ways. 1) Local government is an administrative territorial unit; Section 157 provides that local governments have an autonomous budget. 2) Local government is a local government body. Since 1993, with the adoption of the Local Government Organisation Act, there are two local government bodies - the representative body (council) and the executive body (township or city government). 3) Local government is a form of organising community life. In this sense, there is a clear definition of the local government in Section 160 of the Constitution; according to which the organisation of local governments is regulated by the law (Mäeltsemees 2006, 67). The single-tier basis of the local government system was confirmed by the Government of the Republic Act adopted in 1995.

According to the Local Government Organisation Act (adopted June 2, 1993; consolidated text June 2005), § 6. Functions and competence of local governments are:

(1) The functions of a local government include the organisation, in the rural municipality or city, of social assistance and services, welfare services for the elderly, youth work, housing and utilities, the supply of water and sewerage, the provision of public services and amenities, waste management, physical planning, public transportation within the rural municipality or city, and the maintenance of rural municipality roads and city streets unless such functions are assigned by law to other persons.

(2) The functions of a local government include the organisation, in the rural municipality or city, of the maintenance of pre-school child care institutions, basic schools, secondary schools, hobby schools, libraries, community centres, museums, sports facilities, shelters, care homes, health care institutions and other local agencies, if such agencies are in the ownership of the local government. Payment of specific expenses of such agencies from the state budget or other sources may be prescribed by law.

According to the Social Care (Welfare) Act (RT I 1995, 21, 323) the responsibilities of a local municipality cover a wide range of social benefits to the management of welfare institutions for children, elderly people, people with disabilities. By Social Welfare Care Act, the functions of local governments for social welfare are:

- 1) preparation of the local social care development plan as a part of the township or city development plans;
- 2) provision of social services, emergency social assistance and organisation of other assistance, and the allocation and payment of social benefits;
- 2¹) the preparation of social care statistical reports and submission to the county governor, according to procedures as set forth in the aforementioned law § 6 point 8¹ ;
- 3) organization of the work of the guardianship agency.

Municipal responsibilities may be divided into local and governmental. Governmental responsibilities are financed through the state budget (§ 154, 2), whereas the local matters remain the sole responsibility of local authorities. The Social Care (Welfare) Act, § 10, lists all the services: 1) the consultation, 2) provision of prosthetic, orthopaedic and other appliances, 2¹) childcare service; 3) domestic services, 4) housing services; 5) foster care, 6) care in social welfare institutions, 7) other social services needed for coping are all ordered by local municipalities.

The Design of the Research

The current research is part of work of theses therefore we are utilizing some methodology with the dates (Raudava 2013a). The strategy of research (methodology) has utilised case study (Hassard & Kelemen 2010; Punch 2009) Gomm, Hammersley & Foster (2008) and Bennett & Colin (2007) have pointed that the case study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic (Verschuren 2003) focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case. Therefore the case study is more strategy than a method. A case study is a detailed inquiry into complex of the local government with variety data recourses (Baxter and Susan 2008). The collective case study means that the instrumental case study is extended to cover several cases in order to learn more about the phenomenon. (Punch 2009, 144; Yin 2003). Utilizing the collective case study, following the information-oriented selection: maximum variation cases - size and location (Luck, Jackson and Usher 2006).

Preparing a cases:

- The nine (9) rural municipalities (local government on rural area);
- They do not have boundaries with County Town;

- They show some differences, for example as to the title for social work employer, decision-making level and so on.
- The inhabitants are less 2500

Local municipalities to be more closely analyzed are: Vihula, Viru-Nigula, Rägavere, Laekvere in Lääne-Viru county and Avinurme, Lohusuu, Lügänuuse, Maidla, Aseri in Ida-Viru county.

Table 1. The list of the cases

	Case1	Case2	Case3	Case4	Case5	Case6	Case7	Case8	Case9
	193,6 km ²	103,28 km ²	105 km ²	332,3 km ²	67,1 km ²	173,7 km ²	352,4 km ²	234 km ²	364,91 km ² ,
Inhabitants	1500	785	1396	865	2023	1000	1743	1293	1970
Centre	Avinurme	Lohusuu	Lügänuuse	Savala	Aseri	Ulvi	Laekvere	Viru-Nigula	Võsu
Number of villages	16	9	13	27	8	13	18	32	35
km to County Town	45	40	30	40	39	30	40	25	30

The dates of case study have been based on mix of evidence; triangulation has used as a method of acquiring data:

1. Document analysis (public documents, law, strategies, minutes of social committee meetings, legal regulations of municipalities etc.)
2. Semi-structured Interviews with the members of social committee.
3. Semi-structured Interviews with social workers of the local governments.

The data in the social sciences are obtained in both formal and informal settings and involve oral and written.

The interviews tended to last between 1-2 hours. The conversations I digitally recorded with the consent of group members (social committee). All the recordings I transcribed, the number of pages of transcribed is 45. The number of the document pages is near 1000: for each case, is involving the development plan, the local laws, the local protocols and unpublished documents. The triangulation made possible by multiple data collection techniques provides stronger substantiation of constructs.

The position of analysis has been the taxonomical approaches Complementary configurations are frequently made up of multiple components commonly found together; the comparison is restricted to the set

of the 9 cases (Byrne & Ragin 2009; Ragin 2009; (Dubbs, Bazzoli, Shortelli & Krlovec 2004). We have made the configuration the four bases functions however they have linked to the field of social work at the local government level: a) The function of planning; b) The function of practice of social work (services); c) The Function of Decision for The Framework of Social Welfare Administration and d) The Function of Control.

Ragin (2009) has stated that organizational configurations may also be formed around sociocultural and political factors. A true understanding of organizational configurations must also go beyond merely technical interdependencies to include the interaction between these and sociopolitical and culturally-symbolic factors. The writing method of case study has utilised the diagnostic case report (van Blonk 2003), original by Pettigrew, the report is produced in order to interact with the organizations where the research was conducted, besides analytical chronology a diagnostic case contains a listing and analysis of current problems.

The aim of the research has explored how well does the local government serves for the field of social work and some time does it is following the idea of empower in Estonian municipalities?

The function of planning

The development plan is the basic document for the budget and the project application process; the Municipal Council confirms the plan with the plan of budget. Therefore, the decisions of Municipal Council pointed how will develop the local environment with the local services. The local composition order of the Municipal Development Plan was put into effect ten years ago. There have been different ways to compose the development plan but in practice, they are usually written by consulting firms. They have interviewed target groups and the local employees; some of the local residents think that the local democratic idea is very important (engagement).

The local development plan shows the public position for social services in the local municipality and the first hand it must follow the framework of legal too. Firstly, we like research are the risk groups represent according to the actual situation? The assessment of current situation is the first step for the plan, the general standards of evaluate are missing, therefore the dates have collected all the information from the local municipal ones. Next, analyze the client's groups for the aspect of the responsibility of local government, we find the five big clusters from the results of the interviews and the local documents:

1. Low-educated middle-aged and older, often unemployed and with alcohol-related problems;
2. Elderly people living alone in villages;
3. Adults with disabilities;
4. Family members who care for their relatives;

5. Families with children whose parents are unemployed or in low-paid workers, in the worst case, the parents are alcoholics; families live in dilapidated, in poor condition country houses or in Soviet era apartment buildings built in the fields and which are now falling apart.

Further, we observe the local development plans and the links constructed between the following: a) Description of the current situation; b) Goals; c) The relationship of duties.

Table 2 The Strategic Plan Of Social Services For The Development Plan

	Description of the Current Situation	The goals	The duties of Social Services
Case 1		Family problems The coping of people with disabilities (poverty) The coping of local residents (poverty)	
Case 2		Child Protection, unemployment, the elderly, people with disabilities	According to the Social Care Welfare Act
Case 3	The presumption: the elderly nursing home exists in the region		Public social service available
Case 4		Children and family social care Social Care for elderly people Social care for people with disabilities	
Case 5	Detailed description: the elderly, children and adults with disabilities	Protection for children with disabilities and elderly home care	
Case 6		Poverty	
Case 7		People with disabilities	Public social service available
Case 8	Inability to raise children Alcoholism	Children and families People with disabilities	
Case 9	According to 2006 Data, 36% of the population belong to risk-groups	Families and Children, the elderly,	Solving the problems (child protection) Elderly Care (Home Care)

Summary, we reflect that:

- 1) The problems are not described in local context and the social problems with the risk groups are not very clearly specified;
- 2) The goals of social work are not specific to the target groups according to the Social Care Act, four plans describe the family's problems and poverty;
- 3) The aims serve the local inhabitants of risk groups are not specific, the social service will have to recommend two local municipalities for development

Linked to the budget, the political leadership in rural governance pays no attention to the social problems and the ways to find solutions. Leisure and culture are voluntary activities of the local municipal government, 14% is allocated in the budget, which is more than the amount for the social services budget. Time and again, it should be noted how different the practices of nearby neighbours are: Finland considers child day care services as a social service, and it is the most favoured social service in Finland (Wall 2008, 4). In Estonia, the educational services have remained unchanged since the Soviet era. Some years ago, child day-care services were planned as a social service (fast tracked due to a political agreement) though in practice, it has not been successfully established.

A strategic framework can be conceptualized that balances alignment for the disruption of the opposing forces (Strategic thinking) and alignment creation (Strategic Planning) (Taylor, Peterson, and Machado, 2008). The development plan is a political document; however the local and EU legal framework must be following too. Estonia is linked with several laws protecting human and fundamental rights. The Republic of Estonia joined the Council of Europe and signed "*The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Rights*" on 14 May 1993. The Parliament ratified it on March 13, 1996 and the ratification became binding on Estonia as of April 16, 1996. "*The European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights*" has been approved by the European Parliament on the 29th of November 2007 (2007/2218 (ACI) and sets out rights, freedoms and principles. Article 1 of the Charter puts human dignity the first place, human dignity is inviolable and should be respected and protected; Article 21, the ban on discrimination, prohibits any discrimination, including due to financial situation, disability and age.

The public criteria have not been formulated and the question of who in the local municipality is the social work client, has not been agreed upon at the local government level. As previous studies have shown the people employed in the field of social work are in many cases without any professional training. If we analyze the strategic planning of services it arises the question of knowledge ability and of outcomes as how to ensure a certain

level of services for local inhabitants. The current situation in local governments indicates that the strategic planning rather disempowers, violates the constitution, Convention of Human Rights and European Social Charter. Thus the strategic planning is not related to the actual social work practice while the idea of a development plan should imply practical considerations as to when a school or kindergarten should be built or how to improve the living environment of the local inhabitants.

The function of practice of social work (services)

The Financial Support and Social Services

In the analysis of social services, however we have put social benefits and social services together. In the current study we have singled out all its components and analyse them separately as how they function. In the analysis of the outcomes, we have found the four levels of practice:

1) The target-based benefits; the applicant is entitled to it as some terms for example status (pupil, single, or disability); the age, the date (Christmas, the birthday) or the act (funeral) are fulfilled;

2) The benefit is related to the level of income; the applicant qualifies to it as she/he finds his/herself in the acute crisis or in the poverty; benefits to cover the special care expenses for elderly and disabled people who are registered residents of the respective municipality.

The above mentioned types of benefits are the part of local budget; and

3) The subsistence benefit, the funds comes from the State Budget.

Thus, the main activity of rural local governments is the distribution of financial aid, including the state-funded subsistence benefit. The distribution of social benefits does not require a professional, since the State set conditions in calculating benefits are based on mathematics: household income - documented expenses (not proving the need based upon the individual situation).

4) The social services, mostly the day centres of elderly and the people with disabilities are servicing. Based upon empirical dates, the majority of local governments provide social consultation as a form of service; the social consultation is not considered as a service itself. The obligations prescribed by law to ensure social services are fulfilled modestly in all locally governed areas.

The remaining spectrum of social services has not been sufficiently developed yet. At the same time, services can not be "outsourced" because there are no private organisations, which provide these services (sell services). Over the past 20 years, the understanding that public services can be best provided by both companies, as well as local people themselves, has dominated in Estonia. For historical reasons, there are no viable non-profit organizations in Estonia, who are able to stably provide widespread social

services. The only area of service, which is interesting to the business sector, of which there are many, are nursing homes, because they are profitable. On the one hand, there are a small number of local residents who need the services, 1-2 people in the village. Inevitably, if the social services are only provided on the open market, then the people, who need the service, cannot afford the service. It is a paradox.

Support services are offered to children in the county capitals and the associated queues, travel costs, parents can not get to appointments to see specialists on work days, etc. A few existing services, mostly home care or day centres, are located in the centres, the service is not accessible for single elderly and disabled people, living in isolated villages. Many of the people potentially needing help simply do not receive it. The low number of social services has related to the question, how could the social worker follow the aim, change or support the situation of the client?

The Social Welfare Act has included childcare services subsidy; obviously rural areas have no need for this service; every township has its own kindergarten. Only one township's social worker implements the support person service for families. Although organising this service has problems - low wages, leading to one of the support persons to resign - it is a thankworthy practice.

The Task of Employer of The Social Work Field

In context where the social services do not exist actually, we research the task of the employer of the social work field. The social worker in a small local government can be said to possess full information for the actual situation. A source of information is being local residents themselves, everyone knows everyone. During the course of the interviews, questions were general, regarding local issues or changes. Social workers knew the problems affecting the local community: job losses in the country, lack of public transport (from year to year bus routes are shut down), and bank branch closures (people can not access cash), post office closures (where can you buy a birthday card and a postage stamp?) and the biggest problem, country store closures (daily food).

Table 3. The relation with the social problems and the methods of the social work

	acute problems	involvement in social structures (the State)	intervention / method of operation	sent to social services or another solution from the municipal budget
1	<p>stray children</p> <p>families with alcoholic parents local <i>old men</i> who do not wear reflectors, and are fined by the police</p> <p>determining level of disability</p> <p>people with alcohol problems</p> <p>people with disabilities</p> <p>unemployed</p> <p>care of relatives</p> <p>Problems with housing</p> <p>care for the elderly</p>	<p>Social Security Agency</p> <p>risk group, often have no health insurance</p> <p>applying for government-funded rehabilitation services, long waiting lists for services</p> <p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p> <p>The state has transferred services to local authorities who must find the budgetary resources for the services</p>	<p>cooperation between schools and families</p> <p>direct intervention if the child's safety is at risk social worker purchases reflectors</p> <p>assists with filling out of the disability book Communication with the Social Insurance Agency Application for disability pension</p> <p>communication with doctors and hospitals running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p>	<p>home care</p> <p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family) Foster Care Agreement social housing In certain conditions, the local government pays part of the bed fee for the nursing home</p>
2	<p>families with alcoholic parents</p> <p>Lack of transport</p> <p>a large number of disability pensioners a large number of people with disabilities</p> <p>unemployed</p>	<p>Social Security Agency</p> <p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p>	<p>direct intervention if the child's safety is threatened</p> <p>drives if absolutely necessary (hospital)</p> <p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p>	<p>Specialist who works with people with disabilities Day centre for people with disabilities</p>

	<p>caring for family members</p> <p>appointing a guardian for an adult</p>	<p>The state has transferred services to local authorities who must find the budgetary resources for the services</p> <p>2 year waiting list</p>	<p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p>
3.	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>elderly people living alone</p> <p>heating problems</p> <p>caring for family members</p> <p>people with disabilities</p>		<p>drives to hospitals, graveyard, etc.</p> <p>delivers food to homes (home care)</p> <p>purchases firewood</p> <p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p> <p>Elderly daycare centre</p> <p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p>
4.	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Estonian-Russian language conflict: the determination of disability book is in Estonian, locals are mostly Russian-speaking</p> <p>cash shortage, poverty</p> <p>unemployed</p> <p>people with disabilities</p> <p>elderly, high fees of nursing homes</p> <p>caring for family members</p>	<p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p>	<p>driving if absolutely necessary (hospital)</p> <p>helps people to translate them and fill it out, this takes hours</p> <p>provides financial support to responsible families, who know how to find the best solution</p> <p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p> <p>social housing with home care</p> <p>Elderly daycare centre</p> <p>home care for the elderly</p> <p>In certain conditions, the local government pays part of the bed fee for the nursing home</p>
5.	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Elderly have difficulty in visiting the store</p> <p>cost of nursing home space (bed)</p> <p>caring for family members</p>		<p>driving if absolutely necessary (hospital)</p> <p>In certain conditions, the local government pays part of the bed fee for the nursing home</p> <p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p>

	<p>people with disabilities</p> <p>unemployed</p>	<p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p>	<p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p>	<p>Day Centre</p>
6	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>families with alcoholic parents</p> <p>availability of food in the villages</p> <p>caring for family members</p> <p>unemployed</p> <p>people with disabilities</p> <p>the elderly</p>	<p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p>	<p>driving if absolutely necessary (hospital)</p> <p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p>	<p>Move children to boarding school</p> <p>Municipality finances a mobile shop (shop in a vehicle)</p> <p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p> <p>In certain conditions, the local government pays part of the bed fee for the nursing home</p>
7	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>Poverty / scarcity families, failure to cope caring for family members</p> <p>people with disabilities</p> <p>unemployed</p> <p>housing problems</p> <p>the high cost of central heating costs</p>	<p>Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office</p>	<p>driving if absolutely necessary (hospital)</p> <p>running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids</p>	<p>financial support</p> <p>family support person (Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p> <p>support person for 12 h per week</p> <p>Social housing</p> <p>This township has taken over the furnace building and controls the costs and income</p>
8	<p>Lack of transport</p> <p>a large number of disability pensioners</p> <p>caring for family members</p>			<p>(Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family)</p> <p>Foster Care Agreement</p>

	people with disabilities unemployed the elderly	Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office	running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids	home care
9	stray children, truancy availability of food in the villages caring for family members people with disabilities unemployed	Health Insurance coverage is valid, if registered with the Unemployment office	cooperation between parents and school running around associated with obtaining prosthetic, orthopaedic and other aids	the township subsidizes the mobile shop (shop in a vehicle) (Foster care - personal care in a suitable family, not the care receiver's family) Foster Care Agreement emergency work in the area, local government pays salaries

We observe that the understanding of social services at the local level is limited to the distribution of social benefits, including the allocation of subsistence benefits funded from the state budget. Social benefits are mostly target group based, but at the same time they are limited to the minimum and help to alleviate only deep poverty. In general the local governments support only individuals from single person households as according to the Family Law Act every family member is subject to a mutual maintenance obligation. The Family Law Act does not take into account the changes in the modern day society, where adult children of elderly persons may reside in different parts of the world, or if there are children with disabilities in the family or if adult people with disabilities are deprived of their right for a personal caregiver. As a result the people don't receive sufficient assistance either from the national or local support mechanisms. Sohlberg (2009) has stated that the fundamental rights are the individual rights, independent of the identity of the beneficiary.

The main problem, there is no interconnected network of services, with a linked impact: the social worker intervenes and influences, but activities are individual, there is lack of support functions and services, in other words, activities are at the level of individuals. The Social Commission participates in client work, but they also do either concern the development or the provision of social services.

Support services are offered to children in the county capitals and the associated queues, travel costs, parents can not get to appointments to see

specialists on work days, etc. A few existing services, mostly home care or day centres, are located in the centres, the service is not accessible for single elderly and disabled people, living in isolated villages. Many of the people potentially needing help simply do not receive it.

A local government administration might provide functions and services defined by a central government, or a local government might enable action and management of functions and services that are provided by others, political accountability mechanisms (Knippenberg 2007). Perhaps, State has unrealistic expectations concerning local governments - according to the Social Welfare Act the target groups are children, elderly people and people with disabilities and other special needs. In addition to that there is a list of social services compulsory for all. There is scanty support available to local governments from the state budget and all local services have to be financed through the local budget. Moreover, one must review the list of social services specified in the Act, because as previously stated, the citizen has the right to know what types of service or other forms of support from the municipality they are able to apply for. The right to receive assistance comes from the constitution, and the exercising of this right should not depend on the region and local authority, where the individual or the family lives.

The Impact of Decision-making processes for the Social Welfare Administration

The practice of social work is directly related to the decision-making processes at the local government level. According to the concept of a function-based organisation a local government could be described as a hierarchical system consisting of a representative body (municipal council) and an executive body. The representative body or a municipal council adopts local laws and regulations; the executive body is the municipal government. The executive powers of a local government remain in force until the end of the term of mandate of the municipal council.

The Social Affairs Committee

The council may form both standing and ad hoc committees (alaline/ajutine komisjon) as determined in the statute of a local authority. Law prescribes only the formation of an audit committee (revisjonikomisjon). The chairmen of all committees and all members of the audit committee must be elected from among the council members. Chairman (volikogu esimees) is the head of the council. The majority of the council elects the chairman of the council by the secret ballot. The chairman organises the work of the council, represents the council and fulfils other duties imposed by law or municipal statute.

The legislative base for the municipal council's Social Affairs Council is given in the Local Government Organisation Act - passed 02.06.1993 RT I 1993, 37, 558 - in § 47 Council committees:

(1) The council may establish standing committees and ad hoc committees. Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen shall be selected from among the council members. Each council member has the right to be a member of at least one of the committees. Other members of the Committees will be confirmed by the chairman of the committee.

(2) The basis of the council committees and its procedures are provided by the statutes of the rural municipality or city. and to § 67, 20 The formation and dissolution of council committees, their selection of chairmen and vice chairmen from among the council members and committee members shall be approved.

In local government, the most important legislation governing its activities is the municipal statutes, which also define the rules of procedure of the committees. The decision of establish or not to establish a committee is a strategic question for the municipality.

Municipal statutes do not directly regulate the forming of the Social Affairs Committee, but in practice, the Social Affairs Committee Chairman is a council member, who shall select the members of the Committee. The collected data suggests that either 1) the territorial principle (each village), 2) a sectoral approach (school, day care, pensioners, etc.), or 3) the principles of professionals (school teacher, teacher of kindergarten, nurse, etc.) are followed. In any case, we can say that the elected people have a wide variety of professional qualifications, life experience and understanding of social welfare - and work.

Table 4. The Representations of types for the Social Committee in Local Municipal

	1	2.	3	4.	5.	6	7	8	9
Township Government Social Affairs Committee	n o	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	n o
Municipal council Social Affairs Committee	ye s	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Data suggests that one of the townships does not have a Social Affairs Committee, at the same time another has - both a Town Council

Social Affairs Committee and Municipal Government Social Affairs Committee.

The Committee's objectives and activities of social competence, rules of procedure

The statutes of the Social Affairs Committee for two townships are available publicly; therefore for the rest of the municipalities the municipal statutes have been used as the basis. The political-administrative functions of the Municipal Council's Social Affairs Committee are divided as follows:

- Participation in the development of the township development plan
- Formulation of the budget by sectors,
- Drafting of legislation and review of acts related to the field.

The council's Social Affairs Committee shall submit proposals to either the council or the municipal government, where the final decision shall be made, resulting in an expanded political leadership, which *includes the principle of collegial decision-making*. The Social Affairs Committee should provide only general guidance; in practice the main activities are participating in client work - deciding on the allocation of social benefits and the use of social services. This practice includes several problems stemming from social work ethics and the independence of the profession, autonomy based on a number of problems.

In analysing government legislation, we could not find a legislative act, which would give them the right to discuss and decide about clients, even if it is only at the proposal level. Social Affairs Committee Members justify the reasons for their own social activities with 1)The Social Affairs Committee has been there all the time 2) Movement of information, especially on matters relating to children; 3) Contribution to community-based problem solving.

The task and responsibility of the Social Affairs Committee of Municipal Government

A Social Affairs Committee of Municipal Government exists according to the research only in one township, with the task of discussing the giving of benefits. This local government has two committees, both a council social affairs committee and a municipal government social affairs committee. Here, the discussion of questions regarding clients is the responsibility of the municipal government social affairs committee, while the council social affairs committee concern with solving strategic matters.

Describe the framework we are utilizing the results from the early article (Raudava 2013a). The framework and the responsibility are shared between political and administrative functions involving non-professionals, who are professionals in another field, or volunteers (Social Affairs Committee; *Social Affairs Committee of Municipal Government*). Based on

the dates, we describe the four combinations, how has the local government developed the framework.

- 1) The simple structure, based by law, the social worker only employer = the combination $A + B + Ca$;
- 2) The double political structure, the social worker only employer = the combination $A + Aa + B + Ca$;
- 3) The double political structure, the social worker is member of the administrative government = the combination $A + Aa + B + Cb$;
- 4) The triple political structure, the social worker only employer = the combination $Aa + B + Bb + Ca$.

The social affairs committee could be regarded as a citizenship based working method if its activity was limited to solving strategic matters. This practice, where *people from the street* are directly related to client work, having decision making rights on issues concerning the client; then, it will be regarded as historic. During the course of this study it has become clear, that practice of social work is basically the distribution of various types of social benefits. The problem is that the social benefits paid out from the budgets of local governments are doubly politicized at: 1) the social affairs commission level, who reviews the allocation and 2) at the council level, who defines the type and amount, and makes the decision regarding allocation of benefits or the social services. Thus, the function of the social work itself is politicizing in the local government.

The most important thing is always the question of how to protect the client time and again. First, the client protection issue, as the Social Affairs Committee members are ordinary rural residents, who become aware of all client cases and details, but at the same time are not limited by the confidentiality obligation; adding to this debate about the council or municipal government, the client case can become doubly public. The third level of disclosure comes from the Ministry of Social Affairs new IT solution, which requires client reports in addition to statistical reports. This study shows how the client's "case" will travel around from the various committees and officials, including the Ministry of Social Affairs. Although the local government civil service law requiring the duty to maintain confidentiality applies to some, this Act does not apply to the Social Affairs Committee members. So the situation is that although there is a Data protection law 15.02.2007 (RT I 2007, 24, 127) 01.01.2008, in practice we fail in the protection of client information. The function of decision-making of case study is harmful to the client; social workers also have to protect the clients and advocate for their best interests.

The Function of Control

Municipal welfare services are not to be equated with voluntary welfare services, since the municipality is a representative of public authority

(Annus, Aaviksoo 2002). Local municipality is considered the main agent in the field of social welfare, especially in solving the problems around the availability of social services. According to the Social Welfare Act (RT I 1995, 21, 323) the responsibilities of a local municipality cover a wide range of social benefits to the management of welfare institutions for children, elderly people, people with disabilities etc. The governmental benefits are distributed to the needy through the municipal budget.

The Estonian government gives the responsibility to local municipalities but the government does not control how the local municipalities observe the order. Standards and certificates are missing, nobody has control of social services (work) in the local municipality (the government is the supervisor of only money from the public budget), and the local municipal council ones not accept the rights of local residents.

The long period, during 2002- 2011, didn't exist the consistent public control over the social services of local government. The National Audit Office of Estonia has published the two reports in 2012: "Assumptions for provision of public services in small and remote local authorities" and "Child welfare and child protection as local government functions need more specific rules". The Ministry of Social Affairs compiles data to produce overall statistics, but does not show the description of the situation on the ground.

The state comptroller jurisdiction over the activities of local authorities in the field of social welfare has been assigned to the county governments, in the current period this relates only to checking the legality of allocation of benefits funded by the state budget.

Selection criteria are necessary as a basis for lowering these. Control and evaluation systems are missing in the social field that, which has not been developed, is replaced by the local government collective / collegial decision-making mechanism .At the same time, it is difficult to find examples how information is collected from local residents - what type of help and support they need from the local government.

Conclusion

The start of planning in local government should follow two principles firstly; find the risk groups who are excluded from state's welfare system or who are in the weakness situation. European Social Work has to confront the fact that European and national policies, and particularly social policies, have so far biased to racial identities not only on the part of the ethnic minorities, but also on the side of the traditional "white" majorities. This leads to a mandate for the profession to examine not only forms of practice critically, but also the whole development of social policies in regard to their possible oppress implications (Imre 2010; Ferguson 2009; Lorenz 2008; Gal & Gal 2007). The European Union has been conceived as

a community of law and is based on the rule of law (von Danwitz 2010) thus secondly, the planners however, they must know and respect the legal framework both at the EU and state's level.

The social work must promote social justice, as the profession strives to reach out to and empower all people (Alphose, George and Moffatt 2008; Sewpaul & Jones 2005). Examine the function of practice of social work (services) we could separate the four dominate practice: 1) the benefits from the local budget, 2) the benefit from the state's budget, 3) local social care services and 4) the practice of the employer of the social work field. There do exist too many barriers and we are concerning the problem with small amounts. The state is putting the summa of benefits own the budget of social security, but for the individual level it does help alleviate deep impoverishment only.

Unfortunately, offered social services are not addressed in a systematic way resulting on the one hand in a more individual approach to the client, which is a positive effect, but on the other hand it gives social worker an opportunity to remain impassive or to focus on areas which seem to be more inspiring from his/her personal point of view (for example work with elderly people).

At the local government level, the Social Affairs Committee or Social Affairs Committee of Municipal Government looking for the element of the framework or the function view, it not necessary act. Reflect the idea of the function-based organization, where the positions and functions of each employee are clearly specified, with each having a specific function to perform (Kidd 2010; McAuley, Duberley & Johnson 2007; Hatch & Cunliffe 2006). Further, we have analysed the current situation of the Social Affairs Committee submitting proposals either to the municipal council or the municipal government, where the final decisions are to be made. The decision-making process follows the principle of collegiality and unfortunately, we can say, the decisions at the client level turn out to be politicised. The local council and municipal administration have to make decisions, while the citizens have a right to use the social services and social benefits. Finally, we are pointing based upon the earlier research results (Raudava 2013a) to the ambivalent position of the people employed in the social work field: at the client level the decision making process is political and often the social worker is not included in the implementation process of the social policy in local government level.

The three previous functions are closely linked to the fourth function and the question remains as who has to monitor the activities of the local government and how. As mentioned before Estonia has not provided either a description of social work outcomes or the criteria as how to evaluate the outcomes and their impact, which is why from the point of view of the client

the current situation is very vague. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to reduce the politicization of the client work and at the same time to secure that a certain level of services and benefits for every local inhabitant is provided.

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