

Slovak Psychology Focused on Persons with the Visual Impairments: Reflection on the Past and Present Developments of Theory and Practice

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Paper overview

- Past and present about Slovakia (in brief)
- Past and present developments in psychology field in Slovakia
- Past and present development of pathopsychology / psychology of individuals with the impairments
 - concept development, prevailing theoretical models
 - main research outcomes
- Challenges for psychology in future



Past and present about Slovakia in brief

Geography – 49.036 km²

Krahule Hill – geographical centre of Europe; Danube
East Slovakian Plains Carpathian Mountain range (95
m to 2665 m a.s.l. - Gerlach Peak at Vysoké Tatry)

Population - 5,415,949 inhabitants

average life expectancy 68 yrs ^M and 77 yrs ^W
density 109/km²

Religion

Roman Catholic 60.4%; Evangelical 6.2%;
Greek Orthodox 3.4%; Calvinist 1.6%;
Russian Orthodox 0.7%; Jewish

Archeological findings

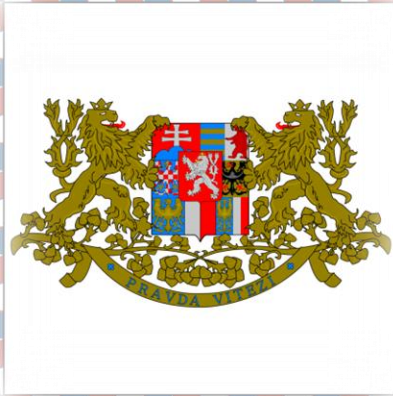
- Neanderthal type human skull and woman jaw;
- Bronze age; crossroad of Celts, Romans, Germanic tribes;
- **Slavic tribes** – 5.-6. ct. Samo's Empire;
- **813 – 833 Great Moravian Empire**
- **863 CYRIL and METHODIUS – Solun brothers**
Byzantine mission;
- Old Slavic script /Cyrillic/Azbuka; Linguistic standard of the Old Slavonic equal to Latin and Greek



History Medieval

- 10. ct. part of Hungarian feudal state
- 1241 Tatar invasion
- 1526 invasion of Turks (150 yrs)
- ... Austro-Hungarian Empire





History Modern

1918 Czechoslovak Republic

1938 Slovak Republic after Munich Treaty

1944 Slovak National Uprising against Nazism;

1945 Czechoslovakia free

1948 Communist party in power

1950 Stalinist era

1960 *socialism with human face*
pražské jaro – 1968

1989 November 17 – Velvet Revolution

Civic Forum (V. Havel)

Public Against Violence (Budař)

January 1, 1993 CSR split:

Czech Republic (Praha)

Slovak Republic (Bratislava)

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POSITIVE HERITAGE

- Technological, industrial infrastructure
- Cultural traditions
- Democratic political traditions
- Religious and moral traditions

NEGATIVE

- nationalism
- collaboration (Nazism)

➔ **reconciliation with the past and relationship enhancement necessary**



Past and present developments in psychology field in Slovakia

1

Ján HORVÁT (1732 - 1799): Lectures on Metaphysics
Universita Tyrnaviensis



Andrej VANDRÁK (1851): Enchiridion antropologiae psychicae
Fries' Jena Psychology School



Anton JUROVSKÝ (1946): Psychology. 1st textbook
1928 - Psychotechnological Institute



1939 - Psychology chair at Comenius University
- 1945

(1908 –
1985)

1948 psychology field ← dialectical & historical materialism

1955 Psychological Laboratory - Slovak Academy of Sciences

(...) but some psychologists / therapists partially „underground“
(Praha, Brno, Bratislava, Košice...), „schi“ public mentality

Past and present developments in psychology field in Slovakia

2

- 1957 Psychological Educational Clinic – Bratislava
- 1958 Slovak Psychological Society; journal *Studia psychologica*
- 1959 Dpt. of Psychology Comenius University re-establ.
- 1964 Institute of Child Psychology and **Pathopsychology**
- 1966 Child Psychology and **Pathopsychology** (journal)
- 1967 Institute of Special and Therapeutic Pedagogy
incl. Dpt. Psychology and **Pathopsychology** at CU FP
- 1968 National corporation Psychodiagnostic and didactic
testing (Czechoslovak)
- 1989  „Velvet Revolution“
- 1994 Act No 199/1994 on Psychological Activities and Slovak
Chamber of Psychologists
- 1995 Code of Ethics - Slovak Psychology Chamber



Miroslav T.
BAŽÁNY
(1923-1998)



Ladislav
POŽÁR
(1928-)

Past development of pathopsychology 1

- **Dpt. of Psychology and Pathopsychology** at Comenius University
Faculty of Philosophy / Faculty of Education
 - pathopsychology as a new psychological discipline;
 - pathopsychology courses for psychologists, special teachers, therapeutic educators
- **Ladislav KOŠČ (1974). General Pathopsychology.**



Pathopsychology = dealing with psychological anomalies and deficits, that means *borderline states, characteristics and processes in human personality in the area between normality and pathology*; with accompanying psychological phenomena and consequences of any life deficit (somatic or psychic illness or defect, or social deficiency), those deviated from the range of normality but without the quality or level of psychic abnormality or pathology (1924-)

Critique: 1) too close to neighbouring discipline psychopathology and
2) too wide or unspecific (e. g. life deficiency)

Past development of pathopsychology 2

Ladislav POŽÁR et Ivan JAKABČIC, Eva D. UHROVÁ, Miroslav ANDREÁNSKY (1984). Pathopsychology of Handicapped Child I.

Pathopsychology = *dealing with research of the principles of development of psychological processes, states and characteristics, overall personality structure in people with handicap as well as principles of psychological regulation of their behaviour;*

handicap - handicapped individual = from the psychological perspective an individual with difficulties in social participation (application) implicated from deficiency or deficit of an organ, its function or process; individual with characteristic difficulties in perception and understanding of the environment, in social interaction; at the same time with specific characteristics in personality development

Critique: 1) too heavy and not practical,

2) person with handicap vs. handicapped person

Psychology of individuals with impairments

Present development

3

Man / woman with a handicap = a man with the existence of a clear deficiency or an organ deficit or its function deficit, which modifies the processes of cognition, acquiring and applying social skills; and by whom at the same time specifics in the genese, structure and dynamics of personality are present

Commentary: not an existence of deficiency or a deficit are essential but their reflection into human experience and behaviour

Psychology of individuals with various handicaps /impairments = research of such behaviour and psychological phenomena which are beyond common framework of assessing of normality, but which at the same time do not reach the level of pathology or abnormality

Example: Is it normal to be blind or deaf...? It is hard to say, yes. Is he or she, because of that, ill or not normal? Definitely not. He or she is simply different...

Viera ANDREÁNSKA et Ivan JAKABŠIĆ, Elena BROZMANOVÁ, Miroslav ANDREÁNSKY (2012)

Psychology of individuals with impairments

Theoretical frameworks

- L. S. VYGOTSKIJ (1896 – 1934)
theory of human cultural and bio-social development – cultural-historical psychology ; mediatory role of culture (language) in the development of higher mental functions in ontogeny and phylogeny within the domain of cognitive-mediation theory; zone of proximal development (to max. potential)
- A. R. LURIIA (1902 – 1977)
(1962) Higher Cortical Functions in Man and Their Impairment Caused by Local Brain Damage; ... (1976) Basic Problems of Neurolinguistics
- I. P. PAVLOV (1849 – 1936), B. F. SKINNER (1904 – 1990)
theories of classical and operant conditioning; behavioural therapy
- A. ADLER (1870 – 1937)
personality theory (i. a. compensation concept)

Since 1989

- positive psychology, humanistic, systemic psychological models,
- move from integration to inclusion
- influence of various psychotherapy models in practice (incl. cognitive)



Psychology of individuals with impairments

Developments in psychological practice

- SLOVAK PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION (* 1990)
1999 standards of European association for psychotherapy adopted
- certified training:
 - Cognitive Behavioural T
 - Brief Psychoanalytical P
 - Systemic E
 - Process Oriented P
 - Katathym Imaginative P
 - Psychotraumatology I
 - Relaxation and Symbolic P
 - Gestalt P
 - Virginia Satir Family T
 - Person Centred T
 - Psychodynamic P
 - Concentrative Motion T
 - Logotherapy and Existential Analysis
- renewal of the Centres of Psychological and Special Education Counselling
- growth of private P/T practices; community services, NGOs
- Association of School Psychology (1990) – move towards integration and inclusion

Psychology of individuals with impairments

main research projects and outcomes

- **psychological aspects of social and professional integration**
of handicapped individual (1980) L. Požár et al.
- **specifics of personality development**
in handicapped child (1985) L. Požár et al. – experimental, cross-cultur. res., moral / prosocial behaviour
- **attitudes of society towards individuals with various kinds of handicaps**
(1991-95) Požár et al. - prejudices and false beliefs even among special teachers
- **social psychological aspects of forming integrated pupils groups**
(1996-98) Požár et al. - prerequisites for the integration success
- **psychological factors influencing the quality of life**
individuals with various kinds of handicaps (1998-2001) V. ANDREÁNSKA et al. - QL tools applied
- **psychological dimensions of a lifestyle**
in individuals with handicaps (2003-2005) V. ANDREÁNSKA et al. - health psychology concepts applied
- **conditions for the equal opportunities**
for individuals with handicap in majority soc. (2006-2009) V. ANDREÁNSKA - social concepts /constructs
- **cognitive versus social prerequisites of success**
in people with handicap (2009-12) M. Groma et al. – concept research
- **psychological determinants of participations and activities towards health care**
in people with handicap (2013-2015) Groma et al.

Challenges for psychology in future

- robust development in biomedicine , convergence (nano-bio-info-cogno) and **emerging technologies**;
 - mixing technology and human organism: „technology is nestling itself within us and between us, has knowledge about us and can act just like us“
 - „**intimate-technology revolution**“ - in the information society information technologies gaining intimacy characteristics
 - to be used beyond „treatment“ or „compensation“ procedures ➔
 - **functional /“performance“ enhancement** and/or **influencing of behaviour** even in „healthy“ individuals ➔
 - **persuasive technology, micromanagement** or **social engineering of behaviour** **touch** upon **fundamental rights** (right to privacy, physical integrity, to safe environment, to property, to freedom of thought, to freedom of conscience)
-
- **some technologies available to public** (DBS, etc.)
 - **false expectations of misinformed public** (vulnerable groups, i. a. youth) and **professionals ?** (transcranial direct current stimulation - tDCS)
 - expensive procedures vs. **scarcity of recourses** and **basic interventions /** treatments
 - **standard evidence-based procedures**, incl. specific ethical evaluations of this procedures not yet available , but **very necessary**

(Van Est et al., 2014. Intimate technology. The battle for our body and behaviour . Rathenau Instituut, NL) www.rathenau.nl



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**while reaching to stratosphere we are forgetting how
the flowers smell...**

**accompanying a person in pain brings us back to the
ground**

**The best wishes for fruitful conference and mutual
encounters**

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

