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Volume 5

Brian Littlechild / Peter Erath / Jan Keller (Editors)

De- and Reconstruction in European Social Work

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

Brian Littlechild / Peter Erath / Jan Keller (Editors)

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.

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

Detlef Baum

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Norway: a welfare regime in the process of change

Rolv Lyngstad, Randi Reese, Steven M Shardlow

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.

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 lower 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.

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

Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka²

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.

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] (*Braziel/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

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

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.

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.

¹ Translation: Lydia van der Ziel

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.

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Vol. 4 **Chytil**, O./**Sýkorová**, D. (eds.)/**Littlechild**, B. (co-ed.): Strategies for the Maintenance of Autonomy in Old Age. A Czech Study. 2004.

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).