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## **PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF SOCIAL WORKERS: COULD IT BE CONSTRUCTED IN CHANGING LITHUANIAN SOCIETY?"**

The major aim of the presentation is to involve researchers in social work and social workers into discussion about deeper understanding, construction and further developments of their professional identities. Presenter discusses the theoretical and empirical premisses for constructing professional Identity of Social worker in changing Lithuanian society.

The concepts of the Identity (same-ness), multiply identity and professional identity as a social and cultural constructs are analysed and discussed in the first part of the presentation. As far as identity is constructed in the social context presenter's insights are based on the ideas of Giddens (2005) about self-identity and of *Castells (2006) about* collective-identity. These concepts are interrelated very strongly and this interconnectedness could serve as a "grass root" for better understanding of the concept of "professional identity" and particularly the process of construction professional identity of social worker. Some decade ago the concept of professional identity was defined as one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences (Ibarra, 1999). Most of the components of this concept description (attributes, beliefs, values) are depending so much on the social context which is rapidly changing, especially in post soviet societies, like Lithuanian is. Following up presenter points out some issues from the Lithuanian social context and discusses the questions: is it possible to construct professional identity of social worker in the "times of changing values", in the times of "loosing identities" (Ciubrinskas, 2008), etc? If yes, on which way? Under which circumstances? If no, how to be with social work profession?

In the second part of presentation author share some findings from empirical research done by the presenter in 2010 on boundaries of social worker in Lithuania. As far as boundaries reflects values and beliefs, behavioral patters of social worker they can be seen as a key components in constructing the professional identity of social worker. Methodology of research was based on ideas from contemporary research done at Seattle university, USA (Slay, H., Smith, 2010) on Professional identity construction and extremely important research in the field done at Sheffield Hallam University, UK on Professional boundaries in Social work (Doel, M. et all, 2009). At the end of presentation some „picture“ of boundaries in social work in Lithuania is made and some reflections on supporting the constrution of professional identity of social worker is shared.

**Key words:** *identity, social worker, professional identity constrution, boundaries*