

of the capital, a critique of a society such as this one should not appear without being noticed. *Thinking society that does not think (itself)* is not, as the publisher promotes the book, an easy reading, but it definitely an intellectually stimulating one. It can engage readers in a variety of topics without underestimating their abilities for reflexive thinking. What such a collection may mean for the Slovene academia may not be such a difficult question to answer: those who will bother to read at least some of the essays might be able to understand why, in the society that does not think (itself), not many are likely to publicly agree with Kramberger and Rotar, and even less to publicly disagree. In a society that does not think, neither itself nor others, authors conclude, little space is left for active public engagement of an intellectual.

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**Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work:
International Perspective**
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The edited volume *Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work: International Perspective*, engages with ethics in

the context of social work: as an academic discipline and as a profession. It reflects on ethical issues and dilemmas pertaining to social work as they occur under profound social, political, and cultural transformations under the process of globalisation that shape social life through market driven strategies. Indeed, as Zygmunt Bauman (2007), has pointed out, life is becoming more precarious and uncertain. It is, of course, nothing new to say that growing disparities between the rich and poor, widening of the North and South divide; trends of re-traditionalisation of societies and cultures: emerging of strong religious sentiments and cultural conflicts; reconfiguration of state authority, and ever-present neo-liberal ideologies, are accompanied with corresponding anxieties that encompass social, political, and economic life in its fullest. Thus this book is set against such a background of increasing precarities and challenges they set forth for social work.

The book *Ethical Dilemmas in Social Work: International Perspective* consists of three parts. The first chapter discusses ethical conflicts and their philosophical implications. Second chapter, analyses challenges to ethical discourses, and the third chapter engages with perspectives of ethics in teaching, practice and research. The book brings together an intellectually stimulating group of social work academics who reflect on wide range of issues stemming from: human rights, moral philosophy, theories of justice, and issues of

everyday conduct in the field of social work practice: teaching, research, and social work vocation.

The first chapter offers a valuable rendering of several philosophical inquiries to aid the broader discourse on ethics within the framework of social work. It is premised on three major theoretical trajectories in ethics: the paradigm of universalism/particularism and human rights, that of justice/care, and pragmatist epistemology-via theorisations of John Dewey and Jane Adams. Indeed, insights from these bodies of theories are then drawn to empirical contexts of social work practice, to provide a vivid sense of dynamic and invigorating stream of thought, of ethical dilemmas taking hold within the field of social work. All three texts produce interesting accounts of philosophical interrogations in search of practical solutions to ethical dilemmas. Important to point out is that authors see philosophical inquiry and social praxis in a mutually constitutive relationship. Nonetheless, all three perspectives are not free of tension and contestation, and the three authors, Staub-Bernasconi, Großmaß, and Maiss, seek to find a middle ground so that an accountable and democratic social work field of knowledge and practice takes place. Indeed, the texts in this chapter do not dwell in theorisations for the sake of making theory. Contrary, these accounts are grounded in skilled activity of social work. As Emmanuel Levinas has argued: *"when philosophy and life are confused, we no longer*

know whether we are interested in philosophy because it is life or whether we care about life because it is philosophy" (Levinas, 1998: 3). Hence, philosophical discussions here clearly show that life and philosophical inquiry are closely intertwined.

The book subsequently explores religion (Rommelspacher, pp. 65-79), ethics of disability (Zaviršek, pp. 79-97), and social work in the post-colonial and post-Apartheid context of South Africa (Smith, pp. 97-119), as exemplary of testing the limits of ethical discourses. For Rommelspacher, what the modernisation theory heralded demise of religion and substitution with rational scientific thinking, not that only proved to be a mistaken mode of theorisation moreover, it never imagined a comeback of religious meta-narrative. She argues that *"religious turn presents an enormous challenge for secular social work"* (p. 76) and advocates for a demarcation line between clerical pastoral social work, on the one hand, and professional social work, on the other (p. 76). Rommelspacher's text is an important reminder of problems and issues around the concept of secular state and the ideology of secularism as never fully liberated from religious traits. Zaviršek brings to attention shifting conceptualizations of the right to work discourse within the ethics of disability (p. 82). In a Foucauldian vein of discourse/power analysis and drawing on empirical evidence, she critiques the right to work discourse, and exposes the cruelty of low paid, unsatisfying, and unpaid

work, the disabled persons are subjected to (p. 85). And, Smith offers an historical analysis of the social work education and practice in the post-colonial and post-Apartheid state of South Africa. She presents the dynamics of constitution and development of social work in relationship to the Apartheid State and imperialism. Yet surely, as Smith shows geography matters and political and historical legacies such as Apartheid, colonialism, and imperialism continue to impact social work in South Africa.

An assemblage of texts focusing on perspectives in social work teaching, practice and research is offered in the third chapter. Diverse in both scope and perspective, the texts in this chapter blend well and open intriguing questions pertaining to theoretical approaches and stances to teaching, the practice of social work services, and ethical dilemmas rising in different research contexts, such as Japan, South Africa, and Slovenia. At this point in the book, Banks offers a lucid account of the necessity for a shift in ethics in social work – that of – from professional ethics to ethics in professional work. Insights from Banks's argumentation are carefully weighted and call for a reworking of ethics in social work towards an embedded conception of ethics that would draw from moral philosophy, moral perception, imagination and empathy (p. 126) to ensure a recast of rational and managerialist trends in social work profession (p. 130) for a greater ethically sensitive social work. The critique of the ideol-

ogy of managerialism in social services is furthered by M. Healy. While focusing on ethical issues for social work managers, M. Healy highlights the ethical issues and problems that arise in both paradigms: management and managerialist and in relation to the risks such paradigms notably that of paternalism and social control, pose to social workers. Importantly enough, M. Healy's text testifies against technocratisation/bureaucratisation of social work services and advocates for ethically and morally satisfying social work freed from the ideology of managerialism. By focusing on issues of ethics in social work teaching, Bozalek shows a format of ethics course, dubbed as *blended learning*, with students and extended network of participants in the course construction mediated by information technology. This is a useful text that generates interest of students and teachers in course construction on social work ethics. Moreover, it demystifies the course as a venue reserved for students-teachers within the confines of the academia by stretching it out to the community to gather insights from it that, alas, often remain unaccounted for in the academic scholarship. The paradigm of human rights comes back in the book with Akimoto's reflection on the official-ness of the Japanese language in the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). Akimoto powerfully argues that language is a site of production of power relations and officialness of the Japanese language in the

IASSW should not be read as an act of inclusion, but of exclusion. Akimoto's analysis of language and power show that the official-ness of a language comes through "*normative scales*" (p. 163) and it represents the "*logic and arrogance of majority, power holders and rulers*" (p. 160), and thus should be replaced so that equality is achieved. Finally, the contribution of Sobočan on ethical dilemmas she encountered in her research with the same-sex families in Slovenia, draws attention to an interrelated set of questions: of researcher's subject position, agency, and knowledge and public engagement nexus. Powerful argumentation Sobočan pursues is that research in social work issues, is not only a mode of knowledge, but also a potential for social change and justice.

Although each text of the book can be read on its own, there are several themes woven throughout the book. One involves the issue of the value based profession of social work. Another one relates to ethical dilemmas in social work practice: confidentiality, privacy, self-determination, dignity of recipients of social care and their centrality in social work, and last but not least, strategies for an empowering and ethical social work field of knowledge and praxis. And, the third theme concerns the practical implications of ethics in social work – of ethical decision-making. As the texts in the book show ethical dilemmas or decisions/choices to be made between two equally important alternatives, occurring most fre-

quently, relate to all three strands of social work: teaching, research, and practice. They include the following: human rights versus customary practices, individual and group rights, privacy, engagement of the researcher in social activism, issues of cultural politics of emotions such as empathy and compassion for social workers; and accountable and ethical social work management. More importantly, the book documents that ethical dilemmas in social work entail conflicts with values and competing ethics, bound to continue.

A major strength of the book is the illustration of concepts in theory, research, teaching, and social work practice. If the book has shortcomings, it is the failure to do away with the market style vocabulary, especially in its usage of the concept *client* for the recipients of social care, used by several authors in the book. However, prevalent in social work literature, this term, it can be argued is in contradiction to the social work discipline critique of the overall trends of commodification of social life. It is evident that such a rhetorical shortcoming, indeed, marks fragility of social work discipline about social system's grappling with an ever expanding marketisation of social spheres. Another important remark to make, as the book shows, is the need for empirical evidence of ethical dilemmas in social work across different social and cultural geographies. Hence, wider geographical and contextual representations of ethical issues in social work would

have not only made visible patterns such as: similarities, commonalities, repetitions, and differences of ethical challenges across space, time, and culture, but would have enriched the international perspective, the book aims at.

Overall, the book will stimulate debate in social work discipline and beyond. Questions and issues dealt in the book not only invite intellectual curiosity but also creativity in dealing with practical and everyday issues in social work profession. Indeed, the book is an addendum to

academic discussion on ethics in social work, and as aspired, it will serve doctoral students and other social scientists, and researchers to explore further, persisting ethical dilemmas and their implications for social work theory and practice, internationally.

References

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