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Volume 5

Brian Littlechild / Peter Erath / Jan Keller (Editors)

De- and Reconstruction in European Social Work

LOGO

Institut für vergleichende Sozialarbeitswissenschaft und interkulturelle/internationale
Sozialarbeit (ISIS) e.V. Eichstätt

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De- and Reconstruction in European Social Work

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PART 1

PRINCIPLES

De- and Reconstruction of European Welfare Regimes – The Consequences for Social Work Theory and Practice

Horst Sing, Peter Erath

Abstract

The evolution of different European welfare state models into fully developed systems of social security has come to a standstill since the 1980s. Even the maintenance of these systems is in danger of failing not only because of financial feasibility, but also because of the consequences of a “general dissension regarding orientation” that has emerged in the course of modernization and globalisation processes and the ending of the East-West conflict, requiring all the actors participating in the regulations of the welfare state – those who make decisions and those affected by them – to face these de- and reconstruction processes. Yet, for instance, it is not only a matter of developing new strategies of production and reproduction of system integration but of recognizing at the same time the function of social work more definitely than before. To do so, on the one hand, social work has to realize that it by itself is affected by the general dissension regarding orientation, and on the other hand, it has to develop its ability to make distinctions and expose inter- and intrasystemic conflicts of interests thus making it possible to deal with them. Only a social work that is highly developed theoretically and practically and is differentiated can contribute successfully to the further adequate development of a European culture of welfare given the conditions of the general dissension regarding orientation.

1. Preliminary Remarks

In the almost 150 years of its development, the Welfare State has had to come through a large number of more or less critical periods, including the risk of being abolished by totalitarian regimes. However this time, perception of the Welfare State crisis seems to have a new dimension. It seems to be a crisis not in the sense that it would be a challenge to awake some sleeping actors or to influence the public opinion to mobilize more commitment on behalf of the welfare state. It seems to be a crisis that tackles the fundamentals of the traditional welfare state and its institutions. In an analogy to a title by *Luhmann* – “paradigm lost” (*Luhmann* 1990) – we could say in short: what makes up the actual crisis of the traditional welfare state is that the loss of the paradigm of the traditional political ideologies of western democracies becomes more and more obvious. This paradigm implies that they are able to solve the fundamental problem of social exclusion. The de- and reconstruction processes taking place in the welfare state on the background of the general dissension regarding orientation of social welfare and their general theoretical and practical consequences for the social work will be described in detail in the following.

Thus, the summary of building up and development of the social security systems in Europe will be presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will demonstrate what changes in society have contributed to the welfare state becoming unstable so that it has to be first deconstructed and then reconstructed (against the background of a general dissension regarding orientation). Chapter 4 will present the consequences for social work and demonstrate from what perspective it can be reconstructed anew – at least partly – in theory and in practice. The key thesis of this chapter will be summarized briefly once more in Chapter 5.

2. The Beginnings of the European Welfare State Models

2.1 The Starting Point: The Collective Self-commitment of Democratic Societies of Europe to Preventing or Overcoming of Social Exclusion

The starting point on the way to the Welfare State in Europe can be seen in the fact that democratic societies of the modern era did not stop at the Hobbs' state model during the first phase of their "nation building." They were not content to achieve "the final cause, end, or design of men ... of getting themselves out from that miserable condition of war" (*Hobbes* 1957: 109) and to "secure them in such sort as that by their own industry and by the fruits of the earth they may nourish themselves and live contentedly" (*ibid.*: 112). Rather, in the wake of Locke and Montesquieu, among others, they bound the monopoly on the use of force of the "Leviathan" and the will of the sovereign people to the normative concept of common sense (Normativität einer allgemeinen Vernunft) or rather, to the "truths ... that all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" as a matter of principle in their Constitutions (The US Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776, see *Boyd* 1999).

Though the interpretations of truthfulness of the "natural rights" have undergone considerable changes in time, these guiding principles of the democratic societies originating from the 18th century are still of outstanding importance in this context. They are of such importance not only because their gist is included in the "Magna Charta" of the United Nations of 1948, which is expressly approved by almost all states of the world, or because they form the normative basis for almost all constitutions and countless political agreements. They are of central importance in this context primarily because the binding linkage to the common sense, which is included there in the sense of a "closing thought" or rather a plausible final argument implies that despite all the historical changes they cannot and should not be interpreted as one likes or placed at one's disposal at will.

In the wake of the first Industrial Revolution, above all, there arose social models in Europe that gave precedence to fighting social exclusion even over only just hard-won constitutional achievements of the bourgeois revolution such as freedom of assembly and of speech, the right to own private property, etc, as was the case e.g. in the frame of revolutionary socialism. Until the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, however, they tried to settle the social issue of the 19th century in the frame of the earlier developed forms of democracy, aside from a few sporadic attempts such as the Paris Commune. And though the standpoints maintained in this context were very different and political debates about the implementation of the prevailing goals occasionally escalated up to the use of violence, there was a far-reaching consensus that the search for the best possible solution can only take place through democratic discourse or by means of democratically authorized processes, that is in the frame of a social policy. The analysis of the problem of social exclusion thus became a central part of the way European democratic societies see themselves.

2.2 The Development of the Social Security Systems

This fundamental decision of the democratic societies of Europe on the collective self-commitment to (prevention – or rather overcome –) social exclusion regarding all citizens and the decision, which gradually became capable of securing a majority, on a non-revisionist democratic form of fulfilling this promise had a specific intervention policy as a consequence. Thus, in the frame of the development of the insurance system, “a utilitarian social policy was formulated” at first that primarily had to keep the working class “efficient, willing to work and politically quiet” (*Merkur* 2004: 983).

The claim to and the range of social assistance was subsumed under the notion of “social justice” and thus generalized after the World War I and especially after the World War Two. In this way, the system of social aids of all European democracies was expanded considerably in the 1950s and the 1960s.

The Welfare State models arose in the frame of a democracy modelling itself on the concept of “social market economy” against authoritarian state, current closed societies of the Eastern block, and the spectre of Manchester liberalism of the 19th – early 20th century. These models reached a dynamic force and increase of efficiency that were inconceivable until then – and that not only in the field of social security (generalizable insurance benefits against social exclusion) but also in the fields that are not generalized and not recorded in the legally regulated standardized insurance benefits; that is in the field of “rescue insurance and secondary insurance,” which means in the field of social service / social work (cf. *Bommes & Scherr* 1996: 106).

In the face of the desolate situation in the socialist countries and in most of the countries of the “Third World,” this welfare state model was regarded as unrivalled even worldwide – at least in the ways western democracies saw themselves. Of all social models under discussion, this one seemed to be the only one that could make the classic social conflicts such as those between the work and the capital, between the rich and the poor, between the rulers and the ruled at least reasonably bearable and make sure that the “added value” of the economic developments was of benefit to as many people as possible.

Yet the uniform model of a European Welfare State was not created with that. Rather, the rise of European welfare regimes proceeded by means of diverse and often quite conflict-ridden developments in the frame of the prevailing internal formation of political will as can be recognized by the differentiation between “the Nordic system” (such as Finland, Denmark, Sweden), the “corporatistic” one (such as Germany) and the rather liberal one (such as Great Britain) (cf. *Ritter 1991, Kaufmann 2003, Esping-Andersen 1999, Schmid 2002, Opielka 2004*). All in all however, there arose the ideal type of the welfare state in Western Europe by whose “construction” any future model must be judged whether one likes it or not, as it turns out nowadays.

Though the neo-Marxist wave despising the “values” of the “liberal fundamental order” and violating its rules gave the political class of “late capitalism” great anxieties, and though the feeling of superiority of western democracies suffered a heavy setback in the wake of the Vietnam War, a welfare state oriented democracy was never seriously threatened. As Herbert Marcuse, a neomarxist, bitterly remarks (*Marcuse 1968*), the “repressive tolerance” of middle-class pluralism and the attractiveness of “consumption fetishism” prevented a fundamental surmounting of system in terms of social policy.

2.3 Characteristics of the European Welfare State Models

What seems to be of primary importance against the background of such developments is that these welfare state systems emerged in competition with “actually existing socialism.” Thus, claims and benefits that arose in the frame of this development would be hardly possible in absence of the competition mentioned. Therefore they increasingly came to be regarded as natural parts of social security system, at least in people’s minds. Now the population is required to reduce their expectations, e.g. in the sense of “robust democracy,” and to overcome the increasingly complained about “self-service and provision mentality.” Political problems and conflicts arising as a result that can be noticed in all European countries at present, such as people having increasingly to work over the ‘normal’ retirement age, reduction in pensions and in healthcare services, can be understood adequately only

against this background. Another element which facilitated the functioning of the Welfare State models was the availability of a social consensus regarding the plausibility of the Welfare State system of values (“civil religion”). Thus, for example, there was a far-reaching agreement that

- particularly effective functional systems such as economy, law, etc. should yield profit to the welfare state in the sense of “specific universal responsibility” (“The economy is for the people!”);
- negative side effects of the market, for instance, should be limited by means of politically legal regulations in the frame of a “social market economy”;
- behaviour of the individuals must not deviate too much from general norms of socially accepted behaviour (or rather of a “common sense”).

In particular, it should be the task of the functional systems policy to control the rest of functional systems (*Willke* 1989; 2001) so that the pluralistic and socially oriented social order is not thrown off balance (*Stichweh* 2000: 93). Where such balance was not yet reached there was at least some hope that it could be reached step by step in the process of progressing enlightenment and democratization.

This judgement is certainly an important reason for the fact that the first defeats of this Welfare State model were not taken seriously enough in Europe, especially in England and Sweden in the 1970s and in Germany and France in the 1980s, but were largely interpreted as correctible accidents in an altogether appropriate model.

3. European Welfare System in General Dissension Regarding Orientation

3.1 The Signs of Disintegration since the 1970s

Up to the 1970s and the 1980s, it could be assumed that the welfare state model was “sustainable,” “self-financing,” or rather “future compliant.” Yet this assumption changed due to some developments that only gradually received a socially political importance.

1. The report on the “Limits of Growth” published by the “Club of Rome” in 1972 (*Meadows* 1972) dealt for the first time with the consequences of consumption, destruction and squandering of non-renewable resources, with the issue of negative side effects of industrial development and with the search for the possible remedy for the damage already caused. Though at first glance this report did not grapple with the issue of the Welfare State, it still tackled the issues that are of fundamental importance for dealing with the problems of social exclusion. For, in the end, the welfare state, too, is dependent on the ecological resources available to it.

2. With increasing differentiation within industrial society and with growing disintegration of traditional social institutions such as family, the realization could be no longer suppressed that the welfare state was challenged primarily by two tendencies. On the one hand, it turned out that “modernization” did not necessarily mean a linear improvement of the living space and standards but rather caused the enhancement of “stubbornness” (*Willke* 1989) of the functional systems. On the other hand, it became increasingly clear that “the modern way of the modern world” does not necessarily mean enhanced solidarity but rather a form of emancipation and individualism that drastically weakens the social fabric (*Isensee* 1998: 125).
3. The differentiation of the modern society into subsystems did not only cause increase of efficiency but at the same time led to production of diverse and more frequent processes of exclusion. Exclusion in the sense of expulsion from subsystems of society (e.g. through unemployment, debts, etc.) now became a “risk” that always had to be taken into account and “productively” coped with by making use of the possibilities of the social security systems (cf. *Beck* 1986, *Luhmann* 1995).
4. An assumption was spreading that the premise behind “the claims and benefits of the national welfare state providing inclusion” had become doubtful in the meantime. “To make an intervention possible it must be assumed that the Welfare State is able to see the effects of functional system proceedings and to assess fairly reliably the consequences of its own interference” (*Stichweh* 2000: 93).

3.2 The European Welfare State System in General Dissension Regarding Orientation

In analogy to the notion of the “polyvalent logic”, which was developed in the wake of constructivism or *Luhman’s* system theory, “general dissension regarding orientation” can be described as a consequence of a “polyvalent shortage” of explanatory information and knowledge necessary to resolve the problems, which all the parties involved have to challenge. It is based on the fact that “the observed facts cannot be assigned definitely” to the one of the two values “distinguishing between right and wrong or true and false” (*Krause* 1999: 148), at least not without risk.

In order to avoid a long discussion on a general dissension regarding orientation, a famous parable in abridged form will be introduced that is usually used as an illustration in writings on constructivism and system theory (e.g. *Baecker* 2002: 126ff.).

A prosperous Bedouin had settled his estate consisting of twelve camels for his three sons in the following manner: The eldest should get half of the camels, the second a

third and the youngest only a sixth. When the father died, there were only eleven camels to share out. The eldest son claimed six camels as the half of the heritage and the others contradicted. They went to the judge and claimed justice. After having given the matter considerable thought, the judge made an offer and said: I'll put on your disposal one of my camels. Give it back to me – if it is the will of Allah - as soon as possible. Thus the sharing out was not difficult: The eldest son got six camels, the second four and the third got two. Thus the letter of the testament was fulfilled. However there remained the problem of the camel which the judge had given to them for the purpose to finish the legal procedure of realizing the regulations of the testament: He had given it to them with the remark to give it back to him – “if it would be the will of Allah” - as soon as possible.

The situation of the Welfare State at the peak of its development during the 1960s – 1980s might be accepted as the point of departure for a comparison. If we put aside the critique of different Marxist positions, the vast majority of the western democracies population shared the opinion that all in all – at least in comparison with other models of society – this model of the western welfare state would be able to provide something like just opportunities for the greatest possible number of the members of a nation (cf. *Rawls* 1971). But similar to the parable, the further development of the welfare state was not as expected, and the (ideology of the) welfare state was thrown off balance. There were only eleven camels to share – as it is now no longer possible to share out the performances and goods of the society in a symmetric way – emancipation and autonomy of individuals, specific rationalities of the functional systems of society, complicated and intransparent causalities etc.; and thus against a logically balanced consensus. And as a consequence there are winners and losers now.

Certainly, the position of society is more complicated as that of the judge. Unlike the judge, society can neither simply refuse the task of establishing social justice in the face of a general dissension regarding orientation, nor can it fulfil it. It has to take note of the lack of plausibility and rationality and express it as frankly as possible without giving up the search for provisional solutions.

While the judge knows that what he needs to implement the testament of the deceased is the twelfth camel, society's problem nowadays is that it only knows that there is always something lacking to solve the problem of social exclusion completely, but it does not know exactly what it is. *Luhmann*, with respect to Spencer Brown, also called this missing thing an “unmarked space”, the other side of the visible, the “presence of the impossible” (*Luhmann* 1997: 49).

4. The Possibilities of Reconstruction of the Welfare State Benefits in the frame of the “General Dissension Regarding Orientation”

4.1 New Strategies of “Production and Reproduction of System Integration” in the Field of Social Exclusion

Considering the consequences of extensive social problems of orientation mentioned above for the means of dealing with social exclusion one can detect two particular forms of dissension.

1. Intersystemic dissensions regarding orientation

Different social actors in modern society orient themselves towards different codes. In this respect it is clear that interaction between different elements of the political system, its subsystem of social policy, social security system, social work, those affected by social exclusion, etc. leads to frictions. Ideally, all these actors should cooperate to deal with social exclusion effectively. In reality, however, there are diverse intersystemic conflicts of interests.

Political system and social policy:

With increased economic problems in the wake of the rapidly growing market orientation it has become more and more obvious that social policy is not a self-sufficient part of the political system that could decide more or less independently on the amount of its inputs. Its budget might still be relatively large if compared to other budgets and its significance in the public opinion considerable, especially during election campaigns. However, owing to its significance and since it is embedded in political discussions and conflicts social policy may increasingly become an object of complex strategies. In other words, social policy might still be a representative and prestigious part of the political class strategies in the struggle against social exclusion but it is only a part of the political system that is often let down by the political system as a whole. Hardly any other part of political agenda is subjected to covering-up, whitewashing, and exaggeration like social policy.

Social policy, social security system and social work:

What concerns the way social welfare regimes see themselves, one of the closest links between different actors of a nation in the struggle against social exclusion is the link between social policy, social security systems and social work. All three of them represent to a certain degree the hard core or the nucleus of the classical welfare state. Social policy is important as a close connecting link to the decision makers in the political institutions, especially in the field of legislation, to the systems of social insurance and to professional social work. Social work is indispensable as the special link between social insurance and the individuals affected by social exclusion. Social

policy, systems of social security and social work represent the limits of the “marked space” of the duty of a democratic society to cope with social exclusion for its citizens. The borders of this field are not naturally given or easy to determine.

Social work and the socially excluded:

It is also necessary to “make differences” if we focus on the group of the “socially excluded” or those who are under risk of becoming excluded. ‘Spongers’ is a term used to denote those who can be seen to take from society without making any attempts to put anything back in, symbolising a view of people “using” the achievements of the welfare regimes as an instrument to live a better life than the “working poor” without working. Such a view is on the one hand a phenomenon that makes the understanding of the links between social work and its clients in the traditional sense of “help to self-help” increasingly obsolete. But on the other hand, continuous unemployment of skilled individuals due to the inability of the labour market policy to provide jobs causes reservations about the still common view that political system is able to create a positive setting for mastering the problem of social exclusion for the actors on the average level. The social state runs into difficulties as far as these two aspects are concerned.

In all subsystems and among them, it is obviously a matter of developing new “modes of production and reproduction of the social system integration” (*Schimank* 1992), which can make it possible to formulate and implement strategies for prevention / overcoming of social exclusion adequate to the changed situation despite marked differentiation into subsystems with self-referential closed logic of action.

Uwe *Schimank* (1992) suggests that in order to deal with intersystemic problems, all actors should attempt to reach “new intersystemic specific consensus of interests” through “reciprocal projection of their own interests onto the areas of interests of actors of other social subsystems.” They should do so in order to deal successfully or at least better than before with problems that harm both their own “substantial interests” and those of their actual or potential partners. In particular, the organization of “concentrated actions,” “round tables,” “forum discussions,” etc. should contribute to transformation of conflicts into manageable differences and then into productive “win-win situations.” What else can be reached in this way on the basis of mutual recognition of the “I-want-what-you-want”-kind are synergetic effects that have been inconceivable up to now in the frame of a purely competitive approach. These kind of strategies, however, always requires a general consensus of orientation in a larger frame, such as of discourse ethics, of UN agreements, or of international technological large-scale project guidelines. In the field of prevention / overcoming of social

exclusion, all European countries carry out comprehensive programs against poverty, violence, homelessness, drug addiction, etc. that aim at achieving synergetic effects by means of extensive cooperation among the systems.

2. Intrasystemic Dissentions Regarding Orientation

Problems may arise during program implementation, however, not only because of different codes of different social subsystems but also in the intrasystemic sphere. Even such subsystem as that of social work is not uncontradictory in itself. It, too, has to admit that it cannot fully integrate different perspectives of various persons involved (e.g. social workers, clients, self-help groups, administration, etc.).

Thus, subsystems should not pass off their own historically developed specific substantial interests (and those of their partners) as “substantial” unity but have to search for dissention in the field of (peculiar) points of view and partial rationalities, too. Such point of view includes not only the possibility but also the necessity of analysing one’s own historically developed “substantial systemic interests.” As with other strategies, they are not regarded as an absolute starting point for the procedure of “production and reproduction of intersystemic interests” but are analysed in this process again if need be.

In principle, acceptance of this strategy means a final departure from trivial pattern of explanation and of action strategy and has the increased uncertainty as a result. The advantage of this point of view is that, among other things, it allows marking in the unmarked space of perception of social exclusion and of help or self-help while preventing or overcoming them. The actors, above all, are bound by their function or their self-image to prevent or overcome social exclusion. Thus, social workers have to reconsider their previous “substantial” or “specific” interests. What it means will be shown by the example of different “core values.”

4.2 Social Work in General Dissension Regarding Orientation

Important metaphors for social work such as “double mandate,” “help to self-help,” or “empowerment” seem at first glance to describe expressively the “system-specific” or rather “substantial” interests of social work. According to these principles, in the “non-generalizable cases,” social exclusion must be prevented or rather overcome without prejudice to autonomy or “self-reliance” of an individual.

The three terms mentioned (surely, there is a large number of others), nevertheless, suggest that unity of social work is in danger of getting lost in the frame of the aforementioned dissention regarding orientation and focus.

1. Nowadays, the relationship between a social worker and a client does not seem to be any longer harmonious and supportive but increasingly troubled and

conflict-ridden. Clients increasingly feel put under pressure by social workers. Social workers feel threatened and not taken seriously by clients. The “helping relationship” is increasingly replaced by the instrument of “contracting” borrowed from the legal system.

2. The institutions responsible for social work develop strategies of making the spongers possible targets as the clients, which amount to a common strategy of the social state expansion. It is increasingly insinuated that the institutions of social work have a “suspected motive” (*Baecker* 1994) implying that the aid is more of use to the interests of the institution of social work (in form of money, status and power) than to those of the client.
3. Appeals to solidarity and subsidiarity of population cover up the fact that social work is often quite helpless against social problems. Thus, social institutions and charities receive such a great amount of donations at Christmas time sometimes that appropriate distribution of these financial means becomes problematic.
4. Self-help and pressure groups maintain a distance to professional social work. They regard themselves as “true” representatives of the interests of these in need and reject professionalisation of aid. The conflicts resulting from such constellation weaken the potential of aid.
5. New problems continuously arising nowadays such as human trafficking, exploitation of people “sans papier” or illegal immigrants, etc. cause situations to which social work has neither satisfactory theoretical nor practical solutions. Loss of reputation concomitant to that can justify cutbacks in financial means or shifting of tasks to other subsystems such as the police.

On the whole, social work can do justice to the great demands associated with the three principles of social work only when it succeeds in taking into account both the guidelines of democratic society and protection of the autonomy of the individuals affected or threatened by social exclusion. In this respect, it seems inappropriate to assume a hasty consensus, as it is frequently done by the representatives of both Christian charitable and critical social work. Social work needs a complex concept of differentiation (*Bardmann* 2000: 90) developed in arduous self reflective and analytical process, which must be continuously adapted to the latest developments of the empirical and theoretical knowledge.

4.3 General Consequences for Social Work Theory and Practice

If social work sees itself as a subsystem of a society marked by a general dissension regarding orientation and focus, as is suggested here, then it has to adapt itself to this new situation theoretically and practically.

1. Social work has to recognize that, in a differentiated society, it is dependent on the interaction with other subsystems even more than before. New intersystemic consensus of interests among different actors necessary for preventing / combating exclusion can only come about when different codes are not constructed as absolute differences but examined for potential connections in this matter and used productively. If politicians want to be re-elected and social workers want to help, synergetic effects in the sense of 'intersystemic specific consensus of interests' can arise where a 'reciprocal projection of one's own interests onto the areas of interests' of other actors can be achieved. The problem of mass unemployment offers many starting points in this respect.
2. Social work has to expose the conflicts (of interests) hidden behind the integration formulas of 'double mandate,' 'help to self-help,' and 'empowerment' and deal with them adequately. For that, it has to give the clients in particular a share in the discussion on construction and implementation of aid, as it happens, for example, in the UK in the frame of the 'consumer decision participation' model.
3. Social work has to take advantage of the findings of social sciences and also develop and use its own methods, and 'alarm systems' etc. in order to uncover new forms of social exclusion in yet 'unmarked spaces' in good time. Thus, an 'exclusion of the second order' arises in the form of 'forgotten existences,' as it does in the case of illegal immigrants in many countries of the so called 'First World', to whom professional social work has hardly any access. Since part of these people falls prey to mafia-like or fundamentalist 'self-help groups' or 'aid organizations', the problem of the socially excluded minorities or fringe groups receives a totally new dimension, which has been asking too much of politics and social work equally, at least until now.
4. Optimization of the 'theoretical control' of social work is one of the most effective instruments to successfully oppose the 'ideological suspicion' implying that social work exposes itself morally as an agent of a capitalist society in front of its clients. Therefore it seems to be indispensable nowadays to intensify development of theory and research in the field of social work in order to achieve new, surprising, clarifying, etc. insights. Only an independent science of social work can guarantee that the 'untruth' is permitted even in the field of social work and the search for insights is possible with no consideration for superficial vested interests.
5. Social work has to see itself as a problem that can only partially cope with the task of combating or preventing social exclusion it set for itself. As a public functional system of a democratic society, social work is answerable to society and therefore bound to self-control. It has to admit in the end that it can never

solve the problem of social exclusion completely. Thus when it realizes that it cannot solve the problems, it has to return them to the society. It depends on the other actors how they deal with them. Since social work is not the only field where new specific 'intersystemic interests' in the sphere of prevention/combating can arise, it depends on whether a need for a 'reciprocal projection of one's own interests onto the areas of interests' of social work arises also from other social actors such as economy, law, science, etc. Industry, too, for instance, must be interested in attending to and educating the unemployed so that they can be available at the market again someday.

On the whole, all the recommended measures presented in this chapter aim at establishing an advance on confidence urgently required by social work in the face of the complexity and the range of the problems it has to deal with. It is only by means of building up such potential of confidence that social work can refute in the long run the reservations about diminishing ability of its institutions and employees to diagnose the consequences of the developments in the field of social exclusion, especially in the frame of de- and reconstruction processes, and carry out appropriate interventions in cooperation with the persons affected.

5. The Crisis of Social Welfare Regimes in Europe as an Opportunity

The legacy of European history for present and future generations leaves us with a task that seems ambivalent and uncertain and therefore cannot be honoured unidimensionally. The task is, in face of a general dissension regarding orientation and focus, to meet a 'collective self-commitment' of democratic societies of Europe to social inclusion of all their citizens in the best possible way.

Therefore it is important to recognize that during the current de- and reconstruction processes within different European welfare regimes, it is not only a matter of planning the nature of the future social state of the European Union, of balancing the demands in the context of unequal social structures and developments, of preventing/ combating social exclusion or of protecting the dignity of the socially excluded. It is at the same time a matter of self-respect of a European culture that has been caught in a deep crisis of orientation penetrating all social spheres in the last decades.

The task of social work as a subsystem of social security in the frame of this development is to take its stand theoretically and practically in such a way that allows the use of productive resolutions of the different interests and strands which have produced dissension regarding concerning the aims and means of social work as well. Two things are necessary for that: intersystemically, cooperation with the actors of other subsystems, and intrasystemically, the inner differentiation of one's own subsystem.

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Social inclusion and exclusion as specific structural processes of modern societies. Challenges to a changing social policy

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Abstract

In this article the question is discussed why social exclusion is a specific social process of modern capitalistic societies and why this process is a challenge for changing social policy.

In three contexts we can identify social exclusion as a typical process of urbanised welfare states with a capitalistic background.

1. The logic and the principles of social policy in capitalistic societies of Western Europe lead to an exclusion from participation in social supports and social security.

2. Social exclusion as a typical process is based on the interdependence of principles of social policy and the logic of bureaucratic institutions.

3. The capitalistic logic of the development of urbanised societies leads to a specific distribution of the space and in the consequence to a socio-spatial exclusion from the urban lifestyle as central condition of social integration.

Social policy must react on these processes by developing strategies of integration on several levels: socio-cultural integration, economic integration, integration by social security, socio-spatial integration.

General remarks

We have a new social question, but we do not have any answer to this. More and more we get the impression that on a structural level the cultural, social and socio-economic capacity of inclusion by the system is threatened. In Western European societies - above all in the urban centres - we observe an increasing social and socio-spatial division of the population; especially in the big cities, and in the metropolitans the division of poverty on the one hand and wealth on the other hand is very progressed. In the countries of Eastern Europe we can observe similar processes - the beginning of a development, which - may be - have its reason in the capitalistic logic of exclusion and inclusion.

Furthermore are main functional fields of the modern societies no longer able to fulfil their integrative function and this both: on the individual behaviour level and of the system level as well. Above all labour is losing its character as a main principle of social integration. The labour market is more and more unable to integrate people by sure employment and above all insured jobs. Social policy is in a special sense more and more overtaxed to fulfil its task of social security. At the same time the integrative function of social security will be more and more important for ensuring social status and integration at all.

Fields of reproduction - like housing and consumption - get more and more a meaning as central fields of inclusion or exclusion. Especially in urban regions, and here above all in the big cities and in the metropolitans the decisions about inclusion and exclusion will be made in fields of reproduction. But also in these fields the capacity of social integration is nevertheless threatened.

And we observe increasing processes of spatial segregation. In the context of a theory of socio-spatial integration in urban societies we are aware that the socio-spatial segregation of whole groups, which are not needed, and their concentration in deprived areas is not only a symbol for their total exclusion, but meanwhile the central condition for exclusion in urban contexts.

Social policy has neither theoretically nor in its practice taken note of this process of exclusion by socio-spatial segregation or by having not access to cultural and consumption fields of life.

This has a reason. Usually in the theory of social policy we discuss social exclusion by poverty or by deviant behaviour or by other social problems in the context of unemployment and of exclusion from the job market. And really is the exclusion from the labour market a necessary condition for explaining poverty or deviant behaviour, because having a job means being insured and having an social integrated status. That is the problem of all such countries, whose social policy is labour focused. But the exclusion from the labour market does not explain social exclusion in all aspects and above all it does not explain the interdependency between the integration in labour market and the other conditions of life and vice versa: having good conditions of life and growing up under "good conditions" as condition for getting a job. We only can explain social exclusion in the dialectic of the relationship between the sphere of production and the sphere of reproduction.

So it is important that we discuss social exclusion not only in the context of individual behaviour (i.e. what are the consequences for the jobless individuals?) but in the context of typical structures and processes of modern societies, i. g. of the logic of capitalistic use of manpower.

Inclusion and exclusion as social processes

In the following contribution I would like to find reasons for my thesis that social exclusion is a specific social process of modern capitalistic societies. That means: social exclusion is not only a historical phase like an event for a short time, in which the welfare state is weakened – it is a structural process, which follows a specific structural logic of the development of modern societies and is partly independent from the

behaviour of individuals. Individuals are structurally forced to act under these conditions, but usually it is impossible to influence this process as individual.

Furthermore social exclusion processes have as structural processes influence on the logic of integration and disintegration of people in capitalistic societies. Independent from and inspite of the quality and efficiency of social supports and helps of the welfare state we find processes of exclusion and excluded people or groups. In times of a good economy social problems will be less and will be solved more readily than in times when the welfare system is threatened.

Processes of inclusion and exclusion do no longer follow the logic of social stratification and social status by income, professional position and education levels. There is not only an 'up and down', but there is meanwhile also an 'inside and outside'. And meanwhile social exclusion does not mean that people must have physical problems of hunger, health or even must die, but they are excluded from an average social and cultural lifestyle, which ensures social integration on a certain level of development of a society.

Social exclusion can only be discussed in the context of the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion. The process of exclusions depends upon criteria and proceedings of inclusion; so processes of inclusion produce will also produce exclusion. Whenever a society defines the criteria for integration, it always defines the borderlines between integration and disintegration. If somebody does not gain the goals or does not fulfil the norms of integration he or she is disintegrated.

If I define social developments as social processes, than I mean that such developments can not be stopped without leaving the logic of the development and they are not reversible. May be that they can be influenced by policy or other structural processes; but usually they develop their own logic and they can only be controlled by their own logic.

These arguments have consequences for the theory of social policy as well as for its practice, and have influence on social work as part of social policy.

The term of social exclusion

The term of social exclusion is complicate to define. In the French debate the term is used in order to describe processes of segregation of migrants in the big French cities (*Paugam 2004, Wacquandt 2004, Dubet 1994*), living in the so called "banlieues" or "bidonvilles". In the United States first the representatives of the Chicago School (*Park, Burgess 1925*), later on *Wilson (1987)* used the term "underclass" in order to describe a phase of living of the poor, which continues and which is more or less irreversible. *Martin Kronauer (2002)* has given an overview about the several discussions and arguments.

The theoretical and analytical background of this term depends also on the terms of inclusion respectively of integration. The question who is excluded and why is a difficult one. In sociological sense it is unimportant, whether somebody has the subjective feeling of deprivation and poverty and social disintegration. What is sociologically important is when a society defines a certain status as excluded or included.

What is the difference between social inclusion and exclusion respectively integration and disintegration?

We speak about integration, when we describe a certain phase, in which people live in a certain historical period of a society. They are able to fulfil the values and norms of a cultural system, they fulfil the expectations of their social environment. Therefore they are integrated, so they are able to ensure their identity and their social status. If they live e.g. in poverty or in cultural and social isolation or in socio-spatial segregation and if they therefore are not able to fulfil norms to ensure their social status, they are deprived, they are deviant and therefore disintegrated. Integration describes the life conditions on the level of individual behaviour and conditions of life. Belonging to the under-class or to the poor describe peoples' disintegration.

Disintegration may happen on four levels:

- the socio-cultural disintegration: unable to share common values, norms and behaviour patterns because the condition of sharing values is a similar social status, social behaviour settings and lifestyle;
- the socio-economic disintegration: no access to central markets of consumption, housing and labour, because of insufficient social security and insufficient resources of education, competences and money for realising an average lifestyle in a society or a certain social group;
- the social-communicative disintegration: not to be accepted by the significant other, to have no social status, which signals that somebody is taken by the others as relevant or important (what is meant by *Luhmann* as exclusion), and not to be able to participate in the important processes and fields of behaviour in a certain socio-ecological or social context;
- the socio-spatial disintegration: not to be integrated in and by a certain social space, in a quarter or a part of the city, to have no access to the urbanity of the city and to be unable to identify oneself with the domicile or quarter where that person lives.

All dimensions of social disintegration explain social disintegration sufficiently, each of them alone is necessary for the explanation, but does not explain the term totally.

Or otherwise: Integration means that somebody is able to participate at an average lifestyle of a society; that means

- somebody has access to institutions and networks or fields of behaviour, which he or she needs for ensuring his or her social status and identity;
- somebody has influence on decisions and is able to participate in important social processes and
- somebody is able to articulate his interests and needs
- somebody is able to realise interests and to fulfil expectations, norms and values

because somebody

- has a certain socio-cultural understanding for sharing values and norms,
- has sufficient social resources and competences for realising a certain lifestyle and for being accepted by the others,
- has sufficient economic means for realising interests and for fulfilling needs and
- finds the socio-spatial conditions for the feeling to be integrated in certain social space.

Each other type of situation leads to disintegration.

Social exclusion means a structural process, which is responsible for individual disintegration and which has its reasons and its logic in the way in which a society socialises their members. That means, the institutionalised processes of labour, of growing up, of education, of social life at all is a specific historical expression of the organisation of a society. These forms lead to specific forms of integration of members of a society, but at the same time to disintegration and on the system level to a specific form of inclusion and exclusion of all parts and functional fields of a social system.

The organisation of these ways is based on typical socio-economic and cultural values and norms. By the logic of such processes individuals or groups get specific positions in a social system, realise a specific lifestyle, find behaviour settings; this logic legitimise social inequality and social stratification, social values and norms. This logic is responsible for the process, in which people are getting or are losing objective opportunities and conditions to participate on processes of communication and social processes, which have a very high meaning for gaining behaviour goals, which secure their social integration, their identity and their material reproduction of life.

Otherwise: this logic decides about the question, which values and norms, expectations and means are relevant for inclusion or exclusion. Who can not fulfil these norms and values or who can not realise the means and resources deemed necessary, is discreditable and threatened by exclusion.

Social exclusion is the central process in modern societies, by which people get disintegrated on the level of their behaviour and their direct conditions of life. So, why people are excluded, depends not only on the question whether they can fulfil norms and values or not; it is not only a question of the individual competences and dispositions, but depends also on the structural frame of conditions of integration by political and social processes - so by exclusion and inclusion. The question, whether people are needed or not is independent from the question, whether they are able and willing to be integrated or not. The question will be decided on another level: The question is, whether a society has resources in order to integrate people by social measures, helps, supports on the one hand and how many supported people do not threaten the integrative capacity of social policy on the other hand.

This dialectic leads in modern societies with a capitalistic economy to paradox situations of interdependence. It may be that special forms of disintegration of people are necessary for social inclusion processes on a structural level - necessary for stabilising a certain political and social system. This form of exclusion has a function of social stabilisation so far as this form of exclusion is controllable. To such forms belongs a specific rate of unemployment, a specific rate of poor people or specific kinds of poverty or a controllable number of people looking for flats in a specific sector of the housing market. We integrate these people on a very low level and under the condition that their integration is permanent threatened. We integrate them under the conditions of structural exclusion.

Theoretically we cannot expect that modern societies will integrate all their members. More or less they integrate them in different ways, with different results or success and on different levels and because of different interests: may be, because they are very necessary, may be, because a society wants to avoid rebellions or even revolutions.

That we observe that capitalistic modern societies more and more exclude people or whole groups of members has two possible explanations:

1. In capitalistic modern societies a lot of people are not needed, neither are the economically important nor is anybody or any institution else interested in them. They live under excluded conditions, in deprived areas without any possibilities and without any access to values and resources which ensure their social integration.
2. Social and political institutions of modern societies are more and more powerless to ensure a social status of people by work or by distribution of resources for urgent need consumption or housing, which are conditions needed to secure their identity and their competences for socio-cultural integration. The capacity of the system for inclusion is threatened.

In which contexts can we identify social exclusion as a typical process of urbanised welfare states with a capitalistic background?

I propose three answers on this question.

1 *The logic and the principles of social policy in capitalistic societies of Western Europe lead to an exclusion from participation in social supports and social security.*

The historical character of our social policy is from its beginning its concentration on labour, on the sphere of production. Social integration meant in the industrial societies of the 19th century integration solely by work or labour. One's whole life was focussed on the process of working. The sphere of reproduction could only be understood with regard to the sphere of production. How people lived, how they grew up, what they learned or did not learn, how they spent their 'free time' - all this was a result of the working process. Even the social security insured only risks, caused by the working process. The houses and flats of the workers were around the factories, later on around the offices.

The integration in work by social policy, especially by social insurance had its reason and its function in eliminating social conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

Social integration as the means to obtain social security against the risks of the labour market and to be integrated in nearby networks on a behaviour level - these goals of social policy characterises the answer of the social question of the 19th century until the end of the 2nd world war. Modern societies al functional differently; they need another method of social integration by social policy. Now social policy has to make sure that all people have an access to all functional fields and fields of behaviour, which people need for their integration - at least a formal access must be ensured. That method characterises an essential of the modern welfare state.

If the focus of social integration is integration by and in work, the change in work disciplines and the end of the industrial period must lead to problems of understanding modern social policy and to problems of the integration capacity of social policy.

Nevertheless the principles of social policy did not change. Somebody has only access to the insurance, if he works and get wages - even is she or he is forced, to be insured. If not - if somebody is unemployed, he or she gets support by the insurance for a certain time on the basis of his last wages, because he or she gained rights of support by his or her insurance premiums - but afterwards he or she needs social support by the community because of entitled rights. In this stage the social support depends on determining needs on a very low level and not on the last wages, somebody earned.

This form of integration leads to very ambivalent situations. We integrate people on a very low level, so that their integration is permanently threatened. And by the logic of social policy a society includes people in markets, where they are in a capitalistic sense not needed – neither on the labour market nor on the markets of housing and consumption.

We have the paradoxical situation that the logic of social policy is the endeavour for integration, above all to prevent disintegration of people who are not needed.

At the first glance the logic of capitalism seems to be a logic of inclusion - the principle of integration is the institutionalised process of integration and reintegration of individuals by labour and in labour processes. But this logic produces both, inclusion and exclusion as well and its function is only to produce both.

Social policy is only to be understood in its dialectic character. On the one hand social policy is a necessary part of capitalistic modern society in order to ensure the status of workers by integration in labour, on the other hand - and at the same time - social policy is necessary to moderate exclusion processes, produced by the capitalistic logic of exploitation of the workers' capacity. Social policy addresses the human principle of integration against the capitalistic logic of exclusion by risks of disintegration out of the labour process. Social policy handles this conflict. It follows as part of the economic system the economic logic and it shares the economic goals of integration of the workers on the level of social integration and it follows the system-logic of inclusion, because it fulfils the functions as a part of the system for the system maintenance. By institutionalising integration of the workers through insuring their risks, social policy stabilises a certain economical and political system and supports by this way the efforts of inclusion on the level of the system.

Thus far I have argued that we may understand the process of exclusion and inclusion and the relationship between both as constitutive processes of the system of social policy in capitalistic societies. I now put forward the argument that the principles of social security produce inequality not only in the status of integration but in the status of social security.

I repeat: somebody who has acquired rights, because of his or her premiums paid to the social insurance have simply another character of integration as entitled rights, somebody get, because he or she is not able to support him/herself or to survive without help or supports. Acquired rights inquire into for the risks which are insured and depend on the reasons why the risk happened; entitled rights inquire into the reasons for the needs, somebody has for reproduction or in order to survive on a very low level.

It does not ask why somebody is unable to provide for his or her self, but only looks to give the necessary support.

This difference in social supports leads not only to an inequality of social security but in the further process to social exclusion, because entitled rights do not fit into the logic of the capitalistic process of exploitation of workers' capacity. So social policy in modern welfare states have the problem that it must integrate people by a logic, which is contradictory to the logic of integration by labour, what always leads to conflicts. In times, in which financial means are scarce, less problems are defined as social problems of disintegration and people have less entitled rights of support or less access to social helps. But the definition of a problem as a social problem is the main condition for developing solution strategies.

2 *The second answer on my question, why social exclusion is a typical process is based on the interdependence of principles of social policy and the logic of bureaucratic institutions.*

The finding, definition and solution of social problems by bureaucratic institutions corresponds with the logic of considering and solving social problems by the social policy and both lead to an institutionalisation and administration of social problems and leads to an institutionalisation of social exclusion-processes.

First of all bureaucratic institutions can only consider and define social problems as problems of a lack of money or health and solve these problems by distributing money on the basic of titles or rights. Administrative and legal proceedings make all social problems to problems, which can be handled by the bureaucracy, so that the social problems are also defined by the logic of bureaucracy – and social policy follows these definitions and problem-solving strategies according to their own principles.

In connection with administrative proceedings social policy constructs problem-solving strategies on three levels.

- a. Social policy has a problem of ensuring order and legitimation. It produces order by producing structures and proceedings, which make people depend on it. It is not the scarcity of resources itself produces this dependency, but the means of the distribution of these scarce and urgently needed resources itself constitutes the maintenance of order.
- b. Social policy must establish problem-solving strategies by depending on the logic of economic efficiency, and legal proceedings defined by bureaucratic organisations. Furthermore this policy strategy corresponds with the logic of

economy, to maintain the peoples' capacity of integration in the labour market by the distribution of calculate economic means (money).

- c. Social policy has a communication problem, which is caused by the administrative and legal proceedings. The level and the type of communication with clients produces the effect forms of them being 'inside' or 'outside'. If the clients understand the language of the administration and know its code, if they have the linguistic competence to interact, they are 'inside,' if not, they are 'outside' and not only outside of the understanding process, but outside of the proceedings at all.

All these conditions lead to social disintegration on the individual behaviour level and in thus far they are conditions of social exclusion.

Another argument in this context is that the bureaucratic logic supports the institutionalising process of exclusion as a structural social process.

Our institutions solving social problems have the tendency to develop strategies of solution as a regular process over a long period of time. They must do this in the confidence that the problems will also exist for a long time. The interdependency between the development of strategies of problem-solving solutions by institutions and the long period of time over which social problems exist, leads to a stabilisation of processes of social exclusion and leads to an consolidation of the social conditions and circumstances, which are responsible for social exclusion. And in addition we believe that these interdependent processes lead to a stabilisation of the capitalistic logic in considering and solving social problems.

An administration must institutionalise strategies for finding and defining social problems and their solutions for long periods, otherwise it cannot develop administrative proceedings. Administrations must furthermore generalise strategies of solution, so they must look for means, which are able to be generalised: money and laws. As I have already stated: all social problems must be defined as problems of a lack of money or a lack of rights (*Baum 1988*).

3 The capitalistic logic of the development of urbanised societies leads to a specific distribution of space, and consequent to a socio-spatial exclusion from the urban lifestyle as central condition of social integration and from the access to the public spaces of the city as central condition of urbanity. This is caused by a specific dynamic, which leads to a spatial concentration of disadvantaged people in deprived urban areas.

Socio-spatial segregation was in history for a long time always a symbol for social exclusion. Now it is no longer a symbol, but the central condition for social exclusion in itself, because socio-spatial exclusion does not only mean a spatial distance, but also a cultural, social and socio-economic distance from the urbanity of the city. The dilemma of social exclusion in an urban context is that people are inhabitants of a city without being urban, without having the chance to participate in the urbanity or in urban public spaces as inhabitants of the city. Such disadvantaged areas are meanwhile structurally so strongly excluding people that in such areas have the feeling that they no longer belong to the city as a social system.

In this context we have to briefly discuss the theoretical issues and perspectives arising from Max *Weber's* discussion of social closure, and *Wacquant's* subsequent discussion of advanced marginality concerning spatial segregation with the result of a physical spatial cumulation of social problems. *Weber's* discussion of social closure describes the social process of enclosure of a certain class by defining borderlines between 'inside' and 'outside', of belonging to the class or not. The consequence is that the change from a lower class to a higher one would be more or less impossible (*Weber* 1985). Advantaged marginality describes a phase in which people are belonging to disadvantaged group without being excluded. This dilemma leads to paradoxical situations of behaviour; somebody accept the norms and rules without being able to fulfil them. That is the situation of people, living in disadvantaged quarters without having the feeling, they are excluded, without seeing the relationship between their spatial segregation and their social excluded situation (*Wacquant* 2004a).

But we can see that the relationship between spatial segregation and social exclusion can not only be described as a problem of socio-spatial distances and of a lack of urbanity as problem of the development of urban lifestyle and the achievement of goals, which ensure social integration. Otherwise we cannot explain social exclusion in an urban context only by describing the form of deprivation and disadvantage in deprived urban quarters. The problem is not the spatial cohesion of problems in a specific sense. The problem is the structure of the social space within which people are acting, and which is the reason for the social problems which people are suffering. The structure of these areas can meanwhile be described by the high homogeneity of the population: all are unemployed, poor, are depending on community supports, have problems and loose the focus of their life in an urban context.

In this way areas lose their connection to the economical and political development and in the consequence the people lose their cultural and socio-spatial relationship to the

city as a social system. And in this way and at the same time the inner connections to the nearby neighbourhood are destroyed.

This process is a condition that people are suffering under their alienation from the direct environment: they are losing their focus within their life, the space as focus dissolves and the discrimination against the areas by others outside of it make it impossible to leave the area without the risk of stigmatisation as a form of symbolic exclusion.

In advanced capitalistic societies we have no political decisions which are independent from the logic of economy and markets. Therefore nobody is interested in the question, what we should do with such areas and their inhabitants, whilst the system itself is not threatened by exclusion processes. The consequence is: we integrate these people, without the opportunity for them that they can leave their marginalized position and without any concerns for them in policy or the economy. I repeat: we integrate them under the conditions of their permanent structural exclusion.

So what is our answer to this new form of social question and which role does social policy play in this context? – A Conclusion

Social policy was institutionalised in a period in which a new working-class was fighting for the improvement of their life and working conditions against the interests of the class of capitalistic entrepreneurs. This leads in the meaning of Bismarck to processes which threatened the capacity for inclusion by the state policy. Social policy has therefore always had the function of social inclusion by integration of workers in work and by work. Social policy is therefor in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand the principles, represented by social policy were always principles in conflict with the capitalistic logic; on the other hand follows social policy this logic of inclusion, because social policy has the main goal to reintegrate the worker in labour processes by help, and support in case of risks – and this is the main goal of capitalistic economy.

Neither the theory of social policy nor the concepts of practical social policy have instruments for explaining exclusion as a typical social process of capitalistic societies. Social policy has the understanding of social exclusion as a phase, which is limited in time and space and may be solved by measures of social support or help. Exclusion as a social problem – and thus also social policy – depends upon the social circumstances under which people live.

But the problem is not to solve social problems on the level of individual behaviour of individuals living in poverty or similar phases. The problem is to implement proceedings and to institutionalise problem-solving strategies which are suitable to apply to

structural processes. Social policy must on the theoretical level develop an understanding or awareness of its dialectic character: Social policy is a part of the logic of social integration by the capitalistic economy and in fulfilling this task social policy stabilises this economic system. On the other hand its measures are directed against this logic by its supports and help, because it realises human principles.

Furthermore social policy has to change its historical perspective, which was certainly important in the period of its origin: Social policy was an answer on the social question, the key to this social question was the situation of the proletarians. To integrate the workers in the society and to avoid class-conflicts - that was the most important goal of the welfare state of the 19th century.

The problem of social policy of modern welfare states is to integrate all social groups of a society. Social inclusion means in this context, that at least theoretically all people should have access to all important social fields of behaviour.

Social policy must aware that the actually existing social problems of social exclusion are not only a problem of dysfunctional labour markets and weakened social insurance system.

To put it another way: Social policy is no longer only an instrument for social integration by labour and by social security. Social policy must more and more become an instrument for analysing and influencing social structures of the distribution of means, resources and opportunities in the sense of social justice.

Instead of this, social policy continues as a factor which stabilises and enforces social inequality and social exclusion. It does not lead to social justice. We have no longer, then, the question of how to insure against risks caused by labour, but we now have the question of how to include members of a society who are permanently are excluded by the structure and logic of capitalism.

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The social state at a turning point

Jan Keller

Abstract

This chapter deals with some of the current problems of the Social State. The author analyses the areas of work flexibility and 'family flexibility' as the two basic pillars of the processes of so-called modernization and examines their probable consequences for the Social State. It describes the main types of Social State in their relation to the processes of globalisation and tries to determine the impact of these processes for the social structure of the developed societies.

Greater clarity is sought concerning the new parameters of the social question in this context.

It is a given that the social state has been going through a serious crisis since the 1970s. But this crisis has a much broader scope, and the potential for much more radical impact, than the difficulties that have been accompanying the social state since its origin (*Rosanvallon* 1981). This time, the very foundations of its stability are endangered.

The social state was able to operate relatively smoothly only when it could rest upon its two basic pillars. One, a functional labour market able to provide adequate employment; the other, a cohesive family unity that encouraged its members when times were tough in the labour market (*Esping-Andersen* 1999).

The social state took advantage of the economic and demographic developments in the twenty to thirty years after World War Two to build a strong system of social security. In many countries it secured strong job protection, developed labour market regulation and fully developed social citizenship. Rather paradoxically, the social state developed in a way unprecedented in history and when it was least needed, as the social risks were, in comparison with the past and future, relatively insignificant (*Döring* 1999: 18).

This happy constellation passed, however, and since the mid 1970s there have been sharp changes in the labour market that are hard for many employees to adapt to. At the same time, the family has also become more and more fragile. The social state has therefore lost not only its two traditional partners, but moreover, both the unstable labour market and the weakening family unit have begun to impose their growing problems on it (*Deufel & Wolf* 2003: 113). And all of this when governments are less and less able to influence the direction of economic and social policies in their own countries (*Andress & Heien & Hofäcker* 2001: 153).

The growing crisis of the social state is thus a simultaneous crisis for three fundamental parts of the system: the state, the labour market and the nuclear family. This concurrence of crises has led to the fact that the difficulties of the social state have radically changed in character since the 1990's. They are no longer merely problems of financing, or of a dysfunctional and over-bureaucratized state apparatus. It is the principle of solidarity and the concept of social rights that should have become, according to the post-war ideal, the main triumph and culmination of modern democracy.

Some of the Problems of the Social State

The difficulties of the social state deepened with the transition from industrial society to post-industrial society, and the move to the service sector. The transition of the majority of economically active people from industry to the service sector has created a completely different situation than in the earlier transition from agriculture to industry. While in the past people would move from areas with low work productivity to areas with high and quickly growing work productivity, the transition to the service sector meant exactly the opposite process. At the same time, people providing services requiring lower productivity demand at least the same salaries as workers in industry. This contributes to an increase in the costs of education, health, and other sectors, making such services even more expensive (*Esping-Andersen 1999*).

The nature of work in the service sector has also led to the individualization of both working conditions and the aspirations of individual workers. This has significantly undermined the standardized and uniform forms of social security that were convenient for industrial workers.

In the diversified area of services, the labour force can be organized only with great difficulty, therefore reducing the power of negotiation. Primarily, though, it means that the development of the service sector has led to a significant feminisation of the labour market, and a general trend towards the discrimination of women's work.

The dawning of the services society has contributed considerably to flexibility at work. Work flexibility means two things: first, instead of adequate standard employment contracts, there are preferred partial and short-term contracts for limited hours of work; secondly, there is a growing movement away from the classical employment relationship to much freer relations between a company and the independent suppliers and subcontractors of individual tasks, products and services. Both have the same consequence – the transfer of a continually growing part of market uncertainty from companies to employees or subcontractors.

Work flexibility appears to reduce the rate of unemployment in a country, however, at the cost of increasing the share of low paid work, and of increasing the risk that the earnings of the economically active person will be on the poverty line or only slightly above it. Thus there comes into being a new phenomenon referred to as “working poverty”¹.

For the worker, flexible work means either lower purchasing power (and at the same time a lesser chance to insure oneself against social risks) or the necessity to be simultaneously engaged in two or more employment contracts. Or both.² The model of flexible work in essence resembles unqualified seasonal work. However, it spreads from the services sector to various branches of working activity and influences more and more branches that are partly or well qualified.

From the point of view of the social state, work flexibility represents a double risk. People who perform inadequate forms of work have low earnings and are often applicants for various kinds of social benefits and social services. At the same time, however, their low incomes prohibit them from properly insuring themselves or paying higher taxes. Thus they represent a burden to the public purse without contributing to it. Work flexibility (together with open unemployment) weakens the basic presupposition of the operation of the insurance systems that form the basis of social state financing.

At the same time, when work flexibility takes place in the labour market, there is also a certain “family flexibility”.³ This institution also becomes a kind of a contract, concluded for a limited period and flexibly adjusted to changing conditions. The family becomes only one of the many projections of the individualized life style, a field of experimentation involving new forms of private coexistence. The growing fragility of the family is not, however, merely the consequence of a form of experimentation chosen voluntarily and autonomously. It is partly a strategy, forced by both the growing costs of education and care for children, and on the more and more uncompromising requirements of the flexible labour market. The willingness to start a family, claims the

¹Work flexibility has so far acquired the most clean-cut forms in the United States of America; however, it is also spreading quickly throughout Europe. While at the beginning of the 20th century, in Germany, five real jobs counterbalanced one inadequate form of employment, by the middle of the 1990s, this rate was already only two to one. During the next fifteen years, the ratio should even out to one to one. In the Netherlands already, almost 40% of the labour force works flexibly in Great Britain it is one third of men and half of women.

² It is not by chance that in connection with this, a new word had joined the lexicon – flexploitation – indicating a wholly intentional distribution of uncertainty that enables to employers to deprive their employees of social comforts, paralyse trade unions and force the reduction of wages (*Bourdieu* 1998: 99).

³ The debate on an alleged crisis has been going on for decades and its results are not unambiguous. For example, the German sociologist Thomas Mayer offers an exclusively critical view on the family crisis in his article “Ende der Familie” – Szenarien zwischen Mythos und Wirklichkeit (*Volkman & Schimank* 2002).

German sociologist Christoph *Butterwege*, weakens in those circles where stable family life, with established maternal and paternal roles, comes into conflict with the requirements of professional mobility and biographic flexibility (*Butterwege* 2001:59).

There thus arises a strange relationship between work flexibility and family flexibility. While the first one serves to transfer market uncertainty from companies to employees and subcontractors, the second one transfers care for the safety from the family as a fixed institution to its individual members, usually those members that are the weakest.

This, understandably, increases the demand for help from the social state, as family flexibility is much more risky for women than for men. This form of emancipation means that women have to move more and more, and of their own initiative, between the marriage market and labour market. "Neither profitable activities, nor weddings provide today's (and even less so future) women with sufficient existential certainty" (*Butterwege* 2001: 62). Mothers with children who haven't found a new partner now belong among the poorest households. Their situation is even worse as they very often look in vain for adequate posts in the labour market and serve as a prototype of perfectly flexible workers, both in terms of the conditions of their work, and the extent of their salary.

Work flexibility is undoubtedly a great contribution for companies. It enables them to pay their employees only for the period of those hours and minutes when they make use of them. They save on costs the rest of the time. In practice, it means that the relationship between the company and its employees is no longer governed by the Labour Code, but rather by the Commercial Code, which doesn't bother with paid vacation, or bonuses for long periods of service or retraining.

The impact of flexibility on the social state is considerably less beneficial than on companies. Temporary and part-time jobs result in the reduction of social insurance paid into the system. At the same time, however, benefits claims increase because workers live close to the poverty line, even though formally, they have a job.

Flexible part-time or temporary jobs rarely enable one to save money for retirement. Rather, one lives from one season to the next. This represents a serious problem for the capital pension system. The decrease in the number of children per family is a continuing problem for the pension system. The flexible model of work simply doesn't provide a suitably strong enough safety net to cover even predictable social risks.

Work flexibility forms one of the two essential pillars of the overall process of modernization. Its essence is the repeated negation of the relationship between employment and security, a relationship that was forged more than a hundred years

ago with the aim of reducing the uncertainty of those who applied for a job, thus ending their socially forlorn position, and leading, in the 19th century, to the culmination of the social question. As Ulrich *Beck* states, in the name of flexibility, poverty and other forms of danger known since the dawn of capitalism have simply been “modernized” (*Beck/Giddens/Lash* 1996: 30).

The Globalisation Factor

Many of the problems that the social state has to face come from within the very fabric of society. The transfer of employment to the services sector with lower work productivity, growing family fragility, and the demographics of an ageing population each represent a challenge to the social state. The social state could most probably deal with these problems on an individual basis without great disruption. But they have been acting simultaneously since the 1970s, which has significantly increased their pressure. Moreover, this development began at the onset of a huge wave of economic globalisation that has radically reduced the room for manoeuvre of national governments (*Bourdieu* 1998: 39).

Practically limitless mobility enables international companies to increase their profit in three ways. They can fully or partially transfer production to countries with low labour costs. They can sell their products in countries with high purchasing power. And finally, they can decide where to pay their taxes and how much.

The triple benefit to the bottom line of international firms is at the same time a triple loss for the social state. The transfer of production to countries with low labour costs (or the threat of such a transfer) creates pressure to reduce labour costs, and decreases the social security contributions associated with the salary level, and paid by the employer.

The demand for purchasing power is strong all over the world. And the possibility to sell their products in countries with higher purchasing power leads companies to lose interest in maintaining the level of purchasing power in the countries where they (almost always temporarily) operate. Finally, the opportunity to take advantage of tax havens or to take tax holidays means that even significant increases in production don't help to fill up state coffers.

The result is that big international companies in particular needn't interest themselves in either the social well being of their employees, in maintaining the purchasing power of the population, or in maintaining the public sector. They can always leave countries trying to impose these features for ones that are more “competitive” (*Rieger & Leibfried* 2001: 58).

Investment incentives play an important role in the site location strategies of big companies. States that compete against one another to provide ever more attractive investment incentives end up pursuing a certain form of “perverse social care”. Their policies – primarily social policy – become merely a maintenance service for big international firms. This situation creates a paradox. Quite often, countries become more and more indebted while at the same time offering various subsidies and forms of tax relief to huge companies that are themselves many times richer than these states.

As it is then necessary to take care of these huge enterprises, there is a shortage of money for those who really are socially needy.¹

Before the start of the current wave of globalisation, big companies were surrounded by the boundaries of the national states, they took part in the financing of social politics and were interested in their employees having large salaries, because they could then buy the produced goods and could consume the services on offer. Globalisation broke this relationship. The result is that large companies prosper and multiply their profit in countries marked by growing poverty. The economy blossoms while the social aspect fades. This disjuncture between social concern and the economy belongs among the most threatening consequences of globalisation, and individual social states are more and more defenceless against it. Their financing is endangered from their very foundations.

The whole structure of the social state is imperilled as soon as the solidarity between companies and their employees disappears (*Kaufmann* 1997). And this is what is happening under globalisation. Companies stop behaving in a socially responsible manner. For them, social responsibility becomes a brake on their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive world. Companies strengthen their competitiveness through a strategy of external and internal flexibility.²

At the same time, companies transfer care for their own prosperity in an unprecedented way upon the state. And it is not only through the ever more generous investment

¹ As Horst *Afheldt* ironically mentions, the whole process is proof positive of the fact that civilized progress does exist. In the past, the state was often guilty of letting itself be bribed. However, it has now significantly corrected itself, and now bribes itself (*Afheldt* 2003:103).

² External flexibility means that a company converts from a hierarchic form of organization to a network form, while its stable centre is connected to a series of flexibly changing peripheral subcontractors who are not the firm’s employees. All the competition and market uncertainties are transferred to these subcontractors. An accompanying phenomenon is the growth of inadequate work contracts and the high risk of unemployment on the periphery of company networks. The strategy of inner flexibility lies in the fact that the companies form their own staff in a way that allows them to flexibly react to the fast changing requirements of the market. The price for this is the elimination of those who are not able to quickly adapt. Both strategies prevent the companies from continuing their function of social integration. On the contrary, they start to operate as machines producing social vulnerability, and exclusion (*Castel* 1995: 656).

incentives that enable big international corporations to use the infrastructure of the host country practically for free, obtain land and buildings for their own activities at greatly reduced prices, and enjoy huge tax relief and tax holidays.

The state has helped many domestic companies in the transformation from fixed organizations to network organizations, with taxpayers' money. The social state has significantly subsidized the rationalisation of jobs in large industrial companies (e.g. through the contributions for early retirement), and at the same time subsidized the creation of new posts in small peripheral service companies (e.g. through contributions in the form of scholarships and retraining courses). Often, it was merely a question of internal reorganization; a large company would found a subsidiary, receive state support, and transfer its employees to the subsidiary, while lowering their salaries at the same time. After the company had increased its competitiveness at taxpayers' expense, it would start to protest loudly against a social state that was too large, and threaten to go abroad unless taxes were reduced (*Boltanski & Chiapello* 1999:343).

Types of Social State in Relation to Globalisation

In essence, the social state can be financed in two ways, either through taxes, or based on a system of social security. Both of these possibilities can, to a certain extent, be combined. But in the social state, one always prevails over the other (*Schmid* 2002).

States that finance their social expenses primarily from taxes (for example, the Scandinavian states) have an unfair position in globalisation, because firms and investors are constantly pushing for tax reduction. They threaten to leave for countries with a lower burden of taxation if their taxes aren't reduced. With no regard to the seriousness of these threats, the pressure on governments to reduce the extent of certain types of taxes forces them to try to finance the rest of their social expenses primarily through an obligatory employee insurance premium (as well as through an increase in indirect taxes, etc.).

The second type of social state takes its finances primarily through the insurance premium paid by those who have a job. This is how it works in countries such as Germany or France. These countries also have a weakened position under globalisation because companies threaten to leave the country unless secondary work expenses, especially the social premium, are reduced. Governments respond to this by reducing the amount of social security paid by the employer, and they try to finance residual social expenses by increasing taxes, especially indirect taxes, as well as through the transfer of the insurance premium from the employer to the employees.

Until the 1970s, the exemplary model of social security was considered to be the continental model (primarily Germany). Over the past twenty years, it has become the target of sharp criticism, because of an alleged rigidity that prevents it from reacting on the challenges of globalisation.

The greatest weaknesses of the German model are, with the onset of globalisation, taken to be those features that were once its strengths and source of support – primarily the central role of full-time, well-paid work as a basis for social security. Here, the biggest gain for the social security system is tied to employee salaries, both in the form of endowments for social insurance and in direct taxes. More than two-thirds of the German social state is financed through the contributions of employees and their employers. But this model depends on almost full employment. As soon as people produce more and more without being provided adequate positions, the social state loses its economic basis.¹

Both the increase in unemployment, together with reduced labour costs for the sake of increased competitiveness, decrease the income of money going into the treasury, while at the same time increasing the demand for social security. Work flexibility has the same effect, creating a boom of inadequate forms of employment contracts. The system as a whole cannot function differently, unless there are an adequate number of proper jobs. In connection with this, we talk about “the trap of the conservative model”: the higher the extent of precarious work and unemployment, the bigger the insurance burden on those who still have an adequate job.

The dependence of social security on families and professional positions are inadequate in times when the classical form of a family and household is undermined, when the number of incomplete families is continually growing and non-standard forms of family are developed. The inadequacy is revealed with the fact that social risks that are preferentially hidden in this system concern the typical life cycle of men, with the strong support of the male as the head of the family. Those who talk about the necessity to “modernize” the German social system suggest, among other things, transferring the centre of its financing from a premium on taxes.

This is another reason why the unions are taking a stand against modernization; such a manoeuvre would put them out of the game. The whole decision-making process would be transferred from the tripartite agreement to the government, parliament and political parties.

¹ As R. G. *Heinze* states, the main cause of the problems of the German social state is really the crisis of the labour market. For example, the expenses on health care are not exploding at all; measured by their share of GNP they are constant over the long-term. Endowments to hospital budgets, however, are falling considerably as a result of growing unemployment (*Heinze/Schmid* 1999: 31).

Unlike the continental (and also liberal) model, the financing of the Scandinavian model is primarily based on taxes. Globalisation thus represents a double pressure for the northern countries. The politicians try not only to draw foreign firms into the country under the promise of tax relief and infrastructure financing, but to also keep domestic firms in the country in an effort to not lose taxpayers and jobs. Considerations about the high level of taxes as a serious handicap for the northern countries have become more and more powerful since the 1980s.

Although the system of general taxes through which the northern social state is financed doesn't raise the secondary work expenses as for example with social insurance, companies are allowing themselves to be less and less burdened by taxes. For this reason, in the northern countries, pressure is rising to finance social policy directly from insurance.

While the conservative model prefers an increase in the level of taxes (and lowers the amount of contributions), the Scandinavian model is more and more forced to reduce the burden of taxation, i.e. to increase the level of contributions.

The residual (Anglo-Saxon, liberal) model of the social state represents in a way *contradictio in adjecto*. While the essential function of the social state is to act as a counterbalance to the market mechanism of social inequality, the Anglo-Saxon social state requires, quite contrarily, that all institutions of social policy conform to the market.¹

It can generally be stated that the relatively high adaptability to the conditions of globalisation that is typical of the Anglo-Saxon social state, in comparison with both previously mentioned ones, is based partly on the acceptance of labour market flexibility, and partly on the attempt to transfer a part of the former duties of the social state onto the family. This strategy, however, has its limits. The effort to attain economic competitiveness is paid through growing inequality, and by a rising number of the poor, both working and non-working. Economic integration thus proceeds simultaneously with social disintegration.²

¹ Great Britain can be considered a European example of a liberal model since the end of the 1970s, that is, since reforms introduced by the government of Margaret Thatcher. The system initiated by William Beveridge at the beginning of the 1940s had in addition to indisputable liberal elements, relatively strong socially democratic features as well. They lay primarily in their universalism, that is, in covering risks of the entire population by integrating benefits and services in the area of housing, the school system and health service, as well as in the commitment of the government to support full employment. In contrast, the Scandinavian model, benefits and services were already then understood as minimal and didn't guarantee a living standard, but only protected the recipient against the worst form of poverty (*Esping-Andersen* 1990).

² The United States of America has proceeded in this way further than Great Britain. In the USA, unemployment rises more slowly. However, at the same time, real wages fall quicker and the gap opens

When the Lift Goes Down

According to Ulrich *Beck*, the deepening of social inequalities does not necessarily lead to the formation of class units, or even to some form of class awareness. On the contrary, the inequality is more and more individualized. This development was enabled among others by the fact that in post-war Europe there was a kind of “lift effect” (*Fahrstuhleffekt*), where each of the social strata raised its standard of living by at least one floor in comparison to the pre-war period.

Beck’s diagnosis was formulated in the middle of the 1980s, when the lift had reached its peak and the salaries of employees started to stagnate (*Beck* 1986). Over the past two decades, the lift has been set in motion again, this time, however in the opposite direction.

A good way to better define this movement can be found through the categorization that French sociology has been working with for half a century. It differentiates the so-called socio-professional categories and examines the changes of their development, as well as the dynamics of the mobility among them. The elementary outlines of the social structure in French society today are as follows.¹

a) Social exclusion

At the very bottom of society today we can find approximately 20% of the French population, who more or less permanently live beyond stable employment. These people and their living conditions represent a new social question (*Rosanvallon* 1995). They are the victims of changes taking place in the economy as a consequence of globalisation. They are the first to lose their opportunities within an economy driven by the goal of continually increasing world competitiveness.

If the existing trend of the “modernization” of the social state continues, then those in the category of “the excluded” will have nothing better look forward to than a reduction in the public social care that they currently receive, and the fact that whatever care it does receive will be provided more and more through private organizations. There is strong pressure on the remnants of the social state to be transformed into a kind of “market with a certain social-ness about it”, dealing with new social risks on the basis of market principles. The problem is that the market can handle the so-called “good risks”, meaning risks with a relatively low probability of arising, and more importantly, that threaten people who are able to insure themselves in advance, using their own

between rich and poor. About one third of employees in the USA belong among “the working poor” with an income below the poverty line. Approximately 40 million citizens of the United States have no health insurance.

¹ We cite data included in the article of Louis *Chauvel*: Le renouveau d’une société de classes. In (*Bouffartigue* 2004: 55-71).

resources (*Kaufmann 1997: 193*). The problem of the excluded, however, lies in the fact that they represent the exclusively bad risks, with a high probability of them arising, and they don't have the resources to adequately prepare for them in time (*Castel 2003: 25*).

b) Blue-collar workers and employees

Above the layer of the socially excluded there is the 40% of the French population that consists primarily of categories of blue-collar workers and employees. These people generally have quite stable, routine work. They are still holding on to their social rights. Their incomes have, however, been stagnating for the past twenty years, their purchasing power has long been experiencing zero growth and their prospects are poor. They live in permanent uncertainty because they belong among those who are most threatened by the prospects of unemployment.

The outsourcing of many production processes involving blue-collar jobs means that subcontractors compete with one another to place orders. The social security that was once guaranteed by years spent in a company is slowly being eliminated. Blue-collar workers then lose their feeling of professional identity and collective solidarity. In fact, a barrier is raised between those who have stable employment and those who have already gone through the process of precarious employment. These are mainly young people, women and those who have lower qualifications. This group also lives under the permanent threat of job losses to blue-collar workers from poorer countries.

Blue-collar workers and employees that are currently stagnating on low incomes that are complemented by various social benefits will continue to go through the process of work flexibility. They will be doubly affected. Firstly, by the fact that their employment status and incomes will be more and more uncertain; secondly, that in this situation, they will be able to count less and less on their existing social rights. This category is too large and takes too many social benefits for the modernizers of the social state to resist the temptation of saving money here. The question is how big a part of this socio-professional category will be driven down to the category of the excluded.

c) Lower middle classes

Approximately 25% of the French population can be ranked among the lower middle strata. The core is formed by the so-called "mediating professions". It was they who were once, during the post-war years, hot favourites to enter the middle classes, and their advance was to take place in tight symbiosis with the social state. They bore the hopes of "bourgeois-ifying" society, and represented a bridge between the successful, who had already found a home in the middle classes, and the blue-collar workers and employees, who were preparing for it.

We can place here the holders of technical knowledge and middle organization positions mainly in big organizations and public administration. "The mediating" character of these professions lies in the fact that they do not unequivocally belong either among the lower and controlled, or among the higher and dominating. Although they work in salaried positions, they enjoy relative professional autonomy in comparison to other employees, and have more and more university education.

The lower middle classes can experience the strongest shock. Over the past thirty years, they had the greatest aspirations to advance among the middle class. Today, they unwillingly admit that the season has already ended for them. The very first waves of modernization deprived them of their rights to social services and benefits to improve their standard of living and relieve their domestic budgets. This is evident among the less successful. At the same time, they are required to pay for the education of their offspring, as well as a growing part of health care. They will have to take care of a large part of their retirement security too, and in case of unemployment or other social risks, they will have to reconcile with the decrease of benefits on the level of basic security. Unlike the successful, they won't be able to rely on a significant reduction in taxation. They are many, and their lobby groups are not sufficiently influential. It can be expected that a bigger part of today's lower middle class will go through the phases of the modernization of the social state at least one level lower on the social scale.

d) Upper middle class

Approximately 15% of the French can be ranked among upper middle class, meaning those who don't have an overwhelming amount of wealth, but who are able to secure through their own activity a relatively independent existence with a very good living standard. This stratum matches the category of executive workers and intellectual professions. They also belong among employees for the most part, however among those best remunerated.

They share with the lower middle classes a certain ambivalence about their professional position. As dependent employees, they are in a subordinate position and have to give their abilities to their employer's discretion. They have at the same time, a certain autonomy that is given by the fact that the organization delegates to them certain responsibilities for decision making. They include professors and scientists, but also computer programmers and engineers primarily of large companies oriented towards export. They are also members of free professions ranging from lawyers to artists.

The upper middle class will be less touched by the modernization, however their situation can also become more dramatic. They generally don't receive social benefits and services, so not too much can be taken from them in this regard. But they will also

have to pay part of the costs of education, illness and retirement that has been given to them by the social state. They will try to cover these costs at the expense of lower taxes that they will attempt to get for themselves. At the same time, their level of uncertainty will also increase, and they will have to stop counting on permanent, secured professional careers.¹

Intellectual professions that aspire to create the second part of upper social strata will be more and more forced into the role of “businessmen with their own competence”. Some of them will manage this role and remain in the higher strata, some of them will fall on the level of the lower middle class and will share with them uncertainty, as well as existential problems. It is probable that the boundaries between both differently successful parts of this subcategory will to a great extent correspond to the boundary between those who started a family and those who rather stayed childless for professional reasons.

e) The Elite

The powerful and economic elite in France (as well as in other countries) is formed by several tenths of a percent of those having the highest positions, controlling not only large properties and the flow of finance, but also knowledge and the flow of information. These people are not immediately touched by the crisis of the social state. On the contrary, it brings them the possibility to push forward the reduction of their taxes. The richest individuals and entire companies thus do not pay a fair part of the advantages that work flexibility gives them.

We can fear that the diagnosis stated in a different context by Horst *Afheldt* for the development of the social structure of Germany can be generalized in other once rich and socially generous countries: “A small minority growing rich evermore quickly. Beneath this there is a middle class that in the beginning benefited quite handsomely from the growth, but which now has less and less from it. And at the very bottom there is a low class that doesn’t benefit from growth at all, and who’s lowest parts fall to the bottom faster and faster” (*Afheldt* 2003: 147).

¹ In the 1990s these executive workers (not only in France) typically found themselves for the first time in history among those caught up in mass lay-offs. At least one third of them have at least one experience with a forced search of a new job, while the chances of executive workers over fifty and without a university degree are minimal. No company is able to guarantee employment or career for a longer term. Most executive workers convert to short-term contracts and change into a kind of nomads who have to assume their own expenses, keep their networks of contacts, and maintain their ability to hand in continually new projects (*Bouffartigue* 2004: 119).

Conclusion: A New Social Question

The society of employment and the social state that grew out of it were based on the precondition that a vast majority of the economically active (long limited to men only) was able to get permanent and adequate employment, which was threatened, at worst, by short periods of temporary unemployment. The whole system could operate only on condition that the groups who contributed to insurance against social risks would in great part correspond to those who would later benefit from this premium.

Today, though, we are in a completely different situation. "It is starting to be clear that precariousness of employment and unemployment is inscribed into the dynamics of today's modernization. These are necessary consequences of the new ways of employment restructuring: they form the other side of industrial innovations and the other side of the attempt to increase competitiveness" (*Castel* 1995: 649).

The new social question is a result of work flexibility (and accompanying family flexibility) and thus grows from the very character of the current economy. Work flexibility means that employment is left to repeatedly establish an absolute asymmetry of power between the employer and those who carry out the work. The rate of uncertainty suffered by those who offer their work for hire is rising significantly.

The ability to delegate uncertainty to others who are forced to live in it is the essence of the power relationship – that is the relation of superiority and subordination. Entire social groups (young people, less qualified people, a majority of women with children, people around 50 and over, etc.) are forced to live with "permanent temporary work" (a concept of Robert *Castel*).

In the growing deficit of adequate work opportunities, it is practically impossible to integrate these "redundant" people back to society in a meaningful way. Their integration has in fact been given up, and society has limited itself to providing a form of provisional integration. It is no longer the elimination of social inequalities by means of non-market mechanisms as the conception of social rights required. It is a one-sided retreat from the market logic, which continually produces inequalities. The social state can do nothing more but limit itself to trying to reduce the most extreme social impacts of neo-liberal politics, with its robust business ideology pushed universally even beyond the sector of entrepreneurship.

Social work, whose task is the integration of marginal people and groups into society, thus confronts an almost impossible task. It has to ensure dignified living conditions to those who don't have work and this inside a society where the dignity of living standards is conditioned by the approach towards adequate work. Social integration that cannot lean upon professional integration is condemned to eternal integration. The

problem of the new wave of deconversion cannot be solved this way, and in these conditions social work becomes the work of Sisyphus (*Caste!* 1995: 683).

Today, the point is how to reverse this process, one that endangers not only the society of employment but also the pillars of democracy itself. The turning point can easily become a point with no way back.

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Social Changes and Challenges in Europe: towards a European Social Work?

Karen Lyons

Abstract

This chapter considers some of the changes that have impacted on social work on a European dimension. There are increasing indications that social problems evident in one country are also evident in other European states, and that efforts to address them may have trans-national or European dimensions, with social work increasingly displaying similar characteristics trans-nationally. The issues arising for social work from migrations are set out. It would appear that social professionals themselves will be involved in more cross-border or European level activities, with the European Union's various funding programmes affording social professionals the opportunity to meet with others across national boundaries, to share concerns and exchange ideas about intervention strategies, service developments and policy change. In addition, regional and international professional associations may offer similar opportunities and sometimes also enable the voice of social professionals to be heard in forums at the European level. This chapter analyses these developments, in addition to discussing relevant developments in qualifying and post-graduate education.

Introduction

Following the earlier chapters on changes in the economic and political contexts within which social work operates – and changes to different welfare regimes in particular – this chapter considers some of the changes that have impacted on social work more specifically. There are increasing indications that social problems evident in one country are also present in other European states and that efforts to address them may have trans-national or European dimensions. It therefore seems likely that, while social work for many will remain a locally based activity, it will increasingly display similar characteristics trans-nationally; and that social professionals themselves will be involved in cross-border or European level activities.

The term 'social work' is here used to signify a range of occupational groups that are variously named, trained and organised across Europe, including social pedagogues (for instance, in Denmark, Germany or Poland), animators (as in France), and cultural workers (as in the Netherlands) (*Lorenz* forthcoming). The more generic term, social professions, originated from an evaluation of the impact of the first decade of the ERASMUS programme on social work and related programmes (*Seibel & Lorenz* 1998). The term was given wider exposure through a new European journal (*Otto & Lorenz* 1998) and a subsequent conference (*Chytil & Seibel* 1999). A unifying

framework for this disparate occupational group is assumed to be agreement with the broad definition of social work, as advanced by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) at a joint Congress in 2000:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the point where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. (*www.ifsw.org* 2000)

A subsequent document has been produced by IFSW and IASSW with regard to education, namely, Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training (*www.ifsw.org* 2004; *Sewpaul & Jones* 2004). The existence of the international definition and the global standards document, together with various UN conventions and other standards (for instance, from the International Labour Organisation), suggest an increase in international influences on national policies which can be seen as an aspect of globalisation. However, at a regional level, European Union directives and programmes provide a benchmark and resources for national legislation and provisions, for example, in relation to social exclusion. A range of organisations operate at a European (rather than global or national) level, affording regional opportunities for social professionals to engage in various forms of exchange.

This chapter therefore identifies some indications of trends towards 'convergence' in the organisation and methods of social work; migration as a common feature with implications for social work across national boundaries; and resulting debates about education for, and regulation of, social professional activity, concluding with a discussion about the possible emergence of 'European social work'.

Some indications of convergence in social work across Europe

A major debate, in the context of Europe, is the extent to which countries will retain national (and even local) variations in terms of policies and social service provisions or move closer to European wide 'norms'. Given the linguistic diversity and wide range of historic and cultural traditions it is possible that degrees of difference will remain in welfare policies, including those affecting social work. Additionally, there are clearly sub-regional differences within Europe, reflecting not only national and local cultures (including religion), political goals and public attitudes but also the economic resources that determine to a considerable degree the extent and shape of services. For instance, financial resources have been one factor accounting for the differences in the level of state provision between North and South European countries; and economic

resources currently play a significant part in both the demands on, and development of, social services in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (*Bochenska-Seweryn & Grotowska-Leder 2003*). However, there are some signs of convergence in terms of the organisational frameworks and methods of social work, partly arising from EU policies and less direct forms of regional influence (for instance, judgements of the Council of Europe Court of Human Rights), as well as from global conventions and processes.

Turning to examples of similarities and possible trends towards convergence, these can be identified in social services organisation and delivery and also in the theoretical frameworks and methods employed in social professional interventions. Among the organisational similarities are the trend towards the 'marketisation' of services and the development of new services and job titles; while among approaches we can identify the growth of care management; changes in relationship based work; some emphasis on prevention and empowerment; and increased calls for evidence based practice. These will be examined in turn, drawing considerably on examples from the UK. However, I suggest that some of the shifts identified in British social work bring it more closely into line with the reality of current policies and practices in many other countries of mainland Europe.

Various reasons can be advanced for the increased commodification and marketisation of social services, but it has generally been recognised as related to a shift to 'the right' in political and economic ideologies, evident globally in the last two decades of the 20th century (*Teepie 2000*). Certainly, this was strongly felt in the UK under Thatcher and has continued since 1997 through the 'modernisation agenda' of New Labour. In terms of social services, policies such as the 'purchaser- provider split' and 'contracting out' have meant that social workers increasingly find themselves assessing users' needs and then 'purchasing' the relevant direct services from other suppliers, often in the voluntary or private sectors. Conversely, social workers already employed in the independent sector spend more time preparing bids to secure contracts for service provision, and then managing the (time-limited) projects established to meet users' needs. This will not be a new experience for social workers in, for example, Germany where a greater emphasis on provision by agencies in the independent sector has long been the norm (*Cannan et al. 1992*). Additionally, it is also the current reality of many social service provisions emerging in CEE countries which have most recently joined the EU (*Krzyszowski 2003*). While the extent to which the state has been the main provider of social services has varied greatly across Europe, a shift away from state provision has been noted even in the Nordic countries (*Blomberg et al. 2000*). It thus seems likely that all member states of the EU will aim to reduce direct expenditure on

'public' social services and that the 'mixed economy' of social care, including privatisation of some resources (such as residential care for growing numbers of elderly people), will become the norm.

In this context we are beginning to see in some North West European countries relatively recent shifts away from previous patterns of longer-term employment in local authority departments, besides which two features of the wider labour market are now also in evidence in social work in the UK. The first of these is the shift to recruitment of social workers through specialist recruitment agencies, some of which become the 'virtual employer' (although the social worker would be working for a social services agency on a day to day basis). The second and related aspect is the development of the 'portfolio career'. Instead of a long-term full-time permanent post with one department social workers are more likely to move from one employer to another, often working on time-limited projects, with greater flexibility about whether posts are full or part-time. A survey in the UK (*Wallis Jones & Lyons 2003*) indicated that a small minority of newly qualified social workers also had more than one paid job at a time. Such employment patterns may not be unusual in other countries (for instance, Germany or Greece) where there are generally more qualified workers than there are jobs available, requiring new recruits (in particular) to be resourceful and flexible in their career plans. Similarly, anecdotal evidence from some CEE countries suggests that, while countries may be short of trained social professionals, there also may not be jobs available due to limited resources for services, or the short term nature of funding (including from the EU).

Whether employment opportunities for social professionals are limited or widely available, it seems likely that many social workers will take up posts that do not necessarily bear the title 'social worker', in a range of organisations beyond the mainstream of the local authorities in the UK or the Big Five NGOs in Germany. Some of these will be new agencies established to respond to 'new' areas of work. For instance, there has been ad hoc growth of agencies catering for the needs of asylum seekers in the UK and Germany (*Huegler 2003*); and other examples would include special projects for homeless young people or for people with drug and alcohol problems. The 1990s saw the expansion of voluntary agencies catering for people (often young men) with HIV/AIDS in many West European countries but, with the availability of anti-retroviral drugs treatment, such agencies have declined following a decrease in government funding or have had to shift their focus to cater for the needs of HIV+ asylum seekers (often women) or of the children of parents with AIDS. Eastern Europe parallels Asia in being the region with the fastest growing rate of AIDS infection

(UNAIDS report 2004) and there are thus significant needs for development of effective prevention and treatment services, with social workers playing a part in tracing contacts and offering advice and support through counselling.

Turning to changes in theoretical approaches and methods informing social work interventions, a major shift apparent in the UK since the 1990s has been the growth of 'care management'. This is closely related to the view that care should not be provided solely or mainly by 'the state' but that social workers should devise a 'package of care' for each service user, drawing on provisions in the voluntary and private sectors as well as the 'informal' or 'community care' sector. This approach assumes the availability of family members, friends or neighbours conveniently located and able to provide various aspects of care needed by, for example, people with disabilities or mental health problems, or elderly people able to remain in their own homes with support. While such expectations of the family or 'the community' have perhaps been the norm in many countries in the South of Europe (and until recently, Ireland), various writers have identified the implications of such a shift for women specifically, in societies with falling birth rates, increased family mobility and high rates of female participation in the labour market (Orme 2001). From the social workers' point of view, it places more emphasis on the skills of assessment, planning, liaison with local 'providers' and financial management, than previously and reduces the element of 'relationship work' often seen as central to interventions by social professionals.

However, relationship work (including different forms of counselling and therapy) is still taking place (but, as suggested above, often outside the local authority departments and by people who may be trained as social professionals but not necessarily in posts labelled as 'social work'). For those working in the statutory sector, including with offenders, it is likely that interventions based on relationship work will be short term and utilising concepts such as cognitive therapy to structure interventions with individuals and small groups. Even where it is expected that relationships will be established and maintained over some time, for instance in child care work related to fostering and adoption, interventions are more closely guided and monitored through the use of standardised forms and timescales, increasing the sense of bureaucracy and managerial control. There is also evidence of more intensive and structured approaches in the voluntary sector in the introduction of Families First projects in Germany and the Netherlands (Hermann 2003). Such approaches tie in with changes both in the organisational frameworks and the call for increased accountability and effectiveness in social work (see later).

However, another trend evident in the UK (and elsewhere) has been a revaluing of policies related to prevention of social problems and empowerment of individuals and communities. This shift has been related in some cases to recognition at national and EU levels of continuing pockets of poverty (often impacting particularly on minority ethnic groups) and of increased numbers of youth and other groups who experience alienation, marginalisation or social exclusion. One aspect of the British response has been the establishment of new agencies, such as Sure Start (concerned with providing community based support for young families) and Connexions (assisting young people in the 'school to work' transition phase). Employees are not required to have social work qualifications (although some do) and *Higham* (2001) has suggested a similarity in the approach of personal advisers (employed in the Connexions service) with social pedagogy, as practised in many countries of mainland Europe. Certainly, employees need to draw on skills such as group work as well as counselling and collaborative work with other agencies. However, neither of these agencies specifically promotes community work (including community development and action) and it tends to be in smaller and sometimes very poorly funded local projects that these approaches struggle to survive.

It seems likely that all governments and other funding agencies will require more accountability from social professionals and the agencies employing them and also be concerned to support 'what works'. The call in the UK is for 'evidence based practice' and this approach to research is also evident in Finland (*Rostila & Piirainen* 2004). Given that positivistic approaches to research are already in evidence in some European countries it seems likely that there will be an expansion of commissioned research utilising a positivistic paradigm and quantitative methodology to measure the outcomes of social work intervention. However, there have also been other developments in interpretive approaches and qualitative methodology (*Karvinen et al.* 1999) suggesting that social workers themselves need to be better equipped to participate in research, or to critique it and identify appropriate strategies for informing policy and practice developments.

Migration: examples of trends and issues impacting on Social Work in Europe

A significant theme of EU policy development since the early 1990s has been the need to address social exclusion (*Steinert & Pilgram* 2003). Policy developments in this field recognised the relationship between material poverty and other facets of exclusion and lack of opportunities for choice and participation faced by some citizens in all societies. Among those most likely to be marginalised are minority groups identified by different nationality, race, ethnicity, language and/or culture. In the face of growing reports of

systematic discrimination or public antagonism towards established minority groups and an increase in the numbers of people seeking asylum in, or gaining illegal entry to, many European countries, the 1990s on have also seen the development of some efforts to combat racism and xenophobia but also much tighter immigration and border controls at both national and European levels (*Mitchell & Russell 1998; Mynott 2002*).

Migration has always been a fact of life within European society and one of the interesting developments recently has been the way in which countries which might previously have been among the 'sending countries' (such as Greece and Ireland) have not only seen the return of some of their emigrants but also become 'receiving countries', in the case of Greece through proximity to sites of conflict (*Lyons & Stathopoulos 2001*) or through the needs of a more buoyant economy and labour market (Ireland). Alternatively, the colonial histories of countries such as Britain, France and Spain have led to the longstanding settlement of minority ethnic groups in major ports and cities. Further, countries such as Germany have an established population of Turkish descent related to its post-war 'guest- worker' policy; and many of the accession states countries have minority Roma populations, historically located in central and eastern Europe.

National populations and governments have been more or less effective in recognising the rights and responsibilities of such populations and the need to develop multi-cultural policies as well as sometimes specialist services. In some countries social workers and educators have been closely involved in such developments, including through an emphasis on work with disaffected youth from minority communities. Such young people have often faced the usual pressures of the transition from child to adulthood but also school failure and discrimination in the labour market, compounding problems of identity formation. Some EU funded networks have focused on developments in youth work and examples of approaches to anti-racist practice and inter-cultural learning across a range of countries have been documented by *Aluffi Pentini and Lorenz (1996)*, *Hazenkamp and Popple (1997)* and *Voland and Porteous (2002)*.

The 1990s also saw the rise in the number of people seeking asylum or entering countries illegally and social workers have faced the challenge of providing appropriate services and orientating students to work with this new user group, sometimes comprising single men but often women and young children (with or without a father) and also 'unaccompanied minors'. In the UK some local authorities responded with the setting up of specialist community based asylum seekers teams (mainly giving help and advice regarding services and welfare benefits) while some voluntary agencies were more likely to respond to the specialist needs (including accommodation) of

unaccompanied minors. But a survey in 2000 suggested that such services were overstretched and unequally available in London and South East England (*Lyons & Stathopoulos* 2001), while a subsequent policy of 'dispersal' meant the disruption of potential support from ethnic communities as well as need for additional workers to develop new services in new areas. While recent press reports early in 2005 suggest a decrease in the numbers of people seeking asylum in the UK, public attitudes remain negative and research studies have identified the tightening of legislative controls in this area as posing problems for both asylum seekers and for those working in this field (*Cohen et al.* 2002). There have also been accounts of social work with this user group elsewhere (see for example, chapters relating to Sweden and the Netherlands in *Callahan et al.* 2000), although in the CEE countries challenges related to modifying public attitudes and developing appropriate services are more likely to relate to a longstanding minority group, Roma people (*Pridhova* 2001).

A particular development in the field of migration, with implications for the work of social professionals across Europe, has been the apparent increase in people smuggling and trafficking. Smuggling is illegal and may carry significant risks (on the journey and in subsequent employment) for those smuggled, but trafficking is more likely to require those trafficked to engage in illegal and risky activities, including the sex trade, against their will (perhaps through ill treatment and /or threats to families 'back home') (*Lyons et al.* forthcoming). Although there are many instances of people being smuggled or trafficked from war-torn and/or poverty stricken countries in Africa or Asia, there is also a strong intra- European dimension in much of this 'trade' with, particularly, young women and under-age youth being transported from East European countries into the EU, via the Balkan region (*Manion* 2002). Law enforcement agencies are leading efforts to combat this problem but social workers, particularly in voluntary projects, are beginning to be involved in remedial projects, for example, for girls and women who have been extricated from the sex trade.

Finally, there are other challenges to social workers and service developments raised by other aspects of demographic trends related to migration. In line with the general rise in the number and proportion of older people in most European populations, some countries are also recognising the need for culturally appropriate services for older people from minority ethnic communities whose needs may not be met (in whole or in part) by their families and communities. At the other end of the age range, despite the concerns about increased immigration expressed in some countries, many European nations are in fact experiencing a downturn in national birth rates and need both the labour of healthy adults (usually male) and the contribution to 'population replacement' which family reunification programmes can provide. But minority ethnic families –

whether long established or new to a country – are not immune from the stresses and strains facing all families (and indeed are arguably subject to more) so there is also a growing need for development of services that are culturally appropriate. These may be an extension or variation on the services already offered to support families, for instance, through Family Centres (*Warren-Adamson* 2001) or specialist projects (*Hermann* 2003) or may offer conciliation or exit strategies where domestic violence or other risks threaten family stability.

Finally, a topic of considerable interest in the national and professional press, concerns the plight of children who cannot be cared for by their parents for some reason. Many European countries have well developed alternative care policies and general trends have been to reduce institutional care in favour of placing children with a substitute family, either through adoption or fostering (*Sellick* 1998; *Garrett & Sinkkinen* 2003). However, various issues have been identified including the adequacy of care in residential establishments or foster homes and the shortage of specialist care facilities (for example, for children suffering from HIV/AIDS). Additionally, taking into account population mobility and migration trends, extended families have often been split, sometimes across national borders, and this trend, as well as the increased number of children being born to partners from different ethnic groups, means that special efforts need to be made in the areas of fostering and adoption to ensure that social professionals adhere to such principles as ‘kinship care’ or ‘same race placements’. Further, international and European conventions must be observed in national legislation and professional practice regarding the rights of the child. There have been previous discussions between social workers at European and international levels about the appropriateness or otherwise of inter-country adoption (*Selman* 1998), and recent anecdotal evidence from London suggests that placement outside the country may also feature in fostering arrangements. Professionals are therefore having to familiarise themselves with child care policies and procedures in other countries, as well as sometimes working through interpreters, to ensure that appropriate alternative placements *can* be achieved (including through care within the extended family), if necessary beyond national borders (*Lyons et al.* forthcoming).

Debates about Status, Regulation and Education

Internal concerns about the status of social work are longstanding and widespread, partly related to debates about the extent to which social work can claim to have and to create a distinctive field of knowledge. Low status has also been attributed to the occupations’ origins and continuing characteristic as a ‘women’s profession’ (*Gruber & Stefanov* 2002), although in countries where social pedagogy has flourished (given its

original location in University Schools of Education and the higher numbers of men teaching the subject and managing service delivery, for instance in Germany), and/or where qualifying education is predominantly offered at post-graduate level, this may be less the case. Periodically, the occupation has also been the subject of increased external scrutiny and direction, including by national governments (*Becher* 1994). In some countries, such as the UK, public attitudes and expectations have also played a part in framing the work of social professionals and the courses on which they qualify. Professional associations may also play a part, for instance, through issuing Codes of Conduct, and specific regulatory bodies are found in a number of European countries.

With the growth of concerns about comparability of professional qualifications (with a view to increased mobility of labour in a 'common market'), a Directive issued by the European Commission in 1989 (*Barr* 1990) established criteria which have helped shape a gradual shift towards convergence in education for social professionals. Social workers are increasingly likely to undertake qualifying education in universities (or schools or colleges associated with them); on undergraduate courses which last for at least three years; and to be subject to some form of registration through an official body, such as a Ministry or Professional Association. Some CEE countries may seem to be exceptions to the 'three year undergraduate' criterion with (two year) post-graduate courses established in some countries (*Bamford & Ross* 2003) but this pattern can partly be seen as a response to the need to equip people already qualified in other professions with new knowledge and skills. It may, therefore, represent a transitional phase or a level of training which constitutes a 'conversion course' for a minority relative to undergraduate courses for the majority (as is now the case in England).

With regard to regulation, systems for approving qualifying programmes tend to be largely the responsibility of individual universities, although central or local governments may play a role in shaping curricula. In the UK, universities need to be approved to offer qualifying courses and must meet expectations about the outcomes to be achieved, although the General Social Care Council does not issue specific curriculum guidelines. This Council is also responsible for the registration of individual social workers (as students, on entry to the workforce, and periodically thereafter, assuming that requirements have been met regarding 'continuous professional development') and from April 2005, use of the title, social worker, is restricted by law to those so registered. In Ireland, in contrast, there is not yet a legally based scheme of registration but the professional body (Irish Association of Social Workers) operates a recognition service which applies to people who have qualified outside the country seeking employment in social work posts in the Republic.

Notwithstanding the locally based and culturally specific form which social work often takes, there are indications that mobility of labour is becoming a feature of the social professions, as in other spheres (*Littlechild & Lyons* forthcoming). The phenomenon of 'overseas recruitment' has been apparent in England since about 2000 and is partly related to the shortage of social workers qualifying within Britain. While recruitment has generally been from Anglophone countries, there is also some evidence of people being recruited from countries with a surplus of qualified staff, including Germany and Spain (*Kornbeck* 2004). There is speculation (at the time of writing) that increased numbers are likely to migrate from the countries admitted to the EU in 2004 and it is suggested that, with increasing numbers of students participating in post-qualifying (post-graduate) courses, often with a European focus or dimension, more social professionals will spend longer periods of time practising in countries other than the ones in which they qualified (*Lyons & Lawrence* forthcoming).

One response to the recognition of the need for knowledge transfer and portable qualifications has been the formulation by the IASSW and IFSW of the 'Global Qualifying Standards' document. Responses to this have varied (with concerns about too much regulation or inappropriate application of 'western' standards to countries with different economic and cultural characteristics), but it has been reported that some countries (including some of the accession states) see this as a useful document for indicating to university authorities and others that there are international standards which should be respected. Papers in a Special Issue of *Social Work Education* (2004) present and critique the document and associated issues. One paper (*Juliusdottir & Petersson* 2004) highlights the possible difficulties associated with achieving common standards even across apparently similar countries in the Nordic sub-region, and illustrates how national traditions can frame social work education so that it 'leans' towards vocational training, relative to establishing itself as a more academic and research informed discipline. There are two areas in which this tension may be most apparent in the actual curriculum, practice placements and research.

In relation to the first, there has been widespread acceptance for some time that qualifying education must contain supervised and assessed practice (*Doel & Shardlow* 1996). Differences arise in relation to when, where and for how long this should be, as well as expectations about the qualifications of supervisors and the form that assessment should take. The UK (which in many respects illustrates influences derived from a vocational model) is perhaps at one end of a continuum in which 200 days of a three year course must be spent in approved placements, with supervision by a practice teacher who has received additional training, and assessment based on (students') written work and external assessment (including service user feedback).

Placements tend to be predominantly related to the statutory sector, orientating students towards work with individuals (and sometimes families). Other countries, for example, Germany, may be more likely to encourage development of group and community work skills, including sometimes through project work undertaken by students working as a group (*Lorenz* forthcoming). The Erasmus scheme has offered students (and associated staff) a useful opportunity to experience placements in another country, and this scheme, together with international standards, may result in increasing similarities over time.

Turning to research, again variations exist in the extent to which research methods are taught as part of qualifying education and also how far these aim to equip students with a range of approaches and methods or favour particular paradigms and methodology (*Lyons* forthcoming). There seems to be widespread acceptance that the research capacity of the social professions needs to be increased, including through the development of relevant doctoral research. The latter was given some encouragement by the award of EU funding, initially for a European project exploring this topic (*Laot* 2000) and subsequently to establish a European database of research (*Laot* 2004). It seems likely that external influences, such as the Bologna Declaration and an increase in post-graduate education more generally (*Lawrence* forthcoming) will combine with internal aspirations to increase opportunities for social workers both to learn about research and to incorporate it into their practice.

Concluding comments: towards a European social work?

As noted in the introduction, the term 'social professionals' covers a wide range of occupational groups in the various countries of the European Union and beyond. However, there are indications of trends in social work which suggest shifts towards similar ways of organising and delivering services. Additionally, it is possible to identify common and indeed shared problems in the European region. In the case of countries within the EU, there is also a growing body of legislation and policy that informs national policy developments. Social professionals increasingly need to take on the challenge of 'reporting back' when particular policies impact negatively on vulnerable individuals and groups and of advocating for change. This advocacy role (increasingly informed by research) may be needed at a national level but could often usefully be carried through to the European level.

The European Union, through various funding programmes, has afforded social professionals the opportunity to meet with others across national boundaries, to share concerns and exchange ideas about intervention strategies, service developments and policy change. Some regional and international professional associations offer similar

opportunities and sometimes also enable the voice of social professionals to be heard in other forums at European level. Qualifying and post-graduate education is another route, not just to preparing social professionals for practice in their own country, but to enabling social workers to appreciate the global and regional dimensions of both intractable and new social problems; and to broadening their experience through study or subsequent work 'abroad'.

In the field, new demands are being placed on social workers, often at a time when government funding is being reduced, levels of need are increasing and /or social workers are themselves preoccupied with organisational change and/or managing a portfolio career. In the face of financial stringency and managerial and bureaucratic pressures, concepts commonly used in other fields, such as of 'transferable knowledge and skills', 'life-long learning', 'continuous professional development' and 'learning organisations' can provide relevant goals for social professionals, whether working at home or 'abroad'. Additionally, it is important for social professionals to recognise the global and regional dimensions of their work and for those in Europe to align with others in the development of services and practice which are both locally relevant and also increasingly part of something we might identify as European social work.

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Reconstruction Processes in Europe: Social Work Theories and Methods

Walter Lorenz

Why does social work need methods? Why should social workers engage in the tedious business of theorizing? Does it not impede them in 'getting on with the job', of 'doing what is necessary', of doing their work with personal commitment and immediacy', applying 'common sense'?

These questions are as old as social work itself, and at no time have they found a satisfactory answer, an answer that would obviate further questioning. The search for a theoretical grounding is closely connected with the development of professional autonomy, but at the same time the scepticism of relying too much on theory and of distancing professional action too much from everyday human interaction has remained a feature of the social professions. It cannot be therefore the purpose of these reflections to provide this definitive answer or to draw a definitive picture of the state of this debate in Europe. Rather, I would like to offer some reflections on why I maintain that the debate on clarifying the profession's relationship to the academic business of theory formation and theory testing must be conducted continuously. Furthermore, I maintain that it must be instigated where the development of autonomous social work methods and theories has begun only relatively recently and that it must be re-kindled in countries where it has been interrupted or suppressed in the era of Communism. Posing such fundamental questions time and again is neither a sign of seeking status and professional self-importance nor of self-doubt and inferiority complexes, but must be done precisely in order to do social work effectively and responsibly as a professional activity in constantly changing social and political circumstances.

It is therefore not with embarrassment and in awareness of our deficits and academic and professional shortcomings that we turn to the continuous task of reconstructing theories; I interpret it instead as our hermeneutic mandate to arrive at tools with which we can understand better the nature of our professional responsibility in society. It might seem paradoxical, but I consider this responsibility to be historically contingent and want to see social work engaging much more closely with history rather than elevating itself from history with the 'trick' of developing eternally, universally valid theories according to paradigms derived from natural sciences and following the positivist approach. Conceptualising social work methods as historically contingent

does not diminish their scientific status but on the contrary hones them to specific contextual requirements and renders intervention a shared responsibility of service users and professionals. To discover in the process that the prevalence of certain methods in the social professions' past always corresponded to a certain degree to the social policy agendas of the time should therefore be not an indictment of the weakness of social work theory but an incentive to explore that relationship more consciously because it obviously makes a huge difference whether this relationship exists in an unacknowledged form, as if social work had been caught (or bought) by social policy or whether it can be deliberately constructed or shaped. It is this latter purpose which I pursue with these reflections.

This broader perspective can serve as a first diagnostic device for assessing the state of social work theory today. In particular, the apparent demise of social work theory in general in the Western world, the disillusionment with the search for a universally valid method which had driven theoretical inquiries until the 1970s before it got caught up in post-modern uncertainty is itself a historically significant development, a development which can be placed in the context of the events of 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union. This was proclaimed by some to be heralding not just as the end of communism but also the end of history itself, as *Fukuyama's* famous book title proclaimed ('The End of History and the Last Man', *Fukuyama* 1992). This perspective captured a prevailing political mood of celebrating the definitive victory of capitalism over communism in sociological terms, implying that there was now no viable alternative to capitalism and that this ideology had not only prevailed but had lost thereby its ideological nature. The hypothesis was theoretically highly contested and indeed refuted by the ensuing 'over-abundance' of history, namely that the break-up of power blocks which had held their respective mix of nationalities together under the perceived threat of a common enemy broke up into re-enactments of local and national histories. This was most dramatically exemplified by the series of national conflicts in the territories of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia where 'old scores' were often 'settled' in bloody wars of a kind not seen in Europe since the ending of the Second World War, but it also had its repercussions in Western Europe where the project of European unification and expansion is meeting a wave of national resistance. In these renewed 'turns towards history' the broken relationship with history as such, instigated by nationalist thinking at the core of European nation state projects, is manifesting itself: Nationalism which resorts to essentialist qualities as the guarantee for national unity by means of constructing and enforcing cultural and ethnic homogeneity actually betrays its lack of confidence in historical processes, or rather in the ability of human beings to bring about consensus and viable social structures by

democratic means and hence by means of preserving their cultural diversity within a nation state. Ethnic cleansing, this abominable concept that gained currency in the latest series of political conflicts in Europe, is the product of this surrender to non-historical, non-democratic means of forging political entities. It is, as I shall argue, also an onslaught on the concept of solidarity and a subversion of the political processes on which modern solidarity in differentiated societies can only be constructed. It is as if the end of history could only have been declared so carelessly in the full knowledge, that an alternative organizing principle of societies was waiting in the wings ready to substitute for historical processes, both for the communist construction of history that had proclaimed to have found the means of controlling the course of history, and the democratic version that had left the outcome open and had emphasized process and participation resulting in changing political and historical directions. This substitute was identity politics, an atomized view of society corresponding to economic market principles according to which self-interests form utilitarian coalitions for the purpose of gaining bigger and bigger market shares for one's own personal and individual interests.

I want to propose that the development of social work theories and methods in Europe corresponded closely to these political developments in recent years and that the significance of the paradigm changes can only be assessed against this political background. This means that the formerly existing link between the prevalence a particular social work method gained and the socio-political context which spotted, utilised and promoted its uses, continues to operate and is exemplified precisely in the confusion in theory discourses. What is new, however, is the degree to which this link is rendered invisible by fundamental changes in social policy. Therefore, only a deeper exploration of this political link can put social work in a position to develop theories and methodical approaches that engage effectively with prevailing politics and thereby fully realize their political mandate and on the grounds of this reconstruct a methods framework. This is particularly relevant in the countries of central and eastern Europe where the development of social work discourses had been severely disrupted or suspended by communism which could not allow an activity in the framework of social work to exist for ideological reasons, even though many of the functions of social work had to be delegated to other professions and institutions. From the experience of those countries in particular it is so obvious that to separate the methods discourse from its political context has dire consequences and any such split is itself a political act. It is therefore all the more necessary to take this inevitable link fully into consideration in the re-construction of social work discourses in former communist countries and to treat this task not as a result of their special historical position but on the contrary as

paradigmatic and necessary for the further development of social work discourses everywhere. Only by putting both histories together, the histories of social work East and West, can we hope to develop differentiated historical – and thereby methodological – sensibilities.

If we look around today for models that would characterize contemporary social work methods in Europe generally we can obtain only a fuzzy and confused picture. In most cases, the question what is a characteristic or prevailing social work method in any country would lead to embarrassment and silence. There is something wrong, old-fashioned about the question, the result of an expectation that there should be a clearly defined method and that in having control over the development of methods the social professions could assert their autonomy within the respective national social policy systems.

A brief overview of current trends in what could be described as contemporary methods in social work or in what would count as their equivalent points us in the direction of the following categories:

Counselling techniques are very much in evidence. Their rise has been inexorable since the 1980s when in the domain of psychology the gravity fields of the twin suns of psychoanalysis and behaviourism finally exploded releasing a myriad of new conceptual combinations ranging from the cognitive to the esoteric. For social work this had a peculiar attraction because it promised on the one hand freedom from the heavy burden of casework thinking which was known to be both politically suspect and practically unwieldy, and on the other hand security in scientifically proven or at least attractive new conceptual structures untarnished by any use in the history of welfare services. The proliferation of these methods is apparent for instance from the classical textbook by Malcolm *Payne* (2005), which was translated into numerous languages and which in every new edition expanded the range of methods covered especially by the inclusion of such frameworks originating in the field of counselling and even of spirituality. Two core ideas characterise this array of counselling methods. One is the notion of self-realisation as an incentive to change, with the promise of gaining control over internal and external constraints, experiences, habits and patterns that had stifled or obscured initiative. The other is the notion of self-fulfilment and the creation of an inner space, that can also expand into the environment, in which a person can be identical, not with given expectations and norms but with an intrinsic, self-determined notion of completeness that derives its value and legitimacy ultimately from the fact of having been chosen. Counselling approaches in their various forms facilitate this view of the self, thereby implying an individualised view of society and, almost as a by-

product, rendering individuals thus re-constituted more capable and competent to compete in market societies. Here the withdrawal from history and from the political context of social services is inwardly directed while the implicit model of society as an accumulation of individuals is no longer subject of the methods debate as such but is left to take its unguided course.

A second cluster of frameworks counting as the equivalent of methods concerns the notion of case management in its respective national configurations. Here the link to a new social policy agenda is more apparent, an agenda that promotes the re-working of social services into 'packages of care' which then get distributed according to an assessment of the needs of particular service users and the availability of resources. The management aspect, conceived of as a kind of meta-method which still allows for a range of 'traditional' methods to feature in the actual delivery of a package, consists in the ability to skilfully negotiate between consumer and service provider interests according to criteria of efficiency, particularly cost-efficiency. While it is obvious that this approach is 'borrowed' from a discipline much further removed from social work than psychology, the disciplinary home to most of the counselling methods, there is nevertheless an affinity with the conventional agenda of social work methods which emphasised the self-activation of the recipients of social services on a broad scale of methodological criteria ranging from fostering ego-strength in the psychoanalytical tradition to practising empowerment in a political sense derived from the original notions of community action. It is the characteristic 'neutrality' with which management concepts present themselves within the methods discourse that give a hint of their actual political significance. Here the disengagement from history, the withdrawal from contests over value positions in conjunction with scientific criteria which would place professionals under obligation to be accountable for their choice of methods, is further advanced than in the area of counselling as the political context which demands this heightened efficiency is taken for granted and with it the whole ideological basis of neo-liberalism.

This current state of affairs is not the result of external forces having imposed this development on social work, or at least external pressure and the political transformation of the context in which social work is being practiced provide only a partial explanation. There is a line of development in Western European countries which provides the elements for a deeper understanding of the current state of affairs East and West and characterises probably a development which social workers in post-communist countries experience in a highly condensed and rapidly evolving form in the years since 1989. The quest for a theoretical underpinning of social work type interventions began early in the 20th century as a result of the 'secularisation' of

charitable interventions and the rise of social policies as a broader political mandate (*Staub-Bernasconi* 1999). Two lines of development are discernable internationally, each polarised between positivist and hermeneutic tendencies. One line can be traced from the approach which informed the first social work textbook, written by Mary *Richmond* in 1917 with the title 'Social Diagnosis' (*Richmond* 1917), a title taken up a decade later by Alice *Salomon* (1926) in her seminal book 'Soziale Diagnose'. Clearly borrowed from medicine the title implies that social work intervention should be the result of the systematic collection and analysis of relevant social data on the client's overall situation. In *Richmond's* interpretation it implied a functional social science model where dysfunction can be avoided or repaired by the careful coordination of factors that enhance the well-being of individuals and families in their respective social contexts. For *Salomon* the personal interaction forms part of the diagnostic and consequently intervention process when she states, 'Wahre Hilfe kann der Mensch dem Menschen nur bringen, wenn fremde Not, wenn fremdes Leid für ihn zum eignen wird, wenn es ihm im Herzen brennt. Die bessere Technik, die durchdachte Methode ist nur ein Werkzeug - als solches nützlich und unentbehrlich'¹(*Salomon* 1926: 66). The vagueness that still prevailed in these early attempts at systematising professional social transactions at the psychological level was transformed by the absorption of psychoanalytic concepts into what became known as the approach of social case work and developed particularly in the USA during the 1930s, to become then 'exported' worldwide after World War Two (for example *Hamilton* 1951). Casework owed its prominence in the US context to its ability to mediate social and psychological factors in the treatment of social problems as they affect individuals and families and corresponded to the ambiguity in that country's emergent social policy which sought to reconcile personal initiative and responsibility with collective social security measures reluctantly introduced in the Great Depression with the New Deal and the Social Security Act of 1935. The method with its underlying array of psychological and sociological theories generally attempted to come to terms with the fundamental transformation of societies characterised by the division of labour in terms of the 'organised' re-construction of solidarity in the sense of *Durkheim* (1933).

The other line of development was characterised by the pedagogy discourse, particularly prevalent in Germany but by no means confined to that country as a methods paradigm for the social professions. It implied a rational vision of society as a continuous process of educational improvement and 'civilisation' of which the school as

¹ Translation: 'True help can be rendered from person to person only where the need of the other, where the suffering of the other becomes the helper's own concern which burns in his heart. The better technique, the well thought out method can only ever be a tool – but as such useful and necessary.'

an institution was but one instrument. In line with the Bismarckian corporatist model of German welfare it required efforts both at the civil society and at the state level, coordinated by the principle of subsidiarity. Social pedagogy, in the pioneering work of *Natorp* (1899), explores theoretically and enhances practically the relationship between education as this comprehensive project and community on which human beings are existentially dependent. This concept became politically influential in the Weimar Republic where Herman *Nohl's* work on social pedagogy (*Nohl* 1927, 1933) both advanced the theoretical discourse and promoted the development of comprehensive social and youth services designed to renew a spirit of community and solidarity – albeit on a precarious notion of a ‘folkish’ construction of community which was later ideologically occupied by Nazism. In exploring the dialectic between individual socialisation and social solidarity social pedagogy poses the methods question in a potentially highly political sense, although in the history of this practice the dialectical element was frequently forgotten and the method applied for purposes of assimilating individuals and groups to prevailing social conditions.

The immediate period after World War Two and the defeat of Fascism and Nazism stood for social work under the banner of unification and internationalisation. With the support of the United Nations the profession was given an explicit role both in the social and democratic re-construction of countries devastated by war and in the project of de-colonisation (*Lorenz* 1994). In this global context the triad of casework, groupwork and community work gained wide acceptance as instruments of involving people directly in the solution of social problems, individually, in families, neighbourhoods and national communities. The optimism implied in these approaches found expression most clearly in those societies of Western Europe which set about developing welfare states. The expanding safety net of social security was intended to give stability to capitalist societies which found themselves increasingly locked into competition with the communist block, stability at both the social and the economic level. For the development of social work methods this meant that they could concentrate on dealing with adjustment problems at the individual level since the structural issues were meant to be taken care of by social policy developments. In this context the casework approach, paralleled by an individualised version of social pedagogy, gained almost universal acceptance, tempered only by ‘internal’ disputes over the validity of the psychoanalytic assumptions at its base from either the direction of behaviourism or from the pragmatic perspective of shorter, ‘task-centred’ interventions.

Only with the so-called ‘re-discovery of poverty’ of the 1960s when studies revealed that welfare state initiatives had by no means managed to eliminate poverty did

casework come in for fundamental questioning on political grounds. This heralded the period of political or 'radical social work' (*Bailey/Brake 1976, Galper 1980*) which sought to expose the misuse of psychological models designed to strengthen individual coping capacities for problems whose origins were structural and political, such as poverty and social exclusion. This turn in social work theory on the one hand resorted explicitly to Marxist theories of class consciousness and revolutionary change (*Corrigan/Leonard 1978*), on the other had it related back to traditions of community action within, for instance, the Settlement Movement which had emphasised collective action since the late 19th century (*Alinsky 1971*). Interestingly, social pedagogy in this context also assumed a more international dimension through the 're-discovery' of its political core in the work of Paulo *Freire* (1973) which gave important practice impulses not just in the Americas, but in many parts of Europe. Together they challenged the 'hidden agenda' of a functionalist view of society at the heart of the casework project and sought to replace it with a human action perspective, questioning at times the entire institution of social work.

Apart from these explicit political critiques the fragmentation of the methods consensus, forged by the international aspirations of the social professions and the welfare state agenda, initially took two forms. One was the 'indigenisation' of theories as more and more lecturers on social work courses in Europe gained their qualifications no longer at US colleges or in the context of reconstruction projects but in the academic fields of their respective countries. In this context available theory frameworks were utilized from disciplines such as social science, psychology and pedagogy. Autonomous research enhanced the understanding of how particular client groups were affected by inequality and injustice and could be assisted more effectively, mainly with their active participation. In Nordic countries this brought about a strong social science grounding of social work, whereas in France and the Netherlands different sectors of the social professions developed their own knowledge base and professional identity (notably the Dutch 'agogics' concept of the French notion of 'animation').

The other concerned the re-emergence of new social movements in the 1970s which linked the issues of civil and human rights with the articulation of particular identities. Chief examples of these movements were the black liberation movement and the women's movement which both bridged the divide between personal self-realisation and structural change with the motto 'the personal is political'. In some European countries these movements were very pronounced and subsequently had a profound impact on the development of social work theory and methods. 'Feminist' and 'Black Social Work' became not just descriptive terms but methods initiatives with a clear mandate to transform the very core of conventional professionalism. While this had

emphasised the irrelevance of personal qualities and experiences for professional action as the detached application of scientific principles and concepts, the approaches emphasising collective identities moved personal qualities centre stage and sought to replace the professional distance between expert and client by notions of shared conscientisation, solidarity and emancipation. Identity and experience featured also in self-help movements in the psychiatric field such as the much acclaimed 'psichiatria democratica' movement of Basaglia in Italy (*Basaglia* 1987) and the self-advocacy programmes of people with special needs (*Beresford/Croft* 1993).

It is apparent that with this radicalisation of the theory discourse in the social professions the aspirations for a universally valid scientific basis which would place social work within the ambit of modernity, rationality and professional accountability were in serious difficulties. Temporary hope for rescue was focused on the ability of system theory to provide both a pragmatic set of guidelines for dealing with complex social situations and a meta-theory that could incorporate various approaches under a unified framework. This dual character probably accounts for the popularity of system theory on social work courses in practically all Western European countries in the 1970s and 1980s with numerous translations of the classic textbook by *Pincus/Minahan* (1973). It also defended the methods proposal to an extent against the charge of functionalism and a conservative view of society since even social action programmes can be accommodated within this broad framework. In the German language literature ambitions of founding an independent 'social work science' on systemic principles were discussed (*Lüssi* 1991, *Staub-Bernasconi* 1995), also in an attempt to differentiate social work from social pedagogy. But ultimately, despite these attractions it proved too broad and abstract to further a more differentiated methods discourse within the paradigm of modernity and progress and was superseded by the new wave of social theory which proceeded under the banner of post-structuralism and post-modernism. In total contrast to the unifying objectives of systemic designs this theoretical framework challenged all theoretical claims to universality and totality as ideological impositions in the form of 'narratives' which it set out to 'deconstruct'. Ambivalence and difference become central points of orientation beyond which no certainty is possible any longer.

In terms of the social work discourses on methods the reception of post-modernism was very uneven. There were sporadic celebrations of the freedom this deconstructive framework provided for practitioners to be able to get on with 'what works' without the tyranny of having to remain within the consistent theory regime of 'received ideas' as these had only been means of controlling the profession and rendering knowledge and power exclusive to a select circle of practitioners (*Rojek et al.* 1988, *Howe* 1994, *Irving*

1999). Social work is essentially recognised as a socially constructed activity which cannot go beyond the subjectivity of the actors involved but has to come to terms with the uncertainty this implies, for better or for worse. On the 'conservative' side this realisation initiated an adjustment to social policy frameworks and institutional procedures of which the case management approaches mentioned above are a result. In Britain this line of development in social work practice and training was actively encouraged by successive governments which sought to commit the profession to an 'evidence based approach' and turn social services ultimately into a 'business' (Harris 2003). Other initiatives at the conceptual level aimed at exploring and exploiting the empowerment potential arising from the recognition of the profession's constructed nature and called for a (re-)constructivist programme of social work theory and methods (Payne 1999, Kieve 1999). Central to these proposals is the dispersal of power to include a client perspective in the definition of goals and methods, corresponding to the turn towards subjectivity and identity as central concerns of the new social movements noted above.

A third response to the challenge of postmodern critique of theoretical models that purport certainty is the attempt to realise the communicative and transformative potential inherent in the critique of modernism (Healy/Leonard 2000). Healy (2000) and Fook (2002, 2004) propose to make language and critical reflection central tools in social work practice in order to shift power from the professional experts to the users of social services decisively, with all the uncertainty this brings, and linking the recognition of difference with the construction of autonomous identities instead of moulding clients into pre-conceived forms of adjustment. 'Identity construction plays an important role in the empowerment of previously marginal or disadvantaged groups' (Fook 2004: 27). Leonard, once an exponent of 'radical social work', utilises postmodern ideas to recognise and affirm feminism, antiracism and human rights campaigns as the dispersed sites of resistance against the prevailing capitalist order, each with their own agenda and angle on injustice and inequality but nevertheless from overlapping concerns (Leonard 1997). He returns to Marxism in a reconstructive sense, treating 'class' for instance not as a given category but as a set of relationships that gets socially constructed in a whole range of situations, not just in the economic field, around a differentiated but communicable experience of exploitation and exclusion. Leonard's aim is not to create a 'symbiotic relationship' between 'difference and solidarity' (Leonard 2004: 14) where neither can be reduced to essentialist qualities but need to be negotiated in relation to each other. As can be seen, the impact of postmodern thinking on social work theory and methods discourses has been very varied and does not amount to a unified shift in one direction. Rather it has aided the

however, in contrast to other European social policy developments, continue to pursue a modernist approach to social problems based on extensive social science research.

This leaves post-communist countries with the double difficulty of having to re-connect with the theory discourses within their own national traditions that had been largely suppressed and at the same time of connecting to contemporary discourses in other countries which are highly uneven and fragmented. However, their particular situation can assume paradigmatic significance for all European countries where discontinuity is now also apparent. The conditions for the reconstruction of social work methods under those circumstances have been recognised much more clearly in countries where the development of professional identities has to take constant cognisance of the simultaneous development of social policy structures and where the relationship is therefore much more apparent. When authors like *Chytil et al* (forthcoming) place such importance on reflexivity in this context the political implications are far-reaching because deciding on which social work method is valid requires reference points not just in social and psychological theory but in the political analysis of the foundations on which social solidarity can be constructed. Nowhere can the methods discourse be content with simply latching on to the latest 'fashion', be that counselling or case management, without becoming embroiled in conflicts over the significance of those methods in specific contexts of social services and social policy. The reconstruction process of methods in the social professions is a highly political enterprise and will necessarily be conducted at the level of political analysis if it is to endure the current profound social policy changes.

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PART 2

NATIONAL SITUATIONS

De- and Reconstruction of Social Welfare in Finland: Impacts on Social Work

Juha Hämäläinen, Pauli Niemelä

Abstract

In this article, the current economic and political trends and tendencies shaping the Finnish welfare system are examined from the point of view of social work. In Finland social work is closely related to the universal model of social policy in terms of equalizing disparity of income with significant income transfers and guaranteeing people's welfare by systems of extensive national social insurance and various welfare services offered by the public authors and financed by taxes. Contracting out, regionalization and networking are new strategies of public authorities in maintaining the welfare system in response to a greatly reducing financial basis. New expertise, research-based development and organization renovations are demanded in social work seeking new ways in responding to pressures caused by changing welfare structures, more and more difficult social problems, decreasing resources and lack of qualified personnel.

The Finnish national tradition of social welfare basing on universal model of social policy is a target of de- and reconstruction ambitions and aspirations. The welfare system is walking on a tightrope between the traditional ideology and future demands; it is very difficult to reconcile these competing pressures.

National tradition under stress: globalisation, the European Union, monetarism

Rapid changes in the marginal conditions of the economy and the service delivery structure and framework threaten the welfare structures of Finnish society. Finland's national economy thrives strongly on the basis of export. Globalisation – the integration of world economy – has decisively marked a new kind of action environment for export companies. Funding the extensive social security system of the state will be possible only if the export companies succeed in maintaining the growth of the national economy. In the face of worldwide competition, this has become more and more challenging. The intensifying demands of economy and production are a central part of globalisation.

During the last ten years, Finland has been a showcase example, especially in information technology, but in other high-tech areas as well, as a consequence of which the national competitive ability has remained high and the development of the national economy has been favourable. It has been possible, still, to more-or-less retain the bases of the welfare state even though there have been increasing demands or structural reforms in the welfare policy and social security. Reform of unemployment insurance benefits, to include obligatory employment, has begun.

In the social policy debate the economic viewpoints have risen to the foreground, as a consequence of which special attention has been paid to the possibilities to cut public expenditure that has been considered high. The neo-liberal tone suggests that maintaining an extensive social security system and a comprehensive welfare services system, which involves high taxation rates and high labour costs, weakens the national competitive ability and causes the transition of the entrepreneurship to countries with cheaper labour in the global competition which is getting fiercer.

A high level of welfare is related to high labour costs. There is a special concern about Finland's possibilities in the future to respond to the so-called China phenomenon, which refers to the large-scale re-location of jobs to China and to other countries with cheaper labour costs. The social structures which favour especially high-quality education and entrepreneurship have been considered as the preconditions for the success of a small country in competition with the big countries (*Allén 2003*). These both are seen as the central challenges of the welfare society which require a new kind of strategic thinking in social development policy.

In the EU treaties – starting from the most fundamental Maastricht Treaty – the welfare policy has been consequentially considered to belong to the authority of the member states and to require unanimity at the level of the Union. In the constitution, the unanimous principle is replaced with a stipulated, majority principle, as a consequence of which the decision-making powers are transferring from the hands of the national authority. The objective is to create a functional entity from the political structures of the Union which will unavoidably reduce the independence of the national states and in the long run probably lead to a federation of European states (United States of Europe).

In the Nordic welfare policy, a general and an equal availability of basic services both socially and geographically are emphasised, which is not a starting point at all in the largest part of the member countries of the EU. By accepting the transfer of the decision-making powers from the national forums to the EU, Finland, in practice, is giving up its own welfare policy tradition, which has been based on the emphatic footsteps of the basic security of the social policy system and on the idea of equality of treatment. In a new political situation, it will become even more difficult, nationally, to follow the principle of universality of social policy.

The Finnish welfare model is based on high tax rate. In the recent social policy debate, there has been dispute about the relation between tax rate and welfare. The reform-oriented right-wing liberals consider the lowering of the tax rate a necessity to secure such economic growth that the financing of social security and welfare services requires. The supporters of the traditional model consider the present tax rate an optimal solution

to maintain the welfare structures, which in turn, can provide the basis for economic growth. In both camps lurks the unanimous idea that the means to produce education services, health care services and social services with smaller resources should be sought. The municipalities compete with the production of services and, in this way they further escalate the role of the companies and organisations in the production.

Finland is strongly a Lutheran country, which even though long secularised, still follows the ideals of the protestant ethics. The economic pressures have affirmed the centrality of work in the Finnish way of life to such an extent that it has been considered to threaten the welfare of families by depriving their members of the time they spend together. Amid the increasing demands, it has been seen that the children, especially have fallen prey to the centrality of work. As a consequence of the increasing demands in working life, families are stuck between a rock and a hard place, just as the whole Finnish society is: welfare, both as a family as well as a society, can be maintained only by doing more work, and more effectively than before.

To secure the basic structures of the welfare state, high-level social security and a comprehensive service system has further been set as a national target. In the 2000s, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has drawn up national development programmes for health care as well as social services (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004a*). Many organisational reforms have, more effectively than before, been made to produce services and the systems have been rationalised. A system of regional centres of excellence has been established for the social sector in order to promote education, research and cooperation between actors, to produce social innovations and to secure the know-how needed in the field.

New strategies in welfare services: contracting out, regionalisation, networking

In the Finnish welfare model, the municipalities have a legal responsibility for the adequacy of welfare services. Traditionally, they have organised their own production of services – the Municipal Service System – which has been maintained by the tax revenue. Except for hospital activity, the cooperation of municipalities in the production of services has been traditionally rare and small. In the 1990s, the economic preconditions for the municipalities to fulfil their legal duties were weakened decisively. This was affected by the increase in the production costs of the services (especially in health services), decrease in the support granted by the state to the municipalities, pressures to reduce tax rates to improve competitive ability of companies, increase in the need for special services as a consequence of increasing psychosocial and health problems, persistent structural unemployment and weaker care relations, especially as a consequence of the ageing population.

According to the prognosis, the social security expenditures in Finland in the year 2003, was 27.1% and that of health was 7.7% of the Gross National Product, which was under the average of the EU countries. In the municipal budgets, the share of the social security and health expenditures is usually about two thirds. Both the state and the municipalities are seeking means to control the continuous growth of public expenditure, which entails making cutbacks in welfare services and social security. In the future, the cost pressures will increasingly be related to the rapid change in the age structure of the population which will predominantly become more aged, as a consequence of which the pension and illness expenditures will increase. This will be seen as a growing scarcity of resources in the social security and welfare services of other population groups.

In the beginning of the 2000s, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health started a national development project for the welfare field aiming especially at design of safeguarding the satisfactory development of social welfare in terms of availability, organisation, direction, financing and quality of services. According to the proposals, both locality and the need for an extensive structure of regional co-operation are emphasized in organisation of social services as well as ensuring a sufficient amount of personnel and its professional quality (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2003a*.) In the early years of the 2000s, the debate on the future of the Finnish social welfare system is deeply affected by anxiety concerning the sufficiency of social services in terms of quantity and quality.

The Finnish welfare society relies on social income transfers and services. The strong economic pressures are aimed at both of these, as a consequence of which the level of the support is in danger of weakening. For example, the income transfers that are directed at families with children are child allowance, parent's allowance, home care allowance and housing allowance, and key services such as, day care, education and health care. The statistics of the Finnish Social Insurance Institution and of research findings (*Hiilamo, Karjalainen, Kautto & Parpo 2004*) reveal that the level of support for families with children has especially reduced since the 1990s, as a consequence of which relative poverty of families with children has noticeably increased. Likewise, there are difficulties to maintain the level of security and care of other population groups as well. In addition to families with children, most of the cuts have been directed at care for the elderly, the disabled, those addicted to drugs and people with mental problems.

The economic pressures caused by the growing welfare expenses in the municipal welfare policy, have been mainly responded to in two ways: contracting out (privatisation and purchased services) and regionalisation (increasing cooperation

between municipalities in the production of services). An attempt has been made to secure the quality of services in spite of economic difficulties in the public sector. The central role of municipalities in the satisfying of the population's need for services has been preserved, even though the municipalities have begun to carry out their duties in line with the new strategies. The main welfare policy debate applies to the relationship between the public and private sectors in offering security and services.

Although private entrepreneurship has strongly increased and the role of the third sector, mainly organisations' role in the production of services, has strengthened, the public sector, i.e. the state and the municipalities are still primarily responsible for the arranging of social and health services. The duty of the state is to provide the municipalities with the necessary preconditions to ensure the adequacy of services. The services have been arranged according to the Nordic model following the principle of citizens' equality. According to the ideal of universality, every one is entitled to the same services and benefits on the basis of individual needs, irrespective of the place of residence and social status.

In the report published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health at the end of the year 2003, it was stated that in spite of the overall development of social security towards a positive direction, the relative poverty, especially of citizens living on social support, has increased as a consequence of the slow development of support and benefits. Some of the special problem-groups are the long-term unemployed, the young school dropouts and the single-parent families. Approximately, every tenth 15-19-year-old youth drops out from the educational system after comprehensive school, and a great majority of them also stay detached from working life. In the year 2003, the social support received per child was five per cent smaller than a decade ago. The report especially lays stress on employment development as the cornerstone of welfare policy and a means to reduce social security expenditures and increase tax revenues. (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2003b*)

According to opinion polls, justice and equality are social values that are important to the Finns. The Finns have a strong desire to maintain their solidarity to organise the structures of society, with the help of which the lives of the underprivileged can be made easier. The high unemployment rate is the biggest threat to the maintenance of welfare. Unemployment consumes the economic foundation of welfare in two ways: it produces a deficit in the tax revenue, with which the security system and the service system are maintained, and aggravates costs in the form of unemployment benefits and other costs related to mounting deprivation.

Constant economic growth and political will are the two basic preconditions for maintaining the structures of welfare. In Finland, there is still the political will, but the political means are scarce. The rate of taxation is high, but still the societal funds are not enough to take care of the families with children, the elderly, the sick and other help-seekers at the level required by the welfare policy ideals. Finland has not yet gone as far as using a 'listed' prioritisation model like some other countries have, for example for special medical care in health care. However, the discussion on the matter is still in progress. For economic reasons, welfare policy ideals have to be compromised, and, also, increasingly, compromises are desired. The Nordic welfare state is a paradox: it performs most weakly when it is needed the most.

Demographic changes place a strain on the economic foundation of the social security system. This implies the retirement of the ageing population and the so-called 'big age groups', which were born during the years subsequent to the Second World War. The ageing of the population and the growth of average life expectancy have added to the social and health care expenditures and increased the pension expenditures. The pension system was created in a situation, in which the number of the pension years was considerably smaller than at present. An attempt has been made to respond to this with reform of the pension system, the objective of which is to encourage people to stay involved in working life for a longer period of time. In the new system, however, a person can choose to become an old-age pensioner already at the age of 63, but the workers have a subjective right to work till the age of 68, and the longer they work the more the pension they are eligible to, especially between the ages of 64-68. In the national economy it is a question of reducing the pension expenditures.

In the 1980s, the Golden Age of the welfare state, high levels of social security were planned for citizens. In the early 1990s, the deep economic depression which had rocked the country caused a fateful disparity between the national income and the social security expenditures. An example of this was the introduction of the earnings-related unemployment security for five hundred days, which during high unemployment, as a result of depression, led to an ill-proportioned growth of unemployment expenditures in the national economy and rapidly ran the state into a huge debt. The system reacted to the finance deficits by making reductions and cuts, although studies show that, despite the cutbacks in the 1990s, the Finnish social policy still prevented poverty relatively effectively (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004a*). However, the cost pressure continues, which may mean the continuation of reductions and cutbacks.

The weakening of the national economy has reflected on the municipal sector. Difficulties in the municipalities to maintain the level of welfare services is partly a consequence of the fact that the size of the state subsidy to the municipalities has diminished decisively. In the 1990s several municipalities had increasing problems in producing required special social services, i.e. services for people in special needs. Concerns about the decline in the quality and sufficiency of social welfare accumulated toward the end of the 1990s and networks were developed for municipal collaboration in producing special services (*Heino 2004*). In the beginning of the 2000s, a national system of nine Centres of Excellence on Social Welfare was established for safeguarding the quality of social welfare and special expertise therein by making collaboration between municipalities and organizations dealing with education and research activities in the field (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2002*). So, the endeavours did not concern finance only but promotion of adequate expertise in social services as well.

In Finland, the municipalities have the power of taxation, but the tax revenues of the municipalities have never been adequate enough to taking care of legal obligations without considerable subventions of the state. With the decrease in the state subsidies, the municipalities have increasingly begun to give up producing welfare services. The contracting out of services has been started, which has increased social entrepreneurship and association activity. Health care entrepreneurship has significantly increased in the 1990s, and will further continue to grow in the 2000s (*Rissanen & Sinkkonen 2004*). The municipalities buy services increasingly from actors of the private and the third sector in order to carry out their legal duties of taking care of adequate service supply. In the future, these outsourcing services will be open to competition.

The preconditions of the state to support the municipalities economically weakened decisively in the 1990s, but the state subsidies to the municipalities had also been cut for ideological reasons (*Korhonen 2004*¹). The cutbacks were related to the aims to reduce public expenses and guide municipalities to look for the most cost-efficient solutions for maintaining the service system. From the part of the state, the municipalities have been urged to cooperate in providing and organising services, to concentrate on developing provincial and regional strategies, and to start engaging in versatile networking. Networking and joint cooperation in organising services is a new doctrine of the

¹ It is claimed that governmentally ruled social policy ended in Finland at the time of the economical depression at the beginning of 1990s – not only as a result of economic depression demanding more effective social policy and increasing expectations towards local social policy but as an ideological choice originating from decisions already made earlier at the end of 1980s when the national economy was still strong (*Korhonen 2004*). This suggests that the reason for the change towards the new policy line was primarily political and only secondarily economical. However, the reforms created new conditions for social work and other social professions in welfare system.

municipal welfare service system. In Finland, there are many small independent municipalities which will not be able to offer services in the future. So, at present, there is a movement to form systematically the so-called joint regional services, provided by several municipalities together (e.g. *Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004a*).

Essential challenges of social work: increasing and more difficult social problems, decreasing of resources, and lack of qualified personnel

In Finland, modern day social work has numerous challenges as a consequence of the rapid changes in society: the faltering financial base of the municipal service system and of the whole welfare society, an increasing rate of problems of children, young people and families with children, a growing elderly population, multiplicity of substance addiction, increase in substance abuse/addiction crimes, exclusion of young people from education and working life, various manifestations of neo-poverty, violence and insecurity, problems in defending interests and rights, disintegrating communalism, rootlessness and loneliness of people, fierce growth of multiproblematics and mental problems (e.g. depression) and challenges brought by growing multiculturalism (*Niemelä & Hämäläinen 2001*).

During the ten last years in Finland, the number of children within the circle of welfare dependency has doubled, the number of placements outside of home has grown incessantly, the number of the substance abuse crimes committed by the young people has grown tenfold, and the rate of dropouts from education after comprehensive school has remained at over 10%. The young people who have been educationally excluded, often have great difficulties in their lives which prevent their effective participation in education. At the end of the 1990s, a new challenging, functional structure was indeed developed for social work, a rehabilitative work activity, with the help of which an attempt was made to promote the preconditions for young people suffering from long-term unemployment so that they could get back to pursuing their studies and careers. In the present-day education society, each young person, who has interrupted his/her studies and is without a vocational degree, will inevitably be labelled as potentially long-term unemployed.

The modern transition is related to the rapid changes in the industrial- and regional structures and increase in instability in the labour market. Prolonged structural unemployment and the relatively large number of the long-term unemployed are characteristic of the Finnish society. It is not just an employment-, educational-, and entrepreneurial problem. The phenomenon is complex; likewise its consequences are manifold. During the depression years of 1990s, long-term unemployment had spread like a cancer, but it is now gradually going into remission. Even during the times of

good economic development, the employment of the long-term unemployed has been difficult for the open labour market. Employment of the ageing unemployed has been especially weak. From the point of view of social work, this has required considerable attention, but it is not merely a question of how adequate subsistence can be secured for the unemployed. Social work entails full support to people in difficult situations of life and helping them to find solutions to these problems. Furthermore, social workers participate in the planning of structural reforms and work under welfare policy programmes. The ramifications of unemployment are huge and are reflected as labour costs on the whole service system. The massive cuts and lay offs in the recent times indicate the fact that the problem of unemployment is skyrocketing. Simultaneously, in many fields, shortage of manpower is becoming evident and is expected to get worse during the next ten years.

The society, its service system as well as social work is burdened with the ageing of the population. The dynamic and in many ways unpredictable world is coming to face the storm of the trend of the ageing population which is becoming a household discussion. Regardless, the provisions made for this in welfare-policy planning and education related to the field is relatively modest. It seems that in municipalities, it is already quite widely believed that outsourcing of services related to elderly care will solve at least the biggest problems. In any case, one problem is that the care of the elderly as a sector of social work and social services does not inspire young people to gravitate towards social work and social services, even if it is known to have a massive labour market. Even though the educational providers ultimately take care of student enrolment, the heightening of the attraction to the field of elderly care should not be left solely to the educational organisations.

The problems of coping at work soared in the 1990s in many occupational fields. This was also experienced very negatively within the social sector. In the background of the burnout victims who are particularly responsible for demanding tasks in the social sector lurk the ghosts of increasing complexity of work and workload. A quantitative increase in the number of social problems and their complexity pave the way for increasing demands on social work. The changes are seen as coping problems, the solving of which requires developing of working conditions to meet the demands of the post-modern society, reorganising of duties and development of education. Coping at work will become a key challenge to the work communities of the social sector. Investing in it is seen as a crucial part of the entity of present day social work in Finland. For example, the University of Kuopio has gone through great lengths to delve deep into this problem. A second project studying and promoting coping at work is already underway.

In the Finnish municipalities, there is a lack of qualified social workers and a considerable number of social work vacancies have been temporarily filled by non-qualified workers. The need for social work in the society increases as the psychosocial problems increase and the security systems at the macro level are diminished. In the welfare system, the role of social work strengthens further. The changes in the environment affect the contents of social work. Social work is done in increasingly diverse contexts as a consequence of which the methods of work are diversified. Also, the development of education and research in social work will provide necessary preconditions for diversification in the field and for all-round development unfolding new theories and paradigms.

Research is becoming an important challenge of modern social work. Social work should be examined as a functional system that consists of research, education and practical work. The new central objective of the system of centres of excellence in the social sector is to connect these elements together and thus secure the know-how needed in the social sector in a fast-changing action environment. The teaching of social work is based on research, and, correspondingly, the as the precondition for real-time research, which deals with the relevant issues, is the close connection to practice. An academic education in social work provides a student, in addition to professionalism, with a social scientific basic education that essentially dwells in training for scientific reasoning, problem solving, argumentation and knowledge acquisition and development. This creates good preconditions for the developing of research in the field.

Responses of social work: new expertise, research-based development, and organisation renovations

Finnish social work has developed on the outline of the welfare state with close connection to social policy. The task field of social work has widened as a consequence of the weakening of the safety structures of social policy at the macro level.

At the end of 1990s and in the beginning of 2000s the Government launched several activities for securing the sufficiency and quality of social services. In 2003 and 2004 the Advisory Board on Social Work asked 80 experts to write on their views on the future of social work in Finland. The three most important theme areas highlighted in the article of the experts were improving the prerequisites for doing social work, a stronger role of social work in society, and development of the knowledge formation in social work (*Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2004b*). Social work is seen to be strongly shaped by the changes in the welfare system with a common belief in its ability to undergo a transformation correspondingly with the new prerequisites and conditions.

In the debate, the topic of a new expertise in social work has come up which seems to lean towards the idea of social work as an independent academic discipline as well as the idea of development of professionalism in the field. The question about the new social work expertise is how it would be able as a vocational operational system to reform as well as carry out its basic task in an action environment that is becoming more and more complicated and demanding.

In the academic social work education this new expertise - a new problem-solving skill - has been required to be developed. On the whole, the growing and challenging problems in social work in Finland have been responded to with the help of education. At first, social work education was offered as an academic degree at the Master's level. Now, a so-called professional licentiate degree in social work has been introduced, which is quite close to a professional PhD degree, except the research period is shorter. Otherwise, the studies are quite extensive (about 120 ECTS). The fields of specialisation are child and youth social work, marginalisation and social work, rehabilitative social work, community social work and social work with welfare services. The education is co-ordinated through the so-called university network of community services (SOSNET).

In Finland, the public social expenses mainly comprise taxes, tax-like payments and insurance premiums, but also client payments that have been proportioned to the clients' wealth/income and solvency are collected in many services. From the clients of social work, this is not usually collected. Social work is the last resort of the welfare system, and leans on the welfare policy principles of social safety, universalism and equality. It is the last safety net in the system, and its clients do not have the opportunity to participate in the costs that usually arise from clienthood. Therefore, the commercialising and entrepreneurisation of social work is, for example, relatively difficult, and nearly impossible.

Finnish social work – especially social work that is done in the social offices of the municipalities – is to a great extent system-centred bureaucracy work. In it the system is trusted and its objective is to help clients to utilise the services, benefits and rights granted by the system. Alongside the administrative and legislative tradition of Finnish social work, a person-oriented way of thinking based on workers' and clients' mutual interaction at work is emphasised as having an impact on Finnish social work. Nowadays, in social work education there is emphasis on the know-how required for system- and person-centred work, although in the degree requirements of universities, variable emphasis lies on the contents of the education.

The Ministry of Education wants education in social work to increasingly include managerial and organisational education. It has been proposed that a managerial education for everybody, comprising about 15 ECTS, is to be included in the basic degree.

Social work was born as part of the modernisation process, as a professional answer to the social problems in the industrial society. The field has developed from the strains of social change. As a profession and an operational system that deals with social disadvantages, social work is sensitive to the various trends and tendencies influencing society. Social changes affect the contents and conditions of social work. Therefore, a discussion on the duties, contents and forms, needs for development and developmental viewpoints of social work will be at its best when it fixes its attention on society analysis. In the present debate, it is also justified to ask what kind of effects the present society development has on social work as a profession, as a discipline and a field of research and as a practical vocational operation.

The modern society and its development trend can be characterised by different definitions: information society, society of continuing education and life-long learning, society of high technology, automation and high professional skill, post-modern society, society of media- and entertainment, society of polarisation and exclusion, society of risk and instability, society of individual-centred way of life and value pluralism, society of global economy, society of commercialism and internationalism. Societal changes impact on social work and the whole social sector at different levels: clients' more complex life situations, changes in the operational- system and principles of the social sector and new emphasis on work contexts.

The present information society requires people to have the training to process many kinds of information at work as well in leisure. Knowledge society is also a high professional-skill educational society, in which the rapid development of information technology has changed the core nature of work. Work has increasingly become about planning of processes and supervision, in which information is received, transferred and produced. The occupational training required by working life can be achieved with relatively long education, and occupational know-how requires constant updating of knowledge and skills. The people who are not able, for one reason or other, to respond to these expectations are in danger of being excluded.

The prevention and alleviation of exclusion and promotion of participation and social ability to act are becoming the pivotal tasks of social work in the present-day society. From the onset, social work was oriented towards solving problems of deprivation and helping people who live under the pressure of social problems. As a consequence of

the increased complicatedness and social risks in society, social work will be dealing more and more with the complex phenomenon of deprivation. Confronting it increasingly requires both specialisation and general training so the complex phenomenon can be analysed. Social workers are also increasingly required to cooperate with various occupational groups, participate in welfare policy planning, produce information for social debates and make decisions.

New reports urge social work more distinctly than before to concentrate on clarifying complex and difficult client situations and making a social impact. Furthermore, in the process of working with clients, special attention has to be paid to making an adequately extensive and integrated assessment of the situation (*Horsma & Jauhiainen 2004: 63*). A demand like this on social work implies understanding it increasingly as a case-study type action (cf. case work). The clarifying and analysing of a client's situation provides a basis for a systematic intervention and evaluation of its effectiveness. Social work is increasingly a social science.

Conclusions

The present form of social work was born in the wake of the development of modernisation and industrialisation in society. How is it affected by the transition into the post-modern and post-industrialised form of society, where for the most part, the values on the foundation of which the modern welfare society has been built have been questioned? What are the issues of social work in the post-modern society that idealise commercialism, entertainment and boundless personal freedom? Will the global economy also lead to the commercialising of social work, in which the supranational companies of the social sector will replace the services produced by the state and municipality? Who will the social workers' employers be in the future? How will the social workers be trained? How will the shortage of social workers, already existing, be responded to in the future?

Such and other analogous questions, together with the rapid increase in demands of social work, are bringing up the need to define the qualification requirements of social work and the grounds for practising the profession clearly and unambiguously. The constant rise and increasing complexity of psychosocial problems among various population groups appoints social workers as the key group to work decisively in ways which affect people's everyday life. This is demonstrated in employment figures for social work graduates, which is one of the lowest for graduates in Finland.

The changes in the society lay down several marginal conditions for the development of social work and the social sector. Increasingly, in social work, a worker is required to have a versatile and professional social-, behavioural- and jurisprudential education

and the ability to conduct cutting-edge social analyses as well as to document solutions competently from a judicial point of view. The demands for efficiency and saving in the municipal economy often increase the social workers' psychic and emotional load. The changes in society bring about new challenges and compel the profession to search for new ways of action. Changes involve threats and uncertainty as well as opportunities to build anew. The core questions of social work apply to the impacts of social change on the bases of the field and the operational system, conditions of work and the main areas of work and on the development needs and possibilities.

On the one hand, the future of social work leans on the changes that take place in the economic and political action environment at the macro level, on the other, it leans on social work's own ability and will to develop social work as a practical operation, functional science and a discipline. Without adequate and relevant production of information about social problems, people's lives and system's capacity to help in difficulties, social work is not able to face the present challenges, not to mention the ones that are yet to come. And, without a sufficient investment into its own environment of social work, terms of employment, coping at work, occupational welfare, employment, etc., social work cannot be transformed into a competitive profession.

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Norway: a welfare regime in the process of change

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Abstract

This chapter explores the changing welfare context within Norway. Core features of the Norwegian welfare state, which is highly decentralised and founded on principles of equality of opportunity for all, are reviewed. Locally provided services include: institutional care and home-based services for older and disabled persons; primary health care; economic support for people in financial need; child care services. Despite the nation's perceived wealth, as a Scandinavian country with a highly developed welfare system, Norway is currently facing a series of challenges to the previous welfare orthodoxy. In particular, the influence of neo-liberal paradigms has weakened the established welfare system both at an ideological level and also as expressed through the mechanisms for welfare delivery. A good example being the construction of social work, which is under challenge from: increased workloads; the development of specialist services, the reduction of preventative social work and so on. Such developments are explored and a solution is proposed through the re-assertion of collective action.

Introduction

Norway is a country of 3285,100 square kilometres¹; it is 1753, kilometres in length, and 400 kilometres at its widest point with a population of 4,577,457 (correct at 1st January 2004). It is a highly technologically advanced society. Economically the predominant industries are fishing and oil. Norway is a unitary state, a parliamentary democracy, with two levels of local government. Although not a member of the EU, Norway is enthusiastically committed to the European ideal and generally conforms to all EU standards and requirements.

Representing the cultural tradition of a country in a few words is a hazardous activity. Nonetheless, we seek here to illustrate some core aspects of Norwegian culture, in so far as they are relevant to a discussion about welfare. *O'Connor* and *Golovina*, from the perspective of being a US and Russian citizen respectively characterize Norway as a culture in which, despite an apparent openness (for example no closed curtains at the windows in the evening) social connection:

comes in the private realm [...] This meant family membership or membership through close personal friends. (*O'Connor/Golovina* 2003: 280)

¹ This includes Spitzbergen and Jan Mayen.

Moreover, they also comment that those who think themselves better than others are negatively regarded - a value that permeates Norwegian society:

The belief that people should be treated the same, and one person should not have greater status than another is very connected to the Danish term *Janteloven*¹.
(*O'Connor/Golovina* 2003:282)

A sense of egalitarianism defines the parameters of social inclusion: exemplified by the attitudes to such as: the expectation that all Norwegians will receive the same standard of health care irrespective of status or income. The same egalitarianism is linked to a notion of communitarianism which enforces social responsibility: for example; there is a strong social expectation that whatever your occupation you will paint your own house (no mean achievement when houses are wooden). Sometimes these values are embedded in law, as for example in the requirement to clean the chimney once per year (often done by a professional); others may be social expectations.

Welfare in Norway

Norway is an example of the 'Nordic Welfare State', as described by *Esping-Andersen* (1990). Whatever the desirable features of the various Welfare Regimes it is arguable that they are generally taken to represent a 'top-down' solution introduced by government in response to a series of imperatives. This is not quite such a straightforward assumption in respect of Norway. *Hanssen, Petterson and Sandvin*, have persuasively argued that local municipalities were instrumental in the development of social security programmes - which covered some forty-four per cent of the population before the National Government introduced a pension scheme in 1936 (*Hanssen/Petterson/Sandvin* 2001).

Seeking to describe Norwegian social work for a Chinese audience, *Øyvind Tutvedt* and *Young* (1991) stated that:

The welfare state is based on the political and moral belief that every citizen has the *right to enjoy equality of opportunity*. The goals of Norwegian social policy are to achieve equality in as many aspects of life as possible, to redistribute the wealth so that no one suffers from lack of material goods, and to provide security and employment for all. [our italics] (*Tutvedt/Young* 1991: 2)

and

Society constantly reproduces inequalities. Some people are born with handicaps, others grow up in families that are less suitable than they should be to foster healthy social values, drugs and alcohol abuse create severe problems, minority groups

¹ *Janteloven*, refers to an imaginary ideal state created by Aksel Sandemose where people did not put their interests before those of others.

aren't always accepted as fully and readily by the majority population, jobs aren't always readily available, to name some of the important factors which produce social conflict and require social work to counteract these forces. Sometimes the social worker focuses on helping the individual adjust to difficult living conditions and works to change or improve his or her own personal situation. Other times social work focuses upon changing conditions in society, at the neighbourhood or local community level. Occasionally, social work is used to try to change national circumstances, for example by promoting changes in the law or by influencing the political processes and what is debated in society. Internationally social workers meet and cooperate to establish standards and influence governments and international institutions. (*ibid*: 3)

In Norway, most welfare services are decentralized to 433 municipalities and 19 counties. Local government is central to the effective functioning of the Norwegian Welfare State. Indeed, it may be more accurate to conceive of the welfare system as a confederation of 'welfare communes' rather than of a single 'welfare state'. The state, however, often employs positive and negative incentives to encourage or even force local governments to give priority to nationally defined tasks. Such policies, of course, cause much frustration locally. The importance of the municipal and regional level in the national economy is shown by the fact that almost 60 per cent of all public employees (until 2002 more than 70 per cent because the county level had the responsibility for the hospitals) were employed by local government (White paper nr. 64 (2003-2004), table 16.1).

The most important social welfare services at local level are as follows:

- Services for elderly and disabled persons in their own homes
- Institutions for elderly and disabled persons
- Primary health care
- Economic support for people in financial need
- Child care provisions

In recent years, the county level has lost responsibility for many welfare institutions: in particular, hospitals (somatic and psychiatric); child welfare institutions and institutions for people with alcohol problems. The responsibility for these services has been centralized by the state and deregulated and therefore is no longer subject to local political influence. This shift seems to be a characterizing feature of many changes in the public sector during the last decade.

In addition to these services, one very important element of the Norwegian Welfare State is the cash benefits paid according to the National Insurance Scheme. All persons who are either resident or work as employees in Norway are compulsorily

insured and are entitled to benefits according to specific rules. These benefits are as follows:

- Old age pension
- Disability benefits
- Daily cash benefits in case of sickness and maternity
- Survivors' benefits
- Rehabilitation benefits
- Medical benefits during sickness
- Daily cash benefits during unemployment
- Benefits in case of occupational injury
- Benefits to single parents
- Funeral grant
- Advance payment of child maintenance
- Family allowances
- Cash benefits for families with small children.

Of these benefits old age pensions represent the largest cost to the state. Worthy of a note is that, among people of working age (between 16 and 67), almost one third get some sort of cash benefits.

The Norwegian Welfare State – as we know it today – is mostly a post-Second World War phenomenon, although the first state benefits were established in parallel with the industrialisation of the country in early part of the twentieth century. Labour unions and political pressure (mostly from left-wing political parties) forced the government to take responsibility for welfare services and cash benefits. The result was a kind of a historic compromise between labour and capital where the interests of both parties were reconciled. The workers and the population in general secured some rights and economic growth was promoted by the state functioning as a stabilising factor in society.

Pierson (1991) has called the decades after World War Two 'the Golden Age' of the welfare state. In Norway, the period from 1960 to 1975 was especially important for the maturation of welfare policies; by the middle of the 1970s the Norwegian Welfare State was well established. Two important acts – the Social Care Act (1963) and the National Insurance Scheme Act (1966) – were well established in conjunction with several more general political initiatives and policies which improved the levels of welfare and living standards.

At the point at which the welfare state reached maturity the 1970s, scholars began to discuss the notion of a welfare paradox:

The economic growth in society is considerable but this fact does not seem to result in reduced need of welfare services. How can we explain this feature within Norway (and probably many other welfare states)?

Contemporary scholars of that time usually explained the growth in welfare services and cash benefits according to three lines of argument.

Firstly, they related the growth in welfare expenditure to characteristics of the sphere of economic production. They were talking about the *expulsion-model*, meaning that the structure and functioning of the labour market made it difficult for many people to participate and earn enough money to succeed as a breadwinner. Many people were excluded or shut out from the labour market as more demanding competences were required of the work force.

Secondly, they looked at changes in family structure and family relations (alteration in the reproduction sphere). They used the phrase *reduction of family-function model* (or maybe the family-reduction model is a better phrase?) meaning that the traditional family where the husband was the breadwinner and the female members of the family stayed at home, was in very significant decline. Women of working age took up employment outside the home and as a consequence could no longer take care of other family members who were in need of help. In addition, due to geographical mobility and the decline in multi-familial living patterns; those family-members in need of help could not continue to rely on female members as care-givers.

Thirdly, the growth in welfare expenditure may also be due to characteristics of *the welfare system itself*. There was a considerable growth in permanent employment which required a professional education, especially in the municipalities. These professionals and some social politicians, both in concert with social scientists who claimed that the welfare system had a lot of 'holes', argued that the state should take greater responsibility for welfare problems in society. Partly as a result of this, problems were redefined as no longer being a private concern and were identified as a public affair. Welfare services and cash benefits grew more inclusive and comprehensive and became shaped according to universalistic principles. In short, the welfare state expanded because citizens were eligible to receive more social benefits.

These ways of explaining the growth in social expenditure must be related to more profound and fundamental changes in ideas about society, the nature and extent of welfare and the state's responsibility for its citizens. There has been a shift from focusing on individualized causes of social problems to a more societal view of causation. In accordance with this shift in perspective, individual problems are

regarded to be a matter of public concern. Hence, a strong public sector is needed to assume responsibility for collective issues - especially in the Scandinavian countries where a strong public sector is seen as a precondition for adequate problem solving.

There are of course historical reasons for this. From the middle of the last century the labour unions and the Labour party achieved a dominant position in public affairs. People believed in political solutions and supported policies which advocated redistribution and public responsibility for welfare services, and the normative status of the welfare state increased. 'Big government' was regarded to be of positive value to peoples' lives. This trust in big government and confidence in the state and public sector may be understood as a consequence of the influence of modernity - the dominant set of ideas during this historical period. A characterizing feature of modernity is the belief in 'grand theories' or 'meta-narratives' which provide reason and meaning to a complex society. The welfare state may be seen as such a *modernist* 'meta narrative' which builds on ideas derived from the Enlightenment where reason, rational thought and systematic enquiry rather than religious superstition was supposed to help mankind to build a better society. Rational men and women could be in charge of their own destiny. Society and social order was no longer seen as the product of a divine will but the result of human activity (*Howe 1994: 514*).

It is therefore possible to argue that the welfare state - as an institutional construction - is a *legitimate child of modernity*. The *raison d'être* of the welfare state is that because the benefits and advantages in society (unjustly) are cumulatively distributed among inhabitants, the government should compensate for this through a re-distributive welfare system. In Norway there is a saying that 'it is very expensive to be poor', this statement well illustrates this understanding of how modern societies work. Problems are thus defined as institutional and societal rather than moral and individual, and this understanding implies collective and professional solutions. Therefore we need a comprehensive welfare state where justice, reason and progress are the core values. Hence, the welfare state is a legitimate child of modernity.

To realize the welfare state, we need professions such as social work. Social Workers competence is crucial to build a well-functioning welfare-state. Self-regulating professions are regarded in 'modernity' as basic instruments of public policy. Especially after the Second World War, professional competence was regarded to be the relevant method to address such problems. One scholar of the study of professions has put it this way: "The parallel expansions of the professions and bureaucracy in the post-war welfare state were complementary rather than competing processes" (*Larson 1977:199*).

One might say that in the same way that just as the welfare-state is a legitimate child of modernity, so the professions are the most loyal servants and defendants of the welfare-state.

Challenges to the welfare state in Norway

As mentioned above, the Norwegian welfare state was well established towards the end of the 1970s. There was a general agreement among the political parties that professional knowledge and competence was necessary to serve people in need of help and to prevent the future 'production' of social problems. Simultaneously with the growth in welfare bureaucracy and the numbers of professional employees, one could, however, notice an incipient criticism of these developments, as discussion of dysfunctions of the welfare state crept onto the public agenda.

Some of this criticism may be traced to political attitudes. The political right argued that professionalisation implied public involvement in private affairs and thereby translated a private (or mostly a family problem) into a public responsibility. In addition, they claimed that the professionals incorporated new problems into their sphere of professional concern. These problems were to be dealt with in a legislative and administrative way. The consequence was growth in bureaucracy and public expenditure. Those on the left criticized the professions because problems, that by nature were political, were transformed into professional issue by the professionals – hence excluding the politicians and political considerations from their solution. The professions seemed to throw a veil over political issues and thereby reduced the possibility of collective action.

At the same time, much social research concluded that many people who were eligible for services and benefits did not receive their entitlement. This occurred partly because they did not know about their rights, and therefore did not ask for help. Partly, also, because the welfare system was organized in a way that made it difficult for some people in need to make use of it. Concepts like 'threshold, queue and counter' were used to illustrate the problem. It was also asserted that the very notion of having a welfare state, functions as an obstacle to improvement of the level of benefits and services.

This kind of criticism – based on research and enquiry about how the welfare system really functioned – did not, however, reach a predominant position in the public debate. More common was a popular and partly politically motivated critique which centred upon alleged misuse and abuse of welfare benefits. The focus was shifted from 'under-consumption' to 'over-consumption' of services and benefits. Accordingly many scholars and politicians interested in welfare policy were engaged in discussing how to build a welfare system with a minimum of such dysfunctions.

In the discussion about 'overhauling' and renewing the welfare state that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm was important – in Norway as in most of other Western countries. In the wake of this paradigm, New Public Management ideas held predominant position in public debate. Economic rationalism, managerialism, faith in deregulation and market forces, the principle of subsidiarity in welfare services were (and still are) characterizing features of contemporary ideas of how to improve the welfare state. Supporters of these ideas claimed that the welfare state tends to undermine individual initiative, create a kind of dependency culture and thereby threaten economic prosperity.

Scholars do not agree, however, to what degree these ideas have resulted in dramatic changes in the welfare system. Some scholars of the Scandinavian Welfare States claim for instance that up to 1995 "all the known Nordic hallmarks were still present: universalism, high quality, tax funding and public provision." Therefore "the Nordic countries seemed to be very resistant to dramatic changes" (*Kautto* 1999: 267). Other scholars seem to be more inclined to describe the changes in the Nordic Welfare states as 'a process of de-differentiation' (*Hansen/Sandvin/Søder* 1996: 41) characterized by the following features: modernisation and downsizing of public sector, deregulating, decentralisation, privatisation, deinstitutionalisation, de-professionalisation and de-bureaucratisation. According to *Kildal* (2001) this shift in policy has resulted in: active measures rather than passive; sanctions rather than incentives duties rather than rights; a public contract approach rather than a rights-based approach and emphasis on selectivity rather than universality.

These changes force the welfare state to restructure, reorient and adjust the services and cash benefits. Because of this restructuring some scholars use expressions like 'retrenchment', 'dismantling' or 'curtailment' to characterize the changes in the welfare state in Norway – as in much of the rest of the western world. Whatever expression one prefers to use, it is a fact that the welfare state is under scrutiny and it remains an open question if this change is solely caused by structural changes in society or must be understood as a shift in political and ideological attitudes and ideas. An American professor, Robert Cox, argues for instance that basic principles like social rights, universalism and solidarity are under attack and that 'such notions as universality and solidarity are giving way to selectivity and individual responsibility as the paramount principles of the welfare state' (*Cox* 1998: 1).

These new tendencies are most visible with regard to what kind of duties welfare recipients should have in return for their benefits. Changes in the National insurance scheme and the Social Service Act implemented by local authorities, put more

emphasis on the duty to work – ‘workfare’ – instead of ‘income maintenance’ which up to recently has been the dominant idea underpinning the National Insurance Scheme.

The shift in policy started in the beginning of 1990s with two White Papers from the social democratic government (one about rehabilitation and one about welfare). The shift in government from a social democratic to a centre-right government in 2001 has not changed the focus on work-related activities as a condition for receiving welfare benefits and social assistance. The contrary is in fact the case: The emphasis on the duty to work has been strengthened during the years of the right-wing government. Both the social-democratic governments in the early 1990s and the present right-wing government are therefore very much in favour of the new workfare policies.

The aim is for more recipients of welfare and social benefits to participate in the open labour market by using both positive and negative incentives and sanctions. The positive ones are characterized by more use of individual guidance and counselling, vocational training, education, job placement etc. The negative sanctions and incentives include reducing or denying claimants cash benefits if they are not willing to work or participate in some training programme. Thus the work approach or *work line* as it is termed in Norway, is characterized by using both ‘sticks’ and ‘carrots’ to effect the policy. In order to succeed with this ‘work line policy’ and to make bureaucracy more user-friendly, the Government is now engaged in restructuring welfare administration. Today many recipients of welfare benefits must relate to three agencies and two levels of decision-making. The aim is to make bureaucracy more efficient by amalgamating the agencies that work with unemployed people, pension-recipients in respect of the National Insurance Scheme and people in need of economic assistance at municipal level.

There has been a concern expressed by professionals working in the field that the focus on workfare tendencies in the delivery of welfare services in contemporary Norway might represent a challenge to traditional values like solidarity, universalism and equality. Moreover, there are some other objections that may undermine the relevance of the workfare argument.

The first objection relates to the question of *job-occurrence*. Most of the reasoning takes for granted that there are and will be work for people who really want to work. They need to be motivated and prepared to meet the requirements of the ordinary job market. The contemporary lack of jobs is only temporary and not caused by long-run structural problems in the labour-market. Many scholars doubt this assumption. It is more likely that the contrary will be the case. A deepening globalisation of economic trends will strengthen these problems and even cause larger scale difficulties than evident today.

The second objection relates to the question of individual *will*. The use of negative incentives ('sticks') and sanctions towards claimants who are not willing to work, presupposes that the problem is one of individual will and not due to structural characteristics of society. In its extreme form, this argument assumes that a lot of people are lazy. If they can cheat society for benefits without working, they will gladly do so. Perhaps some people do act in accord with this assumption. It is more likely that the great majority of people in need of benefits will gladly take part in the ordinary job market if they get the chance. The work ethic is very strong in Scandinavian countries and for most people their self-esteem is badly damaged if they do not accept proper gainful employment in the labour market – if they really have the option to do so.

The third objection relates to the question of *causes*. Jobs might exist and the will to work is present, but the available jobs do not match the individual's qualifications and abilities. Hence, the causes of unemployment are structural and should not be individualized. Therefore focusing on the duties and motivation of the individual represents a deviation from the real issue. Consequently, the *real* problem is the individual, exclusion from the labour market, and the focus should be on modification of certain features of the labour market and how to reduce the expulsion mechanisms.

In addition to these objections, some scholars assert that the new workfare policies reduce the meaning of citizenship to a notion that purely focuses on the citizen's performance in the labour market and that "the new policy is less concerned with mutual recognition than with mutual obligation and less concerned with justice than with personal morality" (*Kildal* 2001: 17). The focus seems to be more on personal responsibility and the duty to work and less on societal causes of welfare dependency. Marshall's concept of social rights – meaning that all citizens have a right to social security – seems to be made dependant on the willingness to work. If this will be a characterizing feature of welfare policy in the future, the 'institutional redistributive model' (*Titmus* 1958) that has been typical for the Norwegian welfare state, will face many challenges. First of all because it might be difficult to decide whether unemployment is caused by lack of will or lack of options (*Kildal* 2003).

These objections question how adequate and relevant workfare mechanisms are in promoting a restructuring of the welfare state. If not successful, the outcome of the new policy could be downsizing and retrenchment of the welfare state, not an improvement.

These considerations could be perceived to be rather pessimistic with respect to the future of the welfare state in Norway. Therefore it is important to underline that these tendencies have not yet fully materialized in reduction of costs of welfare. The relative

share of social expenditure as % of GDP is still rather high. The following table shows the Norwegian Welfare State in a comparative perspective.

	Public consumption as % of GDP 1992¹	Gross public social expenditure as % of GDP 1995²	Unemployment rates 2002³	Number of poor people. % below 50% of median income. 1995⁴
Norway	21.5	27.6	3.9	4.4
Germany	17.9	27.1	8.1	7.3
France	18.6	28.0	9.2	7.9
UK	22.3	22.4	5.1	
USA		15.8	5.9	18.5

Tab. 1: The Norwegian Welfare State in a comparative perspective

The first column indicates the relative importance of the public sector in a country. As expected Norway has a rather large public sector. Surprisingly, after many years of Thatcherism, public consumption was even larger in the United Kingdom. The second column shows the relative share of social expenditure. Norway does not differ dramatically from the other countries, (USA, however, has a very low percentage). The next two columns are even more revealing. The third column shows the employment rate in 2002 and the figure emphasises that a high degree of employment is and has for a long time been a very prominent policy objective in Norway. The final column illustrates a very potent current issue in Norway. Compared to the other countries, Norway has very few poor people - especially if we compare Norway to USA. The contemporary debate in Norway, however, focuses on whether the number is accurate and whether the number of poor people is rising. We have a very active organisation – the Welfare Alliance – which is a partnership network of organisations, associations and groups that work for the financially, socially and legally disadvantaged. The primary objective for the alliance is to abolish poverty which, according to the government, stands at the moment at 80,000 people. This figure is disputed and if we use the European Union's standard, approximately 400, 000 people live below the poverty line in Norway. So we may conclude that in spite of the fact that Norway has the highest social spending in terms of GNP per head in history, a lot of people still do not have sufficient means of support.

¹ *NOU* 1997:8, tab. 5.1

² *Lødemel and Trickey* (2002), tab. 1.1

³ *Andersen m.fl.*(2002), tab. 2.1

⁴ *St.meld.nr.2* (2002-2003), tab.3.1

Social work

Historically, the nature and form of social work in Norway has been closely connected to the development of the welfare state. Presently, Norway has three social professions, social workers (sosionom), child welfare workers (barnevernspedagog) and social educators (vernepleier)¹. Education for each of these groups is at bachelor level. According to *Hutchinson/Lund/Oltedal* there are approximately 9,200 social workers (sosionom), who possess a professional qualification in Norway (*Hutchinson/Lund/Oltedal* 2001). In total there are some 20,000 members of the three professional groups. Currently, the day-to-day work of social workers is influenced by a sense of the welfare state being under pressure as significant changes in the welfare political landscape loom large in the background (as detailed above). Therefore the challenges that affect social work are complex issues which are connected to both the nature of social work as a discipline and the changing welfare state. These challenges are understood in different ways by various different groups (for example, by professionals in health- and social care services in the municipalities, among politicians, and also in research institutions, the educational system and in the trade unions). One particular concern is that the finances of municipalities in Norway are under severe pressure; this will have consequences for service delivery, as the number of employees is being reduced, yet workload is increasing.

The strong political engagement of many people with the future of the welfare system is connected to the fact that the consequences of the new liberal politics are now becoming increasingly visible; many hold the view that privatisation has gone too far. In addition, debates proliferate about three new reforms the government is proposing:

- modifications to the old age pension;
- new legislation in respect of working conditions;
- increased coordination between the Norwegian employment agency, the social security offices and the social service office.

These proposed reforms are likely to have a great impact on the role and tasks of social workers and their work situation. In the next section we focus on the challenges social workers, working in local social and health care (where most social workers are employed²), will face.

¹ Social educators are also a authorized health profession.

² Those who do not belong in this sector, work in institutions or other services related to the tasks in the local welfare services.

Challenges faced by social work

The provision of social and health care at the local level was originally configured as a generalist service. Due to the development of specialised healthcare, social workers are now working with relatively more people who have complex problems than previously (for example, those addicted to drugs and with psychological problems as well as having no place to live, no close friends, little or no education and zero income). At the policy level, there has been a move to de-institutionalise care; for example, large mental health care institutions have been closed down, as have large centralised institutions for people who are disabled and homes for older people. Similarly, the average length of stay by patients in somatic hospitals is becoming shorter: whilst the government proposes shortening the length of stay for children in institutions for children who can not live at home with their parents. All such developments and proposals are based on the wish to make institutions offer more efficient care and to provide help only at a basic and minimalist level. The maintenance of people with significant need for help (previously maintained for longer periods of time by the big and specialised institutions) has now been transferred to the local social and health care services.

In those specialised, large health-institutions, many skilled people with higher degrees were employed and the specialists who worked there (and the services) enjoyed high status. There has not been an equal attribution of status for the local social and health services since they have assumed responsibility for parts of the specialist services. These local services are not regarded as a specialist, even though today they work with the same clients who were previously provided for by the larger specialist organisations institutions. Often employers at the municipality level require that social workers only possess a bachelor degree¹. However, many social workers themselves experience a need for an even higher education, and voluntarily undertake higher level education without the security of knowing that this will lead to an increase in salary. Applications for master degrees are far greater for social work than in many other academic or professional studies offered by universities². After the implementation of more decentralised services, it has become relatively less important, from the employers view, that the client should have services provided by employees with specific competence in social work (particularly for people who are disabled). Nevertheless, in local social service offices, where economic support and counselling is given for people in need, social workers are still the dominant group (similarly for

¹ The paradox being that the formal level of competence required of social workers has never been higher than it is today.

² In Norway much social work education is provided in University Colleges.

services for neglected children). In other locally provided services (such as services for people with mental health problems), employers have strengthened the focus on the health workers' skills.

Together with a reduction in the number of the specialist institutions, access to several national social benefits is being reduced (for example: the period for which benefit may be paid during periods of unemployment has been shortened). Government spends less money now than previously to support the building of houses for those in need (social housing) and to assist unemployed people with 'start-up' assistance to gain employment. It can be anticipated that pressures on the local social service will only increase due to these changes.

With the proliferation of welfare services, there are different access points at municipality, county and state level. One client could be dependent on help from different administrative levels over a period of a few months. The welfare system has become so complicated that the client needs help to know where to go in the system. The various parts of the system do not appear to be effectively working in cooperation. Parts of the system can, at certain periods of time, be under so much pressure, that their main focus is to shield themselves from work. This situation leads to more problems, which are explored below.

Social workers' relationships with clients

Social workers' relationships with clients are under increasing strain from the following factors:

Workloads: The local social service system has no tradition of setting limits upon the number of clients a professional social worker may have at any time¹. The services have no existing norms that can reduce the work pressure. Social services are available to everyone, and provide a safety net. Hence, the social service office cannot hide behind waiting lists as in many other types of service.

The Nature of the Work: The work pressure is of high impact in most aspects of the local social and healthcare service. This can become draining for the social worker. Through face-to-face meetings, the social worker strongly experiences the client's agony and distress over not receiving enough help. This is an extra burden for the social worker, who may feel obliged to do more than can reasonably be expected. The social worker will also be concerned about his/her contribution to the process of a dignified change for the client. The relationship between the social worker and the

¹ The same applies to, preventive work, social work for people with a disability, service for drug addicts and so on.

client is often influenced more by the need to control the client's behaviour rather than to encourage self-help. Due to the pressure of work social workers have less time for in-depth conversation with clients. There must be time for the establishment of mutual respect and trust. The ethical challenges in working under such pressure are severe.

Threats of Violence: Social and healthcare workers say they are experiencing an increase in threats of violence in the work situation – especially during home visits. Often these threats are not taken sufficiently seriously by employers. Where they are given prominence, employers tend to focus on the provision of mechanical/technical means of protection for the social worker.

Whistleblowing: In recent years, social- and healthcare workers have experienced severe limits on their ability to 'blow the whistle' in respect of conditions or services offered by their own work place. A 'muzzle mentality' exists, which makes it difficult to inform the public or the press. Representatives from trade unions experience the same problem. Social workers have limited abilities to reach out to key politicians to influence these issues.

Maintaining the quality of social work

Everyday life for those on social benefits must provide opportunities for a dignified place to live, stable and well-functioning child care and so on. In respect of employment problems, social workers meet many clients who will need a lot of time and perhaps a completely different and more inclusive workplace than many of those that are available today: certainly if they are going to be able remain in work for a significant period of time. Some are in need of education and training to develop their skills before they are able to work. Some people are in need of help from the social worker for a long period of time after having started to work. The government's simplistic rhetoric around work is not compatible to the reality that social workers face.

The legitimacy of the social worker is also under pressure especially in fields where there are tensions between the sensitive issues of 'help and control' are strongly evident (for example, services for neglected children). In situations where the child care worker must investigate the child's home circumstances, conflicts of interest between the parents and consideration of the needs of child (the most vulnerable part of the system) are of extreme importance. There have been several ugly examples where child care workers have been harassed in the performance of their duties. A group of parents who feel they have been treated badly has created a web site with details of childcare workers they believe are doing a bad job.

At the same time as discussion about development and quality in the services is diminished, preventive social work is also being reduced. The type of social work where social workers visit youth clubs and undertake community work in certain areas is being cut back. This is an activity which is not determined by law, and has low priority when the budgets in the municipalities are under pressure.

The time has come for making alliances

Fellesorganisasjonen for barnevernpedagoger, sosionomer og vernepleire (FO) (The Joint Organisation for Child Welfare Workers, Social Workers and Social Educators)¹ is working in different fields for the development of social work: both to secure quality in the services provided and also to secure a healthy work environment for social workers. The aim is to make the meeting between the client and the social worker so that it is characterized by professionalism and affirms the worthiness of the client and moreover that the social worker is available when the client is in need for help.

The time has come for the making of alliances to secure the development of a robust and generous welfare state. An important cooperative partner for FO is *Landsorganisasjonen i Norge* (LO), (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)². FO is also a member of the network *For the Welfare State*. FO is also in active cooperation with groups of clients. In addition, FO is a member of international organisations, both labour unions and organisations which have a more specific social work profile.

FO is promoting, in cooperation with LO, that employers' organisations respond positively to demands of social workers for regular guidance and supervision, in addition to time for reflection to enable practitioners, to provide good social work. FO wants to see the creation of jobs for social workers which allow time for research - to secure evaluation and a continuous development of the services. Similarly, opportunities for professional development must be created. Necessary adjustments to working conditions to prevent violence and threats of violence must also be made. Securing robust laws to maintain the quality of working environment in general has also become important.

FO has launched the idea that social services must be developed so that everyone who wishes, should have the opportunity to receive help and guidance from the same social worker at every occasion. In Norway there is a national arrangement such that people have their particular doctor (so that the doctor comes to know them and likewise they come to know the doctor), for those in need for a medical services. The same

¹ Details at: <http://www.fobsv.no/web/osthome1.nsf>

² Details at: www.lo.no

arrangement for social workers secures a well functioning social professional relationship with the client and the ability to able to provide follow-up for those in need.

FO participates in the political discussion at national level about social and healthcare services, both by writing inquiry reports, participating in debates, lobbying and cooperating with the state and local authorities and politicians. We consider the building of alliances with educational and research institutions to be central in this relationship. FO focuses on the creation of functioning 'spaces' for dialogue across the field of social work practice to include universities and university colleges and research environments.

Conclusion

Norway, a country with a Nordic Welfare System has, over the past fifteen years, faced increasing challenges to the maintenance and development of Welfare, despite the apparent national wealth of the country. In part, these challenges are ideological as Norway is confronted by the same ideological shifts that have confronted most western industrialized nations. The impact of these ideological challenges can be seen both at the state and municipal level, in policy and practice through the delivery of welfare. Social work has not been immune from these challenges. As yet the debates between those who seek to maintain the traditional Nordic Welfare State and those who seek to replace it with some other form of welfare remain unresolved.

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The Social welfare regimes in Europe (with special attention to the Spanish case)

Jordi Sabater

Abstract

This text proposes the possibility to add to the tripolar typology formulated by Gosta *Esping-Andersen* a new model of Welfare Regime, the Mediterranean, which includes the cases of Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece.

The main characteristics of this model would not only be the slow development of their social policies and lowers levels of social expenditure, but also, amongst other areas, their family and clientel focus tendencies, the impact of the European Union, and a differentiated system of social assistance.

On the other hand, the text also argues that the processes of transition to a post-industrial society and restructuring of the Welfare States are in great measure dependent of the institutional legacies. To common problems, the responses tend to be diverse in relation to the diverse types of Welfare Regimes developed by the diverse countries.

1. The Europes of welfare

After the Second World War, the European democratic countries were progressively building their own characteristic socio-economic and political model, the Keynesian model of European welfare, that presents a group of common features, but at the same time, with evident lines of internal diversity. If we compare the European social and economic policies with the North Americans, for example, we can conclude that a differentiated European model exists, but which is very far from expressing a uniform reality. In Europe there is not only one type of Welfare State, but diverse, with different structures and dynamics, as a consequence of the history and the socio-economic, political and cultural trajectory of each nation State. The different historical developments of the processes of nation building and state formation have generated different types of states and welfare regimes.

This diversity has caused a great production of analysis and studies, with different classification proposals in relation to the diverse approaches and explanatory variables used, especially in the two last decades. However, the *welfare regime approach* proposed by Gosta *Esping-Andersen* in his book of 1990 *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, has certainly been the most influential in the theoretical and methodological debate of recent times.

Partly following the pioneer contribution of *Richard Titmuss* (1974), *Esping-Andersen* proposes a typology based on the analysis of three macro areas: 1) the relations between state and market; 2) the stratification impact (the effects of the social policies in the inequalities existent between the citizens), and 3) the level of decommodification (a concept that refers to the group of social rights that allow people to cover their vital necessities outside of the market).

On this base and developing the analytic paradigm of “power resources approach”, *Esping-Andersen* arrived at the conclusion of the existence of three types of Welfare States: the social democratic, the liberal and the conservative, that came to correspond respectively with the Scandinavian countries, with the Anglo-Saxon and with the continental Europe. But despite of the tripolar typology of *Esping-Andersen* become accepted as almost a classic in the field of comparative social policy, his approach and the studies that it inspired have been criticized from diverse perspectives and for different reasons.

One of the main reproaches to the Danish sociologist's analysis is his implicit assumption of the social democratic positions of state orientation to the *Scandinavian way* (“state-centred approach”), according to which the state action is the great independent variable that determines the production of welfare of one country, leaving aside other sectors (*Moreno & Sarasa* 1992).

Also authors from the feminist approach have criticized this typology because in their opinion it neglects the aspects that have to do with gender and the traditional division of functions arriving from men's integration into the salaried market (*male breadwinner*) and the woman assuming domestic functions and family care (*Lewis* 1993).

In relation to these questions, it is necessary not to forget that the provision of welfare is organised around four sectors:

- a. The mercantile sector of social welfare that is to say, the provision that the companies make for education, health, housing, etc.
- b. The state sector: the supply of goods, services and transfers that the state delivers.
- c. The informal sector: the provision of resources of welfare by relatives, mainly women, friends and neighbours, constituting “nets of help” based on certain reciprocal exchange.
- d. The voluntary sector that differs from the informal one in terms of the degree of organization degree and refers to the welfare resource that provides the so-called “third sector” or “organized altruism”.

From the perspective of this social division of the welfare it is possible to affirm that the different social policies try to alter the flows of welfare resources between the four sectors, through procedures of decommodification or commodification, *State centralisation* or *de-centralisation*, *familization* or *de-familization* and *communitarisation* or *decommunitarisation* (Adelantado 2000).

So, if we follow this approach and we keep in mind the four sectors and we not only centre in the relations between state and market, for very important that undoubtedly are, it will vary the characterization that we can make of the welfare regimes and also the classification of their variants.

Recently, *Esping-Andersen* (2000) has also introduced the family variable as other central element that's necessary keep in mind. But this position has not taken him to place in question the three worlds of welfare capitalism. So, for example, in the liberal model the role of the family would be marginal, like in the social democratic, although for different logics; while in the conservative the family would have a most important weight.

But, the objective of this text is not to enter more thoroughly into this debate. With the previous comments I only sought to show that the topic is complex and that it is not closed. However, as affirmed previously, the existence of at least three big models of Welfare Regimes (the liberal, the conservative and the social democratic) has a wide support in comparative social policy analyses.

The main characteristics of each model would be as follows:

- a. *The liberal model*. This is characterized by giving only help to those that demonstrate they have no resources (assistance). The universal transfers are of little quantity and the state intervention is focused to stimulate the market, albeit in a passive way – due to the shortage of the transfers that the public sector offer –, or in an active way – through subsidies to private plans. So, in this model, the role of the state is kept at a minimum; the decommodification effect of the social policies, weak; the coverage level, marginal; the expense, low; the assistance, selective and the redistribution, scarce. At the same time, the labour markets are very deregulated and with regard to the gender, polarized. The consequence for the social structure is a strong dualism. The paradigmatic model's example is the United States. In Europe, with some important differential elements, it would be the case of the United Kingdom.
- b. *The conservative or corporative model*. In this model the public programmes of welfare have an important role to play, but only as a complement of the economic system, offering levels of protection that reflect the supposed merits of each one,

the labour yields and the productivity. That is to say, the services and benefits that the people received are bound to each person's labour history, and to the level of contributions they have made. The aim of the social intervention of the state is the maintenance and consolidation of the social status already in existence. In consequence, the coverage is neither marginal, nor universal, but occupational; the role of the state is complementary; through the financing, fundamentally contribution based redistribution, medium and horizontal. Another characteristic feature of the social policies bound to this model is its subsidiary character: this means that the state only intervenes when the action of the individuals, the families or the informal networks or independent associations is not enough. On the other hand, it is a welfare regime with a strong family based approach. It is usually to locate this model in the countries of the continental Europe, to the point that it is often termed the continental model. The paradigmatic example would be Germany.

- c. *The social democratic model.* Based on equitable and solidarity principles, the social democratic welfare regimes would be characterized for generous systems of social protection financed by a high fiscal redistribution, for a universality of the public services as a citizenship right and for a State centred approach to the systems of welfare provision. The state aims in relation to the benefits, equality to the highest standards and not to the minimum necessities, and through universal programmes to achieve a high de-commodification of social relations, in which the individual can achieve the maximum personal independence, becoming emancipated from dependence on the market and on the family in order to obtain a socially acceptable level of life. Therefore, contrary to the corporatist pattern, their social policies are not subsidiary and the search for a maximization of the individual independence also extends to women, being a regime actively attempting to move focus of care away from the family. The high expenses that this means this implies the necessity to obtain a situation of the active population's full employment. In this model we would have to locate Sweden and for extension the other Scandinavian countries. For this reason it is usually termed the Scandinavian model.

The Mediterranean welfare regime

But in the debate about the diverse types of Welfare State there is another momentous question for our topic. Are there only three worlds of welfare capitalism? And in short, for the argument that I intend to develop in the rest of the text, in what model would we have to locate a country like Spain?

Different authors have maintained that one of the important limitations of the typology of the three worlds is the absence, in its interpretative outline, of those countries that have developed belatedly their Welfare States, after long periods of authoritarian governments and that are located in the south of Europe. So, in recent times, a distinct model of South European welfare (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) has been argued for (*Ferrera* 1995, 1996; *Moreno* 1997b; *Rhodes* 1997; *MIRE* 1997).

The topic however is still in discussion. For some, we cannot speak of a specific and differentiated welfare regime, but simply a 'family of nations' lagging behind those of the 'continental' model of social insurance to which they belong (*Katrougalos* 1996). In this point of view, authors like *Leibfried* (1992) or *Gough* (1997) argue that these cases are a mere 'Latin rim' characterised by a rudimentary level of social provision and institutional development.

For other authors, the case of countries like Spain constitutes a type of welfare regime with notable differences in relation to other European countries. This is the position, for example, of *Vicenç Navarro* (2000), who emphasise the importance of political variables in the configuration of the different types of welfare states, presenting these kind of variables (such as the political partisanship of governments) as primarily, although not exclusively, an expression of class forces, rooting the analysis in the theoretical school of class power resources first developed by *Walter Korpi*. From this perspective, *Navarro* concludes the necessity to include in the classification of welfare states a new group: the countries with ex-dictatorial right-wing southern European conservative regimes. This group includes Spain, Portugal and Greece; all governed by right-wing dictatorships during the most part of the years of the formative period of the welfare States (1945-1980), and which would explain the slow development of their welfare states.

The typology of *Navarro*, in spite of contributing interesting arguments, presents, in my opinion, some important problems. The fact of being centred in the variable "government's years of social-democratic or Christian-democratic parties" takes him to locate Austria in the social-democratic model which is more than debatable, and mainly for our topic, Italy is placed among the Christian-democratic systems. Without a doubt, the Italian case differs from the other ones for not having had a dictatorship in the period of formation of the Welfare State, but I believe that it is possible to argue that Italy has more features in common with Spain than with Germany or France, for to give two examples.

Other authors have added to these political and historic factors, others of cultural character, also arriving at the conclusion that the European southern countries

constitute a different type of welfare system. This is the case, for example, of Ricard Gomà (1996), who talks about of a “traditional model” or Peter Abarahamson (1995) who defends the existence of one model that he terms the “Catholic model”.

It is true that to be able to systematise the argument of the existence of a Welfare State model for Southern Europe it is necessary for more comparative investigation of its character. But, although we have seen this position is still debatable, it seems possible to affirm that in a general way and beyond the logical national variations, the four mentioned countries share an entire group of features with concern to their culture, history, system of values and institutional peculiarities, which contribute to configure a characteristic model of a welfare regime (*Moreno 2000*).

The main characteristics of this hypothetical Mediterranean welfare regime, taking as a special point of reference the Spanish reality, would be:

1. In the economic context it is necessary to highlight that all these countries have suffered important delays in their modernization process, except for some early-industrialised areas in the north of Italy and Spain.
2. In the political dimension, as we have already seen, all those, except Italy, have had past experiences of authoritarian governments and dictatorial regimes, especially long ones in the Portuguese and Spanish cases, during the later period to the Second World War. But also, in this respect, Italy would be only a limited exception, if we keep in mind its Fascist past. So, it is possible to affirm that in a general way, the four countries have had important difficulties in consolidating their democratic liberal systems. Historically, they would be countries with a capitalism relatively little developed, and were managed for political regimes which were weakly democratic. It is also necessary not to forget, for example, that now Spain is living the longest period in democracy of its history.

There are a number of consequences of this, but at present I will highlight only two of the most important for our topic:

- a. In this scenario, the policies of social reform and social welfare have suffered a notable delay and, in general, the social policies, until the recent democratic period, were characterised by an extreme conservatism that combined an unequivocal repressive mood with important doses of paternalism and traditionalism.
- b. These dictatorships were extremely hostile towards the workers and the labour movement. Labour-friendly parties were brutally repressed and the unions were not allowed. So, when at the middle of the nineteen-seventies they became democracies, the labour movement was very weak. A useful indicator of the

strength or weakness of the labour movement of one country is the rate of union affiliation. To this respect it is enough to mention a simple fact: in Spain in the 1980s only 9% of wage-and-salary workforce was unionised, and although it grew a lot during the nineteen-eighties in a context of democratic consolidation and the term of government of the social-democratic party, arriving, according to the most optimistic estimation, to 20%, is therefore far less than most of the rest of European countries. It is also necessary to remember that weak labour movements generate weak Welfare States.

3. These countries that have recently adopted democracy have had to build their Welfare State in a context very different from the other western European countries. The nineteen-eighties had not been a period of economic growth and social and political consensus around the interventionist model of Social State of Rights, but a period of economic crisis and restructuring and reforms of Welfare State. Therefore, in the last two decades in countries like Spain we can observe the overlapping of construction and restructuring processes of the Keynesian pact. Therefore has been cohabitation of measures of universalism, with others such as the increasing flexibility within the labour market and transformation of social protection, to which I return later.

4. Another characteristic feature of this group of countries is their low level of social expenditure. A very clear case is the Spanish one. Spain had its first democratic elections in the year 1977, after forty years of dictatorship, with some extremely low levels of social expenditure and public service employment. During the decade of the nineteen-eighties a great effort was made in this area. But the starting point was so low that the disparities with other countries of the European Union continued. In the year 1980 Spain spent on social protection 18.1 % of its GDP, while the average within the European Union was 24.3%. In the middle of the nineteen-nineties, the difference had decreased, but the Spanish social expenditure was still three points below the European average. The same situation is seen in the other countries of the Mediterranean Europe. Globally speaking, they present a level of social expenditure that separates them from the continental ones of the social democracies, and even of the liberal ones. All also experienced an important growth of their expenditure between 1980 and 1995. However, at the end of the nineteen-nineties they were lagging behind the liberal systems by up to five points, eight compared to the continental ones, and ten to the Scandinavians. Furthermore, the effort to increase the expenditure has decreased in the last years as a result of the policies of austerity.

If we abandon the topic of the expenditure and examine the field of the revenues, we can also see that the countries of the Southern Europe have increases from their fiscal

pressure. In this dimension, although they are above the liberal, they are still quite far from not only the Scandinavians, but also the continental ones. On the other hand, the levels of fiscal avoidance are quite high and the tax pressure on the rents of the capital is lower than in other groups of countries, which is compensated with a tendency to increase the indirect taxes.

The conclusion is clear: the Southern Welfare States have far from exhausted their capacity to generate revenues for expanding their still underdeveloped welfare states.

5. However, the expenditure levels are an indicator that gives us little information about the nature of a Welfare State. Also, if the differential element of the Mediterranean countries is only a low social expenditure, this would only come to confirm the idea that they are simply a Welfare State of the continental type but less well developed.

However, there are other important characteristics that differentiate them of the rest. A very important one is that the Mediterranean Welfare regime can be defined as a kind of a *middle way* between the *bismarckian* model of maintenance of occupational incomes and the *beveridgean* model of universalistic coverage. Italy, for example, it has been defined by *Ferrera* (1993) as a case of a “mixed occupational” model that incorporates the basic characteristics of the continental contribution based regime with some features of the universalistic one. A similar position is the case of Spain, where we find a certain equidistance between the universal provision of its educational and health systems and the maintenance of a social security of contribution based character.

In summary, in relation to the group of countries of advanced capitalism, the states of Southern Europe present levels of medium development concerning their degree of decommodification, the relations between genders and the universal access to services and means-tested welfare benefits (*Moreno & Sarasa* 1992).

6. Another of the characteristics of the Mediterranean welfare regime is the great impact of Catholicism. In these countries, Catholicism (and the orthodox Christianity) has decisively influenced the configuration of their social policies and in the development of social work. Actually, although it is true that the role of the Church as a historic main supplier of social assistance has diminished, the influence of the thought and the Catholic culture continue to be very important in the configuration in their welfare model.

7. Also in relation of the cultural dimension of welfare systems development, it is possible to appreciate in Southern Europe a differentiated self-perception of needs and lifestyles. In a general way, we could say that there exists an idea of welfare as a

facilitator of the vital autonomy of the people. With this objective, people combine different institutional resources, of both a private and a public nature. The people tend to consider that the state has the duty to offer means and services and they have the right to take advantage of all opportunities to maximise the conditions of life although at the expense of "deceiving" the state institutions. A good example of this is the "submerged economy" (Moreno 2000).

In relation to these topics, I will emphasise three characteristics of this group of countries:

- a. The prevalence of values of family and familial solidarity, and the redistribution that operates in the family group during the vital cycles of life: gift mechanisms among the members of the family, processes of late emancipation, proliferation of family companies and jobs. For example, the youths of Mediterranean countries find employment thanks to their family to a much greater degree than in other European countries. That is to say, the practice of *resource pooling* implies that the home becomes a central institution of reference in the obtaining and distribution of welfare for its members.
- b. The forms of social reproduction in the countries of Southern Europe show differentiated patterns such as in how it affects the regime of property and housing. In the Mediterranean Europe, the concentration of the housing property amongst older people confirms the decisive role of the home as a compensatory institution among its different generational components. In addition, the late age of the youths' emancipation and leaving the family home in these countries contrast with the tendencies of "family individualisation" of other welfare regimes.
- c. The cultural preferences and practices of this kind of countries also have structured their civil societies in a characteristic mode. The citizens tend to be part of groups and social networks of influence that often mean practices of patronage, exclusion and group predation. So, we find in this type of Welfare States particular forms of favouritism towards certain individuals and groups.

Sometimes these tendencies take the form of political corruption, but in a more systematic and more typical way they are configured as political favouritism (favours granted in exchange for the support to a political organisation, generally voting for that party). The Southern Welfare States are different from the more homogeneous, standardised and universalistic forms of the north and of those more fragmented and corporatist continental forms. The configuration of their social policies are not rooted in an open and universalistic political culture, neither in a solid and impartial Weberian state with their own rules, rather in responses to a particular culture imbued with patronage relations and a *soft* and permeable state.

Obviously, such kinds of practices do not favour a perception of solidarity as a common asset of all citizenship. But in this respect it is necessary to remember that in the Mediterranean Europe the solidarity is predominantly of a *micro* character and it is observed fundamentally in the heart of the family (Moreno 1997a, 2000).

8. Another of the main characteristics of this welfare regime is its emphasis on the primacy of family. In Southern Europe, the Welfare State is sustained in great measure on the decisive role that the family plays, and not only as a main socialization agent. In its interior take place an entire series of transfers of both a material and social and emotional character (take care of the children and the aged people, domestic work, mutual help...); the basics for the social protection system. In recent years, in the Mediterranean countries the family has been a fundamental mechanism to muffle the effects of the processes, of post-industrialisation, globalisation and economic restructuring.

This decisive role of the family as one of the main producers and distributors of the welfare of the citizens falls fundamentally on the women, who are subjected in consequence to a great overload of work, which increases as they are incorporated into the labour market. A simple fact: according to the Eurostat organisation's statistics, is that the Spanish and Italian women are those that work the most hours in the family in Europe: around 46 weekly hours, practically the double that of the Scandinavians. This excessive workload for women has an important human cost that is summed up in high stress indexes and its associated illnesses.

But the cost is not only human, but also economic, social and demographic. The emphasis on the familial character of the Mediterranean social policies results in the personal services for support to the family are very little developed, contributing to the low level of the women's integration in the labour market, and which explains at the same time, the limited development of the occupation in social and personal services.

On the other hand, the underdevelopment of these services, the high rate of unemployment and the labour market precariousness for the young people – especially in the case of the young women and the shortage of housing, all underpin other phenomena that have lately characterized the Mediterranean countries: so, for example, the considerable delay in the age of women having children, and the reduction of the natality rates (Spain and Italy have the lowest in Europe).

This family based ideology of the Mediterranean social policies has consequences which are not only important in relation to dependence problems, for example for aged people, but raises serious queries about its maintenance in the future in a context of

important changes in the family and growing incorporation of women into the formal labour market (Saraceno 1995; Guillén 1997).

9. The southern countries coincide with the continental ones in the centrality of the contribution based social security system and in its very high institutional fragmentation (the highest is in Italy and Greece), but differs in two fundamental ways: their system of social protection is not based in the subsidiarity principle and it is deeply dualistic.

The Mediterranean welfare regimes offer a very high level of protection to the central nucleus of the work force (civil servants, workers of large and medium sized companies with indefinite contracts...), while the rest (workers with low qualification, with temporary contracts, that enter and leave of the labour market without security of long term employment...) are poorly protected or do not have any protection, just as it is in the case of the workers within the informal economy, the size of which is specially important in the southern European countries (some estimates locate it between 15 and 25 percent of the GDP). The social consequence of this dualism is a clear tendency to generate polarization between the *insiders* (the well-protected group that are inside the system of social protection) and the *outsiders*, those who are relatively or completely on the margins.

10. As I have already mentioned, another of the characteristics of the policies of Mediterranean welfare is the conjunction between universalism and selectivity, in great measure a product of the nature of their labour markets, those which, as we have just seen, show a high level of heterogeneity of their work force.

The Spanish case is paradigmatic at this level. At the end of the nineteen-eighties and beginning of the nineteen-nineties the socialist government forced important reforms of the health and educational system of an universalistic character, but at the same time took away certain protections, as a result of the will to compromise between social pressure in favour of the social rights and the ideological and economic demands of limiting the social expenditure.

11. Also in the southern countries, the restructuring of the Welfare States has adopted, at least in the discourses, an emphasis on the "third sector", but with an important difference with respect to the other nation-states in question: the civil societies of these countries, with some exceptions like the north of Italy and Spain, are in general weak and poorly developed. A relative weakness relates to economic, cultural and political factors, among which it is necessary to highlight the experiences of the dictatorial pasts of some of them, as demonstrated in the Spanish case. However, in the recent democratic period, the voluntary sector has grown rapidly, although still is less well developed than in other European countries.

What also is different has been the configuration of the relationship between the altruistic associations and the political power. If in the Scandinavian regime we can talk about a model of neocorporatist relations under the tutelage of the state; in the continental regimes of neocorporatist relations with subsidiary states, and in the liberal of a bigger pluralism and autonomy of the civil society, in the Mediterranean Europe we would meet with a model that some authors have defined as of *distant accommodation* (Sarasa 1995, 1999). Its main characteristics would be:

- a. Traditionally, the altruistic sector has been represented for the most part by the Catholic Church, overall in education, social services and health. Outside of the catholic world, the third sector, especially in relation to groups for mutual help, has tended to be disorganised and lack power.
- b. The financing is in general public by means of grants and the Catholic Church has enjoyed a special status as a quasi-public body.
- c. The principal difference, however, in comparison with other countries is that there are no formalised institutional channels between the state and the associations to carry out the policies of social welfare. This does not mean that both these actors ignore each other. There are consultations, lobbying and negotiations, but, in absence of institutionalized channels, the results depend to a great deal on other alliances and preferences in times of political changes. The climate is in general one of mistrust and isolation, when not of conflict, which impedes a coordinated collaboration.

12. In the field of social services we can also talk about a characteristic regime of social assistance of the Mediterranean countries (Gough 1997).

The main features would be:

- a. A very high institutional fragmentation. There are diverse cluster of programmes for specific groups that can be administered by the state or by the regions or the municipalities. This institutional fragmentation combined with a political and administrative decentralisation, produce problems of coordination and it allows a degree of discretion at the local level.
- b. There are no national programmes of assistance that provide benefits to all the people who lack sufficient living resources. For example, in Spain the establishment of minimum scales of benefit has been an autonomous initiative and therefore, the character, intensity and development presents notable territorial differences.
- c. The expenditure in social assistance and in social services is lower than the European average. In the benefits to those of the third age, the disabled and

the unemployed and those in need of residential services and of family support in the four southern countries are the lowest in the Western Europe. So, the burden of the assistance falls on the family, as we have already seen, leaving a wide capacity of action to the profit-making sector and the community initiatives.

- d. It is a system based on means testing, but this is at the same time strict (practically there are not exceptions) and informal (it is generally enough to make a declaration of rent and goods) and it has few resources.
- e. The relations between the public administrations, the private sector and the voluntary organisations present problems of coordination and its structure is based to a large degree in different forms of political patronage. Therefore, there are still wide favouritism mechanisms in the public distribution of welfare.
- f. There are considerable territorial differences in the volume, quality and management of the services. In the Spanish and Italian cases we meet with a fracture north/south that has given place to multiple political tensions as much in the national debates on the types and purposes of services as in the policies of territorial distribution of the resources.

13. A last characteristic feature of Mediterranean Welfare regimes is the big impact, in comparative terms, of the social and cohesion policies of the European Union in each one of the countries, as much from a quantitative perspective (social expenditure financed by structural funds) as qualitative (adjustments of the public policies to the Community designs).

3. Four, five... or only one?

It is true that some of the features that would characterize the hypothetical Mediterranean model are common with many parts of the continental welfare states, from the importance of the contribution based programmes through to the family based bias. But if we examine it with all its elements, the relationships that it generates, how they are articulated to the public, private, voluntary and family sectors, the culturally different forms of understanding concerning the design and the implementation of social policies, the historical trajectory, there are enough reasons to take seriously into consideration the existence of a fourth model of welfare regime, the Mediterranean one.

Obviously, it is necessary to be careful when we establish new types in the cases that the population to classify is small: we risk that the number of species finishes being near to that of the number of individuals and it is clear that so we would not want to advance too much in that direction. However, we must not forget that there are scholars that have also used good reasons in favour of a different model for other

cases, for example for Australia. So, *Castles/Mitchell* (1990) have proposed another type of Welfare State, the antipodean one, where the fight against the poverty was carried out through other redistribution instruments by means of high levels of public expenditure. And what happens in our consideration of Japan? And with the Eastern European countries? In this last case the answer depends much on the definition of the Welfare State that we use. Consequently, we could be talking about five, six or more types of Welfare Regimes. Therefore it is necessary to be cautious, but in the Mediterranean case it seems there are enough and reasonable arguments to sustain the argument for the existence of a differentiate model.

But maybe the topic is rather another one. The diverse classification proposals were based in the period of formation of the Welfare States. In the new scenario of restructuring of social policies, globalisation and largely common challenges, might we not be in a convergence process that will tend to reduce the differences between the diverse models of Welfare State?

However, everything indicates that the reality doesn't go in this direction. The problems may be common, but the answers tend to differ from one type of Welfare State to another. The recent works of *Esping-Andersen* show that the post-industrial transformation is institutionally dependent on previous ideologies and policies. In other words, the different types of welfare regimes have a great and lasting effect on the type of application strategies which are being pursued, including the policies for reforming the Welfare State. The institutional legacies of the Welfare States shape the impact of the different social, economic and political changes in the process of transformation of the Welfare regimes. So, many authors suggest that roll-backs of social protection in response to domestic fiscal stress and internationalisation will be notably more difficult in universal than in liberal Welfare States: the relative political strength of Welfare State constituencies, and pro-welfare state coalitions as well as high levels of mass political approval and supportive value orientations will constitute a significant barrier to social policy retrenchments. The reverse may be true in liberal Welfare States where institutional features may facilitate neo-liberal restructuring and in the case of conservative Welfare State the picture is mixed (while occupationally based systems often provide institutional opportunities for resistance to retrenchment, the fragmentation of constituency groups and potential coalitions by programmatic structure may facilitate Welfare State roll-backs) (*Swank* 2001). For example, *Moehl/Wallerstein* (1996) have highlighted the importance of universal versus means-tested benefits in maintaining the support of average voters for national systems of social protection. *Rothstein* (1998) argues that support for the Welfare State depends on the 'contingent consent' of strategically self-interested and moral citizens. This consent is

dependent on citizens' appraisals of the substantive, procedural and distributive fairness of the Welfare State. Universal regimes thus enjoy higher levels of popular support, trust and security than liberal regimes.

The reactions of the Mediterranean Welfare Regimes to the changes that are producing the transition toward post-industrial societies also present differences in relation to other countries. In addition, it seems that in certain sectors the inequalities are tending to decrease rather than to increase, as shown in the expenditure on social protection. In these times of changes, it seems there also exists a Mediterranean method, and a method, not a model. (See next page.)

Model Category	Social democratic (Scandinavian)	Conservative (Continental)	Liberal (Anglo-Saxon)	Mediterranean
Union Density	Very High	Medium	Medium/Low	Very Low
Collective-bargaining agreements	Very centralised and co-ordinated	Less centralised and sectorialized	Decentralised and fragmented	Decentralised
Normative Principle	Equality	Security	Assistance	Security/ Assistance
Objectives	Social Services Network	Income Maintenance	Individual Capacitation	Resources Combination
Social Expenditure	High	High	Low	Low
Financing	Taxes	Contribution based	Taxes	Mixed
Services	Comprehensive Public	Social Agents	Residual Publics	Familiar Help
Criterion of access to benefits	Citizenship	Labour Contributions	Necessity	Labour Contributions/ Necessity
Level of subsidies	High	High (Contribution based)	Low	Low (Contribution based)
Provision	Public/centralised	Mixed/National Labour Offices	Public/quasi-markets	Mixed/ Decentralised
De-commodification	High	Medium	Weak	Medium/Weak
Labour Market	High Public Employment	Stable/Unstable	Deregulation	Informal Economy
Stratified Principle	Egalitarian	Reproductive	Dualism	Reproductive/ Dualism
Gender	Feminisation public work	Feminisation partial work	Labour Polarisation	Ambivalent Family based

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Creating community through the use of research projects and social work education. An example of international (European) cooperation¹

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Abstract

This paper presents an example of how an academic community was created from a network of institutions and individuals, and their interactions, for the purpose of conducting joint research projects. This effort was initiated by the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University and other institutions working together on behalf of social work education in Poland, implemented and directed by the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work.

The key concepts of the subject were limited to the categories of social work, research-education and the conditions of establishing a framework for social action by nurturing various forms of mutual relation (transfer, exchange, mutual sharing).

The methodological foundations of this analysis are the concept of longevity and the transversal perspective.

Introduction

This chapter presents an example of how an academic community was created of a network of institutions and individuals, and their interactions, for the purpose of conducting joint research projects. This effort was initiated by the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University and other institutions working together on behalf of social work education in Poland, implemented and directed by the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work.³

¹ This text is a modified version of the Polish language publication: "Badania i działania profesjonalne w pracy socjalnej. Inicjatywy polsko-francuskie i ich wymiar europejski," [Research and professional action in social work. Polish-French initiatives and their European dimension] (*Bragiel/Sikora* 2004: 137-146). The article is based on a presentation I had the honour of making in Paris in September 2003 during the Forum of Polish Science and Technology, organised by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Information Technology of the Republic of Poland. The presentation describes the research accomplishments of the last 10 years (1993-2003) undertaken in a forum of European co-operation. It was submitted jointly by the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work and the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University and accepted by the State Committee for Scientific Research.

² Translation: Barbara Przybylska

³ The members of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work represent 33 university bodies (faculties, institutes, research centres), schools of higher learning and post-secondary social service schools. Social work education at universities and schools of higher learning is provided within the disciplines of pedagogy, social policy, and sociology and in the specialisation of social work. A licentiate degree is available (3 years of study after passing the secondary school national qualifying exams), as is a master's degree (5 years of full-time study, or 2 years of full-time study upon completion of the licentiate degree). Training in post-secondary schools lasts 2.5 years and passage of secondary school national qualifying exams is not required for acceptance to these schools.

The proposal to present this work follows earlier publications on this subject, and above all, presentations to large meetings of researchers, educators and social work practitioners (Marynowicz-Hetka 2003e: 17-31). The concept of the social creation of reality portrayed herein is the theoretical premise which frames the presentation of the research accomplishments. In other words, this chapter is an attempt to describe how an intercultural academic community can be created in the humanities and social sciences by undertaking joint research in the field of social work (or about this field of activity), and how such activities are bestowed with a European dimension.

The methodological foundations of this analysis are: the concept of longevity and the transversal perspective (Marynowicz-Hetka 2003b; 2003d). Working within this framework enables, on one hand, an analysis of the process - not so much of specific events, but more their essence, permanent aspects, and repeating configurations. On the other hand, it provides the opportunity to consider the supra-disciplinary dimension while at the same time reconciling various epistemological views during the analysis of a given fragment of reality. Due to its structure, the specific steps in the evolving development of co-operation between Polish and European partners cannot be precisely described in this chapter. Rather, we are more concerned with presenting some examples of such co-operation, which clearly illustrate an academic community in creation in our country, and the process of imbuing it with a European dimension, and thus, the process of internationalising social work. The projects analysed also show how we came to share common values and ideas and how the community was formed, and provide a story of discovering anew and the enrichment of a growing spiral of contacts.

The key concepts of the subject were limited to the categories of social work, research-education and the conditions of establishing a framework for social action by nurturing various forms of mutual relation (transfer, exchange, mutual sharing).

Social work is understood here as an activity promoting action, enabling individuals to relate to themselves and to others. The humanistic and relational model of social work is used here, which was also the main reference for viewpoints accepted on this issue at the Congress of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) in 2002.

The category of research-education is used in this discussion, as has already been stated, as the creation of a symbolic institution and the framework for social action in the field of social work. The creation of a symbolic institution is understood here as the process of creating values and norms that result from the crossing of actual institutions with individual images of particular activities. A symbolic institution coming into

existence in this way can provide the framework for action in social work. An important element in this process is the type and quality of relations among its subjects. It is essential that the relations are directed to achieving development and maintained through the expression of commonly held values and ideas - which is the basis for the formation of a community. This process is not favoured by remaining in one-sided relations, but requires work toward a level of relations known as "exchange."

As a result of describing the key concepts in this manner, international co-operation in the social sciences is understood as a particularly specific type of social space, where symmetry in the relations and the commonly shared ideas binding the research team are as important as the actual research results. Achieving these expectations requires that each task is started "at the beginning" and the acceptance of the fact that a lengthy process may be required before the team is ready to conduct research together (*Carré/Marynowicz-Hetka/Piekarski/Pinel 2002, Dibie/Wulf 1998*). This process is further intensified by the need to become familiar with cultural differences when undertaking research with international partners. The very fact that social work requires the acceptance of interdisciplinary research perspectives exacts an intellectual humility in the face of differing theoretical and methodological viewpoints. Achieving a transversal perspective becomes a symbolic act of finding shared theoretical viewpoints. But this requires time, great effort and co-operation of the team. This is exactly how the research projects presented here arose, preserving their qualities of process and time.

1 Developing co-operation for the purpose of research and education, and endowing it with a European dimension

1.1 A General Analysis

In analysing the beginnings of European co-operation between our entities, one must specifically refer to the social context, as it not only accompanied this co-operation, but was also a factor in its development. These first contacts, initiated in the early 1990s, were often characterised by a definite curiosity and interest on the part of our partners, in a new country, its society, its problems and ways of addressing them, as it found itself in the process of completely transforming its governance and socio-cultural systems. This curiosity and interest were at times attended by sympathy and solidarity with the difficulties of every-day life during the visits to our country, which was not yet fully prepared professionally to undertake co-operative projects of this stature. The first research projects conducted were less an expression of methodical work requiring the completion of a great many documents and timely submission of reports, and more a demonstration of will, enthusiasm and the determined involvement of people who simply wanted to work together. The European research programmes then available to

Polish researchers did not allow us to participate as an equal partner, as a subordinate role was written into the legal regulations. (For example, TEMPUS was designed mainly as a programme of EU countries providing assistance in education, continuing education and related infrastructure development to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.) There were also programmes that provided only financial support for professional exchanges but not for research, such as the TEMPRA and POLONIUM programmes. The nature of other programmes was more an expression of solidarity between the societies of the EU with those in Europe undergoing structural transformation, such as PHARE, which encompassed a variety of social areas, as well as culture and education.¹ Thanks to these funds, exchange visits could be arranged that promoted the creation of a European society.

A detailed analysis will not be made here of the importance of the social framework (European, national, regional) for the development of the dynamic and co-operation on an international level, nor will its quality be assessed. However, it should be noted that with time, the Polish academic community acquired access to joint European programmes that supported research projects and began participating in the formalisation of already-existing academic networks. This development could move forward especially as a result of the 5th Framework Programme of the EU (as well as currently the 6th and 7th EU Framework Programmes) and the entire array of programmes supporting it. An additional element strengthening participation in these endeavours was the introduction of programmes developed by the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) in support of the 5th Framework Programme. In analysing the participation of our community in these activities, certain tendencies can be observed in its development, such as:

- growth in the number of participants (especially the number of countries), from bilateral projects (for example, the research project on unemployment in Poland and France conducted together by the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University and the Psychology Institute of the Lumière Lyon 2 University) to network projects involving almost half the countries of Europe (such as the CERTS project that included 14 countries). This is also a distinct sign of the process of spontaneous "europeanisation" occurring with projects previously conducted bilaterally. This process was also evident in the joint discovery of cultural elements that are common, as well as those that differ, and in learning together to be open to other people and their ideas. This process was especially facilitated by a knowledge of cultural roots and the contribution of the discipline in the development

¹ It is worth noting here that the *Social Worker's Library*, with its 51 published titles to-date, was initiated in January 1993 as part of the PHARE Programme.

of thought and practice in the particular field in question, which in this case was social work;

- formalisation of earlier activities in the framework of exchanges with each other and the clear requirement of fulfilling the conditions of the project (in terms of time, space and personnel, etc.);
- emphasis on achieving the research goal as the primary basis of activity, promoting a rational perspective, and less the perspective of solidarity and helping. As a result of this viewpoint, many of us experienced a "taste of normalcy" in European co-operation. But of course the "taste of adventure" accompanies every new endeavour and is also present in the projects currently underway;
- acquiring the courage to undertake the co-ordination of national and international projects.

In discussing examples in the history of co-operative research and its European dimension, a number of past and present research projects are presented below, with the participation of researchers, educators and practitioners working with the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work and the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University:

- 1993-1999: a research project entitled: "Unemployment in Poland and France - problems of association and institutionalisation";
- 1997-2000: a cycle of research projects concentrating on issues regarding the social professions (education and action), including, for example, "The European dimension in education and action in the social professions"; an ECSPRESS project involving a network of social work schools; a research project entitled "Epistemological issues in social work";
- 2000-2003: a project in preparation for the European EASSW Congress held in Łódź in June 2001, entitled "Theoretical Approaches in Social Work Education / Approches théoriques de la formation pour le travail social";
- 2001-2004: a project (CERTS) conducted within the 5th Framework Programme of the EU - European Resource Centre for Social Work Research / Européen de ressources pour la recherche en travail social;
- 2002-2003: a project preparing a research seminar on "Values and professional activities: the case of social work," co-organised with partners from France;
- 2003-2005: a project accompanying the European CERTS project: Resource Centre on/with/for Research in Social Work/Work in Society (CERTS for Poland).

1.2 Brief descriptions of the selected research projects

1.2.1 The "Unemployment in Poland and France - problems of association and institutionalisation" research project was prepared with the Lumière Lyon 2 University as part of the TEMPRA Programme (supported by the Rhône-Alpes Region in France and the State Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) in Poland) and conducted from 1993 - 1999. The research team was characterised by variety with regard to culture, disciplines and theoretical-methodological approaches. A research team studied variations in the process of social exclusion and conditions favouring inclusion into the social fabric based on examples of the lack of employment opportunities for young people searching for their first jobs, and thus the problem of unemployment of people in this age group, and the loss of work by adults as a result of economic transformation or other external factors. The goal of the project was to explore the issues by analysing the opportunities provided by social association of the persons finding themselves without work. The study results were first published in France, and then in Poland (*Carré/Marynowicz-Hetka 1999; Carré/Marynowicz-Hetka 2002*).

1.2.2 A cycle of research projects were conducted from 1997 to 2000 on the social professions in Europe, in large part initiated by the ECSPRESS consortium of social work schools with the participation of many persons and institutions involved in social work education (*Seibel 2003*). Its goal was, among others, an attempt to respond to the question of the essence of the European dimension in educating for the social professions and social action. The issues of the epistemological foundations for action in social work were also addressed. This project was excellent preparation for our community in organising the EASSW Congress in 2001.

Of note is the participation of the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University in this European project, piloted by the École Supérieure de Travail Social of Paris, and its exploration of the issue of doctoral studies in social work in Europe and the issues surrounding epistemological studies in social work (*Laot 2000; 2001*). Our community was significantly involved in the European seminars organised as part of these projects, and in the publications released.

The issues of the contemporary form of social professions in Europe were also the subject of a jointly prepared multi-lingual publication and its translation into Polish (*Marynowicz-Hetka/Wagner/Piekarski 1999, 2001*). 20 authors were invited to present their thoughts on this topic, 10 of them were from countries other than Poland. Participation in the PHARE Fiesta II Programme, co-ordinated by the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University, was open. All the major academic centres in Poland involved in social work research and education were invited to participate. We invited

foreign authors who were fully engaged either in research or also in education and the operation of institutions at the European level. The goal of the project, finalised in published form, was the identification of the following issues:

- a theoretical and methodological approach to social work in the context of times of social change;
- the evolution towards professionalisation of various types of social professions, and consideration of the consequences of this for social work education, with the identification of common aspects and differences in educational concepts in European countries.

The issue studied, and its analysis, signalled the importance of these matters to the community of persons involved in social work education. The awareness of this importance on the part of the editors and authors of this book is expressed in its preface, which invites others to the discussion. Debate on this issue is ongoing, and so it should be, given its many variations as well as its changing contextual conditions.

1.2.3 A characteristic project promoting the creation of a framework for co-operative social action within the European dimension was the preparation, organisation and congregation of the European Association of Schools of Social Work, which took place in Łódź, Poland. The Polish Association of Schools of Social Work was entrusted with organising the Congress, whereas the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University undertook the actual work (June 6-9, 2001, with the theme: Theoretical Approaches in Social Work Education / *Approches théorique de la formation pour le travail social*). The Congress was held in English and French, with plenary sessions also translated into Polish. This project was implemented by the 2001 Polish Committee called into being by the Executive Board of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work, and included the most prominent representatives of the academic community involved in social work education on the university level, as well as representatives of Post-Secondary Schools of Social Service. The timeframe of the project was fairly broad, given the need to carefully prepare the Congress and then bring it to its symbolic closure with the publication of a two-language volume of all the presentations made there (*Labonté-Roset/Marynowicz-Hetka/Szmagalski* 2003). Those issues most significant for the development of theoretical approaches in social work were addressed during the Congress, and included:

- solutions in the areas of research-action-education at the global and local levels;
- the meaning of social work and its function in new social contexts (among others, limiting social work in its stabilising and economic functions, or also expanding its role by seeking opportunities in its promotional function);
- the meaning of self-reflection in practice for the development of social work theory;

- directions in the development of theoretical approaches to action in social work and implications for social work education (pluralist, interdisciplinary and transversal perspectives).

The design of the project, emphasising the involvement of many communities, allowed many ancillary seminars to be organised in "support" of the Congress in Warsaw, Kraków and Łódź. A total of 213 persons from over 30 countries participated in the Congress, with participants representing every continent. The participation in the Congress of Executive Board members of EASSW and IASSW provided an additional opportunity to promote our accomplishments.

1.2.4 An example of a small project addressing the issue of research and professional action was our participation together with the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers in Paris (Maison de Recherche et de Pratiques Professionnelles and Faculty of Social Work) in a seminar on "Values and professional action. The example of social work" ("Valeurs et les activités professionnelles. Le cas du travail social"). The main question posed during this seminar for the social work and education research community concerned the treatment of values in social action. The results of the debate were published in the journal *Vie Sociale* (2003) (Marynowicz-Hetka 2003a).

2. The current situation - projects underway and future perspectives

The presentation cited above of the history of co-operation and the systematic expansion of the field of activities shows how the current position of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work evolved to its current involvement in the CERTS project and the implementation of a version of this project in Poland.¹ We also acknowledged the invitation to participate in the "Days of Polish Scientific Studies" in France to present the results of our joint projects as an appreciation for our achievements, as well as a challenge for the future.

Two projects are currently underway, or, in other words, one project in two versions (European and national). The team co-ordinator for both projects is the Executive Board of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work. A team of employees of the Faculty of Social Pedagogy at Łódź University is implementing and directing the work. Both projects are included in the category of the 5th Framework Programme of the EU,

¹ The first project (CERTS) was implemented as part of the 5th Framework Programme of the EU: "European Resource Centre for Social Work Research/Centre Européen de ressources pour la recherche en travail social." The project implemented in 2001-2004 was co-ordinated by the Ecole Supérieure de Travail Social in Paris. See <http://www.certs-europe.com/database>. The second project, "CERTS dla Polski – Centrum zasobów badań w pracy socjalnej" ["CERTS for Poland - Resource Centre for Social Work Research"], implemented from 2003-2005, is a research program of international partners working together in a network, and is co-ordinated by the Executive Board of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work. See www.certs.uni.lodz.pl

with the goal of improving infrastructure and creating a network of institutions interested in undertaking the activities. A network of institutions exists for both projects, one with 14 institutions of higher learning from 14 European countries. The second includes 14 national institutions (12 university-related bodies and other institutions of higher education and 2 Post-Secondary Schools of Social Service).

The goals of the European CERTS and the CERTS project for Poland are the same, and include:

- creating a data base of research studies (doctoral and others) that analyse the social work field from the perspective of "with," "for," and "over;"
- promoting a greater dynamic in the community of researchers in each of the partner countries and, as a consequence, endowing this movement with a European dimension.

The implementation modalities of both projects differ somewhat. CERTS for Poland is designed with the goal of systematising and organising the entire process of collecting information on research studies for the European data base. Additionally, the intent is to establish a Polish data base as part of this project. As a result, the scope of this project is broadened to include a wider timeframe for the information being collected, starting with 1990 (the European project begins collecting data from 2002) and more activities (awards for master's theses, and eventually licentiate theses and social projects). In this way, CERTS for Poland allows us to create the first data base in the country that identifies research work and distinguished contributions to research that arose during the challenging time of developing a programme of higher education for social work, of intensifying research and of creating a forum for the exchange of experiences and views, at the least through the organisation of the Polish Association of Schools of Social Work.

Both projects will also be collecting information on researchers and study authors. Thanks to this joint effort, we will soon have very interesting data that could serve as the basis for a separate study on social work research. Both projects, and their common intersections, are very interesting examples of the interaction of two elements: participation in a European programme, co-ordinated by a French entity (ETSUP), and the gathering of a research community around this initiative. This could serve as a good example of how to improve the quality of co-operation, with each party taking ownership in creating the social reality together and sharing the values that unite the community.

Based on this very synthetic analysis of our accomplishments during the creation of a community of researchers, educators and practitioners interested in sharing knowledge, skills and their theoretical and axiological viewpoints, we can venture an

optimistic prognosis. If over the past 10 years we were able, as a community, as a team of persons engaged in the development of reflective thought on social work as a field of action for such a variety of activities, to encourage so many renowned researchers, to discover so many important areas of activity and persons with the requisite values to create a common social reality in the field of social work education in Poland, one is free to make the assumption that the future of our work looks promising.

Within the context of a multi-dimensional understanding of the categories describing the relationships of transfer-exchange-mutual sharing, it is worth considering the conditions needed to attempt the creation of an academic community that in its European dimension is culturally diverse, but at the same time has the will and ability to share ideas, values, experiences and tools of analysis in such a way as to respect diversity on the one hand, while establishing a transversal unity on the other.

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The Construction of Social Work in England – A Critical Review

Adrian Adams, Steven M. Shardlow

Abstract

This paper traces and examines the emergence, de- and re- construction processes of social services and the consequences for social work theory and practice within the evolving welfare state, mixed economy and finally welfare market models that have been adopted in the UK. In particular it explores the impact on social work practice of the introduction of the care management approach and, more recently, the policy of modernisation of public services, which has presented an additional challenge to social work agencies and practitioners

Introduction

The United Kingdom consists of the countries of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales¹. Within this small, densely populated nation state² there is a wide variation in income levels and standards of living, and of disparate environments as between rural areas, towns and cities. Each of the countries that make up the UK has different organisational and legal systems and different laws relating to health and social welfare, although there are many similarities between the core principles that underpin these services. It is likely that in the future the differences between each of these countries, in respect of health and welfare, will become more pronounced as the effects of greater devolution of powers to the separate legislatures for the UK are felt.

The total number of personal social services staff working for authorities in England is 208,300 in 2002³. This compares with 237,752 in 1994 – the reduction most likely due to the shift of staff to the not for profit sector where it is now estimated that over half of all social workers are employed. Health and social care services in England (the largest country by population within the UK) are currently undergoing substantial changes. The nature of these changes constitute a radical re-formulation of the relationship between the state, the individual, family and community wherein the balance of responsibility for ensuring social security is shifting away from the state towards the individual citizen.

¹There are in addition the smaller Crown dependencies such as the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and so on which although not formally part of the United Kingdom are closely associated and share foreign policy etc.

² The population of the United Kingdom 2001 was 58,789,194. The populations of individual countries were: England 49,138,831 (83.6 per cent of the total population); Scotland 5,062,011 (8.6 per cent); Wales 2,903,085 (4.9 per cent); Northern Ireland 1,685,267 (2.9 per cent). Source: UK National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=185>

³ Source: UK National Statistics <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D3982.xls>

This shift of responsibility emanates from a belief that the cost of both health and social care has become prohibitive and as such represents an ideological shift grounded in neo-liberal thinking which signals disenchantment with the post war concept of a welfare state. Collective responsibility for society's vulnerable members has been replaced by a return to liberal values and social policies in a market led approach to welfare. Here, the 'mixed economy of welfare' has become common shorthand to describe a mixture of state, private, voluntary and informal provision of care for vulnerable individuals, whereby the role and function of state institutions becomes one of enabling and promoting rather than providing for the needs of the population.

This revised, residual role of the state has given rise to not only a re-structuring of social institutions and agencies, which are now required to operate as assessors and purchasers of care working to pre-determined cash limits within marketed orientated principles, but also to considerable debate and uncertainty as to the purpose, role and function of social care professionals working in both state and independent sector agencies. Over the past twenty years, the changes to the form in which social work activity is conducted in England, have given rise to questions regarding its claims to professional expertise and credibility. Without an automatic presumption of expertise, the credibility of social work activity must be continuously pursued, constructed and demonstrated by reference to the criteria of responsibility and capacity and through the pursuit and achievement of legitimisation strategies. Accordingly social work interest has focused upon the achievement of its *credibility*, by establishing its claim to be contributing to the maintenance of the social system, through the performance of a unique role and the execution a specific function and associated tasks.

Credibility in public life is increasingly constructed through an evaluation of performance using the criterion of the achievement of explicit objectives. Such objectives are set within the parameters of *responsibility* and *capacity* for their attainment. The allocation of responsibility and the attribution of capacity within health and social care regimes operates at four levels, that of the state, the service, the client and the worker. For the state, the execution of its collective responsibility is evidenced through a capacity to produce policy and administrative decisions that successfully maintain the unity and coherence of the social system. For the service, responsibility is specified as the achievement of measurable objectives within predetermined procedures and resource allocations. For the client, personal responsibility must be evidenced through individual achievement and the demonstration of behaviour congruent with prevailing norms and values; that is, the attainment of agency constructed from notions of personhood and citizenship. For the social worker, professional responsibility is demonstrated through successful role performance in

contributing to the achievement of the state as the legitimate representative of society, the service as a responsible institution and the client as a responsible citizen.

In this context successful role performance in social work is problematic, as it is dependent upon satisfying competing interests and by reference to contested knowledge forms, which occupy separate phenomenological domains and functionally differentiated systems (Adams 2004). This proposition, that instabilities in role, function and form have given rise to an essential shift of focus in social work interest, wherein strategic actions are directed away from the problems and needs of clients and towards maintaining the credibility of practitioners through satisfying the requirements of their employing agencies, is the device through which social work in England will be examined here.

1. 1969 – 1979 The emergence of social work as a discrete profession

Within a period of fifteen years following the end of the Second World War a welfare state system was established within England based upon the principles and assumptions of welfare outlined by Beveridge (i.e. that the state should mobilize to defeat Five Giants, Disease, Idleness, Ignorance, Squalor, Want) and economic policy proposed by Keynes (i.e. that the economy should be managed to achieve growth, stability and a gradually rising standard of living for consumers) The first twenty-five years of the welfare state (1945 until approximately 1970) resulted in the creation of universal services used and valued by the majority of the population (e.g. Education and Health). Social work played a modest part in this development consisting of a variety of specialist activities provided by distinct occupational groups such as child care officers, mental welfare officers and hospital almoners. However in the mid 1960s, the omission from the framework of the welfare state of a unified and generic form of personal social services first received public recognition in official publications such as *The Child, The Family and The Young Offender* (1965) – which reflected government awareness of growing public concern at the increase in officially recorded juvenile delinquency rates and the related belief in the importance of preventing ‘family breakdown’; and *Social Work and the Community* (1966) – which suggested that under ideal conditions social problems could be solved by the individuals, who were involved, themselves. However, it was not until the publication of *The Seebohm Report*, (1968) that a blueprint was available to tackle the fragmented organizational structure for social work. This report brought forward detailed proposals for a fully integrated and institutionalised set of social care arrangements for all groups within the provision of a state directed welfare regime.

Seebohm recommended a unified approach to the provision of personal social services via the creation of a single social services department within each local authority. The purpose of this authority being to ensure more effective provision of personal social services in relation to meeting individual and social needs. It suggested that there was a relationship between the effective meeting of social need and the particular forms of administrative structure. The report identified the shortcomings in existing services as inadequacies in the amount, range and quality of provision and poor co-ordination and difficulties in access. The causes of these shortcomings were identified as a lack of resources, inadequate knowledge and divided responsibility and the report concluded that there was a case for organizational change.

The analysis and arguments propounded within the report generated not only proposals for a new organizational structure but also for a new and different function for social work within society. As *Seed* (1973) identified contemporaneously, the case for a re-organization of social work was made within the context of an expanding notion of what constituted the concerns of social work interventions and in particular the assumption that responses to social need could be best formulated through particular forms of organization. The *Seebohm Report* made the case that the most important aspect of the personal social services was social care in the community; implying a redefinition of the field in which social work was to operate. Through this redefinition the nature of the state's relationship to the individual was re-defined – with the state adopting a more 'caring' function and assuming greater responsibility for the welfare of individuals within society.

The subsequent establishment of generic local authority social services departments, through the *Local Authority Social Services Act* (1970), provided the organizational framework and rationale for social work within the English welfare state. The report was significant not only as it laid the ground for the creation of a new organizational structure within which social work was to be located, but that it enabled the state to absorb, integrate and assimilate social work practice into an institutionalised role and form. The notion of the generalist social worker, rather than a generalist team, emerged and was enthusiastically adopted by the newly created departments. Social workers were reconstructed and reconstituted as a generic occupational group, whose expertise and accompanying professional status was to be mobilized in the promotion of social responsibility, the mutuality of social risk, the possibility of social solidarity, national growth and well being within a strategic approach to the government of social life, tied to the co-ordination and application of fiscal, calculative and bureaucratic apparatus of the state.

In a matter of ten years the institutions that had been established post Seebohm to legitimise the place of social work within the welfare state system (e.g. The National Institute of Social Work, (NISW), The Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work, (CCETSW), and The British Association of Social Workers, (BASW)) had achieved an institutionalisation of social work practice and education through the regulation of its role, form and function under the strategic control of local authorities (*Webb/Wistow 1987, Brewster 1991, Cannan 1994*). The institutionalisation of social work was however achieved at considerable cost, especially in terms of the theoretical orientations of practitioners. Not only did it prove necessary to satisfy the adherents to a psycho-dynamic orientation (*Winnicott 1962, Timms 1964*), but also to silence the proponents of radical social work (*Bailey/Brake 1975; Corrigan/Leonard 1978*), particularly those social science graduates newly recruited to social work. The price of genericism was the neutralization of critical theory within education programmes (*Munday 1972*) and the internalization if not erasure of ideology from the newly acquired professional role (*Pearson 1973*), in favour of an integrated, systemic framework for rational interventions.

Although the centralization of the personal social services within local government structures and the generic role of social work emerged relatively late within the English welfare state system, no sooner had it been integrated, than it was overwhelmed by demands and the practice base of the casework method eroded. During this time, the volume of work that impacted upon departments increased markedly as a result of increasing public expectations, partly because the new departments sought to explore unmet needs, and partly because new legislation laid additional duties on local authorities (*NISW 1982*) – practitioners and managers began to use the phrase ‘the rate of bombardment’. With the adoption of the ‘new right ideologies’ following the election of the Conservative government in 1979, the professional aspirations of social workers to provide universal provision which would strive to eradicate need became an early victim of the shift to a mixed economy of welfare that now characterizes UK welfare services.

2. 1979 - 1996 Fragmentation, Diversity and Specialisation

The political crisis that arose as the legitimacy of the welfare state collapsed in the face of economic crisis gave rise to the radical reformulation of the state’s function. This was achieved through a combination of neo-conservative (*Joseph 1975*) and neo-liberal (*Harris 1998*) ideological principles and policies – economic liberalism combined with social libertarianism for the privileged and social control for the disadvantaged. With the state retreat from intervention in the economic system (de-regulation) and the

imposition of moral regulation of the social life-world that permeated the bureaucratic institutions of welfare, focus turned from the public sector to the private sector, from professional interests to the discipline of the free market in the regulation of the economically redundant underclass¹ and from intra-familial patterns of dependency to new roles and forms of intervention by social care practitioners.

The reconstruction of welfare within a mixed economy of care and the rapid construction of a welfare market, exemplified this radical re-conceptualisation of the role and responsibilities of the state in relation to health and social welfare. This approach, in line with general central government policies directed at the production of wealth, low taxation and low inflation prioritised the introduction of competition, the reduction of subsidies to consumers and the principle of privatisation, as transitional measures in achieving a conversion to a residual, minimalist role for the state.

The substitution of a welfare market in place of a welfare state was achieved primarily through the break up of the state monopoly in health care (followed by social care) and the shift in role of local authority social service departments from one of provider to that of enabler. Implementation of this policy was introduced throughout the 1980s and early 1990s through the various legislative and policy statements. These allowed for the financial and organizational arrangements for community care; funding of pilot projects to explore ways of moving long stay residents and resources from hospital to the community; community care arrangements for those with mental illness and learning difficulties; the transfer of responsibility from central government to local authorities for funding residential care and nursing homes; policy guidance on care management and assessment, local authorities being given responsibility for and funds to assess and support people in residential care and nursing homes; the introduction of complaints procedures and inspection units and the publication of the first Community Care Plans; (*Audit Commission* 1986; *DHSS*² 1981; *DHSS* 1984; *DH*³ 1989, 1991, 1993; *HMG*⁴ 1985, 1990). These, alongside the NHS purchaser - provider and contracting out reforms with GP fund-holders being able to purchase community health services and the range of general welfare policies including Education, Housing and Local Government reforms provided the framework within which the architecture of the Welfare State could be dismantled.

In seeking to overcome the systems crises of the 1970s and 1980s, the re-forging of an alliance between the State and the market and assertion of the primacy of instrumental

¹ Where have the 'underclass' gone? The phrase is rarely used in current discourse.

² DHSS – Department of Health and Social Security

³ DH – Department of Health

⁴ HMG – Her Majesty's Government

rationality within welfare services, four ideas have been central. Although introduced during the period of the new-right administration, they have remained virtually intact within current the administration of the new left.

- Firstly, in the 'production of welfare approach' (developed by the Personal Social Services Research Unit at the University of Kent) which is a framework of general concepts from which could be assembled a repertoire of causal arguments and methods for the collection of data. This was described as, 'A tool bag for the analysis of equity and efficiency in social and related long term care' (Davies 1986). This approach and its subsequent development in the form of the 'social opportunity costing approach' (Netton/Beecham 1993) gave credence to a number of important presumptions that paved the way for the repudiation and rejection of the welfare state. In particular it rests on the arguments that there are insufficient resources to match needs/wants; the cost of a resource/service is not be solely determined by its price and that to measure the cost of a service one must also be able to measure its outcomes or benefits. The importance of the general acceptance of these principles and of this approach by government are immense: what this model achieved was the conversion of the idea of welfare from being the normative representation of inter-subjectively negotiated values to an objectified commodity subject to measurement and exchange within a market economy.
- Secondly, with an acceptance of a need for the rational management of health and social services and the best use of available resources, the achievement of efficiency, economy and effectiveness became a priority (and ultimately some may argue has become the dominant the purpose) of services. The language, focus and concern of managers and practitioners in the personal social services shifted with the introduction of and emphasis given to rationality in planning and resourcing, the application of eligibility criteria, targeting and needs led assessments. New organizational structures to guide these priorities and objectives were called for that utilized 'co-coordinated decentralization', such as: the monitoring and review of sub-unit performance; the use of information systems to gather production and financial data; and 'responsible autonomy'; i.e. the control of decisions over criteria and value base with local autonomy for generating innovation based on centrally determined criteria and values.
- Thirdly, new roles and skills were introduced within the workforce; these included commissioning, contracting and care management functions. Objective and short term goal setting, review and audit of levels of service was designed to provide quality improvement within cost constraints with an emphasis on

specification and achievement of measurable objectives. These new functions required that individual responsibility was limited and controlled by fixed contracts, performance and pay review; the generation of performance indicators for resource inputs linked to care outputs; resource allocation linked to demography and need rather than production and capital costs; and the separation of the discrete functions of management, purchasing, planning, quality control and the minimum provision of essential core services. Such measures all invoked managerial rather than professional criteria and priorities in the performance of social work particularly with regard to budgetary control and allocation. Intermediate outcomes dominated the need to demonstrate performance competence and compliance in meeting operational performance targets; specifying and costing input and output measures; monitoring and reporting mechanisms within the workplace and the acceptance of a competence based approach for establishing national occupational standards for social workers.

- Fourthly, as welfare clients were re-designated as 'service users' or 'consumers' and service planners and organizers as 'customers' or 'commissioners' the introduction of consumerism within the welfare economy established a presumption that in managing human services organizations formal arrangements for 'institutional representation' could be replaced with more informal approaches to 'looking after' the customer. Satisfying the customer with services and goods rather than allowing them to influence what is available and offering choice for consumers / purchasers from amongst a range of services and service providers, determined naturally by individual's ability to pay, was rationalized as promoting individual autonomy.

These four notions have, since their introduction during the early 1980s and subsequent maturation, now taken on the status of social facts and appropriated understandings of the need for, purpose and nature of social welfare policy and services in England. Collectively they represent a process of the *commodification* of care. Their subsequent impact on the construction of a role and function for social workers within prevailing policy highlights the vulnerability of the profession to fluctuating ideologies and central and local authority agendas. As *Henkel* argued:

... the establishment of social services in 1971 to be led by the emerging profession of social work was a Pyrrhic victory for social workers. Although the departments were set up on an assumption that they would be defined by professional values and although social workers continue to hold many of the key roles in them, that assumption has now been effectively reversed: social work practice is largely defined by legal and managerial values. (*Henkel* 1995:80)

The transformation from social casework to care management exemplifies the retreat from professional expertise and the privileging of organizational objectives that reshaped the social work identity during the 1980s and 1990s.

The adoption of 'care management' by local authority social services departments, and the impersonal application of a contractually based procedures and criteria for resource gate-keeping and allocation, have been instrumental in shifting workers' sense of responsibility away from the client and towards the organization through its emphasis upon quantifiable intermediate outcomes related to the achievement of targets being privileged over 'soft' final outcomes related to client well-being (*Simic* 1995).

Fisher argued that the introduction of care management within the United Kingdom served as a mechanism 'designed primarily to bring about a 'market' of care supply' (*Fisher* 1990: 221), and which marginalizes the direct role of the care manager in eliciting expressions of need, offering counselling or advocacy and of clients' self-defined problems and goals.

The introduction of the care management approach in England led to increased specialization in the delivery of social work around client groups categories – with a consequent concentration on assessing needs and problems, risks and dangers, rights and responsibilities; identifying formal and informal resources, purchasing and co-ordination of 'packages' of care and monitoring and evaluating progress and outcomes. These coincided with a relative decrease in attention given to the relationship between the professional and the client (or service user/consumer) and the processes of reaching agreement and decision-making. As such case management developed as a procedure for the measurement of client entitlement to a service by the systematic application of eligibility criteria. Here assessment of need becomes a process of measurement rather than a matter of professional judgement and where need is objectified rather than interpreted from the phenomenal units and reality of the client life world so that: Need is defined by the process by which it is measured (*Offe* 1996:92).

Within care management the role of the practitioner is to verify the client circumstances as a legitimate claim or entitlement to a service package, the nature of which is determined by the agency and drawn from amongst those available services that are affordable for purchase from the welfare market. Through the separation of the assessment of need from the provision of service, the dialectics over the nature of care that were exposed in the social case work model are dissolved within the care management approach. Here no translation, interpretation, simulation or distortion of phenomenal reality is necessary as *needs are services*, pre-constructed as commodities through the equation of need with a claim for a service and a service as

that which can be afforded from the available range within the market place. Here the role of the worker becomes that of assessment of the claim against agency determined criteria. In care management, in contrast to case work, the dialectics of the case are relocated within the client rather than the practitioner reality, as represented in Fig. 1:

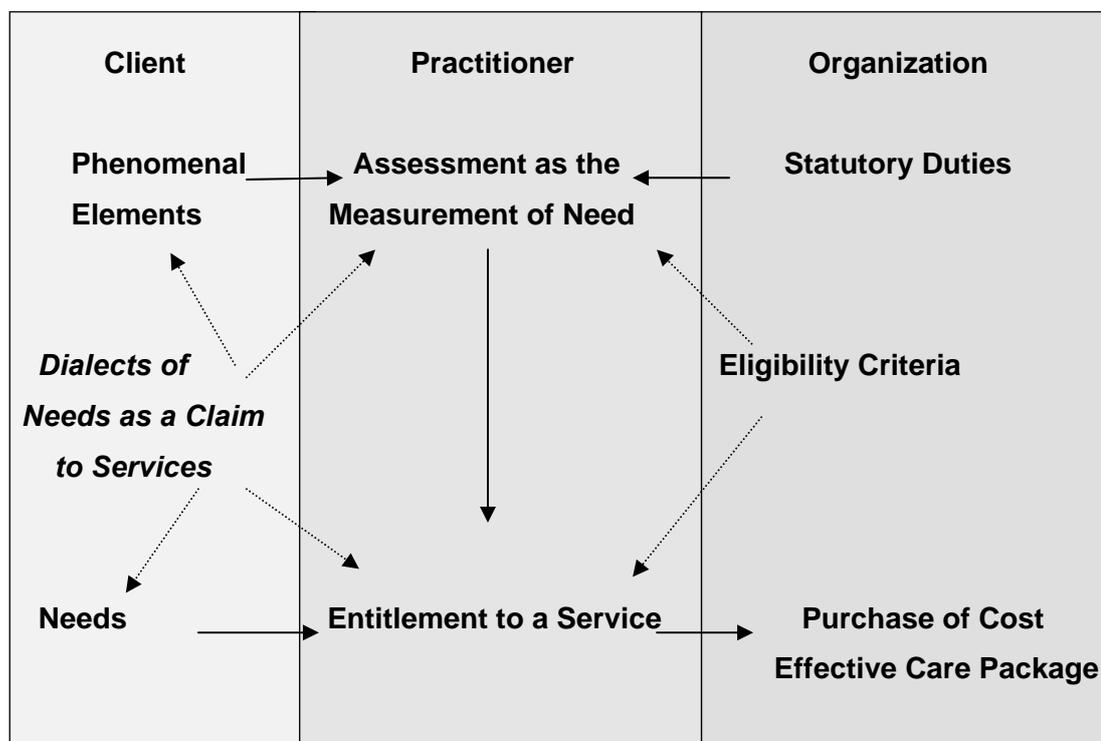


Fig. 1: The Role of the Care Manager in Assessing a Case

3. 1997 – 2005 Modernisation and the Emergence of a New Social Work

In England, the New Labour Government initiatives to ‘modernise’ the Social Services (for example: *HMG* 1998 and *DH* 1999) suggest, that through a combination of achievement, innovation and excellence, that typifies the current UK government’s approach to policy issues, there is a possibility of re-inventing public services, beyond the conditions required by a welfare state model. Superficially, when applied to issues of health and social care, modernization revisits many of the perennial ‘problems’ and indeed many of the ‘solutions’ earlier identified by Seebohm. However, under the banner of modernization, it is claimed that success can be achieved through the clarity of vision and purpose of central government and the management of social service departments’ performance (*Adams* 2003).

As such modernisation at one level continues an approach to social welfare policies that has been evident since the 1980s in which issues of wealth and poverty have attracted a response in terms of competition for available resources in an increasingly de-regulated and competitive environment. Such policies follow the liberal tradition of the USA by focusing upon individual performance and pathology and have since the

1990s, with the rising incidence of poverty, crime and associated problems of homelessness, lone parenthood, truancy, substance abuse and suicide, increasingly adopted nineteenth century forms of re-moralization of the economically and socially excluded (from labour markets and families) through coercive welfare to work and treatment programs.

The result is that the burden of and responsibility for managing social risks has been shifted downwards towards the level of associations of mutual interest (most notably private households and the individual). This in turn has left those socially excluded groups, to lobby national governments, largely unsuccessfully, for greater distributional shares and social rights and to become increasingly dependent upon measures of compulsory inclusion, expert intervention and corrective enforcement.

Under the rubric of modernisation, the New Labour administration has introduced a wide range of health and social policies. For the government the modernization agenda serves as a legitimating device aimed at de-limiting public expectations of the State, in respect of its capacity and responsibility for ensuring personal and social security, by reconstructing the credibility of public services as the evaluation of its performance using the criterion of accountability. Here the objective of policy is the achievement of social inclusion in contrast to social welfare.

At the level of central government, modernisation implies a transformation of the welfare system, from one of collective to individual responsibility, through the introduction of policies and regulations that include:

- National service frameworks and occupational performance standards.
- Performance reviews, monitoring and inspection bodies and processes.
- Arrangements and agreements for governance, that give rise to new configurations and relationships between the statutory, private and independent sectors and between commissioners, providers and recipients of services; aimed at achieving permeable boundaries for the integration of health and social care service systems.
- Service innovations, aimed at achieving regulation of user access to services and building user capacity.
- The integration of policies, strategies and practice and the alignment of resource allocation, service interventions and intermediate outcomes.
- Reference to the full range of relevant legislation, e.g. Universal Human Rights, National Health and Local Social Services Acts.
- Increased use of electronic data retrieval and dissemination technology.

The Government claims that, despite the best efforts of many devoted staff, some social care services were not of a good enough quality, or suited to the needs of the user. There was a need to eliminate inequalities in social care and to provide a system that is convenient to use, responds quickly to emergencies and provides top quality services. There was also a lack of regulation in the care services and it was not clear what standards the public should expect, or staff should meet. The agenda for the modernisation of social care includes the establishment of:

- *The Care Standards Act 2000.*
- An independent National Care Standards Commission to regulate all care homes, private and voluntary healthcare, and a range of social care services in accordance with national minimum standards.
- A General Social Care Council to raise professional and training standards for the million-strong social care workforce.
- The Training Organization for Social Services, to improve both the quality and quantity of practice learning opportunities for social work students.
- The Social Care Institute for Excellence, to act as a knowledge base and to promote best practice in social care services.
- The programme of National Service Frameworks (NSF) to drive up quality and reduce variations in health and social services. Each NSF is developed with the assistance of an External Reference Group (ERG) which brings together health professionals, service users and carers, health service managers, partner agencies, and other advocates supported and managed by The Department of Health.
- The Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) for social care, with detailed national performance indicators to manage the performance of the Social Services, set targets for efficiency and value for money.
- The championing of evidence based practice.

However, the modernisation of public services in the England has also presented an additional challenge to social work agencies and practitioners, as behind the rhetoric of service improvement, the notion of modernisation implies risks.

- Firstly, modernisation suggests a new relationship between the State, the complex and fragmented network of welfare agencies and the public that necessitates the abandonment of the stabilising social democratic compromise represented by the idea of a welfare state. Accordingly achieving modernisation may lead to improved conditions only for a minority of citizens, at the expense of those who have been expelled from the labour process.

- Secondly, modernisation suggests a shift of a concern away from the goal of social integration towards a concern with systems integration. Here, modernisation privileges the administrative and economic imperative to transform personal relations and phases of life into objects of administration or commodities.

These two tendencies, apparent within the project of modernisation, have profound implications for the nature of social welfare agencies in general and for social work practice in particular. When taken together, they suggest that:

in the West, our moral codes have become focused more on a concern for control than for care, for regulating one another rather than caring for one another. (*Burkitt* 1999:151)

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has sought to demonstrate that social work in England is now increasingly constrained within a form that limits its function and role to that pre-determined by the State and not by the profession or service user. Whilst the *referral* has remained the principle vehicle for bringing the potential of a problem/need to the attention of the social worker, the question of its actualisation and recognition as a case for *intervention* is no longer dependent upon expert interpretation by the practitioner. Similarly whilst the process of an *assessment* remains the vehicle through which a case becomes allocated and intervention follows, the information and its method of collection upon which a decision to allocate rests is now determined by *eligibility criteria* outside of the control of the practitioner. Only once a sufficiency of evidence has been gathered to satisfy these criteria, may practitioners commence an intervention.

As a consequence the already fragile social work identity becomes fragmented, with different forms of practices being developed and targeted at different social groups; such as those who are perceived as more or less representative of the morally deserving, for example children, older and disabled people and who as such are entitled to care and assistance; or those perceived as morally reprehensible and in need of discipline and control. As welfare clients are categorized in accordance with the type and extent of the problem that they represent to the State, so social work practice is sanctioned in accordance with these categories, through prescribed assessment and treatment regimes of people *with* problems or people who *are* problems.

Welfare agencies, acting on behalf of the state and in pursuit of their legal responsibilities, no longer require practitioners to reach a judgement about the validity or necessity of establishing a case for intervention. Rather they require practitioners to

gather evidence of objective indications that a threshold of need or problem has been reached. In effect, the autonomy and discretion of social workers that relies upon their relationship with the client has been replaced by a model of service delivery that requires their compliance in following the application of standardized routine procedure. Paradoxically this is occurring just at the point at which the title 'social worker' becomes a protected title and when professional registration for social workers becomes mandatory – previously these have been taken as signifying the enhancement of professional status leading to increased professional autonomy.

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De- and Reconstruction of Social Welfare and Social Work in Germany

Peter Erath, Horst Sing

Abstract

The de- and reconstruction of the social security system and social work in Germany takes place against the background of the increasing financial crisis in the state. This has led to considerable reductions of social benefits and to basic changes in the theory and practice of social work. While in former times the preventive and socio-critical role of social work was emphasized, now the concepts, which assign the function of re-inclusion (“Daseinsnachsorge”) to social work, come to the fore: As a result social work is increasingly formalized as a service, it is managed as an artefact and its effects are evaluated respectively. However such a perception gives consideration only to the remit of social work – the remit, which is also geared to individuals and not only to the society – if politics, society and social work admit imperfection in rendering socio-national services to each other.

Introduction

The thesis that the welfare state in Germany is stuck in a crisis, of course, can not only be sourced empirically by many facts and statistics, it is also communicated as gloomy news via the mass media almost every day. Such coverage about the topic demonstrates the controversial nature of changes, which is important for the internal coherence of the Federal Republic of Germany: the emphasis given to the topic of social justice proves the fact that it is not only a small problem of the society.

Against the background of this development, which has been coming to a head since around the 1990s, a de- and reconstruction process of socio-national services is presently taking place in Germany. This process shall be briefly described in the following sections.

In the first section, it will be shown that the crisis of the welfare state in Germany is not only a specific German crisis, but also a crisis of modern society in general.

In the second section, the specific reasons for and results of the crisis in Germany will be pointed out: A crisis, which finally causes a socio-political discussion and which evolves into a search for a new orientation norm.

The changes resulting from this re-orientation for political and administrative regulation and for the practice of social work will be described in the third section.

Finally, the fourth section will reveal how the perception of the welfare state problem is splitting the philosophy of social work science and the practice of social work in two camps.

In the concluding fifth section some of the demands on society and social work will be set out. These expectations have to be met so that both society and social work could perform their humanitarian functions.

1 The crisis of the social welfare state in Germany as a crisis of the modern welfare state and its interventions

1.1 The welfare state's conditions of development

The history of the modern state shows that the ideology of the welfare state is more strongly associated with the life-world ("Lebenswelt") of people than with other important achievements of democracy (Sing 2003). The fact that the individual citizen can relinquish political rights as, for example in the participation through exercise of electoral right, but cannot pass on the achievements of the welfare state, shows that this statement is correct. Everyone – with some exceptions – is dependent on these achievements in some way and some time, and if it is only in seniority.

According to this concept, the first democratically established societies of modern times were no longer content with adopting *Hobbes'* model of the state and did not restrict themselves to the guarantee of physical safety of their citizens during the first phase of their foundation. At the same time they developed a collective self-conception, which was based on the duty of socially absorbing the risks of the individual in the "pursuit of happiness". So they became supporters and guarantors of the human rights and of the ideas of the Enlightenment. The success of modern societies after World War Two became only possible – in spite of the antiquated authoritarian state and the collective states of the Eastern Block – through the dynamic and the increase of the capacity in the sector of the social security systems, which nobody had thought to be possible before and which took place in the ambit of the generalized insurance benefits as well as in the field of standardized services, as seen for example in social work.

This model which had been developed in the democratically established societies of Europe after World War Two was all in all considered to be an unrivalled model to transcend and to prevent social exclusion at least until the nineteen-eighties across the borders of Europe.

In this manner a "social constitutional state" – as it was put in the Basic Constitutional Law of 1949, the Constitution – had developed in Germany in the first three to four decades after the extensive self-destruction wrought through national socialism. In this

“social constitutional state”, least at that time, the common opinion was that the duty of the highly efficient parts of society [=Funktionssysteme] – as for example the economy – was to do the preliminary work for the state or at least not to counteract it. Within the framework of this model politics had been assigned the task to restrain the different elements so that the balance of a pluralistic and socially arranged social order could not be undone.

1.2 *Increasing doubts about the welfare state model*

Serious and basic doubts about a balanced sustainability of this model of development appeared only years later in different contexts:

- In the beginning of the 1970s the “Club of Rome“ (*Meadows 1972*) published its spectacular thesis of the “limit of growth”. Initially effectively repressed it was not only about the question of the present wastage of non-regenerative resources but in the final analysis also about the question of how the “limits of growth” would affect the development of the welfare state.
- In the 1970s the first ruptures in a few European welfare regimes could be discerned – in particular in England and Sweden. However, at first they were not dealt with as phenomena which were basic problems, they were more or less interpreted as “accidents”, which had to be solved / avoided.

At that time it was already realized that for example the consequences of increasing unemployment (like in England) or the costs of extensive social benefits (like in Sweden) could not any longer be interpreted as inherent to the system (for example by recession) and could not be solved easily (by more autonomy, improved educational systems etc.) Above all it was already obvious that the increasing differentiation of the society (*Luhmann 1997*) and the changes within traditional social institutions such as, for example, the family, neighbourhoods (for example *Beck 1986*) etc., would constantly overstrain the social welfare state.

So the following question can be put: What happens to a welfare state if it is not able to overlook its interventions any more, if it is not able to “watch the effects of the operating of the functional system [=Funktionssysteme] any longer and (...) if it is no longer able to rate the consequences of its own intervention reliably”? (*Stichweh 2000, 93*)

If that is a fact and if these questions cannot be answered by science coherently any more, then social problems in the society cannot be solved by an increase in personnel and money. Then the problem of social exclusion is about a lack of certain knowledge in many areas – and above all in basic fields – and that means it is about a problem of “manifold curtness” (*Sing 2003: 9*).

2 Causes and effects of the crisis of the social welfare state in Germany

2.1 Increase of problem situations

In the 1990s the social welfare state in Germany spiralled into an increasing decline. In this context the German Unification, which took place in 1989, is often identified to be the cause of this process. Within a few years a significant rise of formerly ignored and accordingly increasing unsolved problems can be observed:

- An obviously increasing number of unemployed people leads to an invariably higher demand for support in the field of measures of unemployment benefits, which increasingly has to be financed by tax money. Currently there are about 4.8 millions of people out of work (this is about 10 per cent of the population able to work) and this trend is still growing.
- The inland public revenues have declined particularly because of the supranational companies, which can enter profits and losses in a way that almost no taxes are paid in Germany. At the same time the tax revenues due to employment decrease by the decline of 'normal' employments.
- A constant fall of the birth rates as well as an increased expectation of life lead for more and more old people to an imbalance between the generations and further strains for the health care system and the pension scheme.
- An increased number of people who can be characterized as "relatively poor" (presently about 10 per cent of the population are considered to be poor) require extensive financial and supervised support.
- Consequently more children and adolescents who grow up in a difficult social background are not academically nurtured in an adequate way, get no apprenticeship place and therefore are socially declassed. This consequently involves a rise in juvenile delinquency, particularly a rise in juvenile violence, and a decreasing power of self-help in families.

Each of these described problems in themselves is not so dramatic, however, overall and against the background of the difficulties for politicians in controlling the nation-state, they altogether lead to enormous problems of orientation of the citizens and to tensions in the political and social life.

2.2 Reductions of social benefits

The increase in problems is however facing a decline of inland revenues. Accordingly social benefits in the sector of annuity-, accident-, health-, unemployment- and nursing care insurance are steadily cut down. At the same time it is supposed that in future the employed population should finance a steadily increasing part of their social security by savings and additional payment themselves. For the poorest, though, who are not in the position to do that, the national benefits are cut down to a minimal standard.

Serious social and financial consequences of the dislocation of workplaces from Germany into cheaper neighbouring states as well as a continuous decline of the consumption of goods result in serious profit cuts for companies producing in Germany. This leads to the demand for a further dramatic cutback of ancillary wage costs and so to a further reduction of the revenues of social insurances. Indeed the government tries to compensate the competitive disadvantages against other countries with the creation of low-paid jobs as well as the creation of new employment contracts (which are considered as relatively unsafe); however this is also at the expense of the inland revenues and therefore of the national budget.

2.3 The discussion about the welfare state

In the wake of this development it amounts to a discussion about a reorientation of the social policy in Germany. Expressed simply, it is basically about two positions:

- the “preserving“, ideologically viewed “left“ position demands to attacks on the generally undoubted problems – unemployment, the growing ageing of the society, globalisation – by returning to more solidarity, by reduction of unemployment and by increasing national investments in benefits of the welfare state,
- the “progressive“, ideologically viewed “right” or “conservative” position demands to keep the aims of the welfare state by maintaining a “robust democracy“, which restricts the national investments to the basics and which returns the care for the social security to the society as far as possible.

So, in Germany it is about nothing less than the future of the ancient generally accepted “corporatist system“. This system wove the state, social groupings and insured people into a subsidiary social support system and also wove everyone into the privilege of social benefits – so it almost did not leave any gaps.

Two main developments put this system into a precarious position, which seems to be more difficult than the situation in other welfare states in Europe: on the one hand the social consequences of the German Unification in 1989 had been underestimated, on the other hand the German politics made the population believe they were still secure for too long.

3 Consequences for the political control and construction of the social security system

3.1 Point of origin

The functioning of the welfare state in Germany is based on the Article 20 of the Basic Constitutional Law, which defines: “The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social constitutional state“. The term “social” is hereby taken for the state being

responsible for the care for all parts of the population, in particular for a bad economical situation. The application of support is orientated to three basic principles: subsidiarity, solidarity and justice.

The particular supports are being realized by three differently constructed security systems:

While the system of *first assurance* is based on assurance benefits and should protect the citizens from all-important hazards of life (accident, unemployment, disease, ageing, nurture), the system of *second assurance* is financed by taxes. It particularly provides assistance in the form of social work as for example in individual support, advice, guidance, care etc. In Germany this assistance is provided only in a subsidiary form by national institutions but in general by non-commercial institutions of non-statutory welfare. A special characteristic of this system was (and still partly is) that for these private associations blanket public funds had been appropriated, of which they could freely dispose. Whenever deficits occurred, the communities generously often took on the deficits. Finally the mixed financing and the mentality of subvention had partly led to a completely unmanageable financial situation of single organisations – a circumstance, which of course was not difficult whilst there was enough money available.

To talk about the system of *third assurance* might sound exaggerated. Nevertheless voluntary workers, volunteers and members of mutual aid groups make a considerable contribution in supporting people in difficult situations and so to the success of the welfare state.

How much Germany believed in the superiority of this system is shown by the circumstance that until the 1980s a relatively small importance was attached to self-help and how new benefits were created in the sectors of the first and the second assurance:

- 1 In 1995 the nursing care insurance was established as the new fifth post of the first assurance. It was supposed to prevent people becoming in need of care, and those advancing in years having to spend their savings on costs for their nurture.
- 2 The reconstitution of the youth welfare law in 1989 as [Leistungsgesetz] led again to a cost-intensive expansion of the pedagogic services for families and children. Services which had been categorized as voluntary, became compulsory benefits, which had to be financed by financially weak communities.

Support by voluntary workers or rather by mutual aid groups, however, were given little credence. In particular, the professionalisation of the services in the social sector was furthered.

3.2 Introduction of new methods of control

Because of the financial crisis in the state it became necessary to take economic measures. In its turn this necessitated controlling support benefits for the citizens in all sections of politics and administration. These changes are particularly characterized by the following features (however not all measures can be realized in all fields):

On the part of the administration

- The particular (single) households have to be budgeted to “cap“ the total expenditure per year and to determine the particular shortages of financing accurately;
- The provision and the examination of benefits have to be controlled by “case managers”, so that the client can be quickly lead through the measures and particularly to prevent ‘excessive’ take up of services;
- All benefits have to be checked constantly, taking into account quality, efficiency and effectiveness to counter the accusations of waste of funds;
- A “social market” has to be established, to make providers organize their benefits as effective and as cost-efficient as possible.

On the part of the client

- The beneficiary has to be defined as a customer to enforce the market-orientation of all involved. Warrants (vouchers) have to be handed out partially to strengthen the status of ‘customer’ on the part of the client.
- The relationship between a social worker and a client has to be formalized using support schemes [=Hilfepläne] and contacts to agree upon the aims [=Zielvereinbarungskontakte] to enforce the willingness of co-operation of the clientele.
- The financing of supports have to be reorganised: from blanket (institutional related) subsidisation to individual case related subsidisation. Accrue benefits have to be distinguished into benefits of obligation and benefits of choice so that the legality of such financing can be explicitly proved.
- The beneficiaries have to be involved consequently in the financing of the particular supports wherever possible (additional payment for medical care, childcare in kindergarten or at home etc.), so that the cost consciousness of the beneficiaries will be strengthened.

In that way a new form of the “arrangement of the welfare production“ is being currently formed which means an arrangement of the specific “configuration between national, market-, organizational and private forms of the welfare production” (Kaufmann 2003: 42). However it is not possible at present to form a final opinion about how far the above mentioned mixture between new, economically geared strategies and methods will succeed in making the German model of the welfare state financially feasible in the future.

3.3 The consequences of the new control: weakening of the organizations and the practice of social work

These propositions are valid for the whole sector of social and custodial services. Considering particularly the institutions of social work, the following consequences occur:

- The institutions and organizations of social work have to be repositioned. They have to stand the test of the market and so have to consider themselves as competitors against other providers. To meet the new requirements a consequent marketing approach as well as the introduction of a blanket quality management become necessary.
- A permanent detailed supervision and control of costs become indispensable. Case-based lump sums and individual billing change the financial situation of the institutions and necessitate a cost consciousness for the staff. The dependence of the institutions on the funders is increasing dramatically because reserves can only be built up on a limited scale.
- The control of institutions increasingly takes place within a framework of management structures. The individual levels of decisions and decision-making powers become more transparent. Success or failure now can be determined individually; in that way corporate cultures and personnel-structures are changing.

Against the background of the development of the German system all these changes have to be considered as factors, which put the whole arrangement to a crucial test. Up to now social work has considered itself as largely autonomous in the frame of a huge subsidiary support system – this at least was the self-conception of many of the representatives of social work – and has been orientated to values such as charity, altruism, solidarity etc. Now however it is no longer possible to forecast the consequences of the introduction of market structures. A “corporatistic system”, which was based on praising the job of social workers as a “good deed” and on “kind-heartedly” ignoring its efficiency and effectiveness, will be replaced by – there is

obviously no doubt about it – a “robust democracy” (Willke 2001), which basically considers social work in the frame of a cost-benefit analysis. The consequence is a diffuse focus and orientation due to questions about the identity of social work, which are difficult to answer.

Between the representatives of social work and society it comes down now to reciprocal disappointments:

- The modern society, particularly in the form of the media, merely shows interest in functions and not in motives. So it simply asks about the efficiency of social work and not about its motivation.
- Social workers define themselves by their noble motives. In that way they try at least partly to hide the chronic failures in their practice.

Due to these reciprocal disparities the press and increasingly the courts too, have focused on the practice of social work during recent years. Supposed deficits and failings are published, partly scandalized and eventually brought to court and in the public gaze. Social work at national and organizational levels often demonstrates that they it is not able yet to deal with these new challenges. However, alleged failures finally lead to stakeholders of employers' associations and to politicians seeing the opportunity of asserting economy measures in the social sector effectively in the public domain.

Different tendencies, which include both political and practical consequences, can be pointed out:

- The term of ‘social work’ does not appear in official documents of the government any longer. It is quasi politically neutralized by the terms “benefit” or rather “social services”.
- One opinion is increasingly being established: only a person who is taking an active part in the process of support and who co-operates with the plans of the professionals should receive support. An open dialogue with the clientele hardly takes place any longer.
- Due to the conscious strategy of rapidly criminalizing certain groups of clients, pressure is put on to enforce the adoption of supporting measures (for example training courses, compulsory therapies etc.)
- The increasing connection of the social workers' support and compulsory approaches leads to an increasing use of violence from clients against their social workers. Social workers, who were considered to be “advocates” of weak people, are now suddenly considered as opponents.

4 Perception of the difficulties of the welfare state within the social work scientific discussion

The discussion about the development of the welfare state and the associated “economization of social work” has caused different reactions in the scientific discussion. Representing many opinions the two following antithetic positions concerning the social work can be outlined:

4.1 Social work as a function of the modern society with a mission to help/not to help

Against the background of the vague “responsibility for everything” of social work, *Baecker* (1994) tried to construct social work as an autonomous functional system of the society, this is the point of view in *Luhmann’s* systems theory. In that way he provided a completely new theoretical-practical perspective on social work, which subsequently has often been discussed.

In his opinion it becomes rather difficult to control the demands for support – among other things – and the need for help arises more often. In this way, the problem that not everyone can be helped gains a moral character.

As *Baecker* says, social work can only be carried out through this basic dilemma by “introducing a society theory alternatively to the control theory so that this difference is assigned a subsidiary status to” (*Baecker* 1994: 96).

In *Baecker’s* opinion such an alternative social theory is systems theory. Only this theory can reveal that “a functional system of social support has been differentiated in the modern society. This system is supervising inclusion problems of the population in the society using the code of help versus non-help. These problems can not be taken on by other functional systems and can not be supervised by the politics or rather by the welfare state alone any longer.” (*ibid*: 95).

‘Help’ is a communication which informs about the existence of a deficit, which informs about the necessity of eliminating this deficit and which highlights that there is not a causally reliable, but highly contingent coherence between the existence of a deficit and its elimination. (*ibid*: 99)

As *Baecker* says, help in a modern society can only be provided when support is possible; wherever support does not seem to be promising, it is not possible to help. Staff and schemes now decide on support, namely “not by the view of misery any longer, but by a comparison of facts and schemes.” (*Luhmann* 1973: 34)

In this frame the decision to help or not to help is not a matter of the heart, moral or reciprocity, but a matter of methodical examination and interpretation of the scheme. The staff is busy with the implementation of the scheme during a limited work time.

The providence of problems, on which the organization reliably reacts, can be found in its own structure (ibid).

In that way – as *Baecker* says – the system does not depend on its schemes but becomes an instance of observation which relies on “judging the rightness or falseness of schemes concerning a code, which envisions two possibilities [namely to help and not to help.] and not only one possibility”. (*Baecker* 1994: 95 f.)

This in practice means that the task of social work is to watch the schemes concerning their effectiveness. However, the success finally decides on the individual measures of social work. In the opinion of many people social work is not allowed to name possible societal reasons of social problems and to criticize mostly only marginally supplied resources. General-societal or rather general-political, social work stays affirmative to an extremely high degree and without any influence on societal guidelines:

The organizations of social support are rather incumbent on re-inclusion. They work on the solving of problem cases, which consistently re-occur from realizing the predominant structures and from patterns of dispersal. It is not their affair and not the affair of support in common to think about a change of those structures, which generate specific forms of need for help (*Luhmann* 1973: 35).

4.2 Social work as an “agency with the purpose to realize social justice“ or the recovery of the political

Thiersch (2002) proceeds on the (socio-critical) assumption that we live in a society that is characterized not only by inequalities and discrepancies between socialization and individual [=lebensweltlichen] experiences, but increasingly by the “return of the ordinary capitalism” (*Thiersch* 2002: 12).

Society is increasingly determined by the primacy of the economy and by the benefit of economy, by competition to be able to keep up, by the effort of asserting against the competition and by the concomitant social coldness and callousness, represented in unemployment, in exclusion [Randständigkeiten] and selection of people, and also noticeable in manifold perplexities and uncertainties (ibid).

Instead of solving these problems, society indulges in gamesmanship, as *Thiersch* says: it dramatizes social problems such as violence, juvenile delinquency, immigration etc., so that it can denounce the abuse of social support and to disavow social support.

In that way, and also as a result of the fact that the question about the effectiveness and the efficiency of social support arises especially intensely, social work is becoming “demoralized”.

Against such a background the saving policy, that presently dominates social work in many ways and in different fields of work, can be justified and is plausible. It goes along with the increasing de-professionalisation [=Entfachlichung] (...); it goes along with the cancellation of service offers (...). It finally goes along with the reasons for the lowering of work standards and service standards within the sector of social work, which means with thoughts about what could be done with cheaper staff peacefully and inconspicuously and, in any case, in a way that it is possible to save money (*Thiersch* 2002: 16).

In that way social work as “agency with the purpose to realize social justice” (ibid: 14) can only perform its task worse and worse. Therefore, as *Thiersch* says, it must not stop naming and scandalizing social misery. It has to contribute to the accomplishment of the current societal situation by “furtherance of the competences to design the Social in antagonisms, disparities and tensions of our society” (ibid).

However, as *Thiersch* says, social work also has to face its specific problem. This problem is due to operating in a modern institutional and scientific culture. Due to this culture social work “also participates in the estrangement, which characterizes our society, participates in the estrangement between individual [=lebensweltlichen] experiences and grand-organizations, participates in the estrangement between technical-technological life scripts and the design tasks of the daily life” (ibid: 18). This problem forces social work to a critical reflection of its peculiar proceeding, to an intense cooperation with social movements, in order to keep open the potential of self-help in sight. According to this social work has to focus on requirements, subjects, individual experiences and acceptance.

Thiersch calls on social workers to act politically, and not in contrived professional acting, in which the orientation to criteria of efficiency and effectiveness comes to the fore, and not to have the right attitude – the right consciousness – of social workers concerning the design and change of the Social.

5. The future of the welfare state and of social work in Germany

Taking both positions as evidence for the theoretical frame where the discussion about social work in Germany is taking place, it is possible to say in simplified terms: Both theories misjudge – and if it is in a different way – the opportunities for social work: *Baecker/Luhmann* do this in a technological way. They believe that social work just waits for social problems to occur and only then handle them. *Thiersch* does it by assigning political influence to social work, though social work argueably just does not have it.

However if social problems can not be solved only by social work, then these problems apparently can only be reasonably handled if social work and society can find a “common” base of understanding. That assumes that first of all they both have to admit their specific dilemmas in relation to each other:

The dilemma of the German society is in being bound to offer support (opportunities of inclusion) to citizens with social problems again and again. It can not reduce support if it does not want to lose the character of its society, which is orientated to democracy and the Constitutional Law.

In contrast, the dilemma of social work is in being obliged to convert these blanket promises in the frame of individual benefits, while it cannot always succeed in performing this task because of its technological deficit (*Erath 2004*).

Against the background of the concession of both dilemmas it finally makes sense to discuss the need for an increase of efficiency and effectiveness of social work. Therefore it could be a common basis to admit “non-knowledge” or at least “shortage of knowledge” – and if it is in different ways – to all involved.

The traditional German system of the welfare state – in terms of the principle of subsidiarity – has rightly not entrusted the state or companies, but non-statutory welfare organizations, non-profit associations with providing social support and therefore has strengthened them. Apparently in this field there cannot be a market orientation and private companies can only undertake a proportion of these tasks.

So it is important to accept that there is a need for non-profit organizations where politics and market fail. Therefore these organizations are stuck in a special and unresolvable dilemma in the first place. As organizations of the third sector they form a kind of “reserve of control of the societal change” and make “additional institutional arrangements to assure political stability” possible. Such organizations secure their existence “not in spite of but because of their failures against the measures of norm- and purposeful rational control” (*Seibel in: Grunwald 2001: 36*).

Concerning its means social work apparently has to stay “diffuse”. Society has to admit at its peripheries that social work at least partly remains unsuccessful with its interventions, however, that does not mean that these interventions can simply be cut out.

In spite of their economic failure non-profit organizations are insofar functional concerning the politics as they fulfil a socio-political depressant function – the state is virtually pursuing a symbolic policy with them. (*Grunwald 2001: 36*).

Facing this complexity social work and society must not overestimate themselves in the normative highly estimated social sector. This is not a charter for social work to proceed without methods and aims and it does not mean that social work is not obliged to match the standards set by the modern management methods. But it does mean that a modern society, which is oriented to democracy and is bound to human values, has to measure the social sector with its own specific standards.

The increasing realization that social work as well as the welfare state are caught in an unresolvable dilemma does not mean that this is “the end of the story” of the welfare state and the social work; neither practically – as a linear development of the destruction of social benefits – nor theoretically – as a matter of theoretical control. As long as the overcoming and prevention of social exclusion is considered as a passport of a democratic society – and it is not conceivable that this might change – the interventions of the welfare state will stay a part of the general strategy of any democratic society.

A foundation of such a society is the realisation of imperfection, which is inherent to the system; the realisation of dilemmas is – in contrast with a totalitarian dictatorship – no fiasco; far from it! It just depends on how we deal with it!

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The reconstruction of the Dutch Welfare State

Frans M. van der Veer¹

Abstract

The Dutch welfare state is going through a drastic transformation. The welfare state, which used to be characterized by a mixture of social-democratic and corporate features, is now increasingly taking on the characteristics of a liberal welfare state under the influence of several social developments. The paradigm has shifted: the government changed from a distributing welfare state in the 1970s to an activating welfare state in which the government makes way for the market. In Dutch welfare policy, the topic of social activation has become increasingly important, which means that citizens are primarily responsible for their own welfare. The government plays a stimulating role: the primacy lies with citizens and different forms of private initiatives. The Social Worker is increasingly confronted with people who fall by the wayside. At the same time, the Social Worker must deal with commercialisation and increasing social differences. There is a stronger focus on budget control, goal-orientation and efficiency, measurable results and visible quality, demanding specific professional competencies.

Introduction

In September 2003, *Queen Beatrix* spoke these historic words during her address from the throne – the second Cabinet of Prime Minister *Balkenende* was faced with the task of making drastic changes that would affect the future of the Welfare state:

Hundreds of jobs are lost every day. The problems facing us are not just related to the state of the economy. To achieve a sustainable recovery, we must strengthen our economic structure and thoroughly review our social security system. The government is aware that this will initially have a considerable impact on many people. (*Queen Beatrix* 2005)

Apart from resulting in structural reform in financial and economic / social benefits, these drastic choices also demanded a cultural shift.

It [the government] should allow individuals and companies more scope to take the initiative. Genuine improvements are possible only if everyone takes their share of the responsibility and participates in our society. The government cannot provide solutions to all problems, nor should it try. Its task is to create the conditions in which problems can be solved. This means setting fewer rules and making sure that they are complied with. These principles are at the core of this government's policy. (ibid)

¹ Translation: Lydia van der Ziel

The 'pessimistic' words of the *Queen* did not come as a surprise. The new Cabinet had already announced a radical change during its government policy statement of mid 2003.

The *Queen's* address in 2004 hardly differs from the one in 2003 with respect to the social-economic paragraph. One notable difference, however, is that a connection is made between the interventions in the economic area and the strains on solidarity:

A strong economy is essential for employment and prosperity. In an ageing society, pensions, care and other social programmes must be sustained by a smaller working population. This will put our solidarity to the test. (*Queen Beatrix* 2005a)

Once again the government defines its position exclusively. The necessary social coherence cannot be reached by just the government. Citizens, social organizations, and social partners give shape to the Dutch society.

Clearly, much is changing in a short period of time. The current Minister of Finance, Gerrit *Zalm* (also the vice Prime Minister) said in his explanation of the budget that intervention in the social-economic system is inevitable and that the 'modernizing' of the welfare state must continue. Aart Jan *De Geus*, Minister of Social Affairs speaks of a 'revision' of the welfare state. Leaders of the trade unions disagree with the proposed policy and announce an 'Indian Summer' with many strikes and demonstrations. In early October 2004, the trade unions FNV, CNV, and MHP organized a massive protest in The Hague – estimates range between 200,000 and 300,000 participants – to demonstrate against what they call the reprehensible social reform that is advocated by the Cabinet.

This much is clear: the Welfare state as it took shape in The Netherlands after World War Two is on its way down. Just as other European countries, The Netherlands is dealing with a reconstruction process, which has far-reaching consequences. This chapter gives an analysis of this reconstruction and indicates what the consequences are for social policy and for Social Workers.

The Dutch Welfare State in historic perspective

Compared to other European countries, the Dutch Welfare state is a relatively recent political and social phenomenon. Until recently, society was structured according to liberal foundations: the state was to interfere as little as possible in social and economic areas. In this role as 'night-watch state' or 'laissez faire state', the state basically limited itself to just the care needed for order and safety.

In this political and social structure, the care for needy people, such as the ill, poor, homeless, unemployed, elderly, etc. was not explicitly a task of the state, much less a social right. The need for this type of care obviously existed, but it was organized by

people themselves (family and private initiatives), or by charitable institutions (including the church).

The start of the welfare state can be seen as the result of various developments (*De Swaan* 1996). Widespread and divergent arrangements for the fight against disease, poverty, and ignorance have become increasingly large-scale and uniform, especially since the industrial years. In addition, they have become increasingly entwined with the central function of the state. Social developments such as nationalization, the rise of capitalism, and processes of urbanization and secularization did not only result in a growing dependence among people, but also created collective arrangements to combat the threat of poverty.

The Dutch welfare state did not develop until after World War Two. One of the causes is the late period of industrialization (*Schuyt & Van der Veen* 1990). The post-war welfare state can be characterized as a compromise between a socialist and liberal ideology. It is socialistic due to the fact that the state intervenes on a large scale in the social and economic arenas. Another socialist aspect is the underlying view on solidarity. On the other hand, the welfare state is liberal because it maintains the principle of the economic market. It is remarkable that the denominational element is not included in the early stages of the welfare state. For a long time, two principles in the denominational ideology have played an important role, which slowed the development of the Welfare state: the principle of 'sovereignty within one's own group' and the 'principle of subsidiarity'. These principles allow social institutions such as family, school, and church to be autonomous to a large degree. Within these institutions, the state holds no responsibility or authority. After World War Two, opinions were largely divided regarding the structure of social-economic policy. The socialists and trade unions wanted the state to play a large role in the organization and execution of welfare arrangements. The denominational parties and various social organizations held to the view that the first responsibility belonged to the social organizations (*Schuyt & Van der Veen* 1990; *Trommel & Van der Veen* 1999). Eventually, the idea that everyone had to work together in order to rebuild The Netherlands won the denominational parties over, and they gave up their resistance against the increasing influence of the state.

The conservative outlook of the traditional elites – noblemen, farmers and urban elites – also played an obstructive role. They were opposed to arrangements made by the state, because this would take away their possibility of providing help through different forms of private initiatives. As a result, they would be deprived of an important means of exercising and continuing their traditional authority over the lower classes. The

desire to continue this traditional authority had to do with economic, political, and status reasons (*Hoogenboom* 2004).

Before we analyze the current position of the Dutch welfare state, it is important to briefly discuss the different phases of its development using the most common classification.

The period before 1930

A number of social laws already date back to the 19th Century. The development of social security as a legal right cannot be disconnected from far-reaching social processes, such as industrialization and urbanization. Employees in urban areas were faced with (labour) risks that could no longer be covered by the traditional forms of support, such as the church, and aid from the guild corporations or family. However, this period did not yet have the characteristics of a modern welfare state. In the first half of the 20th Century, the growing intervention of the state brought about a number of social security laws: the General Workers' Accident Act (1901), the General Accident and Disability Act (1919), and in 1930 the Sickness Absenteeism Act.

The period 1930 – 1945

The material and moral basis of the welfare state originate from the Depression in the 1930s (*Schuyt* 1991). The economic crisis and the war greatly changed the way people thought about the role and responsibility of the state. The foundation can be described as solidarity and social justice – no random distribution of income. The social democrats (SDAP) and the association of labour unions (NVV) were in favour of a more systematically controlled economy. In the Labour Plan report (1935) they proposed that the economic crisis be resolved by controlling the economy. This report appeared at a time when the ideas and work of economist Keynes became influential, forming the basis of state interventions in The Netherlands. In practice, this resulted in a growing government policy (financed from general means) in the areas of education, housing, and social security.

The period 1945 - 1958

The post-war period is often seen as the Golden Age of the welfare state. There was a strong emphasis on reconstruction and reaching consensus. The government was focused on increasing productivity by moderating wages and creating a calm labour climate. The government was able to use the social-economic structure: until the 1960s The Netherlands was a strongly pluralistic society. Each social group – different denominational groups, liberals, and socialists – had their own political, cultural and social organizations. Because the different groups within this pluralist society had such authority over their separate groups, the government only had to deal with a select

number of elite representatives. The pluralistic society model also tied in with the corporate ideology. Within the denominational groups, the following social viewpoint was adhered to: various groups of society – employees, employers, religious institutions, etc. – must seek consensus through decision-making channels that have been proportionally composed. This basic attitude towards consensus-seeking is also known as the *polder model* (Delsen 2000).

In this period the following laws were passed: an old-age pensions emergency act (1947), the Unemployment Insurance Act (1952), and the General Old-Age Pensions Act (1957).

The period 1958 – 1977

In the previous period, industrial recovery was achieved through a guided wage policy. At the end of the 1950s, the system of guided wages was released and prosperity quickly increased. During the 1960s, attention shifted from the growth and distribution of *prosperity* to the distribution of *welfare*. As a result, the tasks of the state expanded considerably. The expanded tasks of the state were made possible through processes of depluralisation and secularization. The traditional pillars crumbled: the classic elites lost their grip on citizens who were becoming increasingly assertive. Halfway through the 1960s there was a wave of democratization. Economic developments (great material progress) and cultural shifts (democratization, depluralisation, secularisation) resulted in a growing demand for state action. In the welfare state, the government was expected to fulfill the increased desire of the population for well-being, medical assistance, subsidy, etc. For example: in 1955, 37.4% of the National income was spent on the collective sector. In 1975, this percentage increased to 57.6%, and in 1985 this percentage had risen to over 65% (Schuyt & Van der Veen 1990). Since the 1970s, the rapid increase and expenditure of the state resulted in serious criticism on the welfare state as being out of control and too costly.

The period since the 1980s

The past twenty years have witnessed economic depression, a period of great economic growth, and another period of economic stagnation. This economic wave movement has triggered a serious debate on the relation between the state and the economic market. This ideological debate is not yet concluded, while the social and economic policy is already going through major changes.

The economic stagnation that started in the 1970s caused a growing political divergence and the exclusion of various social groups. The weak economic performance in the Netherlands became known as the Dutch disease: slow economic growth, high unemployment, a high degree of state intervention, and high tax and

contribution fees. The Dutch consensus-seeking culture was seen as one of the negative causes of this economic depression. This situation brought about serious discussions about the future of the welfare state. The result of these discussions can be seen in the current reconstruction of the welfare state in which the state is forced to make way for the influence of the market. At the end of the twentieth century, the reconstruction of the welfare state was accompanied by a renewed success of the polder model, making Dutch economy the focus of international attention. After 2000, the economy regressed once more. Regardless of the political colour of government coalitions, it is clear that the welfare state cannot stay as it has always been. The criticism, which became noticeable since the 1980s, is now being translated into concrete policy.

Position and characteristics of the Dutch Welfare State

Based on analysis of the tax system, labour market and social security, three types of welfare state systems can be distinguished. These are the *liberal*, *corporate*, and the *social-democratic* welfare state. *Esping-Andersen* (1990) based this classification on his famous '*de-commodification index*'. This index expresses the degree in which the state makes welfare arrangements for its citizens, making them less dependent on the market. Set out briefly, this means:

1. In the liberal system, aid is focused on perceived high-risk groups: single mothers, people with disabilities, and uneducated unemployed people. Society is divided into two groups. One includes the majority of citizens who can take care of themselves because they have regular income and can therefore afford private insurance against risks. The other group is made up of a minority of people who cannot afford this and must therefore turn to the government for support. People only qualify for government support if their financial situation is means tested and deemed to be below the level prescribed.
2. In the *corporate* system, social security is arranged by a large number of labour and occupational groups (civil servants, labourers, etc). Protecting families is an important principle, which is expressed in family benefits. Another characteristic aspect is that these systems were established through close collaboration between church and state.
3. The *social-democratic* welfare state employs a universal system of social security, in which all social risks are incorporated. This means solidarity for the entire population. This system has the highest percentage of government expenses in the Gross National Product.

The Dutch welfare state can be classified as a mixture between the corporate and

social-democratic type (*De Gier* 2004:19). With the Scandinavian countries the Dutch system shares the general accessibility of benefit arrangements, generous allowance conditions, and rather high financing expenses. The Netherlands compares with corporate welfare states in that it has low work enticements, a relatively small degree of labour participation by women and less productive people, and protection of the achieved living standard (*SCP* 2000; *Esping-Andersen* 1990, 1996).

A strong Dutch characteristic is the consensus-seeking culture, also known as the polder model. In this system, employers, employees, and government work together on social-economic issues. The *Wassenaar Agreement* (1982) is generally seen as the start of this unique consensus culture. Government, employers and employees signed an agreement to reach a social-economic policy in The Netherlands by way of seeking consensus. This also resulted in a calm labour climate. Strikes are rarely held in The Netherlands.

In this *consensus economy*, the market (individual perspective) and the state (collective perspective) do not oppose each other, but they are involved with each other through regular consultation. Ideologically, this consensus-seeking culture is related to corporatism, in which labour unions, employers' federations, and state authorities work together to formulate and implement social-economic policies.

Another characteristic of the Dutch culture is the importance of solidarity and equality. In The Netherlands, these are organized qualities. Agreements made on the macro level affect the labour terms, social security, pensions, etc. on the meso level. In turn, these results have an effect on enterprises at micro level.

The consensus of the renowned polder model only applies to the labour market. Cooperation, consensus-seeking, and wage negotiations on a central level are important elements of the polder model and have a long tradition. Since the end of World War Two, the relation between capital and labour has been institutionalized in the Netherlands through different forms of consultation (*Delsen* 2000).

The Welfare State as subject of criticism

The debate on the future of the welfare state must be seen in the light of current social-economic relations and the common views regarding the role of the government. As early as the late 1970s, the sustainability of the welfare state has been subject of debate. The criticism can be divided into a number of segments such as the monetary problem and the controllability problem.

- The monetary problem: how can services be financed in a sustainable manner?

- The controllability problem. The central question is how the demand for services can be controlled. The cause for this problem is increasingly blamed on the behavior of citizens, who apply for social benefits prematurely or unjustly.

Since 1990 there has been an ongoing debate on the limits of the welfare state, its aims, target groups, and financial feasibility. However, it became clear that a line must be drawn when it comes to the expansion and size of the welfare state. Social security allowances and subsidies are lowered, inspection is applied more strictly, and due to privatization people are forced to pay for more services themselves. The measures taken are often painful. The government is focused on the question which people and groups should receive the services, allowances, insurances, and benefits, and how to cut back the costs.

Trommel & Van der Veen (1999) distinguish three main streams of criticism on the welfare state:

- The first is based on the liberal concept of freedom, which is believed to be in serious danger in modern welfare states. This vision is distinctly voiced by the famous English critic and economist *Hayek*, who stated in '*The Road to Serfdom*' (1946!) that the increasing role of the state in social and economic life would put a strain on civil freedom. In addition, state intervention - which is not subjected to the laws of the market - is less efficient and the relief of social needs leads to greater dissatisfaction.
- The second stream does not so much point out the inefficient nature of state intervention, but criticizes its lack of effectiveness: social injustice hardly decreased as a result of government support, despite being one of the aims of the welfare state. Notwithstanding, numerous programmes to improve social participation and eliminate debts, and the relation between the privileged and underprivileged, have not produced fundamental change.
- The third form of criticism is directed against the lack of control of the bureaucratic system and the increasing dependence of citizens that goes with it. In this view the (historic) dependence on family and charity has been replaced by a new one: dependence on a faceless bureaucracy.

Schuyt (1995) is a follower of the first stream. He speaks of four unforeseen effects of social security, which in his view are cultural effects of the welfare state. There is a connection between the rapid and enormous growth of material wealth and consumption starting in the 1960s and the constant dissatisfaction with this wealth. The success of the welfare state has replaced the moral of solidarity by one of individual utilization. This relates to the idea of not wanting to settle with one's given fate. The

results can be seen in the field of health care and social security. In many areas there has been a change in expectation concerning compensation from misfortune. This change is visible in the behavior patterns of individuals (such as diminished willingness to accept risks and decreased frugality), in the motivation and justification of behavior patterns (decreased motivation to work), a shift in standards/values awareness (because of the high taxes people feel that certain forms of dishonesty are permitted), and finally: a change in group awareness (unintentionally, new interest groups have appeared; old-age pensioners, mothers on welfare benefits, etc).

Government policy: the phase of re-assessment and paradigm change

The memorandum '*New accents in the field of work and income*', describes the viewpoint of the Cabinet on a welfare state that is financially feasible for the future ('solid'), and that offers security to those who really cannot find employment ('solidarity'). Since the start of the welfare state, society has drastically changed. The changes listed below cause tensions in society, and therefore justify a radical change of policy.

- The labour population is ageing and the number of pensioners is increasing
- Companies have expanded towards the European or global market and competition has increased.
- Due to fast growing developments in technology, knowledge and skills of the labour population are becoming out-dated at a more rapid pace.
- Society has become more diverse.
- The wage earner's model is no longer standard due to the increase of double income households.
- People are better educated and switch jobs more frequently
- The desire to combine work, education, care, and rest according to one's own views has increased.
- The prosperous, well-educated, assertive, and demanding citizen wants more room to make his/her own choices.

In order to get more people employed, the job market must become more flexible and dynamic. Life-long learning should balance out the demand and supply. Dismissal procedures must be simplified, and social security must be granted for shorter periods of time. The Cabinet also urges employees to take more responsibility for risks they can prevent or decrease themselves. Therefore, collectively financed arrangements will make way for saving or insurance arrangements.

The shift in state tasks is also visible in the welfare policy. Since the mid 1990s, the government explicitly speaks of a *re-assessment phase* in relation to the welfare policy (*Hortulanus/Liem/Sprinkhuizen* 1997). Three parties play an important role in this

policy: the citizens, the non-governmental social service providers, and the (central and local) government. The welfare policy distinguishes two major objectives. First, encouraging self-sufficiency, independence, and social participation among individuals. Second, encouraging stability, cohesion, and solidarity in society as a whole. The relation between the participating parties is shifting. The government is continually making way for the non-governmental social service providers and the individual citizen.

Quoting from the most recent Welfare memos:

Welfare policy is a responsibility shared by many (..) Each party, from its own specific position and responsibility and according to its own ability, contributes to the public cause with the aim to define, reach and guarantee the quality level of society. The role of the state is to create conditions, the primacy belongs to the citizens in the first place, and secondly to different forms of private initiatives. (Memorandum 1995-1998)

The welfare policy has continually been placed within the view on the government's role. (...) What followed was a withdrawal of the government in favour of the market (privatization), and the individual had to take his own responsibility. (Memorandum 1999-2002)

The relation between government and citizens is increasingly seen as a reciprocal, committed responsibility. Citizens are expected to contribute and fully participate in society. In turn, the government must create the conditions for a society that makes this possible in all respects. Strengthening the social infrastructure allows citizens to participate and develop, while it simultaneously combats exclusion and inequality (Memorandum 1999-2002).

Since the 1970s, the government has been working on reform and economy measures. Behind all the adjustments and re-assessment operations lies a more fundamental change in views and ideas: the *distributing* welfare state of the seventies is becoming an *activating* state (Hazeu 1998). The cut backs in social security were supported by the idea that the government does not have the sole responsibility in providing care and welfare. However, there was not yet a clear idea or social consensus of what exactly the role of the government should be. It was not until the 1990s that this became clearer. The massive entry of women into the official job market and increasing unemployment forced the government to let go of the job-reduction path and to focus on increasing labour participation. Priorities in the policy include activating people and providing them with incentives to do so. As a result, less attention is paid to the former paradigm of distribution. Government and market are therefore not seen as opposites, but as partners who complement and strengthen each other.

In short, we can say that the current position of the government is a continuation of the earlier phases of controlling (1980s) and economizing (1970s). In the current phase there is a fundamentally different outlook on the relation between government and society. *Hazeu* (1998) speaks of an '*enterprising society*'. The Welfare memorandum '*Working on social quality*' states the all-encompassing welfare state as reduced to the essence of a social '*protection state*' (VWS 1999). Prime Minister *Balkenende* (2005) recently emphasised in his Bilderberg lecture that the old welfare arrangements no longer fit in with today's modern times. The emancipated citizen wants a government that is less controlling and centralized. He characterizes the current welfare state as a '*participation society*'.

Meaning for Social Work

The professional practice of the Social Worker is strongly influenced by the changing task assignment of the government. The Social Worker is confronted with a society that is described as a risk society, characterized by marginalisation of certain (underprivileged) groups and a social divide in different areas. This can lead to a lack of social cohesion and result in a world of winners and losers. For many people, the trend of individualization means being freed from traditional connections, but it may also cause loss of social commitment. In current Dutch society certain trends are indicating a hardening of social problem in two ways. First of all, many issues seem to involve a relatively limited group (single people, adolescents, immigrants, care applicants), leading to – in the second place – a distinct relation between groups: a limited number of people have many problems, and many people have only few cares. In addition, social developments such as individualization, increase of information, privatization, increases in the scale of problem, customized care, and the increase of different ethnic and multicultural minorities influence the professional practice.

These trends require a new type of professional. In the near future, the Social Worker will be a professional with a broad perspective who will function as a contact person for citizens, volunteers, paraprofessionals, and other professionals. On the other hand, the need will remain for specialized professionals who can employ specific competencies in dealing with certain groups, questions, and problems (*Van Vliet et al.* 2004).

The future professional is a generalist who must have command of various competencies:

- He/She must be able to work on demand. On the other hand, he/she must also be able to signal problems and respond to a personal or social problem, even if there is no clear demand.

- He/She must be able to empathize with the client's situation and translate the needs into adequate care and support. He/She acts in a outcome-oriented manner.
- He/She must be able to make use of the opportunities and possibilities of citizens. In other words, he/she must be open to their strenghts and capacities. He/She must also encourage and support individual initiatives and bring people together.
- He/She is present among the most vulnerable groups in underprivileged neighbourhoods. He/She is sensitive to their needs and builds a relationship based on mutual trust.
- He/She must be accountable to different parties: the clients, his/her own professional group, citizens, government, and social organizations.

Concluding remarks

The Dutch welfare state is subject to great changes. Today's society is all about participation of people. The government is leaving more to the responsibility of citizens themselves. This shift towards a society in which the role of the market is increasing may include risks. The Social Worker is increasingly being confronted with people who are left on their own. Commercialization is also affecting the welfare policy. Before, people could automatically fall back on the government or their (traditional) network. Now the situation is no longer a matter of course. Personal responsibility is the key word. The Dutch welfare state has steadily shifted towards a more liberal state, in which solidarity has been replaced by commercial market relations. The Social Worker is no longer a passionate person whose work is driven by ideals and personal conviction, but he/she has become a market player.

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Welfare State, Social Inequalities and Social Work in France: An Epic Battle

Emmanuel Jovelin, Elisabeth Prieur

Abstract

In this chapter we will first try to explain what people understand by inequalities, the Social State, as well as the contradictions and consequences the end of the Social State and inequalities can have on individuals. Finally we will try to explain the difficulties of social workers face as far as these inequalities are concerned.

I) Social Inequalities – What are we talking about?

Analyzing inequalities in terms of wealth or poverty, which are separated by an insuperable gap according to Louis *Chauvel* (1997) constituting an “imperfect and imperfectible approximation”. The author underlines the multidimensionality of the problem: two individuals having equal income levels can live very differently whether

they own their house, they have debts, they have access to goods and public services, according to their income increase expectations, according to the permanency or the precariousness of their job which enable them (or not) to consider life projects. (ibid)

As a consequence, if economic inequalities constitute a major dimension in a trade economy, they do not give an answer to the whole problem.

Moreover, he also underlines that inequalities do not appear between two groups but between three groups: middle class is situated between wealthy and poor people. Thus to understand inequalities, it would be interesting to take “all sources (capital income, retirement pensions, allowances, etc.)¹ into account according to household needs in terms of consumption units: the living standard” (*Chauvel* 1997: 21).

Inequalities are numerous, even if the most visible ones are economic inequalities. Upon these economic inequalities are superimposed other types of social inequalities affecting any species of belongings (wealth, education, knowledge etc), qualities (status, age, health, etc.) and achievements (qualifications, physical performance, authority etc). In short, one can detect statute inequalities between men and women (at work or in politics), school or cultural inequalities (according to social backgrounds), ethnic and racial inequalities (concerning access to employment and housing), without forgetting inequalities linked to health, mortality and emotional and physical inequalities

¹ Cf. *Cuin* (1999: 281)

which are more than obvious: nice people, 'ugly' people, healthy people and people with disabilities¹. All these inequalities set the basis for the use of the word "equality"!

Social inequality is a social phenomenon of differentiation between individuals whom each society interprets differently: "Everybody started looking at others and wanting to be looked at". From this moment on, "public regard had been afforded a price". Since *Rousseau*, *Tocqueville* and even Karl *Marx*, the topic of inequalities is at the centre of the debate as well as in sociology and philosophy.

Rousseau, in his work on origin and bases of inequalities among men (1755), detects two significant sources of inequalities. The first one is linked to nature and physical appearance. It comes from age differences, and strength differences. However, he specifies that these differences can not explain everything. The question is: why are some people born with a golden spoon in the mouth and others in misery?

According to the author, the fundamental reason is linked to the organization of society and institutions, which would create obvious inequalities. If, at the beginning, these inequalities are born due to historical accidents and maintained by convention, i.e. by social arbitrariness, *Rousseau* thinks that they can disappear because "what society created can be destroyed by society itself". One can see here the claim for equal rights which can be found in the French revolution.

One century later, Alexis de *Tocqueville* understood that "conditions equality" means the demand for "political and civic equal rights" and the possibility for everyone to reach high social positions (*Dortier* 2004: 350). The same Alexis de *Tocqueville* defended the idea according to which only merits and talents should differentiate men instead of birth privilege. As we underlined previously, conditions equality would be one of the principal functions of a modern society, in opposition to the statutory inequalities in feudal societies. Conditions equality means rank, order or state equality. According to this idea, the enormous middle class would comprise individuals being in highly differentiated groups in a progressive way. But it is in the American liberal society that he saw

the development of such a model, which he qualified as an egalitarianism model. American people were freer to contract, to buy and to sell. They shared the taste of material wellbeing and the values of tolerance. (*Birh* 2003: 24)

– whilst France was marked by the weight of Aristocracy in spite of revolution.

¹ Cf. *Dortier* (2004: 347)

II) The French Social State against Inequalities

Social State refers to the role of the modern State in dealing with social wellbeing of citizens. Its functions must not be limited to justice, police, currency and diplomacy functions. Social State – rather than Welfare state – according to *Castel* (2001) is essential in the same point of view as that impelled by *Durkheim*: it makes individual integration a central problem. Social State is a state whose role comprises Social Security and obligatory assistances controlled by the State. The State acts as a risks reducer. Consequently, we have the impression that social security benefits must be reserved to the least favoured people. For some people, this is what “equity” means: redistributing money from the richest people towards the poorest.¹

This point of view is different from “British welfare state” for example whose roots date back from the 19th century. Under “Poor Laws” of the 19th century, the State aid for the poorest people was reduced to its simple expression and was even non-existent. Poor people were practically treated like criminals.² The label “pauper” was used to talk about poor people and was very stigmatizing and included the loss of all civil and political rights. Contrary to France, trade unions development and “collective conventions” arranging wages regulation as well as working conditions occurred separately from State or Law intervention. As a result of these origins, people defend free collective bargaining. Moreover in the 1960s and 1970s people and even trade-union leaders strongly disapproved of the attempts undertaken by the government to introduce a wages regulation. In Great Britain, there is an old liberal tradition according to which

social problems are built like economic problems; the load of inefficient workers who are in competition on an encumbered labour market is a synonym of inefficiency, which results in a low productivity, in social deterioration and in a loss of commercial competitiveness... Instead, social policies protect effective workers against the risk of accident, disease, temporary unemployment but retain a punitive system to treat the residue (*Whiteside* 2001: 110 f.)

Here is the logic which distinguished - from the beginning - people who could not work and those who did not want to work and who were inevitably excluded from the right to State aid. In short this means:

If idleness was due to disease, the worker could ask for disease allowances; if it was due to old age, the worker was entitled to a pension, if the worker was temporarily unemployed, he could get unemployment benefits; but if his condition persisted and if his rights to services were finished, then he was considered as a lazy person and he joined the category of ‘poor people’ (paupers). (ibid: 111)

¹ Cf. *Merrien* (2003: 3)

² Cf. *Whiteside* (2001: 109 ff.)

National insurance distinguished regular workers and others thanks to their contribution and separated “hardworking people” from “lazy people”. Only “hardworking people” could receive State aid. Thus “the intervention of the State did not oppose to liberal ethics, yet it reinforced it” (ibid), insofar as the “welfare state” helped industry to identify and hire the most productive workers, in order to encourage a taste for work and work regularity and encouraged young people entering on the labour market to go on studying to get a steady job.

This underlines the differences that exist between this system and our protection system, which is compared to the preserving corporatist model, which aims at a safety guarantee for difficulties appearing during life. In French representations

social State is associated with solidarity and the fight against inequalities. In history, it did not build itself on a redistributive ideal but on a different project of social insecurity reduction. The objective of reformers...is clearly to set up a form of (social) security... This objective is not simply the objective of elites or of a part of social classes, it belongs to the whole French society. (*Merrien 2003: 4*)

This encouraged the development of a real feeling of safety among the French population. Yet there is also a real and powerful attachment to social security. However, this feeling seems to be put into question by the rise of liberal ideas even if social security has made “uncertainty” disappear for many French people (ibid)¹.

It is also appropriate to specify that some analyses of the Welfare state distinguish three models of social States:

1. The residual social State: its objective is to set up a vertical equality, by limiting the protection to the poorest people, who are not always deprived from protection but rather stigmatized.
2. The Beveridge model (strong or weak): aims at ensuring a suitable social minimum for all citizens if there are social risks. It offers free public services (financed by taxes).
3. The preserving, corporatist or Bismarck model: is a model of social State privileging a safety guarantee against life risks. It grants income replacement solutions for example, in the event of unemployment, of disease, of retirement etc (horizontal solidarity).

France can be classified in the third model with a slogan which one can qualify as follows: “safety rather than equality”. The State owns the regulation monopoly but a good part of social State regulation belongs to institutions under supervision of the State. Thus, most of social protection financing rests on wages contributions, which depend on income levels. Recipients of social benefits as well as their families are

¹ Reflexions that follow come from the article from *Merrien (2003)*.

social policy holders. The most concrete example in the field deals with family policies which are considered as a means of compensating for the cost of the child, and of equalizing incomes between families which have children and those which do not. This results in the payment of family benefits to all families whatever their income. This is not a privilege reserved to the poorest families. It is also for that reason that 1945 ordinances creating social security stress that there is “a family risk as well as a disease risk and an old age risk”. This is unthinkable in an Anglo-Saxon culture. Thus

insurance mixes right to benefit from services which are not the result of public charity, but constitute the counterpart of contributions. Getting a retirement pension, unemployment or disability allowance, or to be refunded medical care is subjectively seen as the counterpart of former efforts. Working people pay for pensioners and unemployed people, healthy people pay for unhealthy people, valid people pay for invalids, young people pay for the elderly in a total distribution system. The totality of resources available covers the totality of existing needs (*Merrien 2003: 4*).

This model of protection is not unique in the French State, since from the institutional point of view, in parallel to the insurances sector managed by social partners under the control of the State, there is a number of social assistances financed by taxes which try to bring assistance to households which have not contributed to social security systems or to households with very low incomes (regarding housing and education), or for specific categories of people (disabled people, single-parent families etc).

According to François-Xavier *Merrien*, if social security assessment seems interesting, as regards inequalities reduction, the result is contestable. Compared to Anglo-Saxon countries, the French Social State more effectively played its role of crisis shock absorber. But this role is better played in favour of its traditional priority targets – retired people – and does not protect younger generations enough. For example the evolution of incomes for workers and unemployed people is less favourable than that of pensioners. During the thirty last years, “poverty worsened for people under thirty and improved for those over fifty” (*Merrien 2003*).

III) The End of “Big Father”¹ Social State considering individual pain

As Marc Henri *Soulet* underlines, the “big father social state” is abolished. “It is the end of this State which was used to repair unequal distribution and which considered social policies as a tool of society maintenance, thanks to insurance systems and risks mutualisation”. We have a Social State which activated its resources developing the principle of “counterpart”². It is the idea of responsibilities redistribution between

¹ Etat social du grand papa, expression coming from Marc-Henry Soulet.

² See *Soulet (2005)*

individuals and communities where one is asked to assume a maximum of risks.¹ It is the inception of a new prototype “homo calculator”, a super human being.

It is in this context of social upheavals that new cultural references for users and for professionals can appear.²

As Bernard *Lahire* (1998) underlines it, individuals become plural. As a consequence, it becomes difficult for the individual to define his/her identity and to know which capacities he/she must bring up to date. This contributes to creating an unfinished and anxious individual. Whereas the adult was regarded for a long time as the achievement of the human ideal, today one sees an “immature adult” appear (*Boutinet* 1998). Thus there would be a tyrannical present, made of urgency and immediacy which prevents action and project maturation. Unfortunately, some social workers fall under a logic of immediacy and do not take time to build an identity to the person they are going to help.

Modernity, the end of the Social State, as well as poverty, can lead the individual to make a choice between “rage” (*Dubet* 1987) and “depression” (*Ehrenberg* 1998) or to seize opportunities in “a random culture” (*Rouleau-Berger* 1999). It is necessary to learn how to manage oneself. This contributes to bringing a new facet of the individual up to date, who is a victim of collective determinisms. The individual appears as the actor of his own life (*Skinner*).

To use the excellent approach developed by Marc-Henri *Soulet* (2005: 92) we live in “a society of responsibilities”:

each one wants to be an autonomous and responsible person, to fulfil himself but also to be a member of the community... each one must find a project and act so as not to be excluded from social bonds, whatever resources he has. (ibid)

As *Dubet* underlines it, the triumph of the individual contains the dreams and disappointments of modernity. Marc-Henry *Soulet* is not mistaken when he explains that the individual must pay an enormous price to have the right to live (*Soulet* 2005: 92) and there is an individual cost:

the individual is alone and has to face lassitude, suffering, and even pathology that this can imply. This requirement to be constituted as an individual rests on a paradoxical injunction: be free, be autonomous, be responsible... Positivity of autonomy changes, independence becomes vulnerability, uncertainty becomes infinitude, responsibility becomes responsabilisation. (ibid)

¹ Cf. *Ewald/Kessler* (2005)

² Cf. *Castel* (2005)

There is also a social cost:

the inability of some members of the community to institute themselves constitutes a failure of socialization. This form of deviance jeopardizes the participation of each people in the institution of the society. (ibid)

Thus according to the author, these individuals by simple willingness and forces, become responsible for their failures whether they are “depressive or long-term unemployed” (*Soulet* 2005: 95). For him

this logic of responsabilisation also produces the impossibility of integration by legitimating the idea of individual objective features of incapacity to get integrated and consequently to be integrated. (ibid)

We have the impression to have a sovereign and heroic individual who is the source of his/her action and judgements and who is able to produce his/her action and the direction for his/her life. Yet, the more he/she becomes “a free homo calculator”, the more he/she is stripped from his/her protective social attributes. He/She is alone in the world, and thus less solid and more vulnerable. In short:

the individual is confronted with dominative social relationships, which involve an endemic frustration. The individual is not protected any more; shame (caused by a lower social position) becomes culpability (caused by the conscience of personal insufficiency). The sovereign individual who manages his destiny feels guilty if he does not succeed. The cultural heritage does not appear as a resource anymore and the individual must find elements to define himself inside his personality. (ibid)

IV) The Evolution of Inequalities in France

In the long term (half a century) inequalities have decreased. France in year 2005 is not that of 1955 and it is less unequal.¹ First of all, it is important to specify that at the beginning of the century, French society was made up of four social groups: farmers, upper-class, proletariat and middle class. Each group had its particular characteristics, its culture, its ways of life.

Farmers live in community. “The whole household lived with the same fire and the same food”. One eats only what one produces. As *Brel* said, among the middle-class “one does not speak, Sir, one counts”. Among these people, one lives from revenues and inheritances. Henri *Mendras* (1994) underlined that “living with ostentation was truly the common ambition and the daily concern of this social class which was preoccupied by its leisure and comfort”.

¹ See *Paradis* (2001) concerning the ideas developed in the following pages.

Workers, alike, lived in the cities thanks to their employers. Some lived in unhealthy residences (without water, electricity or gas).

The middle class comprising small shopkeepers, employees, civil servants, and teachers, had a privileged place because they could buy goods which were inaccessible even in dreams for workers (cars, domestic comfort, holidays).

These social groups with different incomes and lifestyles became more defined between 1945 and 1975, according to Henri *Mendras*.

At the end of the Second World War, our country was very unequal with many poor people (farmers, workers, retired) and an upper middle class. Forty years later, and in particular in 1985, French society gathered around a median income. The number of poor people dropped because of the reduction in the number of farmers, of the introduction of social minima (creation of "SMIC" = minimum salary, "minimum old age pension"). As for the number of rich people, it had been reduced because of massive taxation of incomes.¹ In addition, the constitution of the middle class between 1945 and 1975 contributed to restricting economic hierarchy. This reduction in economic disparities was very obvious between 1965 and 1985. But between 1985 and 1994, we can observe a small reverse in this tendency. The number of poor people did not increase.

Between 1945 and 1975, there was a movement towards a society organized around two constellations, according to Henri *Mendras*² (1994): the popular constellation (workers and employees) and the central constellation (executives, teachers and engineers). The galaxy of independent workers revolves around these two constellations and at the extremes, one finds the poor people and the elites. In the French social field, one finds the two constellations gathering three quarters of the total population against 15% of independent, 7% of poor people and 3% for the elite. The hard core of the central constellation is made of executives (friends of former middle-class people, as long as they have knowledge, culture, and qualifications). They are aeronautical engineers, human resource administrators, etc. What distinguishes them from industrial independents is the fact that their inheritance is human, while others are financially equipped but have a weak educational background.

Constellations differently shine for some rather than others. There are differences which sometimes are not obvious between constellations. Some executives and

¹ See *Piketty* (2004)

² Henri *Mendras* gave an image of the French society by using a cosmographic vision. The society had to be observed as one observe stars during the night. One can see stars: galaxies and groups of galaxies, constellations. See *Paradis* (2001).

workers share television, washing machine, car etc. But today, “the category of executives and intellectual professions accumulates the greatest range of recent equipment (computers, telephones, DVD player, etc.)”. Moreover if two thirds of French people go on holiday, destinations differ according to social origins: beaches of the English Channel for workers, beaches of the Atlantic for executives and the Riviera for the most fortunate. Nearly 90% of executives go on holiday against only 45% of workers (1999).

All employees, all unequal! Behind this apparent homogenisation between ways of life one finds deep disparities. One lives better in 2005 than in 1945 but economic inequalities remain the essential factor of differentiation: increase in space segregation between districts, differences in access to goods etc. If half of the executives had a computer in 1999, only 10 % of workres had them. But brands are not the same for all. Some buy the mark “Bang und Olfusen” and the other buy “Tokai”. In the same way with food, there is also a double range of products of a certain quality, some are designer labels, and their substitutes are sold at very cheap prices. Therefore, there is “chicken” and “chicken”, “bread” and “bread”.

Inequalities are reflected even in the use of time. Senior executive and liberal professions compensate for the extra-work by buying the time of the others: baby-sitters or cleaning people. They can do it because there remains an income inequality which enables them to gain in time the equivalent of several times that from the others.

Between the French lower-class and French upper-class, there are great differences.¹ The social division did not stop worsening. The BIP 40, Barometer of the Inequalities and Poverty, published by the network of alarm on inequalities shows that if inequalities dropped between 1970 and 1977, since 1978, they have risen. When France produced 60% of extra-wealth, and at the same time the number of French owners increased, differences between the richest and the poorest decreased. Income inequalities dropped between French people between the 1970s and the middle of the 1990s. The situation has been stagnating from this date. Moreover, economists commissioned by *Jospin’s* government gave the same conclusion: if France is less unequal than France of the 1930s and even that of the 1960s – a period which was prosperous – “the continuous motion of inequalities reduction which was observed in the 1970s and 1980s stopped”. Yet the situation is less preoccupying than in most liberal developed countries. In its last world report on human development in 2004, the United Nations Organisation explains that Scandinavian countries are the most at risk. France ranks

¹ See e.g. *Houdart/Malye/Vincent* (2004)

14. Anglo-Saxon countries, Ireland, Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States are at the other end of the classification.

It is no secret that the unemployment rate has worsened (from 8.3% in 1982 to practically 10% today). Insecurity at work has never been so widespread. According to *INSEE*¹ (2005), 2.3 million French people (that is to say almost 4 times more than in 1983) are part-time workers. Nearly 20% of the working population is looking for a job or is in an unsuitable professional situation (the most affected people are young people, the least educated people and women).

Are there more poor people today? In an official way, the number has dropped. According to *INSEE*, there were 4 million poor people in 1984 and there are 3.6 million in 2001. This figure is contradictory compared to what associative networks say (“Restaurants du Coeur”, “Armée du salut”, “Médecins sans Frontières” whose activity grew by 10% per annum). This figure is at the origin of disagreements between *IBP* and *INSEE* researchers. For *IBP* researchers, the number of poor people must be calculated according to the global incomes of French people. The *INSEE* only takes into account a limited definition of the richest people’s wealth.

And wealthy people? According to “Forbes Magazine”, the income of billionaires in dollars increased by 36% in 2004. The number increased from 476 to 587. Ten of them live in Paris, 31 live in New York. In France the number of people who pay Wealth Tax (ISF) almost doubled in ten years, growing from 163,125 people to 299, 656 in 2003.

At the very time when we try to gauge if the number of poor people has increased or not, one can observe that a new category of French people entered among the privileged people of the ISF² (Wealth tax). For those who already paid ISF, one can analyse the evolution in their situation thanks to the evolution in the real estate prices which increased by 60% during these last years and thanks to the “CAC 40”³ whose value almost tripled between 1988 and 2003. Michel and Monique *Pinçon* studied this middle-class and explain the exponential evolution of this social class, at the time when insecurity increased. In fact, in France, other social classes disappeared except ONE: upper middle classes. In twenty years the number of those in insecure employment practically quadrupled (from 638,000 contracts to 2,360,000 in December 2004). Nearly 6 million French people earn the “RMI” (Minimum Insertion Income), top-up allowances, widowhood insurance, old age pensions, disability allowance etc. They are in fact twice as much as in 1970.

¹ French National Institute for Statistics

² People, whose taxable patrimony is superior to 720,000 per year.

³ *Compagnie des Agents de Change 40 Index*, the index of the French stock exchange, containing the 40 stocks with the highest volume of sale.

V) Other Forms of Inequalities

As we have underlined, inequalities are numerous but we can summarize some of them:

Inequalities between men and women¹: the situation of women improved considerably in terms of formal and substantive rights. But progress made can conceal significant inequalities, which can be qualified as discrimination in three fields: work, violence and politics. We know that on several occasions voting rights were granted to women by the House of Commons, but each time it was contradicted by the Senate. It was necessary to wait until April 21st, 1944 to see women obtain the right to vote and to be elected. France was one of the last countries to give the right to vote to all citizens, before Italy, Greece, Belgium, Cyprus, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Women in other European countries obtained this right earlier and notably in Finland (1906), Denmark (1915), Austria (1918), Germany (1918), Ireland (1918), Luxembourg (1919), Holland (1919), Sweden (1921) England (1928) and Spain (1931). Even if France is the first country in the world to adopt a law on parity, the delay between France and the majority of European countries concerning access of women to political responsibilities is still obvious. The proof is that women are always underrepresented in the French National Assembly and the Senate.

As far as the labour market is concerned, women appear among categories of people who are in the majority in the labour market. They are also those which meet the biggest difficulties with fulfilling themselves thanks to their career. Since 1970, women are more numerous than men at university. Women are often perceived by employers as potentially pregnant women. They are more often forced to work part-time compared to men (e.g. the case of cashiers who are obliged to work part-time for fear of being made unemployed). They are also part of a group called "the working poor", and who work to earn wages lower than the French "SMIC". Whatever their job, women earn wages that are lower by 10% to 15% than those of men. All indicators taken into account to analyse employment insecurity provide the same report: women are more exposed to inequalities than men. The probability of having a part-time job is stronger for women than for men once effects of age and socio-professional category have been taken into account. It is not a question of interpretation of labour research because the regulation system of the labour market exposes women to employment, as Serge *Paugam* (2003: 86) says.

One must also underline violence towards women, which is very widespread in our country. In 1999 48,000 women were raped. The perpetrators of these crimes are

¹ See *Mossuz-Lavau* (2004)

almost always men. 84% of physical brutalities and 93% of murder attempts are ascribable for them. Concerning physical brutalities, 53% of women accuse their husband.

Leisure: leisure remains a socially dependent activity in spite of the reduction in working time and the rise in education and standards of living. When people have little free time, television remains the first leisure (nearly three quarter watch it at least once per day on average according to *INSEE* surveys between 1998 and the end of 1999). The practices of leisure are influenced by social origin. Senior executive have more cultural leisure: they read more books, more often go to the cinema and to the theatre etc. Inequalities related to living places intervene as it is not easy to go to the opera or the cinema when one lives far away from a large city.

Inequality in life expectancy: this one is really unacceptable. Though access to good care is expensive, inequality in life expectancy is not directly related to incomes or to inheritance, but it gives indications about conditions variations in the French society. When they are 35, workers have a life expectancy of 35.8 years; that is to say 9 years less than senior executives.

Socio-economic inequalities of immigrants: the position of populations of immigrant origin is characterized by several inequalities. Immigrants coming from North Africa and belonging to the second or the third generation encounter more difficulties. One must not forget the attitude of the society with regard to these people, which results in discriminatory practices. In general, the problem can be seen as a challenge in terms of meritocracy. They are obliged "to fight" more than people with equal qualifications.

School inequalities

Pierre *Bourdieu* had already underlined school inequalities, in particular through his theory of reproduction. Figures are very significant. Among children aged 12 for example, the variations are considerable between social categories: 14.6 points between workers and executives in French, 16.4 points in mathematics. The educational qualifications of those in different social categories show that 1% of workers and 3% of employees have a diploma higher than "Baccalauréat + 2 years" against 63% of senior executives. With regard to school difficulties, more than half of children whose father does not have any educational qualification already repeated a class at least once before being 15, against 14% of children whose father has a educational qualification higher than the "baccalauréat". Studies get longer and longer, but not for everyone: in classes for children aged 5, one finds 54% children coming from poor families. And in classes for children aged 12, one only finds 15% of pupils coming from poor families.

Finally, social inequalities at school did not disappear with the rise in the general level of instruction. The more one studies, the stronger social inequalities become. The "grandes écoles" – typically French institutions – are presented as schools where leaders are trained, which would tend to support reproduction of the elites, by accentuating social inequalities linked to school success. Executives' and teachers' children are more likely to enter a "grande école" than poor families' children. Foreigners are underrepresented in the "noble" schools. Moreover, these inequalities can be found from the very beginning since the score of foreign pupils to the tests taken by children aged 12 is approximately 10 points lower than the national average, and only 46.9% of them manage to pass the "baccalauréat".

Beyond the various forms of inequalities specified above, one also finds: inequalities linked to distribution and redistribution of social security benefits, inequalities of incomes, consumption inequalities, inheritance inequalities, housing inequalities, health inequalities, school inequalities, inequalities linked to the social uses of time, inequalities within public space.¹

VI) The Effects of Inequalities on the Individuals

The increase of inequalities leads to leaving poor children² aside. In 2000/2001, one million poor children³ lived in poor households. These figures do not even take all children in great difficulty into account, such as children who live in the street or in social centres, with or without their parents, that is to say all children who do not live in an ordinary household. If three quarters of poor children live with their two parents, a quarter of poor children live with only one relative whereas only 13% of "wealthy" children are in such a situation. Whereas one non-poor child out of three (38%) lives with an executive, two poor children out of five have an unemployed relative. Two thirds of the poor children live with a poor worker. A poor child often lives with a part-time employee. But having a job is not sufficient: everything depends on wages, since 120,000 poor children live in bi-parental families in which the two parents have a job. As soon as one of the two parents has a full-time job, their poverty rate decreases. On the other hand, jobs occupied by part-time employees offers less protection against poverty.

Today, we unfortunately can see the appearance of people whose salary is not sufficient to avoid insecurity (*Paugam* 2003), and therefore this can be seen as "the working poor" era. We have the impression that work does not protect against

¹ See *Bihl/Pfefferkorn* (1995)

² Cf. *INSEE* (2005)

³ A poor child lives in a household whose living standard is inferior to the average median living standard.

insecurity any more, since 5.5% of working people are poor and 1 homeless out of 3 has a job. Christine *Lagarenne* and Nadine *Legendre* (2000) identified 5 groups of poor workers: poor independent workers (27%), full-time employees (21%), part-time employees (8%), employees who are employed all year long but with a contract with limited duration (10%), employees who are unemployed a part of the year (27%).

In addition Gilbert *Lagouanelle*, Manager of the institutional section of the “Secours Catholique” in France suggests that it is time to stop the spiral of precarious employment which exposes many people to insecurity. According to the “Secours Populaire”, “part-time contracts lead to a succession of ruptures in people’s financial resources and thus lead to precarious life” because precarious employment does not ensure a living standard which would make it possible to live above the poverty line.

Thus, the insufficiency of financial resources and sometimes the irregularity of money generate situations of great social, physical and psychical distress, (health problems, addictive behaviours, accidents, suicides, hospitalization for mental disorders). These are the reported experiences given by health professionals and by social workers, and in particular welfare officers.

If we take the example of some young people, in a survey which was carried out a few years ago, we can notice that they feel excluded¹, they have the impression they are rejected by institutions and they internalize this image of exclusion because of the unsuitability of standards imposed by the system. When one is excluded from commercial or cultural consumption, of school and of the lifestyle imposed by the society, one feels useless. Thanks to F. *Blondel* (1999) we can say that “young people are in front of a paradox, where they are asked to be responsible for their intervention, to find their place and who in same time are considered as objects by the institutions which educate or animate them”.

This paradox is at the origin of three possible scenarios:

- Submission, which leads to accepting standards and to internalise the functioning of institutions
- Revolt, which is a reaction related to frustration created by the misunderstandings or when they have imposed upon them a system of values in which they are not recognized
- and finally the most current attitude, which is characteristic of our sample; this is withdrawal: they still have desires but have no hope.

¹ Cf. *Jovelin* (2002)

The feeling expressed by young people is a feeling of disgust. This even leads them to claim social offence, to reverse the logic of the problem. Promises which have not been held, the absence of an inclusion policy brings the speech on citizenship closer to the political field: this means a very negative dialogue.

According to young people we have met¹, the political subject is apparently of no interest for at least 80% of them. If a great majority of young people choose to vote for socialist parties, for those who do it, the speeches of politicians express the gap that exists “between them and young people”. There is a huge gap between “them and us”. The problems mainly come from “them, who have everything they need and who in addition are dishonest because they are corrupted. We, honest and poor people, have nothing!”

This feeling of uselessness reminds us of Robert *Lane*'s works (1962), in which he studied the population of Eastport and highlighted the phenomenon of “alienation”. People were studied by the author as mentioned above. According to him, they are “political lunatics”, they feel excluded from the political system. They have the feeling not to be concerned with what occurs on the political level. They consider themselves as observers, whose principal role is to defer to political actors who have the full power to decide what they want to do or not. The analyses of Robert *Lane* (1962) are very significant for our sample, and in particular about the three proposals he made on the state of mind of “political lunatics”: “I am the object and not the subject of political life. I do not have any influence and do not take part in anything. Politically, I speak using a passive mode”. “Government is not interested with my opinion. It is not my government”. “I do not approve the ways in which decisions are made; the rules are unfair, they are faked; the Constitution is at a certain extent fraudulent”.

What to then conclude? We said there is a feeling of alienation among young people, a feeling of being dominated. In their discourses, they try to detach themselves from this world and this feeling which do not relate to them, nor to their relationships and their lives in other ways, and which contain many difficulties. The term ‘political’ can be associated to the concepts of political parties, government, State, elections, politicians, etc.

Sometimes inequalities produce typical “outcasts”, who lead lives marked by a triple “NH” that is to say by an individual Negative History due to a negative family history, and a negative social history. Indeed the lack of socialisation networks, unemployment, alcoholism, and drug addiction does not enable them to expect the same things that people who think they are “normal”.

¹ Ibid.

All this can lead to what is called “existence medicalisation” (Zarfian 1998), as mental health is determined by physical, psychological and social health. Within this, there would be an increase in the consumption of medicine. If stability corresponds to everyday life with its problems, frustrations, gratifications, small joys and small contradictions, major turbulences on the other hand correspond to chance mishaps (conflicts, mourning, unemployment, divorce, loneliness, poverty). It is life without existence! To survive after all this damage one thinks that “existence medicalisation” is the solution, that is to say the use of a reassuring model; “the medical model and the care system”. Does this mean that France is ill? No, as long as the State will be present to control social life, the anomic society about which Durkheim speaks will not appear tomorrow!

VII) Social Work to curb Inequalities: An Epic Battle?

What interests us in this part is to analyse what social workers say about their work during crises, through research we have carried out with 38 welfare officers.

Social workers are confronted with the complexity of users' problems

Welfare officers certainly feel the consequences of socio-economic crises with the situations they have to deal with and which they consider more and more difficult, as one can notice in the following speeches:

“I experiences fears. I could have been killed. Someone threatened me with a gun, a scalpel, a rifle” (J, 55 years old).

“They were people with great difficulties. There were no drug problems, these did not exist. They were people with great difficulties, why? Because they had not had the chance to have financial, environmental, intellectual means, all that one wants... emotional means etc. I had to help them to lead a pleasant life, to find a way. But they were people who did not have any influence on their life. Therefore, it was necessary to give directions and things started. And now, there are nevertheless people who claim, who know what their rights are. When I was a professional, there were people who did not know many things, now they come and claim I have the right to...., I require..., I want... They announce to us they have the right to something we are unfamiliar with. There are also users who like the comfort of assistance. I think this did not exist in the past. Maybe in the past, there were people who could find a little job, there were small tricks. There are people who are installed in a comfortable life. I see many young people for example who deal drugs and who earn a lot of money and say so openly. When we offer them to do some training to help them find a job, a place in the society, to find stability... this makes them laugh. They do not care about us. They tell us we are ‘real idiots’ to work like that. If you want, they earn more money than we do and do not

have any job! They do not see why they should accept our proposals. There are some young people today who we find scaring. I believe that it will be necessary to modify our methods and our approaches and our answers... the problems evolved and the profile of people evolved as well and in practice, we do not feel competent anymore. We have no financial means. I find there is not enough things, it is not sufficient. Nothing has been created until now. Maybe this will be done. For example for babies of drug addicted women, because they are very violent at 2 or 3 years old. Therefore we must be prepared. What will we do? How will we be prepared for that? The other day, I said during a meeting that I was anxious for the years to come because I do not know how we will cope with the situation..." (Q, 51 years).

These speeches show that concern is important. For the interviewed people no specific proposal is made by hierarchy. They do not have the impression of being listened to, and thus they have the impression they have to mobilize themselves alone because of these difficult situations in spite of studies carried out in some regions about violence and safety of social workers.

Social workers feel the importance of responsibilities and feel useless.

Workers must support all the misery of the world and find solutions. However, professionals themselves lack resources and cannot deal with every request: "What seems to me a problem is the fact that we are identified by schools, associations of the district, etc. When there was a professional situation, everyone addressed me, the welfare officer, what will you be able to do? I could not stand these glances anymore... We have helped families, we gave them everything we could, they used everything and what could we then offer them after that? Partners said "you are still there? What are you doing?" This was dreadful, because I had the impression that I really had a very important responsibility. It was stressful. I had the impression that what had been done was not good. When I arrived I told myself, I have to leave because... with external partners, it is always necessary to work, work, work. One cannot manage such a heavy responsibility without having somebody with whom to speak, it was dreadful" (C, 34 years old).

Here, one can notice the responsibility of welfare officers especially when media deal with ill-treatment cases in which social workers are blamed for their bad practices and said to be responsible because measures have not been taken earlier.

This stigmatizing glance is less and less accepted and acceptable. This situation can be related to the representations which people have of the welfare officer. Indeed, he or she is regarded as someone who must know everything, and is not entitled to make

a mistake. However, welfare officers are people like others. There is a gap between the representations that the society has of welfare officers and what he or she is in reality.

Social workers have difficulties to adapt to the change caused by crises

Until now we always considered the positive aspects of the profession. But some welfare officers highlighted the weak points associated with this job, in particular considering its evolutions and the difficulties encountered to adapt to changes. "It is true that it is rather tiring to have all these reorganizations, it is exhausting" (B, 48 years old). "There are frustrating times, that it is true..." (E, 36 years old).

Indeed, the conditions of social work practice changed with the increase of social exclusion as well as decentralization which changed the conditions of public action. Professions were used to having to adapt to these elements to which they were not used. So, social action has become social policy. Traditional social workers have become new types of social workers. All this expresses a professional identity crisis (Jovelin 1998: 94). "The district was destroyed with the increase of teams, it is necessary to know how to adapt. There were different structures, different policies. It is true that these are events you have to manage and to accept" (E, 38 years old)

The welfare officers interviewed were reproachful of the successive changes made within the General Council or within their services since they started work there. They must adapt to the new policies and do not have the impression of having been consulted; and participating in the making of decisions is a source of motivation. Social workers are obliged to adapt, but this adaptation is painful.

Social workers are exhausted

Of the 38 interviewed social workers, 21 said they felt exhausted because of their work. Professional tire or "burn-out"¹ is a feeling of impotence felt by social workers. Didier Martin (1992) distinguishes four causes for professional exhaustion:

Structural causes related to the overall social policy. Professionals try to find adequate solutions for people, but external devices appear ineffective and inappropriate for the needs.

Causes relating to the organization of work in the institution. This is what social workers call "the lack of recognition, the institutional heaviness".

Causes relating to the population to be helped. This deals with the type of people social workers have to help. It depends on the population's capacity to invest in a project and

¹ burn-out means: being exhausted, and tired because of a too great an energy requirement. People are more likely to give up or to feel exhausted after excessive requirements. This is also caused by a physical, mental and emotional state of exhaustion.

its difficulty in giving a commitment to it. Moreover the rarefaction of solutions to the problems of the users can demobilize social workers who feel frustrated because of a failure of their actions.

Personal causes: a weakening in personal motivations related to the management of one's own time, to institutional influence, to disturbed family life, can tire professionals and result in inefficiency.

All these ideas are illustrated by the following speeches:

"Tired, yes. It is cyclic, that comes back regularly. A physical exhaustion, a moral one also. For example, I disagreed with a family in which there were violence acts which were recognized as cruel acts. During two years, I had difficulties helping this family because I got help from nobody" (E, 38 years old)

"Yes, completely. This week, I feel absolutely tired because there are difficulties all day long. One must have very personal qualities and a lot of energy. In the evening, when you come back home, you are exhausted" (D, 42 years old)

"That can happen, yes certainly in child welfare. This is something which I could live consciously or unconsciously" (G, 47 years old)

This tiredness is sometimes related to a repetition of situations, and a reluctance to do new things. "It was always the same requests. I think that when you work with the same people, you do not have the same dynamism any more. Even for them, that is not good." (L, 43 years old)

Another person underlines: "I am tired because of my responsibilities. Because of the rhythm at work this is not completely "burn-out" because I believe that if it was the case, I could stop" (B, 50 years)

Globally these speeches can be compared to the way in which Christina *Maslach* and Susan *Jackson*¹ define the "burn-out" that is to say a relational syndrome composed of three dimensions:

- a feeling of emotional exhaustion: "I am exhausted, I have the impression to have no power anymore",
- a tendency to dehumanise the relationship. The relationship is managed in a cold and distant way. In this case, one tends to find the responsibility of the problems in the users themselves. This brings a deterioration of the relations in the agency,

¹ In: *Pezet/Vilatte/Logeay* (1993)

- and finally a reduction in personal achievements: "I do nothing gratifying in my job anymore".

As F. *Dhume* (2001: 30) explains it, "one reduces the place of social work to an instrumental function, which is more administrative and more dependent on the choices of the community. The intervention is centred on the relation between the social worker and the user. More than ever, the social worker is only one link among others in a chain which has lengthened. That contributes to the "disappearance of the educational ideal of emancipation"¹ of social work with regard to its partner. Finally, the assertion "I have right to" has an effect on the request of the public. "Customers of social services are not looking for relational help. They are less ready to exchange the relation against a service." (*Dubet* 1998: 91) This change in the design of the intervention weakens social work while reducing what makes its specificity (the relation) and by restricting its capacity of action (its autonomy)".

Conclusion

Social work which was very important between 1945 and 1975 and functioned according to Robert *Castel* as "integration auxiliary" weakened with the beginning of what Nicolas *Baverez* calls "the thirty piteous years". Concepts of contracts and projects became the magic words of social workers. One asks them to build individual paths with the participation of users. It is a call to modernity, the call to responsabilisation. The user must find "his/her own definition in his/her own heart" that is to say the development of his/her projects". According to Robert *Castel* (2005), it is very interesting but that can also lead to problems and even seem ambiguous because making a project requires an individualized social support, a redefinition of a positive identity, according to Marc-Henri *Soulet* (2005). However, "mobilization of the individual is a very delicate and very expensive mission, when it is not based on collective supports. One will ask performance, adaptability, mobility and responsibilities to people in difficulty... without giving them the means to assume them". (*Castel* 2005: 44).

According to *Castel*, social workers are faced with a paradox, a contradiction. How?

He stresses that social work is a political and social mandate to promote social integration of people in difficulty. Yet it does its mission by "transposing into the form of a problem while working on their personal economy. This tension between a socio-political finality and a model of relational psycho treatment is worsened since many users need a service because they are in an intolerable social condition". Social

¹ *Donzelot* (1998: .94) In: *Dhume* (2001)

interventions are thus threatened by what he calls “standard of interiority” (this desire for seeking in the individual himself the reasons of his difficulties).

He specifies that it is well to act this way since social workers have the impression to give responsibilities to users but it also gives “great risks that can make them feel guilty”. Some social workers tend to act according to this standard of interiority. This does not solve the problems of the poorest people who can feel even guiltier.

We think that the fight against inequalities must be the problem of the State. Protection is not a natural fact but only one social construction, and the State must guarantee this protection.¹ We know that the reduction of income inequalities will not produce a more equal society but that should not prevent us from acting on the concrete terms of life and employment (*Maurin* 2001: 45). Today, one tends to move the question of equality “from the field of existence legitimacy of the existence of social hierarchy to that of individual chances” (*Yves Poirmeur*, in: *Bihr* 2003). Speaking about the potential of equality of opportunity finally makes it possible to dilute and to neuter the idea of equality, the equality at the same time like reality and horizon. Because where there is equality by definition, no chance is required, no equality is required... “Don’t you think that the word “chance” recalls the idea of lottery? Lottery is a world where somebody speaks, and where somebody else wins... and where the majority loses.” (*Bihr* 2003: 29).

The opportunities for people in difficulty can only be found in a strong social work which works in close proximity to people in despair. For this reason, it is necessary to have a constant movement so that social work continues to be the bridge between integrated and excluded people without forgetting to exploit the efforts the individual in difficulty could make. The titan combat between inequalities and social work continues. Yet as long as work will be strong because Social State is strong (from the 1970s until today) and social work weak because the Social State is weak (from the 1970s until today), the fight will always remain unequal. The tunnel will take a long time to travel through. The opposite must occur: a stronger social work must appear.

¹ See *Castel* (2003)

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Within the hugely significant processes of globalisation following the breakdown of the Berlin wall and the Eastern bloc, it became more and more apparent that the classical welfare state was in the middle of a crisis. In spite of still significant differences according to the symptoms of that crisis – high rates of unemployment, movement to avoid taxation, cuts within the social security system and the budgets for professional social work, a lack of political control of social processes, increasing disaffection from the state, etc. – all of this points to the conclusion that these developments are different from former attacks on the welfare state, and are symptoms of a fundamental crisis in modern democracy.

The book therefore proposes that the crisis of the welfare state (and therefore of social work as well) is not only a crisis of the traditional model of the different systems of the welfare state and its interventions – e.g. of the Anglo-Saxon, Nordic or corporatistic models – but a crisis of societies and democracy on behalf of their self-understanding of social justice and the fight against social exclusion. This crisis can then be seen as a ‘turning point’ in the fight against social exclusion in democratic societies.

Thus the de- and reconstruction to the different welfare regimes therefore is an objective necessity not only for Eastern European countries, but for all European countries. There are different transformational processes within each country dependent on different traditions, cultures, political and economic situations, etc. but the challenge within all European nations is to preserve social security and social help as far as possible under these new conditions.

According to these themes, the book which is dedicated to Professor Oldrich Chytil from Ostrava University (CZ) on the occasion of his 60th birthday is divided into two parts.

Within the first part fundamental and transnational political, sociological, theoretical questions about the welfare state and its interventions as well as the role of transnational (European) social work will be discussed by Detlef Baum (Germany), Jan Keller (Czech Republic), Walter Lorenz (Italy), Karen Lyons (United Kingdom), and Horst Sing & Peter Erath (Germany).

Within the second part authors from eight European countries will look at different transformational processes within their countries first of all from empirical, ideological, and strategic levels. Then they will discuss the different ways social work is dealing with these theoretical and practical problems internally and externally, and finally they will draw possible consequences for the organisation of social work agencies, employment of social workers in the different sectors, and the effects on social work practice of these changes, and of government policies. The contributors of these texts are: Peter Erath & Horst Sing (Germany), Juha Hämäläinen and Pauli Niemelä (Finland), Rolv Lyngstad, Randi Reese (Norway) & Steven M Shardlow (United Kingdom), Emmanuel Jovelin & Elisabeth Prieur (France), Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka (Poland), Jordi Sabater (Spain), Steven M Shardlow & Adrian Adams (United Kingdom), and Frans van der Veer (Netherlands).