

Walter Lorenz

# Facing up to history social work between timeless universalism and contingent particularism

Marie Kamphuis-lezing 1999

Co-referaat:  
Nora van Riet

Met een woord vooraf van M.L. Waaldijk

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## Woord vooraf

In het najaar van 1999 is de Marie Kamphuis Stichting begonnen met het organiseren van een tweejaarlijkse Marie Kamphuis-lezing. Het moment was passend gekozen: in dat najaar vierde het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk het honderdjarig bestaan van de oudste school voor maatschappelijk werk in Nederland. Dit vond plaats onder leiding van een comité waarin de opleidingen, de beroepsvereniging, de werkgevers en de werknemers, alsmede de instellingen die onderzoek op het gebied van maatschappelijk werk bevorderen, vertegenwoordigd waren.

De Marie Kamphuis Stichting is genoemd naar een van de grondlegsters van het professionele maatschappelijk werk in Nederland. Marie Kamphuis (geboren in 1907) heeft als docente en directrice van de Groningse school voor Maatschappelijk werk, en als onvermoeibaar auteur en redacteur een cruciale rol gespeeld in de professionalisering en democratisering van het maatschappelijk werk in Nederland.

De stichting stelt zich ten doel:

- bevorderen van (wetenschappelijk) onderzoek op het terrein van het maatschappelijk werk;
- vergroten van de professionele kwaliteit van het maatschappelijk werk;
- bevorderen van de reflectie over professionele kwaliteit in het maatschappelijk werk;
- bevorderen dat maatschappelijk werkers en wetenschappers met elkaar in gesprek komen over bovenstaande onderwerpen.

In dat kader van deze doelstellingen onderhoudt de Stichting een bijzondere leerstoel 'Grondslagen van het maatschappelijk werk' aan de Universiteit Utrecht, daarin financieel gesteund door het Hilda Verwey-Jonker Instituut in Utrecht.

De tweejaarlijkse Marie Kamphuis-lezing is een initiatief dat beoogt de verschillende groepen die beroepsmatig betrokken zijn bij de ontwikkeling van maatschappelijk

werk met elkaar in contact te brengen. Daartoe worden inspirerende sprekers uitgenodigd die vanuit een specifieke invalshoek het professioneel maatschappelijk werk in een breder kader plaatsen. Een co-referaat door iemand die de praktijk van opleiding en werkveld van het maatschappelijk werk in Nederland goed kent vormt de opmaat voor een discussie, die naar wij hopen de discussie tussen maatschappelijk werkers, opleiders en onderzoekers zal stimuleren.

Met vreugde presenteren wij u de neerslag van de eerste Marie Kamphuis-lezing die op 18 november 1999 in Utrecht werd gehouden door prof. Walter Lorenz uit Cork (Ierland). Het co-referaat werd verzorgd door Nora van Riet.

Namens het bestuur van de Marie Kamphuis Stichting

Dr. M.L. Waaldijk

## Facing up to history – social work between timeless universalism and contingent particularism

*Walter Lorenz*

Reminiscing in social work frequently serves the purpose of measuring the distance we have travelled since the days of the pioneers. We smile benignly at those figures of the distant past to whom we owe our gratitude but whom we have long left behind. Social work usually writes its history as a history of emancipation from pre-modern constraints and paradigms, a history of progress and of the gradual gaining of scientific respectability. This perspective serves to give hope that one day this profession, troubled by its uncertain social and academic status, will take its hard earned place among the ranks of proper professions that have a proper scientific base in proper academic disciplines. Only then will social work be able to claim that it played its part in the advancement of civilisation, closing ranks with other professions devoted to the victory of rationality.

But lately another reading of social work history is gaining acceptance, a fascination with its origins, an admiration of the pioneers, and specially of the women pioneers. This reading emphasises that those 'founding mothers' had discovered and already advocated so many principles which were otherwise regarded as prerogatives of our present times, e.g. their feminism, their action-orientation, their unconventional social analysis. This version of social work history tries to draw parallels between original and contemporary concerns and establish the profession's credentials not from its emancipatory efforts but from a legacy that was modern, or perhaps post-modern, before its time, that did not participate fully in the project of modernity.

This paper attempts to stand back from both these positions and instead to look critically and more fundamentally at the purpose of historical reflections in social work and social work training. It starts from the premise that social work is a discipline and a form of practice closely related to historical enquiry, that it deals with the interplay of facts and their contextual, culture-specific interpretations, that it cannot stand aside from its historical embeddedness but must develop its professional mandate precisely

within specific historical contexts. This is not to deny the relevance of the emancipatory intentions of the universalistic project, nor the right to discover and reclaim particular familiar territory explored and prepared by the pioneers. What I am proposing instead, however, and of which I would like to demonstrate the relevance and actuality, is a project of inter-cultural competence that points in two directions simultaneously: our ability to develop a particular historical competence in the encounter with and the evaluation of our profession's past might depend on how we apply some of the 'lessons' derived from the encounter with contemporary cultural diversity. This in turn would allow us to see the enmeshment of social work in historical and political constraints, the whole vexed problem of the 'burden of subjectivity' (and hence relativity) in social work not as a hindrance to be left behind but as a challenge for the development of very specific and highly valuable competences for the encounter with cultural diversity and relativity today. I am suggesting that in dealing with both synchronic and diachronic cultural differences the mediation of universality and particularity is equally at stake. Sharpening our historical understanding of the social work profession's precise location in politically and historically defined moments can further a critical intercultural discourse in the present.

In stating this agenda I am declaring my view that the issue of cultural diversity poses the biggest challenge to the social work profession today. This challenge is all the more severe since social work has historically avoided confronting this issue and has, through this avoidance, been vulnerable to political misuse. We seem to be strangely unprepared for this encounter – strangely, because it is certainly not the first time in the history of the social work profession that the theme of cultural diversity had to be faced up to. But I regard it for this very reason as significant that within that history a consensus had been building to the effect that social work should avoid or transcend those encounters with cultural plurality (and relativity), eliminate any possible influence of culture on its methods and steer the methods discourse instead towards a higher plane of universality. This was no mere oversight; on the contrary, the neutralisation of the irritation that cultural (and other socially constructed) differences represented for the emerging profession served to establish and solidify a very definite, uncritical and potentially very oppressive approach to cultural diversity. My central hypothesis is that implicitly (and at times explicitly) the failure to articulate and to problematise diversity and identity tied the social work profession to the project of the formation and consolidation of national cultural unity and homogeneity on which the newly formed nation states converged. By being either too culture specific or too abstract-universal, social work theories and methods at best bypassed the critical and crucial confrontation with nationalism, at worst they played right into its hands.

It is highly indicative that the issues of cultural diversity are beginning to unsettle social work so much precisely at the moment when the power of the nation state is diminishing in the wake of changes normally summarised as 'globalisation'. The nation state can no longer control a cultural agenda according to which it wanted to define itself as ultimately homogeneous and, simultaneously, loses its sway over social policy making and other key political decisions. This 'weakening' exposes the link between the cultural-political state interests and the methodological project in social work. Internationally the profession seems suddenly embroiled in a heedless commotion for new reference points for a form of practice capable of accommodating diversity (Dominelli & Hoogvelt 1996). Much of this results in a surrender of normative principles and in post-modern gestures of despair. Feminist social work is proposed for work with women, intercultural approaches for work with immigrants, adoption rules prescribe that black children are to be placed only with black families (Macey 1995, Courtney et al. 1996). In some European quarters a free-for-all of methods (Parton 1996, p 17) parades under the guise of a post-modern turn in methodology; this suggests that the choice of methods is largely determined not by an underlying principle or by the search for the 'definitive' method, but by personal style and momentary decisions. Elsewhere 'essentialist' approaches become established, meaning that only the members of one cultural community can understand and deal with the social problems of that community. Formal academic and professional qualifications become secondary to life experience and to membership of a 'category' of service users: only people who have come through alcoholism can treat alcoholics, only women who have experienced violence can work with women suffering from violence etc. In these rushed responses an historical discontinuity and historical incompetence in social work is revealed, for which the ground had been prepared by the course social work methodology took in its overall development through various academic discourses which had set themselves apart from the reflection on a specific historical context. Against this backdrop I would argue that the acquisition of the skills of historical reflection are a crucial aspect of social work methodology and could make an immensely important practice contribution today.

To this aim it is worth reminding ourselves of the specific historical site on which social work has its origins. Its birthplace is marked by the transition of European societies from one organisational principle to another, from traditional communities to modern societies in Tönnies' terms, or from mechanic to organic solidarity, as Durkheim described it. As an organised, systematic and purposeful-rational activity social work is firmly placed on the 'modern' side of that divide, but its strong value base and frequently quite spontaneous and voluntary character place it in a life-world

that preserves continuities with a pre-modern age. With this dual character it fulfils a necessary role within state systems which face enormous and historically completely unprecedented tasks and difficulties of integration. Social work's functions within these new political systems must be sought not just at the social but above all at the political level: Social work found its place and gained a reputation as a socially valuable profession within the newly emerging nation states as an aid in managing the rampant divisions in terms of class, gender, culture and ethnicity.

The political aspects of the problem of diversity have perhaps not been focused upon sufficiently by social work historians. As we know from Benedict Anderson's work (Anderson 1991) nation states are imagined communities. That means that beyond all the centrifugal divisions threatening their cohesion they were held together by a fundamental belief in the unity of that nation, a unity feeding on the manufacture of authoritative, largely pre-modern, ancient images. It also meant that the identity they bestowed upon and demanded loyalty towards from their citizens was by no means a naturally given identity, even though it presented itself as such. Social work's task has always been to assess people on the margins of social norms as to whether and on what conditions they can fully belong to and participate in the mainstream of society, leaving those who do not qualify or reform sufficiently to the mercy of institutions designed to exclude: the asylums, workhouses, correctional institutions, penal colonies. In the context of the emerging nation states that drawing of a border meant defining not just a socially acceptable identity but implicitly this reflected also the standards of a national identity. Social workers were very much part of that project of imagining the nation as a pure, legitimate, loyalty deserving, sacrifice demanding political entity, precisely by not questioning the ethnocentricity of standards of 'good, acceptable behaviour' it promoted. The political legitimisation process alone was, particularly while the right to vote was so restricted in the beginning, far too weak to sustain that legitimisation. It had to be provided by the direct commitment of people at the level of civil society who would ensure that the nation was in fact a community worth living in and, ultimately, worth dying for (Balakrishnan 1995). Social work helped to define the terms of social citizenship long before official social policies came into operation.

Crucial to this process of national integration was the fundamental change in the connotation of 'differences' during the transition from agrarian to industrial societies. Gellner in his analysis of nations and nationalism has argued that whereas in an agrarian society differences were patterned and stable and cultural norms stabilised those patterns, industrialisation brought about a fluidity and random patterning of differences. This constituted a source of great instability and required a re-interpretation of the function of culture.

'Culture is no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimisation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce... Moreover, it must now be a great or high (literate, training-sustained) culture and can no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture or tradition' (Gellner 1983, p 37-38).

Gellner emphasised the role of state education in this transformation of culture into a national, shared, authoritative and homogenising heritage. But it needs to be recognised that this cultural, educational project extended well beyond the schools, and this not only in countries where social pedagogy became the defining paradigm of social intervention like in the German tradition. The link between social work and the cultural project of the nation state was probably not quite so obvious in countries where this profession developed within a 'social science' or a psychological paradigm. But everywhere the flourishing of myriad new organisations of civil society in that period, from leisure-oriented associations in the field of sports and entertainment to religious and philanthropic institutions, missions, clubs and settlements all came under the spell of the same cultural project: to absorb, channel and control the disruptive potential of differences, differences which not only lingered on as pre-industrial relics but which of course increased in extent and intensity as products of industrialisation. Their overall 'patriotic task' was to render these differences functional. The project of imagining industrial societies as national communities settled on nationalism as its pervasive formula with which to supplant and hence to manage cultural, class, gender and ethnic diversity, a mechanism that constructed 'the other' both internally and externally as 'the enemy' (Kristeva 1988).

Nationalism offered itself as the solution to the core dilemma posed by the new forms of governance and of political legitimisation, which was how to reconcile given differences with the aspiration of equality. If 'belonging to a nation' was a given reference point as a matter of 'inheritance' (ethnic or cultural) then inequality in terms of class and social status among the members of the national community could be re-defined as 'natural differences' as long as the overall distance of the nationals to non-nationals in terms of their material and cultural conditions was always greater. The 'pure' civic-republican construction of the nation with its emphasis on the tolerance of cultural differences and on the political contract among equally entitled individual citizens, which characterised particularly post-revolutionary France (Brubaker 1990), lacked the imaginary substance with which to endorse that political equality. It had to emphasise culture as a source of homogeneity, especially in the absence of effective redistribu-

butory social policy measures. By the outbreak of the First World War even social and political movements that had been international in their intentions, like the labour movement, the women's movement but also to a great extent the churches, movements which regarded the reference points of class, gender and religion as more compelling than that of the nation, had largely succumbed to the 'national cause' and were prepared to play their part in the orchestration of the 'final sacrifice', dying for one's country, which happened in WWI on an unprecedented scale. Equality came to be substantiated if not in material so at least in (imagined) ethnic terms, and this kept issues of social and gender inequality within bounds. Being of the same nation was an endorsement of equality which could switch its signifiers flexibly from language to religion, life style, territorial ancestry and finally to blood.

It is significant that the preparation for war and the aftermath of war in the 20th century gave important impulses for the realisation of political citizenship for women and for the extension of social citizenship through state social policies and eventually the establishment of the various versions of European welfare states. It is as if the faith in cultural equality alone was wearing thin and had to be propped up by other means of political and social equality. In this way the gradual expansion of political and social citizenship came to substitute for the principle of 'Volksgemeinschaft' as the constituting principle of the nation state, at least in some countries. It is equally significant perhaps, and this will feature later, that the demise of the nation state today in the face of globalisation is accompanied by a dismantling of the welfare states.

In this sketchy European overview I find it interesting to observe how the nascent social professions came to reflect that shifting agenda and followed the trajectory of squaring difference with equality in their methodology. As far as I have been able to check the evidence there appears to have been little in the way of straight forward and explicit national enthusiasm or nationalism that guided early forms of social work intervention. Two criteria for the imagining of communities stand out instead in the early forms of European social work, criteria which were however absorbed into the agenda of nationalism the area of values and beliefs, inspired either directly by established religious denominations or by humanism as a secular equivalent the identity of women as carers and as the embodiment of motherliness.

It would be entirely wrong to regard both as remnants of a pre-modern past. The religious and humanistic beliefs in the dignity of every human being were very much rooted in the social present. Their affirmation emanated from an acute awareness of the specific threats that destitution, squalor, disease and depravity arising from the condi-

tions of an industrialising society pose for the individuals concerned. The responses based on those values gave a positive and practical answer to Cain's question 'am I my brother's keeper?', as Zygmunt Bauman called it in his memorial lecture on 100 years of social work education in the Netherlands. They were not lofty, romantic or abstract ideals but were framed in the purposeful, rational and modern language of an educational project: traditional alms giving, sentimental outpourings of the heart to alleviate misery, unreflected impulsive personal reactions to human misery were declared as doing more harm than good within this modern framework of 'doing good'. Charity had to become systematic, impart on people the skills to master their own destiny, to earn their place in society rather than being carried along by society and therefore bearing the stigma of inferiority in terms of the conditions of that modernity. Differences are a scandal to that modern society where they appear to negate the principle value on which it is founded, which is that everybody can have a share in it as long as they try hard and apply the right skills that are necessary for effective participation. The 'deserving cases' were not defined a priori, for instance that those worthy of help belonged to the same religion nor indeed to the same parish community as the helper; their 'deserving-ness' had to be established in the process of intervention, case by case.

To give an illustration from the case notes of the London Charity Organisation Society of 1891, reported in Helen Bosanquet's history of that society (Bosanquet 1914, p 255), I quote Octavia Hill, a pioneer of philanthropy and friend of Ruskin's, who is reported as saying on the issue of giving free school meals to all poor children: 'I say I can imagine no course so sure to increase the number of underfed children in London as the wholesale feeding of them by charity. I myself know family after family where the diminution of distinct responsibility increased drunkenness and neglect, where steady work is neglected and lost, training for work abandoned, house duties omitted, all because of our miserable interference with duties we neither can nor should perform, and in no way is this evil clearer to me than in the provision of free food for the apparently hungry.'

This filtering device became the core of systematic diagnosis and intervention for social work on the road towards professionalisation without making explicit reference to national values. Nevertheless, despite the appearance of these value-based reference points as objective and 'detached', the manner of showing oneself as being deserving, of being a good and worthy citizen, contributed de facto to the repertoire of imageries which made up the national cultural reference points, together with all the other cultural inventions which came to define the national character of a people. To quote Octavia Hill again: 'There needs, and will need for some time, a reformatory work which will demand that loving zeal of individuals which cannot be had for

money, and cannot be legislated by Parliament. The heart of the English nation will supply it – individual, reverent, firm and wise. It may and should be organised, but cannot be created' (Hill 1883, p 10). The individualisation of a case orientation, so characteristic of the mainstream of social work everywhere, was not an arbitrarily or scientifically chosen methodological principle. It arose precisely in the context of the logic of having to square equality with differences in the context of the nascent European nation states. Seen in that context individualisation represents not just a supporting device for liberal market capitalism as which it has frequently been exposed but also, paradoxically, an educational device for the creation of national collectives, or rather for the one collective that supersedes all others, the nation. It represents the construction of the model citizen.

This becomes even more evident in the historical development of the social pedagogical movement in Germany which articulated the dialectic between individual efforts and social norms much more comprehensively and explicitly. The key statement by one of the earliest exponents of social pedagogy in Germany, Paul Natorp, that 'education was not conceivable without community' (Natorp 1899, p 84), postulates this kind of ideal community which, historically, becomes realised through the imagined community of the nation. While no particular community is named, the very universality of the concept, like the rationality on which the social work diagnostic process was to be based, makes it de facto dependent on given, real communities with their very real and very particular political agendas and boundaries. The bottom line is, for instance, that in Germany people who received poor relief were excluded from participation in elections until WWI (Sachße & Tennstedt 1988, p 66).

This pragmatic universalism reflects an inability to engage in the problematic of difference conceptually other than either by way of stressing the particular, the uniqueness of every individual, or by referring to the universal sameness of all human beings. The space in between, where actual identities are formed as historical and collective identities, is ceded to the national agenda which is supposed to take care of the formation of identities. This social work approach disregards or denies the existence of other cultural identities, like the existence of a distinct working class culture, to say nothing of the ignored role of ethnic identities, and bypasses the whole issue of the constitution of identity as a political task of citizenship-grounding. It operates, to put it in today's polarisation, with the principles of liberalism to serve the ends of communitarianism. This unrecognised and unproblematised polarisation in social work methodology remained a feature of our profession right up to the present.

We find another version of this characteristic blindness towards issues of diverse collective identities reflected in the second key criterion for social work professionalisation. In contrast to the value principles this did stress the importance of identity, and this in the form of the identity of women as carers and hence essentially as mothers. The entry of women into the caring field marks again, like in the case of the religious organisations (and often closely related to them) not the continuation of pre-modern forms of social life in the form of relicts from the past, but on the contrary it represents a distinctly modern phenomenon. The role of women as responsible for the physical and emotional well-being of family members was no more 'natural' than their participation in industrial production processes. Both are the result of a differentiation of an external, production-oriented public sphere of work and an internal, intimate and private and ultimately reproduction-oriented sphere of the family which formed only gradually during the 19th century (Sachße & Tennstedt 1988). The identification of women with caring universalises therefore a very particular experience, making a historical product appear like a law or nature, while at the same time creating a very particular identity of 'the woman' as a middle class woman.

This ambiguity must not be overlooked when evaluating the central role that 'motherliness' assumed in the early methodological reflections of women in the caring field. Motherliness in this sense is not the result of women having had the experience of becoming and being mothers but with being female in relation to a specific socio-political reality. It describes a social role that allows women to participate in the public sphere 'as equals' while remaining 'different' in a way that cannot be challenged (by men). This was certainly the line of argument by the bourgeois wing of the German women's movement against the radical feminist wing which it accused of 'levelling' differences (Gleichmacherei): They argued that the women's movement 'should be concerned not with formal equality as a last goal, but with the equally vivid, equally full and rich contribution of female values to culture, with the possibility of a richer influence of specifically female forces on the global perspective of the world' ('Nicht um formale Gleichberechtigung als letztes Ziel, sondern um die gleichlebendige, gleichvolle und reiche Wirkung aller weiblichen Werte auf die Kultur, um ein reicheres Einströmen spezifisch weiblicher Kräfte in die Gesamtanschauung der Welt') states Gertrud Bäumer (1905, p 324). This is a political programme for the recognition of what is only superficially characterised as a natural, biological difference and is in fact a set of cultural values that women uniquely represent. Being a woman as mother has deep cultural connotations. However, its critique of a prevailing capitalist order, that excludes all women from the public sphere and many working class women additionally from the fulfilment of their full role in society, is at the same time an accommoda-

tion to the cultural conditions of the nation: women are expressing their patriotic commitment by moving into organisations and activities which have a social integration objective. Significantly the 'patriotic women's associations' in Germany were affiliated to the Red Cross and therefore brought their personal commitment in nursing, caring and social pedagogy as a sacrifice to the nation, not just to 'society', in the same way as men made their sacrifices for the nation in war.

A key figure in the development of German and international social work, Alice Salomon, held fast to the identity question contained in this emancipatory programme even after the end of the WWI, from the perspective of her very firm international outlook when she wrote in 1919:

(As women) 'we want to express our nature. We must help to create something new for which men do not have the necessary experience and for which aim they also have to search for new energies and ideas. Women especially are equipped for this new task with one quality. It is the sense of the totality of the people as an organism ("Volksorganismus"), the social idea, which grows out of the destiny of woman to be a mother and which gives her the special ability to go beyond her own interests and those of her immediate vicinity in her feelings and actions. It is this thought which has to become the foundation of the people's state ("Volksstaat")... There is no true democracy as long as the life of a people is split by class interests and troubled and torn apart by class movements and class war. The people's state requires citizens who place the interests of the totality above their own interests. In its true manifestation, in its ideal form it would not contain parties any longer, only vocational groups and guilds ("Stände")' (Salomon 1919, p 10).

This is no longer patriotic feminism but the blueprint for an integrated national community based on altruism and aimed at ending divisive social inequality. The qualities of women as carers become the metaphor with which to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate differences and hence create a society of equally valid, but different people. Motherliness for Salomon is a universal quality which transcends the ideologies of politics and religion, and yet it is the prerogative of a particular group of people who can and should build their professional qualities around their 'natural' qualities.

But the distinction between the particular and the universal contained in this 'feminist' approach, rather than giving an absolute reference point in 'nature', remains once more completely open to interpretation. The qualities of women as mothers are social constructs and as such dependent on interpretations that reflect the prevail-

ling social reality. They are the objects of political power games that play on the ambiguity between natural characteristics and their social significance. When it suits, the biological boundaries can be transcended (as when the labour power of women is required in war times to keep the weapons factories going) while at other times they can be invoked to legitimate women's exclusion from work. The same ambivalence attaches to the term 'Volk' which in Alice Salomon's writings is clearly meant to refer to an abstract, idealised non-national community almost equivalent to 'humanity'. But this undifferentiated, quasi-biological construct was also all too quickly colonised by the extreme nationalism of the Nazis and their essentialist and racist constructions of the German Volk.

Both 'proto-methodologies' of social work, as one could call them, which have their grounding in (to our sensitivities) moralistic conceptions and in the elaboration of female qualities of caring, represent attempts of universalising a particular set of values or qualities. In doing this they become oblivious to the subjectivity contained in their original position and hence likely to provide legitimation for ideologies that have an interest in obscuring their ethnocentricity. Both approaches became subsequently discarded and to some extent even discredited, but not on account of their inability to articulate the specific requirements of a culture specific and identity conscious form of practice; on the contrary they were found wanting in objective universalism. One specific reason for their demise seems to be that as social work training developed academic aspirations, such reference points in values and personal qualities were at odds with the positivist criteria prevailing in academic institutions which determined a very pervasive version of universalism. The other is that their de facto dependency on a national framework and their usefulness for rather narrow and instrumental applications to nationalist political agendas became all too apparent. In other words, as social work activities changed character from largely voluntary efforts to paid and contracted jobs, professionalisation appeared achievable only by means of aiming at a higher degree of independence and autonomy, particularly in relation to any national agenda. Both these influences helped to give the emerging profession's international orientation a scientifically oriented methods focus.

The 1920s were not just the period when the first international congresses were being held, but also when methods frameworks began to be exchanged freely between countries which helped them to rise above national social policy confines. They did this not just as practice suggestions, which as 'good ideas' had always crossed from one country to another, like the Elberfeld System, which spread from Germany to many locations in Europe, or the Charity Organisation Society model, but as transferable theories.



Mary Richmond's proposal of 'Social Diagnosis', published in 1917 (Richmond 1917), heralded the start of this exchange and established the 'sociological method' as a functional replacement for the distinction of deserving and undeserving cases based on moral criteria. The adoption of a sociological orientation in the history of Dutch social work in the 1920s pointed in exactly that direction. As Koenis argues (Koenis 1999) this had nothing directly to do with the importance of sociology in Dutch academic discourses at that time but with the dynamics inherent in social work's quest for professionalisation. This compelled it to find more encompassing and thereby more universal reference points than the affiliations to religio-charitable organisations. The breakthrough to a more universal acceptance of this perspective in the Netherlands was however impeded by the strong influence of 'pillarisation' on all public life in this country and hence also on social work. Here social work seems to have been constantly pulled back and forth between the universal, represented by the aims of a 'scientification' of the profession's approaches, and its grounding in distinct value and thereby cultural positions as represented by the 'pillars'. Marie Kamphuis, whom we commemorate in these lectures seems to have advocated the former, applying, however, a combination of sociological and psychological frameworks. It was her conviction that despite their scientific detachment and objectivity they were nevertheless capable of accommodating distinct Christian value positions within their wide and general remit (Kamphuis according to Koenis 1999, p 45).

The appeal of the more specific psychoanalytic paradigm in the USA and the UK, beginning in the 1920s, is based on a similar promise of greater neutrality and universality. Not only did Freud's theories claim universal applicability by offering a scientific representation of the way the mind works, especially in its unconscious layers. They also relativised the boundary between normal and abnormal behaviour and made the abnormal 'Other' part of 'Us'. The Freudian paradigm set in motion, at least at the level of theory formation and of academic endeavours, a search for the one authoritative and universal method. This search culminated in the 1970s in the formulation of system theory as a framework for social work practice capable of encompassing all fields of social work, all types of agencies and all kinds of intervention.

During this whole quest for the development of a universal discourse on methods, the issue of cultural diversity and difference was subjected to a core set of strategies which for me amount to the following options:

Functionalisation of differences – this is the case particularly within the sociological methods framework when a social work perspective served to diffuse political conflicts

and to concentrate on turning differences from a disruptive into a 'fitting' element (that could be remedied through reform or rehabilitation).

Reductionism – from this perspective, applied especially in the reliance on psychological paradigms, cultural differences and questions of identity were reduced to the question of their compatibility with universal human needs as the overriding yardstick for their 'relevance'. This gave social workers the confidence to 'respect' cultural practices in certain respects (mothering and bonding in child rearing practices) while condemning them in other respects ('spoiling' children or neglecting them).

Generalisation – as exemplified in the system approach the methodological focus here was so wide that it could accommodate all differences, allowing the social worker to regard and treat them from a safe and uninvolved distance. Cultural practices emerged as relevant for a particular system and changed when the requirements of the system changed.

Essentialisation – this is, perhaps surprisingly, a very recent response to issues of difference and probably a reaction to the avoidance of any direct engagement with issues of cultural and personal identity. We see it reflected in some forms of feminist social work and in various self-advocacy movements, in the area of disability, poverty or exclusion on ethnic grounds. Essentialism states that there is a qualitative difference between understanding certain life situations from a theoretical and from an experience-based point of view and privileges the latter. Differences become absolute, accessible only to the members of a particular group of people who share the same history, the same experiences, the same biological characteristics.

It is important to recognise that all these strategies can be applied, singly or in combination, both for the purposes of inclusion and for those of exclusion, and the direction which that application takes is not contained in the method as such. By the time the Nazi regime involved social services in Germany in its racist social policy programme social workers had replaced all moral judgements about the 'deserving-ness' of cases with scientific diagnoses of the suitability for treatment of particular cases. The sensitivity for the social and political criteria that constructed differences, which were contained in the categories of e.g. alcoholism, vagrancy or 'Verwahrlosung' ('waywardness'), had been submerged under the confidence in the scientific, rational progress of diagnostic methods that could not possibly have anything to do with culture and politics. They had to do with furthering the aims of civilisation, and, as Bauman has also argued, the Holocaust was not the break-down of civilisation, rather 'it was the

rational world of modern civilization that made the Holocaust thinkable' (Bauman 1989, p 13). The evils of the German Nazi nation required indeed a lot of imagination, of rational imagination. It is time to reflect on social work's part in the production of that imagination and more especially on the fatal ideological substitution of objective, universal criteria for what were ultimately highly subjective criteria of norms of behaviour. By trying to be unbiased, neutral, value-free social workers played into the hands of a murderous state apparatus that sought to perfect its racist social policies through the scientific legitimisation of its programme of exclusion, oppression and annihilation.

And so we feel ourselves caught in the middle of a fearful dilemma today when we try to draw lessons for a more aware, differentiated and competent approach to cultural diversity from the history of social work's methodologies. On the one hand we are beginning to realise how our quest for universal models has always tended to drive us into the hands of a national political and ideological agenda where our espousal of universalism served to make processes of exclusion invisible. We become aware of this link because of the weakening command the nation state has over its own welfare agenda and the break-up of the kind of consensus that existed in every European society after World War II over the basic principles of a national version of 'the welfare state'. Suddenly this taken-for-granted horizon fragments and the former consensus is no more than one position among many other versions of welfare and social solidarity in society. The 'universal goals' of increasing the degree of equality and inclusion through social policy measures lose some of their credibility and this in two regards: in terms of the encroachment of a globalistic economic agenda on national social policies which introduce cost calculations under market-like conditions into the delivery of social services. And it emerges in terms of the unmasking of the myth of national cultural homogeneity in the light of immigration into Europe instead of out of Europe, which serves as a rationing device for scarce social resources. Both conditions seem to suspend the agenda of equality. But on the other hand we know equally well that the retreat to particularism in the form of essentialist identity positions in social work would spell the end of our mandate as a social mandate. It would mean replacing all competence criteria which we have sought to establish through training programmes and formal qualifications with personal identity criteria: only black social workers could then ultimately work with black clients, only women with women, women who have experienced violence with women who have experienced violence. This 'communitarian' alternative would cancel the 'universe of social obligations' which our profession as a social profession was ultimately always premised upon.

The issue of identity and diversity, the task of squaring difference with equality, cannot be addressed with such new simplifications. It seems to me unavoidable that we return to the project of nation building, or rather to the project of making citizenship a lived, rather than a merely formal and institutionalised, reality in the building of complex political networks around social solidarity. For this the nation state remains so far the only viable organisational unit that can guarantee and enforce rights and claim obligations legitimately. But in this nation-state-building 'from below' the issue of diversity, of collective cultural identities, of their constant transformations in the context of providing continuity, needs to be worked out anew and negotiated as the key to stability and integration. This means that every social intervention needs to be more than a transaction between individuals, it needs to be seen as and conducted as a political transaction, a realisation of the many facets of citizenship. It also means that the core skills in the realisation of this citizenship approach are inter-cultural skills, and particularly the skills of the identification and prevention of racism that could always establish itself within those transactions. In this task we can indeed learn a great deal from the history of our profession and from the struggles of founding mothers (and occasional fathers).

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## Maatschappelijk werk, diversiteit en verschillen

*Nora van Riet*

De analyse van Lorenz betreffende de professionalisering van het maatschappelijk werk en de gevolgen daarvan voor de wijze waarop dit beroep omgaat met culturele diversiteit is prikkelend. Ik wil zijn analyses en stellingen leggen naast de Nederlandse situatie en wel op twee terreinen: het terrein van het politieke beleid ten aanzien van diversiteit en verschillen en het terrein van het maatschappelijk werk.

Daarna wil ik enkele conclusies trekken zowel betreffende de opleiding tot maatschappelijk werker als de organisatie van de agogische sector in het werkveld.

### Aandacht voor etnisch/culturele en seksespecifieke verschillen in de politiek

Het omgaan met etnisch/culturele en seksespecifieke verschillen is een regelmatig terugkerend thema in Nederland en in de geschiedenis van het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk. Het is niet altijd een gemakkelijk thema geweest en dat is het nog steeds niet.

Waarom of waardoor precies is niet zo eenvoudig aan te geven. Ik kan een globale indicatie proberen te geven, maar ga dan meer af op mijn impressies dan dat ik met harde cijfers of 'bewijzen' kan komen.

In de discussies draait het steeds weer om de vraag of het in de samenleving gaat om *integratie* of om *inburgering* wanneer we het over 'de allochtonen' hebben. Ik gebruik het woord 'allochtonen', waarbij ik mij realiseer dat er én meer termen in omloop zijn én met allochtonen meestal bedoeld wordt 'gekleurde nieuwkomers' (om toch ook nog even een alternatieve benaming te gebruiken) terwijl er ook een aanzienlijk aantal 'blanke allochtonen' in Nederland zijn. Met integratie wordt eigenlijk meestal *assimilatie* bedoeld, terwijl inburgering meer het behoud van de eigen identiteit van de allochtoon impliceert. Deze discussie wordt op gezette tijden vanuit de politiek aangezwengeld en resulteert geregeld in nota's en beleidsvoorstellen. In het verloop van deze maatregelen zijn in de laatste vijftien tot twintig jaar interessante

het terrein van maatschappelijk werk? In de geschiedenis van 'de honderjarige' valt daar natuurlijk veel over te zeggen en er is in dat kader al veel over gezegd.

De ontwikkeling van het maatschappelijk werk in Nederland hangt sterk samen met de opkomst van de verzorgingsstaat. In de wederopbouwfase na de tweede wereldoorlog werd het maatschappelijk werk in eerste instantie ingezet om de Nederlandse samenleving als een goed geordende, nette samenleving te herstructureren. 'Onmaatschappelijkheidsbestrijding' was een van de eerste taken van het maatschappelijk werk direct na de oorlog: mensen moesten leren wat het betekende burger van de herrezen natie te zijn. Het is de vraag, en dat is ook de vraag die Lorenz stelt, of de toenmalige maatschappelijk werkers zich wel gerealiseerd hebben welk werktuig zij waren in handen van een overheid die duidelijke beelden had over de Nederlandse samenleving: de sloten werden recht gegraven zodat het land in ordelijke partjes werd verdeeld, de verzuiling zorgde dat ieder in sociaal opzicht z'n plek kende. Op die manier konden ook de 'afwijkingen' van het patroon in kaart gebracht worden en kon maatschappelijk werk worden ingezet om dat te verhelpen. Dit is wat in de geschiedschrijving van het maatschappelijk werk de disciplinerende kant van het beroep wordt genoemd. Disciplineren is echter geen geschiedenis. In toenemende mate, misschien wel meer dan ooit, wordt het maatschappelijk werk ingezet bij dwang en drang, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van voorwaardelijke hulpverlening bij schuldsanering of het werken met gezag door de gezinsvoogden nieuwe stijl. Het komt er nu vooral op aan dat de maatschappelijk werker zich *bewust* is van deze situatie en vanuit dat bewustzijn handelt met inachtneming van zijn beroepsnormen.

Over de introductie van het 'social casework' in Nederland vanaf de jaren vijftig kan ik kort zijn. Het voorzag in een behoefte, die zeker universeel te noemen is, om via de verbinding met de wetenschap die het casework legde, erkenning en aanzien te verwerven als professie.

De situatie die Lorenz in zijn betoog schildert is ook in Nederland herkenbaar. Het verlangen om zich te onderscheiden van vrijwilligers, van filantropie en caritasbewegingen, van wetenschappers die ook een aandeel claimden op het sociale terrein, leidde en leidt tot een intensivering van de drang tot professionalisering.

En zo kom ik tot de bezorgde vraag die Lorenz terecht aan de orde stelt: heeft het 'social work', hier het maatschappelijk werk, door zich te professionaliseren zoals het gedaan heeft, zich niet losgemaakt van haar oorspronkelijke, humanistische of christelijke drijfveren en zich overgeleverd aan een afstandelijke, meer op de wetenschap gebaseerde houding en werkwijze, en is het daardoor niet verworpen tot een soort *sociale technologie*? Van Beugen, de Nederlandse 'uitvinder' van de sociale technologie, geïnspireerd door de Amerikanen Lippitt, Watson en Westley met hun boek *Dynamics of planned change* en door Bennis, Benne en Chin, bekend, zeker bij de oude-

ren onder ons, van hun boek *The planning of change*, stelt dat het door middel van modelbouw op het gebied van nagestreefde gedragsverandering mogelijk is tot een betere basis te komen voor het meten van effecten van agogische actie. Onder agogische actie betreft hij ook het maatschappelijk werk. Van Beugen benadrukt in zijn werk heel sterk de onafhankelijke opstelling van de 'change agent', of van, zoals hij als term introduceerde, 'het dienstverlenend systeem'. Ik herinner mij discussies uit die tijd – waarin ook de 'School voor maatschappelijk werk' werd omgedoopt tot 'Sociale Academie' – dat er zelfs wel gespeeld werd met de gedachte de afgestudeerde van de Sociale Academie de titel 'sociaal ingenieur' mee te geven.

Het is duidelijk dat in deze optiek geheel onduidelijk is vanuit welke normen en waarden wordt gehandeld en het lijkt erop alsof die eigenlijk geen rol speelden.

Het lijkt verleden tijd, maar ik vraag mij af of dat zo is.

Door de introductie van de marktwerking op het terrein van zorg en welzijn – en dus ook in het maatschappelijk werk – bestaat de neiging de hulpverlening steeds instrumenteler te maken. Er moet geproduceerd en gescoord worden en er is hoe langer hoe minder tijd om in instellingen tussen hulpverleners de discussie te voeren vanuit welke beroepswaarden op deze manier gehandeld wordt. Als zelfs het *bewustzijn* gaat ontbreken dat dit noodzakelijk is – afgezien van de vraag dus of er tijd voor is – dan hebben we te maken met sociale technologie nieuwe stijl.

Maar, ik zou het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk groot onrecht aan doen als ik hier niet ook vermeldde dat wij in Nederland zo langzamerhand een aardige traditie aan het opbouwen zijn waar het gaat om *methodiekontwikkeling*. Vooral het terrein waar Lorenz zijn vraag neerlegt, het omgaan met diversiteit, is een terrein waar zowel in opleiding als in praktijk geprobeerd wordt methodische werkvormen te ontwikkelen die toegesneden zijn op de specifieke vragen van met name allochtone cliënten. Ik noem hierbij als voorbeeld de bijdragen die mijn voormalige collega Karl Ernst Hesser van de Hogeschool van Amsterdam heeft geleverd op het terrein van de jeugdhulpverlening en de pleegzorg.<sup>5</sup> Bij hulpverlening aan allochtonen komt in organisaties wel steeds de vraag naar voren die Lorenz ook signaleert: of het niet beter is de hulp te verlenen op basis van persoonlijke, op identiteit gebaseerde criteria.

Ik wil hier heel duidelijk stellen dat, hoewel verschillen in cultuur heel groot kunnen zijn, we uit moeten gaan van hulpverlening door en voor alle bevolkingsgroepen.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Ernst Hesser & Luitke van Waveren, *Naar een klarrijke pleegzorg*. Hogeschool van Amsterdam, 1992. Karl Ernst Hesser, *Hulpverlening aan jongeren uit etnische groepen en hun ouders*. Verslag van het project Fondsworming wjw/casusa.nl. Amsterdam, 1990.

slingeringen waar te nemen. Om er maar enkele te noemen: tot in de jaren zeventig werd een groepsspecifiek beleid voorgestaan door de toenmalige regering, mede gebaseerd op de verwachting dat de mensen die hier verbleven als arbeidsmigranten (volgende term), te zijner tijd wel weer naar hun land van herkomst zouden terugkeren. In de Minderhedennota van 1983 werd een de-categoriaal beleid ingezet wat betekende dat de algemene voorzieningen voor allochtonen in dezelfde mate en op dezelfde manier toegankelijk moesten zijn als voor autochtone bewoners van ons land. Toen echter duidelijk werd dat de achterstand op het terrein van werk en inkomen bij de minderheden (volgende term) onevenredig groot bleef in weerwil van alle overheidsbemoeienis, werd een beleid van positieve actie ingezet dat in 1993 resulteerde in de Wet Bevordering evenredige arbeidsdeelname allochtonen, in 1998 gewijzigd in de Wet Stimulering arbeidsdeelname minderheden. Op het internet is een website te vinden, het InburgerNet, dat een samenwerkingsproject is van verschillende ministeries en goed inzicht geeft in alle mogelijke vormen van beleid en uitvoering ten behoeve van allochtonen en asielzoekers/vluchtelingen. En wanneer je die website bezoekt kom je onder de indruk van de hoeveelheid activiteiten die zijn gepland, maar ook worden uitgevoerd. Door al deze activiteiten wordt echter wel eens uit het oog verloren dat inburgering een proces is waar ook de autochtone bevolking bij betrokken is en moet zijn.

De laatste tijd zien we hoe langer hoe meer voorstellen opduiken, zowel in de media (misschien als proefballonnetjes) als in de Tweede Kamer, om de achterstand van met name allochtone jongeren op het terrein van scholing te reduceren. Daarnaast is de criminaliteit van een relatief kleine, maar harde kern van Antilliaanse en Marokkaanse jongeren een bron van zorg én een bron van gerichte en ongerichte voorstellen.

Ook wat betreft emancipatie van vrouwen en de positie van vrouwen staat er in Nederland al sinds lange tijd, om precies te zijn vanaf 1974, beleid en wetgeving op de politieke agenda. Het werd erop gezet in het kader van het door de Verenigde Naties uit te roepen 'Jaar van de vrouw' in 1975. Door de Stuurgroep Vrouwenhulpverlening vws is eind 1998 een beleidsplan gepresenteerd om vrouwenhulpverlening te integreren in zorginstellingen. De gedachte hierachter is dat de zorgbehoeften van vrouwen verschillen van die van mannen en dat ook factoren als leeftijd, etniciteit en culturele achtergrond een belangrijke rol spelen.

In 1994 werden allerlei afzonderlijke wetten en maatregelen opgenomen in de Wet Gelijke behandeling. Op grond van deze wet is het verboden onderscheid te maken op grond van godsdienst, levensovertuiging, politieke gezindheid, ras, nationaliteit,

geslacht, hetero- of homoseksuele gerichtheid of burgerlijke staat.<sup>1</sup> We moeten wel constateren dat in dit opzicht het leven sterker is dan de leer, ofwel: de wetgeving mag dan min of meer ideaal lijken, de mentaliteitsverandering in de samenleving die een goede werking van de wet mogelijk moet maken is nog lang niet tot stand gekomen. Zoals de Commissie Groenman<sup>2</sup> in haar rapportage in 1997 meldt hebben beleid en politiek tot nu toe geen greep gekregen op de indirecte discriminatie.

Ik constateer echter dat niet alleen het greep krijgen op de *indirecte* discriminatie niet lukt, maar dat er, integendeel, in toenemende mate sprake is van racisme ten aanzien van vluchtelingen en asielzoekers en een toenemende onverdraagzaamheid ten aanzien van mensen die de gangbare normen in onze samenleving overtreden. We hoeven maar te denken aan de gebeurtenissen in Kollum en in Elst, aan het bedekte – en soms openlijke – 'eigen volk eerst'. Europa groeit, mensen gaan in andere landen wonen en werken. Er is sprake van groeiende sociale ongelijkheid zoals massawerkloosheid in het ene land en krapte op de arbeidsmarkt in het andere, uitsluiting, racisme en (seksueel) geweld tegen vrouwen en in het bijzonder tegen kinderen. Het zijn thema's die steeds scherper in Europees perspectief aan de orde komen. Gezocht wordt naar grensoverstijgende analyses en tegen-strategieën omdat deze verschijnselen weliswaar in afzonderlijke landen van de Europese Unie voorkomen, maar nauwelijks meer door de afzonderlijke landen kunnen worden bestreden. Het vrije verkeer van personen, goederen en diensten impliceert ook het vrije verkeer van de daarbij behorende spanningen, variërend van de weigering door Frankrijk Brits rundvlees toe te laten op de eigen markt tot vruchteloos uitzetten van rechteloze en statenloze vluchtelingen over elkaars grenzen, wetend dat we daarmee een immens menselijk drama aan het creëren zijn en in stand houden.

## Hoe gaat het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk om met culturele diversiteit?

Ik wil nu stilstaan bij de professionalisering van het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk, in het bijzonder de wijze waarop wordt omgegaan met culturele diversiteit.

Wat kunnen wij leren van ons verleden als opleiders en beroepsbeoefenaren op

<sup>1</sup> Bron: *Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport 1998, 25 jaar sociale verandering*. Rijswijk, SCP, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Commissie-Groenman, *Het Vrouwenverdrag in Nederland anno 1997*. Verslag van de commissie voor de eerste nationale rapportage over de implementatie in Nederland van het internationale verdrag tegen discriminatie van vrouwen. Den Haag, Ministerie van SoZaWe/VUGA, 1997.

pen heen, omdat hulpverlening gebaseerd is op respect voor de identiteit van de ander en op de wens deze tot zijn recht te laten komen. Sekse en etniciteit zijn slechts één aspect van identiteit.

Deze discussie is voor de seksespecifieke hulpverlening formeel afgerond door de integratie van deze vorm van hulpverlening in de algemene hulpverlening, met name in het AMW. Ik wil hierbij uitdrukkelijk de bijdragen vermelden van Lies Schilder<sup>4</sup> en van Eveline Gommers, de laatste als vertegenwoordigster van het VOG-AMW-project 'Seksespecifieke hulpverlening in het Algemeen Maatschappelijk Werk'. Ook in de opleiding MWD wordt, weliswaar niet overal in dezelfde mate, in het curriculum aandacht besteed aan seksespecifieke hulpverlening en aan transculturele hulpverlening (ook hiervoor zijn verschillende benamingen in omloop, ik kies er dus maar een). Collega's van opleidingen hebben daar hun sporen verdiend met het ontwikkelen van methodiek, in samenwerking met het werkveld.

## Conclusies

Het lijkt zo langzamerhand een cliché om te zeggen dat het sociaal werk in het komende millennium voor een grote uitdaging staat. Maar mijns inziens is dat wel zo. Het gaat daar, wat mij betreft, niet of niet in eerste instantie om de vraag hoe het nou verder moet met de professionalisering van het sociaal werk. En zeker niet wanneer die professionalisering gekoppeld wordt aan verdere domeinafbakening ten opzichte van anderen waar juist in toenemende mate mee zal moeten worden samengewerkt, wil het sociaal werk een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan de grote problemen die op ons afkomen. Die problemen hebben te maken met de globalisering op allerlei terreinen van ons leven, waardoor, als reactie op 'het grote en onoverzichtelijke', mensen weer eigen, gesloten, voor hen overzichtelijke wereldjes gaan creëren. Met als gevolg uitsluiting en soms uitstoting van anderen, die 'niet van ons zijn'. In 1997 is door de International Federation of Social Workers een rapport gepresenteerd als uitkomst van een door de EU gesteund project onder de titel 'Social Exclusion & Social Work in Europe - Facilitating Inclusion'. In dit rapport worden aanbevelingen gedaan aan opleidingen, aan sociaal werkers, aan de politiek. Het rapport is aangeboden aan de toenmalige minister van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid. Het verontrust mij dat ik

tot nu toe nergens iets vernomen heb in opleidingen en werkveld over welke stappen men denkt te ondernemen om actief aan het voorkomen van uitsluiting te gaan werken.

Aan het eind van mijn betoog wil ik nog op één opmerking van Lorenz ingaan en wel die over het sociaal mandaat. Ik vat het sociaal mandaat op als de legitimatiebasis voor het maatschappelijk werk vanuit de maatschappij. Dat mandaat wordt echter niet verleend op basis van goed vertrouwen alleen. Het feit dat het maatschappelijk werk hoe langer hoe meer verbonden wordt met bijvoorbeeld lokaal sociaal beleid, met herstructurering op het terrein van de GGZ in het kader van vermaatschappelijking van de zorg, betekent niet automatisch een toekenning van het mandaat. Dat mandaat wordt niet verkregen door middel van de nieuwe zakelijkheid, door het omgaan met maatschappelijk werk alsof het een koekjesfabriek betreft waarin productielijnen zijn vastgelegd en productieprocessen in tijdsinvestering en opbrengst zijn vast te stellen. Dat koekjes breken in een productieproces is aanzienlijk minder ingrijpend dan dat mensen die niet in het productieschema passen daaraan kapotgaan. Het sociaal mandaat kan onder andere verkregen worden door een zichtbare bijdrage te leveren aan het helpen voorkomen van uitsluiting van mensen in onze samenleving en het bevorderen van sociale participatie. Dat betekent een voortdurende bezinning op de vraag of wat wij doen meehelpt om uitsluiting van mensen te voorkomen en meer nog, meehelpt mensen tot hun recht te laten komen als persoon en als burger in onze samenleving.

Onze samenleving is in beweging en dat geeft naast dynamiek ook onrust en onzekerheid. Het geeft ook onrust voor ons beroep van sociaal werkers en opleiders, want wij zullen steeds opnieuw onze plaats moeten bepalen tegenover die veranderingen. De kern van onze opdracht is dat wij blijven openstaan voor die veranderingen, dat wij ons niet opsluiten in een veilige, afgegrensde professie, maar dat we op weg gaan in de samenleving om het werk waarvoor wij zeggen te staan, te doen. Als het maatschappelijk werk, het sociaal werk, werkelijk maatschappelijk verankerd is kunnen wij niet anders. Dan ook accepteren wij het sociaal mandaat, of liever gezegd, dan zijn we het waard dat het ons wordt toevertrouwd.

<sup>4</sup> Zie bijvoorbeeld Lies Schilder, *Maatschappelijk werk met vrouwen. Over de integratie van Vrouwenhulpverlening in het Algemeen Maatschappelijk Werk*, Utrecht, 1990, en Eveline Gommers, *Seksespecifieke hulpverlening in het Algemeen Maatschappelijk Werk*, Utrecht, 1997.