

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide the reader with a comprehensive view of institutional developments in the area of mental health policy in the two compared countries - the Czech Republic and Slovakia. These countries have a long history, and their health policies were based on the same foundations. This determined their different direction also in the area of mental health policies, the effective setting of which is today more important than ever before. The available global and national statistics point to alarming numbers in the area of mental illness, lack of staff and capacity and insufficient financial resources devoted to this area.

Based on historical institutionalism and its concepts, I present identification of the reasons why both countries stagnated in the area of mental health policies for a long time and what were the critical junctures behind the change of institutional settings of mental health care policies to their present form. In the final part of the thesis, I compare these political settings, I identify the main similarities and differences, and also, I formulate the most problematic areas of the current mental health care systems. Since the Czech Republic started to implement the reform of psychiatric care several years ago and Slovakia is still waiting for this phase, the thesis can also serve as a lesson for the "near neighbour" of what mistakes to avoid in this process.

The thesis is complemented by the opinions and views of 12 experts on mental health.