Chapter 3
Social Services and Their Educational Mandate in the Modern Nation State

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Introduction

The emergence of social services is one of the key characteristics of modern European nation states and has to be seen in the context of the realisation and shaping of notions of citizenship on various levels. Although the 'phase model' of the development of different dimensions of citizenship, proposed by T. H. Marshall (1992), and his assumption that successive forms of citizenship will automatically bring greater equality can be criticised in that civil citizenship, political citizenship and social citizenship were not necessarily achieved in Europe in neat succession, Marshall nevertheless highlighted the components necessary for the existence of a 'sense of belonging' in society under the conditions of modernity. The cultural, political and social effects of the intellectual movement, which can broadly be characterised as the Enlightenment, amounted to a mentality in which traditional bonds in social relationships and political allegiance gave way to the principle of autonomy and hence free choice in social relationships (marriage, occupation, religion, lifestyle) and in the corresponding structure and legitimation of political forms of governance (Habermas 1989).

Two fundamental principles thereby entered into a dialectical relationship with each other, the principle of liberty and that of participation, based on principles of equality, a tension that came to be the driver of all modern social and political developments and which constitutes according to Mouffe (2000) the 'democratic paradox'. In fact, it can be said that this constitutes the core characteristic of 'the social' in that the manner in which individuals in modern societies interact with each other both threatens and constitutes their individuality, makes them withdraw into their private spheres and reinforces their interdependence, creating the

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need for ever more pronounced differentiation and the recognition of uniqueness and the desire for universal equality.

At each of the levels at which the notion of citizenship formed, this dialectic is being acted out in different patterns (Turner 1990). In terms of social citizenship, the ability of the individual to enter freely into contracts with other citizens, regardless of their rank and social position and under conditions of equality and reciprocity, cannot remain a private arrangement when the question of the enforcement of those contractual agreements arises which necessitates a superseding structure of laws, of enforcement agencies and of sanctions which curtail the absolute freedom of the individual considerably.

At the political level the tension concerns the fundamental ambiguity of the democratic process between the desire for 'direct democracy' where citizens are being asked individually, by way of referenda usually, to express their views on single issues, which entails a strong mobilisation of civil society movements, and the formalisation of 'representative democracy' which ensures more continuity in planning and control over processes but at the same time tends to disregard the interests of minorities. More concretely the dialectic in the context of the development of political versions of the nation state in Europe gave rise to two fundamentally opposed models.

The civic-republican notion of citizenship gives priority to a sense of community both at the civil society level and as its embodiment in the form of the actual nation itself which is characterised and held together by shared cultural values. Citizens are dutiful members of a culturally distinct community, to which for instance a common language contributes centrally, while this nation community commits itself in turn to disseminating those values through a common education system and instilling a sense of pride in this nation with which citizens should identify, if necessary by being willing to sacrifice their lives.

The liberal tradition of citizenship emphasises by contrast the role of the individual citizen as agent in shaping the collective whole. Historically this took two very different political routes. In the libertarian form, the freedom of the individual citizen and his or her right to be unencumbered by the state is paramount (unless the law is transgressed or the arrangement of freedom guaranteed by the state is being challenged); here citizens are primarily private individuals, free to be different and to arrange their own affairs largely by 'playing the market' as the embodiment of this freedom. In the social-democratic form of citizenship, the freedom of the citizen rests on the right to be equal in his or her relationship to the state and hence also to each other, at least as far as the satisfaction of basic human needs is concerned. Citizens contract the state to ensure not only formal fairness but also substantial equality. They therefore invest heavily in a powerful, stable and efficient state, primarily by being prepared to pay a high level of taxes but also by ensuring the continuity of stable governments.

Social citizenship finally developed in Europe in the shape of three basic welfare traditions or rather in different combinations of three guiding principles which regulate the tension between freedom and equality, particularity of need and universality of service and private and public interests. It is important to recognise that they are

directly linked to the different notions of political citizenship that came to characterise the European nation states even though they in most cases developed much later in their history and took their decisive forms in the decades after the Second World War. These models or 'regimes' (in the terminology of Esping Andersen 1990) can be seen as different ways of resolving the fundamental tension contained in the project of modernity mentioned above.

In the conservative approach to ensuring the welfare of citizens and hence creating their social citizenship, which formed a significant part of the politics of national integration engineered by Bismarck in consolidating the founding of the 'Second German Reich' after 1871, a combination of private and public responsibilities prevails. As part of the politics of 'restoration' which asserted themselves in Europe after the crushing of the revolutionary movements of 1848, this model represents the attempt of conserving elements of solidarity structures which had characterised premodern societies and which were preserved in civil society organisations and activities like those of the churches and of civil charities and associations while at the same time involving the state in the creation of new solidarity structures through regulations and subsidies. In this way the principle of 'subsidiarity' distinguishes this model, a principle which also characterises the official approach of the Catholic Church to matters of welfare, meaning that priority in the provision of welfare and social assistance has to be given to the 'smaller unit', the family, the neighbourhood, the association, the local administrative unit etc. and that the state is only entitled to intervene when the capabilities of those units reach their limits – whereby in the 'strong' version of subsidiarity, the state at that point also has a duty to become active and to give support. Bismarck's measures of social insurance were based exactly on those principles and, having their origins in this crucial transition phase, where societies were faced with massive social disruption through industrialisation and the emergent market capitalism and restorative politics feared the impact of communism in the light of this disruption, were the first 'modern' public welfare provisions that gave citizens a certain level of protection from social risks associated with events like industrial accidents, illness, unemployment and old age. Citizens should feel the 'care' embodied in a (paternalistic) state while not being released from their individual and collective responsibilities and being made to adhere to their civil society allegiances in cultural terms.

By contrast the residual model of welfare, which manifested itself most clearly in the UK, fully embraces the principles of liberalism on which the emergent 'free market' bases itself. It appeals primarily to the initiative and hence the responsibility of the individual and limits the responsibilities of the state to a matter of 'last resource'. State intervention, when it is being called upon, therefore is invariably associated with a degree of stigma, exposing the failure on the part of the individual to make adequate private provisions for life's contingencies. This in turn ensures the individual, rationally acting citizen is unencumbered by the state whose role should be minimal and not interfering in the private affairs of free citizens, while those failing to make the right choices are granted only the promise of full citizenship pending on them demonstrating certain achievements (Lawy and Biesta 2006).

The 'Nordic' universal model of welfare developed much later and under very different historical and political conditions. It was not the result of Marxist revolutions as was the case with programmes in post-Revolutionary Russia, but emerged as the social-democratic 'correction' of Marxism in recognition of the necessity of an effective and strongly redistributive state under the geographic and social conditions of Northern European countries. These did not allow for massive industrialisation and a broad labour movement, but the programme had to include the interests of smallholders and fishermen and hence preserve the sustainability of agriculture and promote integrated social development (Stiernø 2004). Its priorities were ensuring the high quality of public services in all parts of the country and availability to all citizens who would thereby regard the state as their 'servant' and could identify with a universal entity which recognised their individuality precisely by providing the basic means of full participation in society. Social citizenship blended here neatly with political and civil citizenship, expressing a concern for a balance between the conflicting or ambiguous needs of the individual.

The development of social services under the at times and in certain respects very different political conditions of the European nation states is often studied merely from an organisational perspective. While the Nordic model favoured the establishment of public social services with civil society initiatives providing more the pioneering beginnings and the residual regime installed public services always as 'second best' in comparison to private ones, particularly in the area of schooling and health, the conservative regime placed and still places great importance on non-governmental social services. But the organisational structure does not on the whole determine the methodology adopted by the operators of these services. In fact, there is a great deal of uniformity in the contents of training programmes for personnel in the social professions across Europe and in that sense also in the methods taught which promote capacities of individuals and communities in solving their own problems, as evidenced for instance by the almost universal acceptance of the concept of 'empowerment' (Adams 2008).

However, the crucial question is how these capacities are to be brought about and fostered, and in this regard, the social professions are faced with a very particular challenge that sets them apart from both the school-based teaching and the clinical therapeutic professions. The 'social' in their title is on the one hand a relict of their past in the social history of modern social services symbolising their being part of the development of the various social welfare structures, and on the other hand, a reminder of the fact that 'the social' is not a reality which simply exists and can be taken for granted as a kind of by-product of the entity 'society', but is constantly changing and is dependent for its existence partly on a particular form of agency which is the 'spontaneous' contribution by all members of society, and partly on very specific efforts and activities which need to be explicitly organised and promoted.

This means that in the act of intervention by social services, in all types of organisational arrangements and in all types of welfare regimes, the nature of the social relationships prevailing under particular social and political conditions of the respective nation state, and hence the whole history of how these relationships were

formed and structured, is in a certain sense being re-enacted. Social citizenship only becomes a reality where it is being practised (Lawy and Biesta 2006), just as much as political citizenship manifests itself in elections and other moments where citizens become politically active within – or indeed against – a particular political framework. Seen from this perspective, it becomes evident that methodical and professional social interventions are also principally characterised by the dialectics contained in the respective citizenship model and that ultimately there can be no fixed reference points for these interventions, but only those reached by participation and negotiation in a project which is always still in the making.

The need for intervention, regardless of whether the request emanates from the individual concerned who perceives a need that requires assistance or from the collective entity which perceives the situation of the individual as problematic, calls for a change process which can be framed in very different formats and which is influenced by prevailing notions of political and social citizenship, or rather by the way in which a particular version evaluates the presented 'problem' either as an expression of the insufficient competence of the individual to master his or her own affairs independently or as resulting from lack of provisions, rights or care afforded to that individual by the collective whole (or a combination of both). In any case a process is required whereby the 'deficit' is not remedied without the participation of the person affected but only with her or his direct involvement in the changes that are necessary. This constitutes a learning process and hence an educational mandate on behalf of society which needs to be activated in these situations – even where this is not necessarily expressed in 'educational' terms (but, for instance, as social intervention, social therapy, social assistance or whatever). Citizens of modern states become full citizens through the exercise of their citizenship, whereby, as Lawy and Biesta (2006) point out, it is very much the question whether they must in the process 'earn' their citizenship through their purposeful learning efforts or whether such efforts are rather the consequence of what was made possible through the initially unconditional granting of citizenship as a basic right. The educational process necessary is therefore in essence a political process with considerable margins of interpretation, and it is not even universally accepted that it can rightly be called an educational process, as shall be demonstrated below.

This 'indeterminacy' has its origins however not just in the historical fluidity of political processes to which the contemporary epoch bears ample evidence but also in basic anthropological and psychological conditions in which 'assistance' in various forms is required at particular moments of crisis and 'need'. These situations tend to reactivate the dynamics of the constitutive elements of human psychological development which evolve in the tension between dependence and autonomy. Here it has been recognised that the human abilities to form social relations and to gain autonomy are directly related to early experiences of attachment and belonging (Kraemer 1992). While the early versions of attachment theory postulated direct causal correlations between bond disruption in early childhood and social adjustment problems in later life, particularly delinquency (Bowlby 1977), current thinking concentrates more on the vulnerability that difficulties in early social bond formation causes in individuals, whereby the element of resilience which can to

some extent compensate for deprivation, are also to be taken into account (Grossman et al. 2005). Nevertheless, a childhood period of taken-for-granted belonging has been recognised as an essential part of the human experience, whether in natural families or in substitute care arrangements, in correspondence to the utter physical dependency displayed by human beings at birth and for an extended period afterwards. Furthermore, humans are completely dependent on others not only for their physical survival but also for their intellectual development, for language acquisition and hence for the ability to live in community. Yet this dependency, or rather the reliability of bonds developing on that basis, is a necessary precondition for the infant sustaining periods of separation by forming an inner coherent sense of self and autonomy. As human beings grow up, reach beyond the bounds of their birth family, enter into relationships and commitments on a wider scale and more and more of their own choosing, the taken-for-granted sense of belonging is replaced or superseded by contractual arrangements that are conditional on particular secure forms of behaviour. This behaviour, apart from establishing a public sense of self, interacts with and constructs a web of rights and obligations which seek to stabilise those 'non-natural' relations in analogy, but also in corrective contrast, to the bonds characteristic of noncontractual family bonds or group identification processes (Hogg 2005).

At a structural level, it is therefore not surprising that human forms of community and solidarity develop in relation to, though not necessarily in correspondence with, this dual psychological need for unconditional belonging on the one hand and autonomy and the exercise of choice on the other. Traditionally, some forms of community take recourse to the model of the family and treat the corresponding form of national solidarity as an extension of kinship relations; however, the complexity of modern social interactions and particularly the division of labour with all its social consequences require then the establishment of the kind of structures of solidarity and belonging discussed above from the perspective of citizenship.

The social professions, as products of this fundamental reordering of solidarity structures and as an intricate and inalienable part therefore of social policy developments and particularly of the various welfare state projects after the Second World War, have to confront and negotiate two related sets of conditions: At the level of the immediate face-to-face encounter with the users of social services, they have to be prepared to meet persons for whom the necessity to seek (or to accept) assistance evokes possibly unresolved issues of vulnerability in relation to the balance between dependency and autonomy. This issue has now been recognised as of considerable importance also for instance in a medical context where the state of security or vulnerability of adult patients can make a considerable difference with regard to their ability to accept help and to their compliance with prescribed treatments. It is patients with unresolved issues concerning self-confidence and dependency who tend to 'emphasise psychological normality, independence and strength, or they seem preoccupied with their emotional needs and oscillate between seeing others as either wonderful or dreadful' (Adshead 2010, p. 210). These effects and uncertainties are exacerbated in the case of social instead of medical issues and mesh

directly with the way social and political communities are constituted on social values and political arrangements which give dependency and autonomy very distinctly, and contrasting connotations.

And this is where social workers and other social professionals have to take these structural issues into consideration as elements of their perceived roles. Requiring public assistance with social problems is potentially a shaming experience. These perceptions and expectations always precede the actual encounter and make it fraught with defensive and frequently hostile attitudes on the part of the client. In this sense, the welfare regime and the presuppositions of social citizenship, which social workers in particular are part of and represent, inevitably frame the actual method of intervention chosen to address a specific situation of need, or rather, far too little methodological attention is given to the necessity to relate methods of intervention to the principles guiding a country's social policy structure and social service practice.

This means not that the welfare regime context would determine the choice of method but rather that the change process negotiated with clients as a means of overcoming the actual sets of difficulties confronting the client, as a learning process, has to address both the client's personal history and in a certain way simultaneously the society's political history. This is the point at which the distinction between two fundamentally different approaches to social learning matters (Biesta 2011). Social learning conceived as a means of socialising people into the prevailing value and behaviour structure of a society ultimately suppresses the resistance which the helping process triggers initially, thereby 'wasting' its motivational potential and causing a fundamental disengagement of the person from the change process required. By contrast, the civic learning approach aims at mobilising the subject as an agent by giving recognition of the initial necessity to view critically the need for assistance and to deal with potential issues of shame and stigma. Only by placing the learning process in this wider context can the actual social mandate be carried out and the promise of social citizenship be realised. It entails, whatever the precise method of social learning used, a process of 'learning to realise social citizenship', whereby the fundamental ambiguity in the notion of learning has to be addressed – does this focus on a deficit on the part of the 'learner' which has to be remedied, or does this produce an 'enabling process' in which society as a whole is also called upon to make sure that nobody is 'left behind' in realising their full potential for the benefit of an integrated, culturally advanced and technically well functioning social organism?

This link with social policy, and the difference in connotation that the political context can make, becomes immediately visible in cross-country comparisons in relation to the implications of the two major methodological strands which developed in Europe in the field of the social professions. On the face of it, the 'educational' implications of the method paradigm of social work are less apparent than those of the social pedagogy approaches, which have the educational element in their (often misunderstood) title. But a brief look at the history of social work serves as an illustration of how in the context of a basically liberal approach to welfare, which prevailed in the countries that form the political context in which this model was first created (Britain and the USA), an educational element was indeed

present in the largely punitive public welfare measures that existed at the time of industrialisation. It was instrumentalised to drive the development of capitalist attitudes and comportments in those strata of society that were not immediately willing (or able) to adjust to the rules of capitalism. However, on account of the inefficiency of 'moral preaching' for people struggling with poverty, the 'lesson giving' had to be taken back and transformed into an individualised, psychologically understood change process based on the latest scientific insights derived from the therapeutic arena. Professional social work as case work (leaving aside for the moment the community and particularly the community education approaches that developed in the ambit of the settlement movements) sought to tread a path between wanting to rescue vulnerable people from the deliberately stigmatising forms of assistance enshrined in public institutions like the workhouse, the asylum, the prison and other receptacles for the poor on the one hand and the indiscriminate, unsystematic almsgiving of private charities on the other, which was considered to be of a bad (educational) influence on the character of the poor (Bosanquet 1914). The personal relationship with the individual 'cases' became thus a core element, not only for finding out whether they were 'deserving', but also to initiate a process of enabling which initially ranged from a mixture of material assistance and personal example to soft moral pressure and appeals to reason or decency (Peel 2011). In this context the advent of psychoanalytic insight into the working of the unconscious came to the rescue of those early social work pioneers who saw themselves confronted with a great deal of resistance, denial or con-compliance by their clients – for the psychological reasons discussed above. Only by recognising in these 'defences' the unconscious reactivation of unresolved earlier conflicts around autonomy and dependency could a scientific way be found to address these conflicts as a precondition for the resolution of the actual 'presenting' issue. The learning process thereby initiated addressed, according to Freud, the capacities of the Ego to develop a constructive relationship with 'reality', to 'mature' and grow strong (Robinson 1930).

As mentioned, there is no linear connection between the political principles of a liberal social policy regime and the development of this individualised case work orientation in the sense that politics would have determined the emergence of academic discourses; nevertheless, the policy context of a liberal tradition provided opportunities for a rather neat fit as far as the formation of citizens was concerned, particularly those on the margins of society, who could thereby be made to 'integrate' into a welfare model centred on enforcing their individual efforts as a precondition for gaining more autonomy. The parallel development of community approaches in the settlement tradition, also in liberal countries, bears witness to the emergence of a model of social learning that shifts the emphasis from the individual to the collective in protest against the prevailing political ideology and its enforcements through individualised intervention methods (Davis 1984). This approach to social issues holds on to the principle of self-help and introduces self-generated learning as the method to overcome adverse conditions lastingly without creating dependence. It thereby acknowledges the fact that in overcoming adversity, people need to mobilise the potential of cooperative action and this resolves also several of the problems associated with an exclusively individual orientation.

Settlements were basically centres of community learning, partly by means of instruction by the 'experts' who decided to share periods of their privileged lives as students or dons from Cambridge or Oxford with people in neighbourhoods at the bottom of the social scale, but partly also by means of autonomous learning processes generated by the community itself. This was the idea developed by Jane Addams for the Settlement 'Hull House' at Chicago (Addams 2002), an approach which incidentally greatly influenced John Dewey in his democratic education concept. It lived on as an educational tradition particularly in Scotland under the title of 'community education' (Scottish Education Department 1977). But the context in which these movements emerged in countries of a liberal tradition did not favour their consolidation, or only in 'pockets of resistance', nurtured mainly in traditional working-class neighbourhoods or other milieus of 'nonconformism' that turned against the prevailing tide of individualism and class distinction. It is for these reasons that the paradigm of social pedagogy never really took root in Britain because it would have required the corresponding notion of participative political citizenship to take root.

Social pedagogy as a response to the challenges of social disruption resonated instead particularly with a political regime which accepted that the creation of an integrated, stable society was not to be left to the sum of individual efforts to organise themselves out of sheer necessity and make private provisions for their social protection. A society of this 'communitarian' kind, promoting the notion of subsidiarity, is automatically and collectively involved in a continuous educational process which it regards part of its collective 'cultural reproduction'. Here it is accepted that the task of overcoming difficulties, particularly those that constituted 'the social question' as it was called in nineteenth-century Germany, could not be delegated to individual efforts alone and could not be achieved by means of increasing social control, but only by the whole society engaging in a collective learning process (Lorenz 2008). Just as schools did not come into existence merely for those incapable of learning by themselves but as a mainstay of the collective 'civilising process', so this social learning process had to extend to areas beyond the sphere of the school, and not only for purposes of 'correction'. Youth clubs, sports activities, leisure initiatives, evening educational institutes and the work of charities all carry this collective mandate to improve the state of society by means of learning (*'Bildung'*) in view of the growing challenges of modernisation. Typically, in Germany, the romantic youth movement at the turn of the twentieth century did not set out to take impoverished youth from the slums into the fresh air of uncontaminated nature to teach them an alternative lifestyle – it was an inclusive movement that sought to redress the ills of industrialisation and the alienation from nature. Although being largely promoted by middle-class youth, it aimed at reducing class barriers in its idealistic, universal pursuit of leisure and rehabilitative activities, imitated also by working-class associations (Coussée 2008). The encounter with nature per se was seen as an educational, participative experience. Sports became the domain of cultural 'nation building' which gave all classes a sense of purpose and incorporation into the nation state project, even though their type of sports might be class divided.

The concept of social pedagogy that harnessed the core ideas of those movements can only be understood against this political background and as an alternative to the 'remedial' orientation of the social work paradigm. It accepts the legitimacy of comprehensive lifelong learning processes in which all members of society, not only those who show problems of adjustment and coping, have a stake. This is the reason why for instance the German Children and Youth Legislation, from its beginnings in the Weimar Republic to the Act of 1989, sought to unite universal educational measures and those specifically aimed at 'youngsters with problems', not only to avoid stigmatising the latter, but as an expression of the fundamental right to education of all children and young people. This cannot be reduced to the right to schooling but means a right to have a stake in all the formal and informal learning opportunities that a society provides.

In addition to its social policy affinity, this concept of pedagogy had deep roots in German philosophy inasmuch as the hermeneutic tradition that constituted the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) provided the paradigm of an interactive, linguistically constituted community as the medium in which understanding is only possible, a social entity which in every generation and every cultural context has to be created and renewed. It is noteworthy that sociologists in this tradition like Max Weber, exponent of the sociological approach of *'Verstehen'*, and Ferdinand Tönnies with his distinction of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* contributed as much to addressing the 'social question' (Schröer 1999) as did pedagogues like Friedrich Fröbel, founder of the Kindergarten movement, and Hermann Nohl, who helped to shape the youth policies of the Weimar Republic (Lorenz 2012).

However, also in the case of social pedagogy, the proximity to a particular social policy regime can bring the danger of incorporation into this regime for purposes of legitimating the state of affairs that a conservative government maintains considerable degrees of social inequality. The emphasis on learning how to be and to behave as a citizen can allocate people to social ranks or cultural or ethnic entities that confine them to their boundaries of possibilities and opportunities in the typical gesture of civic learning as an instrument of socialisation (Biesta 2011). Only a political and socially critical reading of social pedagogy addresses the risks involved in forging such links and challenges the limits of socially and culturally constructed horizons in order to arrive at a practice of democracy as a constant challenge to the existing social order (Mouffe 2000). These 'subjectivising' versions of social pedagogy, of which the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' by Paulo Freire (1970) is perhaps the best known, have their own tradition and uphold particularly the values of collective, self-generated learning processes where the issue to be addressed has equal importance as the process and the mode of working towards its realisation. The political implication of social pedagogy in this critical sense is always that the community which is meant to be shaped and organised by the pedagogical process is ultimately seen as a political community, constituted and at the same time constantly transformed by a process of open democracy which challenges predetermined objectives (Biesta 2011). Even where it takes place in institutions like the school, it implies a lived form of social citizenship in which participation is seen as a right and where the members of a learning community value and practise their

differences as the essence of a democratically constituted community (Shor 1992; see also Wildemeersch in this volume).

This brief analysis shows that the practice of both social work and social pedagogy implies different forms of learning but is always bound up with social policies and that this practice requires therefore always an active engagement with social policies. Indifference to this social policy context already implies taking a political stance that accepts the limits set by these policies and furthermore interprets social citizenship only in a passive way of 'belonging' whereas particularly the tradition of social pedagogy emphasises its active, collective and transformative practice.

This is particularly acute at a time when neoliberal ideologies are curtailing the dimension of citizen rights and lean more heavily towards citizen duties (Cox 1998). The impact of these principles on social policies in all parts of Europe has been considerable with the result that social service staff become enlisted in an extensive programme of 'activating' users of those services designed to prevent long-term dependency on social benefit payments in cases of unemployment or incapacity to work. In this context the full ambiguity of the concept of 'help towards self-help' and hence also of 'participation' manifests itself anew and brings all the tensions and conflicts characteristic of the initial formation of welfare models back into play (Clarke 2005). While being deprived of a job or lacking in physical or cognitive skills to 'look after oneself' can indeed be associated with a loss of self-respect and confidence, the task of motivating and enabling people to regain those skills and engage in retraining or more systematic job searching is embedded in political and economic conditions which either can offer realistic hopes for such participation or are geared towards denying the very means of participation. In the latter case, efforts and techniques of activation can easily be perceived as a cynical ploy of shifting attention and blame from 'the system' to the individual (Raeymaeckers and Dierckx 2012). When defects at the structural political or economic level are presented as learning problems at the individual level, the seeds of fundamental mistrust in both these educational efforts and in the political system and its intentions are being sown (Biesta 2012). This ploy in turn spreads the perception that all rights of full citizenship, social, political and ultimately also civil, have to be 'earned' and that to receive assistance from the collective is associated with shame. Social work interventions linked to a 'workfare-as-welfare agenda' (Roets et al. 2012) acquire once more the flavour of distinguishing the 'deserving' from the 'undeserving' and of extending the 'privileges' of full citizenship only to those willing to adjust and to learn how to modify their behaviour.

Contemporary interests in the UK in adopting the paradigm of social pedagogy have to be assessed in this light (Cameron and Petrie 2009). While the widening of the prevailing methodological discourse there in a social pedagogical direction can indeed enrich various fields of the social services and provide a much needed theoretical underpinning of the fast growing 'care sector', where scant attention had been paid previously to systematic professional training, close attention has to be paid to the very different sociopolitical implications of the approach in its original German context and in that of the UK. Where learning becomes 'being taught a lesson', new dependencies arise and the old dichotomy of care and control,

which all post-war models of the welfare state attempted to shift towards care as a social-educational means of obviating the need for control, resolves into one comprehensive and insidious programme of adjustment and thereby control in the disguise of care.

The essence of social learning, in whatever context it takes place, is that it gives expression to and enacts in being practised a particular version of 'the social' and thereby of the way in which social solidarity is understood and organised in a society. This applies equally to formal and informal learning processes. In the face of a colossal re-education process instigated by the combined forces of commercial interests and neoliberal policies and aimed at constructing the 'free agent' of *homo economicus*, pedagogues in all settings need to take position to these pressures as part of their pedagogical competence and commitment and apply their professional knowledge and skills also in a political arena. Such knowledge points towards the necessity of establishing a correspondence between anthropologically and psychologically evidenced needs for constructive forms of dependence in dialectical relations to those of identity and autonomy on the one hand and their recognition in public and civil society arrangements of solidarity on the other. In this sense, achieving social citizenship by practising democracy is indeed a pedagogical task, but one that requires careful theoretical grounding and focused, determined and critical political practice at all levels.

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