

The impact of privatization on the quality of social services for seniors

Lucie Pawlasova

The development of the 70's of the 20th century brought a change of the state, which began to reduce its role as service providers and funders of social protection and its role has been transformed into the role of regulator. The reform of social services should involve the introduction of market mechanisms, mediation of competition, leading to efficiency gains and savings, minimal government support and preference for individualism and individual choice of earlier clients - now customers. The introduction of the market in social work is associated with the privatization of public services. In this context, they are on public services imposed new requirements. These are an emphasis on high quality, reasonable price and response to individual needs of customer / user (Harris, 2003). In addition to the state, which was in the past previously the single provider of social services, created since 1990 NGOs and in recent years also a private organization.

There is a need for research that captures the interpretation of the privatization of social services from the perspective of professionals involved in social services for seniors.

From April to July 2010 conducted research titled "**Social services in postindustrial society. Developed on the example of Ostrava**" on the Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava. This qualitative research has two parts. The first of these focuses spatial aspects of the city Ostrava in relation to need, availability and organization of social services for seniors. The aim of the second part was to find information what the respondents mean about the concept of privatization, how it can manifest in social work and the impact of privatization on the quality of social services.

In this research we contacted a representative of government organizations, nongovernmental and private organizations, total of 19 communication partners. The respondents were the leaders of these organizations, the ordinary social workers and social service workers, but also representatives of the city of Ostrava and Moravian-Silesian Region.

The development of communication and information technologies, socio-demographic changes, migration, the increasing inequality between individuals and communities, increasing globalization, market liberalization and the associated free movement of persons and services makes traditional systems of social protection for fundamental changes. In this context, the public services subject to new requirements. These are an emphasis on high quality, reasonable price and ability to respond to individual needs of customer / user. For these reasons, engaged in advanced countries the issue of public services and the quality of attention (Jabůrková, Mátl, 2007).

Diskussion about quality and quality management in social institutions appears only in recent years. Economic stagnation, savings in government budgets have led first to greater attention to ensuring the quality to the debate and partly to the introduction of quality management system (Beck, Schwarz, 2004).

Quality control, quality assurance, quality control as a concept and methodology have been introduced at the beginning of the 80th years. Since then, the whole sector developed with a view to setting standards, their definition, description, measurement and quality assessment in different contexts. It was accept three main quality criteria: effectiveness, efficiency and economy (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, 2002).

It is important to emphasize that there is no objective for all people equally valid criterion for the quality (Mainhold, Matul, 2003), there is no absolute definition of quality, because what is considered as "quality" is dependent on political, social, psychological, cultural, historical and economic influences (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, 2002).

We have the research also focused on the question of the quality of social services to identify, what our communication partners mean about the concept of service quality, what are indicators of social services and what the impact of privatization on service quality.

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Lucie Pawlasova

University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

Contact information: lucie.pawlasova@osu.cz