
Supervision in Caritative Social Work

Supervīzija karitatīvajā sociālajā darbā

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The article deals with the specific character and main principles of supervision in Caritative social work describing the content of the notion *caritas* and development of the caritative social work as a new profession in Latvia. The article analyses the common methodological sources of Caritative social work and its supervision: Tradition of the social ministry of the Church, Patristic anthropology, and social agenda of Europe. The article emphasizes the transformative and ethical nature of supervision, and the anthropological centre of the process of supervision as a source of the professional identity and *caritas* capability.

Key words: Caritative social work, supervision, caritative supervision, Patristic anthropology, professional identity, helping professions.

1. Development and definition of the Caritative social work (CSW) in Latvia

Profession of Caritative social work has been developed in Latvia since 1997 – as the basic study program at Latvian Christian Academy (LCA) since its accreditation. The study program provides interdisciplinary based professional socially oriented education which incorporates the Church Tradition of anthropology and social ministry. In 2003 profession of CSW was registered into Classification of Occupations and in 2007 got final legitimating in the Law of Social Services and Social Assistance which defines “the Caritative social work as analogous to that of social work.” The goal of CSW is “to provide assistance to persons, families, groups or society in general to recover ability of social and spiritual functioning” (The Law of Social Services and Social Assistance). Social problem from the perspective of Caritative social work is understood as a wholeness of social, physical, psychological, spiritual ingredients.

Specific and innovative character of Caritative social work is determined by the phenomenon of *caritas* (Latin term, equivalent to Greek *agape*) – divine energy of love functioning through human person; active compassion; charity. *Caritas* capability lies in the heart of the personal professional identity of the Caritative social worker.

The caritative methods and professional skills stem from the professional identity and motivation of the PERSON: not methodical techniques but personalities are the bearers or agents of *caritas*. That is the reason why caritative technologies and methods cannot be mechanically borrowed or copied. The factor of personality, its motivation, respect, compassion, and love is the most determinative in the Caritative social work as a helping profession.

Caritas-based social work exists not only by the extrinsic delivering of Christian charity tradition by the means of programs and acquired methods, but also simultaneously in deeper sense – by intrinsic participation of an actor in God’s life. It necessarily relates with specific human qualities such as freedom, creativity, responsibility, and Eucharistic mode of being. These qualities stem from the ontological concept of person formulated by the Greek Church fathers in 4th century. Christian theology summarizing the heritage of Hellenic philosophy introduced its novelty: human being as a person was interpreted deriving its meaning from God who is the Person and the source of all personological existence. “He is the one personalizing Person, while we are personalized persons who draw from him the true substance of our personal being both in relation to God and in relation to one another” (Torrance, 1989, 39).

As follows, human being as a person is characterized by:

1. conformity to God’s image (*Imago Dei*),
2. freedom that protects the human concept from determinism and reductionism, and makes human person able to create and bear responsibility according its intrinsic *Imago*,
3. sociality or orientation towards relationships that primary has nature of love. It is the question about person’s ecstatic (< Gr. *ek-stasis* – ‘state outside’) or self-overcoming, self-leaving love in order to be rooted in community of relationships where it becomes possible to discover and recognize the transcendental spiritual essence of a person (Яннарас, 2005),
4. transparency of motivation (especially important for practitioners in helping professions).

2. Problem of supervision for Caritative social workers

The development of the profession of supervision as an integral part of the profession of social and Caritative social work in Latvia is still in process – the first step for professionalization of supervisions has been achieved – Latvian Christian Academy together with academicians and supervisors from other universities and professional organizations in 2013 has worked out and Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Latvia in 2014 has approved the **standard of the profession of supervisor** that allows development of Master level study programs in supervision in Latvia. Latvian Christian Academy in 2014-2015 has developed and started **Professional master study program in Supervision** for social workers.

Today supervisions for caritative social specialists are mainly led by supervisors-psychologists, infrequently – by supervisors-social work specialists. Methods orientated on discussing social work process (e.g., how to manage social case; what to do with aggressive client etc.), or psychological ‘ventilation’, or other psychological methods used in these supervisions do not reach the inner goal of supervision regarding the caritative supervisees. Expected goals of the caritative supervision:

1. strengthening the *caritas* capability in the personality of practitioner. Today the concept of supervision turns towards the focus on the person of supervisee rather than the work, defining the supervision as a moral agency which helps the practitioner to activate his inner recourses (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2006; Šneiders, 2005; Кулаков, 2002);

2. stabilizing professional identity, call, motivation. The issue of clearing up the motivation in helping professions is one of the topicalities of supervision (Hawkins & Shoheit, 2007). Supervisions of study field-work at Latvian Christian Academy show that motivation of helping could be influenced by different moral, spiritual and psychological complexes as stab of guilt, remorse, exaggerated feeling of responsibility, sense of omnipotence, need of controlling, different compensation models, subjective projections on the image of God, etc.
3. and resultantly – developing professional skills and competences.

Conclusion: Caritative social work needs supervision of adequate/ common methodological sources and principles, as is the Caritative social work.

3. Common methodological sources and principles of CSW and caritative supervision

There are three interconnected methodological sources of CSW – pattern of the Church's social ministry; anthropology of the Church Fathers (so-called Patristic anthropology); and heritage of Christian Europe and its social agenda:

1. Principles of the social ministry (deacony) of the historical traditional Church (*caritas* practice):

- Serving to each human person with respect, compassion, and love;
- Theocentric motivation and sacred recourses of ministry;
- Ecclesial traditional techniques of deacony;
- Spiritual/ pastoral guidance (supervision) of ministers.

2. Patristic anthropology – holistic teaching about man. Seeking for new holistic anthropological paradigm, social work stretches back to Patristic or Byzantine anthropology (to the Church Fathers of 4-14th centuries) as it offers undivided unity of theory and spiritual empirical practice. The treasure of Patristic anthropology is developed through centuries, based and verified in the experience of tradition of spiritual practice, albeit this anthropological approach is not esoterically closed within itself. Quite contrary, by providing paradigmatic positions to other humanitarian and social sciences it is open for dialogue. Theology of the Greek or Byzantine Church due to its unaffected holistic identity is able to perform an interdisciplinary approach and possesses the necessary potential to carry out the principle called “theology as a radical human science” in most authentic way even today. Methodology of practical implementation of this interdisciplinary principle was worked out by renowned Catholic theologian Karl Rahner. He believes that “theological anthropology is not at all the extension of a secular human science but is its centre” or *radix* (Latin ‘root’) (Rahner, 1975, 387-406). Principles of patristic anthropology forming the shape of CSW and supervision:

- Potential of personality – *Imago Dei* – as a core of the extrinsic action (methods, techniques) and it's actualization in supervision. Perspective of God's image and likeness defines inner dynamism of human existence, i.e., active (energetical) mutual cooperation or synergic relationships with God in his/her salvation. Due to existing relationships with his own source of spiritual life any human may experience “ontological auto-transformation” (Horujy, 2005), the goal of which is deification of the human or his unity with God.

- Possibility of synergic transformation.
 - Spiritual reason (Gr. *nous*) which is open to the Truth.
 - System and types of anthropological pathologies which Fathers have defined as “misuse of the powers of the soul” and, according to St. Dorotheos, “a sickness of the soul depriving it of its natural health, which is virtue” (Hierotheos, Metropolitan of Nafpaktos, 2000, 251).
 - *Eucharistic* mode of being (Church sacraments) as authentic spiritual resources.
 - Such categories as “The Other”, “humility – confession of sins – serving” show ethical dimension of Patristic anthropology. Church Fathers define humility as existential state, as all-embracing understanding of individualistic insufficiency to become a perfect personality, the one that has inherited its own identity, as well the necessity of communication. Thus unfolds the anthropological space for communication between different levels of the human being for caritative cohesion and solidarity, and the quality of personal life gains relevant new dimensions.
3. Values of social agenda of Europe and Christian Democracy:
- Solidarity; common good;
 - Reciprocity; cooperation;
 - Communitarian thinking;
 - Moral consciousness.

4. Supervision as a space of truth and ethical growth

Regarding the supervision as a space of ethical standards and moral development there should not be ignored following problem, which become essential in the process of implementation of the ethical and anthropological strategies during the process of supervision. Caritative supervisor should be very conscious of moral discourse changes in up-to-date social consciousness. In the context of crisis of classical European ethics, classical proclamation of moral norms and principles in helping professions (characteristic to the traditional European Christianity for centuries) has become ineffective. Tracing the decline process of the classical moral consciousness of society, theologians and philosophers (*see* Yannaras, 1996; Horujy, 2005) have outlined several phases:

- Rejection of platonic (and later patristic) ontology or *kosmos noetos*. This stage has been basically completed to the end of the 19th century with the loss of consciousness of sacred unity of humans, nature and God. To this time the noticeable presence of platonizing and patristic metaphysics in European thought was probably restricted to Russian Orthodox theology and religious philosophy.
- Rejection of the Cartesian epistemological subject – the famous “death of subject” widely discussed at the beginning of 20th c.
- Rejection of Kantian ethical subject. This “death of ethical subject” is a result of the Second World War and the experience of the Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism, which was quite correctly interpreted as a total bankruptcy of classical ethics.

Therefore classical propositional formulas, 'ethical dogmas' from above couldn't be practically personified by modern society, even by Christian communities and social workers or their clients, and supervisors and supervisees. Nevertheless, searching for possibilities of regaining authority, social worker/ supervisor should not fall in another extreme – losing the Truth in efforts of improving social, etc. situation.

Describing this problem of moral "efficacy" Orthodox philosopher Christos Yannaras (Yannaras, 1996, 196) analyzes the specific character of Orthodox ethos, which is imbedded into Eucharistic community and Truth. There is a distinction between Truth-based moral position and "ethics of improvement" peculiar to a large part of Western Christianity.

The expectations of direct improvement of outer situation or other person (supervisee or client) are based on two premises, which are taken as self-evident:

- One such premise is that organized effort, where individuals enlist in struggles against other individuals or structures, which maintain social injustice, is capable of bearing fruit and restoring the life of society as a whole to its correct functioning.
- The other premise is the conviction, that correct functioning of life can be secured by an objective, rationalistic control of the individual's rights and duties.

On the other hand, Truth of the Church is still a teaching with the power to transfigure the world. The problem arises when "objectification of Truth" (Yannaras, 1996, 201) comes about. The historical and cultural life of the West has been built identifying the truth with a particular function of human logic. "Objective" truth presupposes rationality as the only possible way of interpreting and ordering natural and societal reality. In modern Western consciousness, truth is no longer something achieved by a personal approach and personal experience, by anthropological transformation in the process of striving for the Truth, but a complete, closed system of concepts. When Truth becomes "objective," this leads to the "infallibility" of its representatives, of the bureaucratic structures.

The ethics of the supervision aims neither at an "improvement" in the objective conditions of life, nor at an "improvement" in the character of other individuals. Its aim is to enable life to operate in the limitless scope personal freedom, the freedom that can be existentially realized only as an event of communion or 'communal becoming'.

Also in Russian Orthodox theology we can find similar theological position – Sergey Horujy proposes topicality of 'experiential ethics' today opposed to any abstract ethics (Horujy, 2005). This type of *ethos* stems from Orthodox Patristic and monastic ethical tradition that is based two factors: 1) divine and human love, and 2) personal communion. This does not make ethics a doctrine; it is rather like a live instruction or counselling. Contrary to other frequent accusations of ascetic ethics, it is not egoistic or purely individualistic. The God-man connection, being personal, includes at the same time rich inter-subjective aspects. These inter-subjective or "councilary" (Russ. *soborny*) aspects shapes appropriate methodology of developing solidarity, associations and communities – links of life and ethically-based relations which penetrates and heals the canvas of social life.

At the starting point, the Ethical Space, i.e. the sphere of validity of ethical judgments, coincides here with the Space of the personal experience of love and *praxis* of *caritas*. This personal ethical space is, of course, much smaller than whole Human

Space (space of human and social being), which serves as Ethical Space for classical European ethics. However, the experiential Ethical Space is also expanding, keeping always its personalistic and cohesive nature.

The process of approaching and experiencing the Truth in the relational space of supervision is an important catalyst of the reciprocal transformation of participants of supervision (*see* Weld, 2012). Emphasis on the transformative function of supervision becomes more and more remarkable (*see* Shohet, 2011).

Summing up aforesaid, let us consider Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Surozh on spiritual supervision of person:

“Spiritual guidance or supervision is not a technique, – it is a gentle (not a top-down activity restricting the freedom of personality) and self-sacrificing ministry leading both – the supervisor and supervisee – to the spiritual growth and transformation” (Антоний (Блум), митрополит Сурожский, 2005, 33).

5. Problems of social work and Caritative social work practice

Another problem of practice: very often supervisors of Latvian Christian Academy supervise the groups of social workers (not caritative) or individual social workers. During years 2012-2013 is being summarized data of typical problems shared by practitioners:

- Bureaucracy, paper work;
- Overload;
- Need, material problems (of both clients and social workers);
- Aggressiveness of the governing body; lack of cooperation with leaders and authorities (feeling like ‘empty space’);
- Loss of professional identity;
- Aggressiveness of the clients;
- Permanent stress;
- Indifference.

These problems denote and justify one essential tendency peculiar to the helping professions nowadays – it is a tendency of losing a man; disappearing of a person; or “ anthropologic emptiness. Therefore *Caritas*-oriented supervision with its transformational anthropological paradigm today is the most appropriate space for re-creation of the professional motivation for different specialists of helping professions (not only for Caritative social workers).

Conclusions

1. Methodological core of *Caritas*-orientated supervision is anthropology and anthropologically ethical changes.
2. Credo of CSW and its supervision: in the midst of methodic schemata, never lose a man, a living human person – professional growth stems from understanding truth and renewing caritative self-identity.

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Kopsavilkums

Raksts aplūko karitatīvā sociālā darba supervīzijas specifiku un galvenos principus, balstoties jēdziena *caritas* un karitatīvā sociālā darba saturā un metodoloģijā. Tā kā karitatīvais sociālais darbs ir jauna profesija Latvijā, tai nepieciešama arī metodoloģiski adekvāta supervīzija, kas balstās 1) Baznīcas sociālās kalpošanas tradīcijā un garīgās pārraudzības praksē, 2) patristiskās antropoloģijas zināšanās un askētiskajā pieredzē, jo tā ir pamats transformatīvām pārmaiņām cilvēkā, 3) mūsdienu Eiropas sociālo procesu izpētē, kas nosaka palīdzīgo profesiju attīstības tendences, tātad arī supervīzijas uzdevumus.

Rakstā ir uzsvērts šodien Eiropā ļoti aktuālais karitatīvās supervīzijas transformatīvais un ētiskais raksturs, kā arī supervīzijas procesa antropoloģiskais smaguma centrs, kas nodrošina darbinieku profesionālās identitātes un karitatīvās kapacitātes attīstīšanu supervīzijas procesā. Karitatīvās supervīzijas uzsvars ir nevis primāri uz sociālās problēmas risināšanas vai gadījuma vadīšanas tehnisko prasmju pilnveidi, bet uz darbinieka personības pilnveidi, garīgo stabilizāciju, profesionālo identitāti un pašapziņu, kas ir kā pamats, uz kura var attīstīt profesionālo metožu lietošanas prasmes.

Arī mūsdienā aktuālākās supervīzijas tendences apstiprina šo cilvēkcentrēto ievirzi sekulārajās palīdzošajās profesijās: supervīzija tiek definēta kā morālētiska starpniecība, kas palīdz praktiķim aktivizēt viņa iekšējos resursus (*skat.* Sergiovanni, Starratt, 2006; Šneiders, 2005; Кулаков, 2002); supervīzijas aktualitāte šobrīd ir cilvēka motivācijas problēmas risināšana un profesionālā aicinājuma rekreācija (Hawkins, Shohet, 2007). Iemesls šādam pavērsienam 'no metodēm uz cilvēku' rodams vispārējā negatīvā parādībā palīdzošajās profesijās, ko dēvē par 'cilvēka pazaudēšanu' jeb 'antropoloģisko tukšumu'. Cilvēka pazūšana attiecināma gan uz klientu (pacientu), gan uz pašu praktiķi. To parāda arī pētījums, ko autore veikusi 2014. gadā, supervīzējot sociālos un karitatīvos sociālos darbiniekus – tika apkopotas praktiķu uzrādītās tipiskākās problēmas, kas apgrūtina profesionālo darbību un ko autore klasificē kā cilvēka personiskās un profesionālās identitātes izstumšanas faktorus no profesionālās vides. Galvenās apkopotās problēmas: birokrātisko prasību pieaugums; pārmērīga slodze; nepietiekošs atalgojums; sadarbības trūkums ar administrējošo korpusu (jušanās kā 'tukšai vietai'); klientu agresivitāte; paša darbinieka dusmas; pastāvīgs stress; vienaldzība pret klientiem kā reakcija uz emocionālo pārslodzi.

Šajā kontekstā aktuāla ir karitatīvā sociālā darba profesija, kas principiāli balstās antropoloģiskajā paradigmā un caritas kapacitātē, saprotot caritas kā dievišķās neradītās mīlestības enerģijas darbību cilvēka struktūrā, tādējādi profesijas centrā liekot pietāti un mīlestības praksi attiecībā pret cilvēku. Un attiecīgi aktuāla ir arī karitatīvā supervīzija, kuras mērķis ir šī personības spēka un cilvēcības rekreācija profesionālajā kontekstā. Metropolīts Antonijs (Blūms) par palīdzošo profesiju supervīziju: "Supervīzija jeb garīgā pārraudzība nav tehnika, – tā ir maiga (nevis 'no augšas uz leju' norādoša aktivitāte, kas jebkādā veidā iegrožo cilvēka brīvību un pašcieņu), un sevi ziedojoša kalpošana, kas ved abus – gan supervīzoru, gan supervīzējamo – uz garīgu izaugsmi un pārtapšanu."

Atslēgas vārdi: karitatīvais sociālais darbs, supervīzija, karitatīvā supervīzija, patristiskā antropoloģija, profesionālā identitāte, palīdzošās profesijas.



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