Profession and Diffusion: Occupational Therapy in Bulgaria

Elaine Jean Struthers, Ph.D., OTR/L
Mihaela Todorova, BSc. OT
BULGARIA

Territory: 110,921 square KM

Language: Bulgarian / Cyrillic

Population: @ 7 million people

Capital City: Sofia

Full EU Membership: 2007

This is the poorest Nation in the EU with the NW corner of the country experiencing the greatest poverty of any EU Nation, however it is seen as a “financially disciplined” country with relatively lower debt burden (IMF, The Economist)
Kroeber Diffusion Theory

• An analysis of diffusion is an analysis of process; in anthropology in particular we are interested in the process through which the dissemination of objects, technology, ideas, values, and practices occur across populations and between groups of people (cultures, nations, regions, communities, neighborhoods).

• Culture change as a process within defined groups is evaluated for the emergence of elements that result from contact and interaction between groups.
Kroeber Diffusion Theory

• Alfred Kroeber developed the idea of **Stimulus Diffusion** in which a system or pattern spreads, but there are difficulties in regard to the transmission of the concrete content of the system; the idea of the complex or system is accepted, but it remains for the receiving culture to develop a new content.

• He states that “a new item or specific trait fills some need or is of obvious advantage in a culture which has not previously possessed it...”
STIMULUS DIFFUSION

WHAT IS A HAMMER AND HOW DO YOU USE IT?

CONTEXT & ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITY MAY DEFINE “HAMMER”
Kroeber Diffusion Theory

• “The process is of interest because it combines development within a culture with influence from outside. What is really involved in every true example of stimulus diffusion is the birth of a pattern new to the culture in which it develops…”

• “…diffusion in space, like transmission in time, is an exceedingly common process, [but] it is not something that operates automatically. There are selective factors making for and against diffusion…”

• “More understanding of the types of mechanism through which the generic diffusion process operates will certainly be worth having…”
Evaluation of Diffusion in The Adoption of the Profession of Occupational Therapy in Bulgaria

- What are the influences on development of the profession within the culture and the relevant external influences?
  - How do practitioners view the value of the profession?
- What unique new content and new patterns of occupational therapy practice are developing in Bulgaria?
- What are the selective factors making for and against diffusion of the profession?
- What mechanisms are of interest in assessing diffusion of the profession in Bulgaria that might inform the implementation of occupational therapy practice in other cultural milieus where it may advantageously serve the needs of the people?
Participants: Senior Occupational Therapy Students & Early Career Practitioners from Four Countries
METHODOLOGY TO EVALUATE THE EMIC AND ETIC VIEWS OF THE VALUE OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN BULGARIA

• Bulgarian participants provided written responses in an original survey (2011)
• Continuing use of a Delphi Analysis Process in which open ended questions and statements in different iterations derive information about the perceived value and meaning of the profession
• A snowball sampling technique is used in which one or two informants in each cultural milieu were asked to participate and requested to invite other practitioners to answer the questions
• Literature review on general categories of related / relevant topics
• Sample Criteria Original Survey: Bulgarian OT Student
• Sample criteria for the European participants
  – be advanced students (last year of curriculum) or early practitioners (first two years) of practice
  – Have practiced in Bulgaria as an occupational therapist or in a practicum
• Sample criteria for the American participants
• be advanced students (last year of curriculum) or early practitioners (first two years) of practice
• Sample Size Original Survey of Bulgarian Students n = 22
• Current sample size in Delphi Process n = 12
  – BG = 3; UK = 6; GER = 1; USA = 2
• Iterations of questions / statements:
  – Original Sample
    • When you are an occupational therapist, where would you like to work, what kind of people would you like to work with? Why?
    • What 2 things are you most worried about in your future career as an occupational therapist
    • What 2 things do you most want to accomplish in your career as an occupational therapist
    • Can you imagine and describe what you will be doing, where will you be living and working 5 years after you finish school
    • What are the best and the most difficult things you encountered in fieldwork
  – Delphi Analysis
    • Occupational Therapy is a profession that improves society. Explain
    • Occupational Therapy is a profession that shares the values of my own culture and nation. Explain
    • Occupational Therapy will help improve life for people and children with disabilities in other nations where the profession has not been established yet. Explain/ Provide Examples
    • Occupational Therapy is a profession shares the values of the Bulgarian people
    • Occupational Therapy has the potential to help children and people with disabilities in Bulgaria

METHODOLOGY
General Categories: Internal & External Factors That Shape Professional Practice and Which Can be Comparatively Evaluated “Across Populations and Between Groups” in the Process of Diffusion

• Ethnohistorical Factors
• Cultural & National Identity
• Contemporary Sociopolitical Pressures
• Economic Conditions
• Societal Need
Ethnohistorical & Contemporary Features of OT in Countries of Western Europe Influencing Development of Occupational Therapy in Bulgaria

German & English Students & Early Practitioners Participate in Programmatic Practicums in Bulgaria
Occupational Therapists Practicing in Europe

Figure b

Number of practising occupational therapists in Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of Practicing OTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>39,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>34,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>3,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1,700</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>20,482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENOTHE website retrieved 3/14 (Most Recent Compilation is from 2000)
UK: Occupational Therapy History and Current Levels

- **UK: Health & Care Professions Registry Currently Registered Occupational Therapists:** 34,026
- Early history of OT includes occupational (moral) treatment of confined mentally ill (e.g. Royal Bethlem Hospital), and arts & crafts philosophy
- **1932** The Scottish Association of Occupational Therapists (SAOT) is founded.
- **1936** The Association of Occupational Therapists (AOT) is founded for England, Wales, Northern Ireland.
- **1938** AOT offers the first diploma examinations for occupational therapy in England AOT journal "Occupational Therapy" launched.
- **1945** AOT sets up its first office in London.
- **1948** *The NHS is established and AOT and SAOT appoint representatives to the Whitley Council to negotiate national pay and conditions for NHS occupational therapists*

(British Association OT Site; retrieved 3/14)
What mechanisms are of interest in assessing diffusion of the profession

the dissemination of objects, technology, ideas, values, and practices
the idea of the complex or system is accepted, but it remains for the receiving culture to develop a new content

http://www.frontlinepartnership.org/pages/bulgaria.html
Germany: Occupational Therapy History and Current Levels

- **Johann Christian Reil** 1759–1813 the father of psychiatry publicized conditions of the mentally ill in asylums developed an activity-based method of treatment that is a founding basis for occupational therapy
- Members of WFOT since 1958
- Current practice requires a undergraduate degree
- Curriculums still emphasize craft media approach
- Comparatively largest number of curriculums in the EU / Europe
Germany: Occupational Therapy Current Levels

Figure a

Figure a  Geographical distribution of the occupational therapy educational institutes in Europe

OT educational institutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Malta</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The United States has the largest number of occupational therapy practitioners in the world. Educational programs in Occupational Therapy and Institutions governing Occupational Therapy Practice have a wide influence globally. Some of the most prolific and influential researchers and theorists have been American. The American Occupational Therapy Association Defines Terminology in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework; these terms are adopted and reflected in definitions of occupational therapy practice throughout the world.
United States: Occupational Therapy History

• The Arts & Crafts Movement emerged between 1860 and 1910 as a response against the monotony and lost autonomy of the industrial era, and craft process became the foundation block of occupational therapy which emerges as a profession around 1910 (mental institutions and work houses)

• WW I brought OT into the medical domain with standardized training and practice (reconstruction aides) establishing clinics, workshops, and schools to assist recovering veterans

• Current practice is strongly biomedical and influenced by the third-party payer system
United States: Current Levels Occupational Therapy Profession

- Employment of occupational therapists is projected to grow 29 percent from 2012 to 2022, much faster than the average for all occupations.
- The employment, or size, of this occupation in 2012, which is the base year of the 2012-22 employment projections: 113,200.
- The projected numeric change in employment from 2012 to 2022: 32,800.
- Practice is defined by specialization in disability type, but historical eras have also defined needs; e.g. returning war veterans, spinal injury & TBI secondary to automobile usage & high risk sports/leisure activities, aging population.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Ethnohistorical, Political, Economic Milieu in Which Contemporary OT is Developing in Bulgaria

• History of Communism and related policies affecting persons with disabilities/inclusion
• Stigmatism affecting National Identity related to issues of disability and social inclusion has stimulated research and action toward addressing these issues
• EU / European Commission requirements for disability rights and pressure to improve and make changes in issues related to institutions and accessibility for persons with disabilities despite limited infrastructure
• Role recognition: as a new profession no job positions as such exist for occupational therapists in the country. Graduates must market themselves to appropriate settings and compete for allotted dollars with other workers both trained and untrained
Ethnohistorical, Political, Economic Milieu in Which Contemporary OT is Developing in Bulgaria

- Economic conditions of limitation: slow increase in economic conditions matched by losses in the job sector (*Economist*)
- A sense of pessimism or lack of optimism that affects National Morale (Open Society Institute Survey)
- Ethnohistoric narrative related to autonomy and resiliency
  - Antiquity and awareness of situating self in place and time (Daskalov)
  - National Liberation 1878 is Iconic Event
  - End of Communism
  - Mixed response to EU requirements
Watershed Events in the History of OT in Bulgaria

- 2003-2006 Joint Action Program “Facilitation and Participation of Young Persons with Disabilities in an Enlarged Europe” (FPYPDEE). To facilitate the participation of young disabled persons in all spheres of daily living by introducing occupational therapy services and formal academic education.
- 2003 Membership in ENOTHE; Liliya Todorova of University of Ruse Elected to ENOTHE Board from 2004-2010
- Two faculty were fully trained to begin a Bachelor program in occupational therapy in University of Ruse in 2006
- 2007 BBC film that deeply criticized the orphan home system in Bulgaria: Abandoned Children of Bulgaria
- 2010 Membership in WFOT
- 2010 Establishment of ABET
- 2010 First cohort of BA students graduates
- 2012 Establishment of the Graduate Program in Occupational Therapy
# Bulgaria: Student Trends in Occupational Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of applicants</th>
<th>Number of enrolled students</th>
<th>Number of graduates/students 2014</th>
<th>Drop outs %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>for one position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Todorova, L; 2014  Admission Document to the WFOT*
Respondents USA: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

• “OT can improve society by meeting specific needs of certain sectors of the population such as marginalized groups and such as disabled, mentally ill, homeless etc. This can only be achieved if there is funding to support the developments of programs and or have OTs that are willing and able to apply their skills, knowledge and education within contexts that are different then what they are usually exposed to”
Respondents UK: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

• “The main ideology of occupational therapy is to enable people to maintain their independence for as long as possible. If people are able to complete tasks independently it reduces the strain on others and reduces the costs of care that society may end up paying through taxes.... if people are able to live independently they will be able to work and so able to contribute to society.”
Respondents Germany: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

“every-day-life in society includes the 3 areas productivity, freetime and selfcare”

“OT’s try to integrate people with special needs and diseases in society. This is very important for society, cause more people can take part in it which is the basis for a long lasting and functioning society. Furthermore, individuals learn to respect every human being, change their point of views and values. Positiv effect: society develops and gives every man no matter if disabled or not the chance to be a part of the whole”
Respondents Bulgaria: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

• “Part of the work of occupational therapists is to respect the values that are inherent in each ethnic group. This method of working is not typical of most of the helping professions.”

• “The fact is that occupational therapy job is a more humanistic approach to clients and that makes it a valuable profession to society”

• “Occupational therapy also provides emotional support which I would like to believe creates a much happier and motivated society.”

• “There are many families with various concerns and it’s our job to face that concerns”

• “Wellbeing is important for everyone. We all have inner need of doing something. That is why OT and Bulgarian people share the same values.”
Bulgarian OT Students: Framing the Future

22 students responded to an open-ended questionnaire about the profession of occupational therapy and their hopes for the future.

Half of Students reported wanting to work in Bulgaria.

One-third reported being worried they would not find a job in Bulgaria.

More than one-third were worried they would not be recognized as a profession in Bulgaria.

One-quarter were worried they would not be respected by other professionals in their work settings.

Most reported wanting to be successful OTs who helped their clients.

“I really want to continue my work here in Bulgaria, no matter how hard it will be. Bulgaria is my Motherland and I don’t want to leave it.”
Respondents Bulgaria: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

- “I would like to develop my skills abroad“
- “I think Germany is really good for teaching some new things in OT and it’s not far away from Bulgaria”
- “I imagine myself working in another country such as England, where I can achieve greater knowledge and experience and to realize myself as a specialist there and after that – in Bulgaria”
Respondents Bulgaria: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

• “I had to teach a child with Down syndrome how to use a computer, how to use the mouse and keyboard and how to entertain children with various programs installed specifically for training. It was really hard because no one told us how to do this thing we used everything what it comes like ideas and sometimes it was successful, but not every time.”
Respondents Bulgaria: “Ideas, Values, and Practices”

• “The second thing that worries me is the people’s attitude towards people with disabilities here in Bulgaria”

• “The most enjoyable thing about my fieldwork was that every single time this kids was coming in our school whit joy and every time they are going whit smiles and they say to us that they didn’t go home because they like to spend time with us and we feel the same about them. and that was really great feeling”
Bulgarian Occupational Therapy

**Individual Occupational Challenges:**

- Role Definition
- Challenges in Economic Participation & Employment: Challenges in finding social & professional place

**Profession Concerns:**

- Developing Potential & Defining Role of OT in Bulgaria
- Sustainability
- Creating a case for the need of OT services in society:
  - Training opportunities at home and abroad
    - Mentoring
    - Acquired skill sets
    - Familiarity with new technology

Rujdie Salieva

4/10/2014
Stimulus Diffusion in which a system or pattern spreads, but there are difficulties in regard to the transmission of the concrete content of the system; the idea of the complex or system is accepted, but it remains for the receiving culture to develop a new content.
Current: Occupational Therapy as an Adaptive Force Addressing Social Needs

• Deinstitutionalization of persons including children with disabilities
  – Respect for the autonomy, happiness and well being of all people
• Social inclusion
  – In the family
  – In schools
  – In the community
  – Everyone gets a chance to participate
Bulgarian Occupational Therapy Association (ABET)
Creating a Center for The Profession & Occupational Therapy Resources
Participation in family, home, school, and society as a concrete value met by the profession.
VIDEO SEGMENT
References, Credits, Research Support

ANED  Academic Network of European Disability Experts  http://www.disability-europe.net/countries/bulgaria

Blewett. Kate; Bulgaria's Abandoned Children (2007); BBC Broadcasting

British Association of Occupational Therapists, retrieved 3/2014  http://www.cot.co.uk/about-baotcot/baotcot-historic-timeline-key-dates


Frontline partnership for Bulgaria  http://www.frontlinepartnership.org/pages/bulgaria.html


References, Credits, Research Support

* Munoz, Noah  UTEP OT Dept. Senior Student / Graduate Assistant aided in preparation of data

Open Society Institute Survey as cited by The Economist:  *Once Bulgaria hoped to be like Greece; now it just hopes to survive:* The Economist  Accessed 3/1/2014  http://www.economist.com/node/21558288
