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Social Work in Switzerland

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Abstract

What form does Social Work take in Switzerland, and what are the current discourses? This article aims to trace academic and political developments in the analysis of coercive care in Switzerland. In a spirit of scientific self-observation, it will also reflect critically on the role of Social Work as a force of normalization and of the imposition of norms, as well as contextualizing it within current discourses. Looking back into the past makes it possible to expose arbitrary welfare practices that have violated people's integrity; at the same time, it can reveal processes of professionalization and, linked with these, the development of work methods. The problems confronting Social Work have to do with the tension self-determination and external control, and interventions in the lives of those affected require a particularly high level of legitimation.

Keywords

Social Work, Switzerland, normalization, welfare and coercion

Introduction

Writing about Social Work in Switzerland is a challenge, given the country's federalist nature. Switzerland is not only characterized by three different linguistic regions; it has even been said that there are three different models of the welfare state within a single national framework (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011, p. 1319). Furthermore, the theoretical discourses on Social Work conducted in Switzerland are linked not only to international discourses in the English-speaking world, but also to the discourses in the neighbouring countries with a shared language. German-speaking Switzerland is oriented towards Germany, while French-speaking Switzerland is oriented towards France and the French-speaking part of Canada (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012, p. 415). Against this background, publications aiming

to give an overview of Social Work in Switzerland generally focus on the development of professionalization in one linguistic region, such as German-speaking Switzerland (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011), trace the history of Social Work (Ramsauer, 2020), or concentrate on the academization of Social Work (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012). They point out that there are no findings based on scientific systematization, and that the scientific self-observation of Social Work in Switzerland is still in its infancy, though historical research on Social Work is an exception (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011; Gredig & Goldberg, 2012).

In this article we wish to examine the scientific self-observation of Social Work, focusing on a specific subject area, the historical analyses relating to administrative detention[1] and the current research around 'welfare and coercion'.[2] This makes it possible to trace selected historical developments, to reflect on discussions of Social Work as a normalizing and norm-imposing force, and to contextualize present-day problems and discourses.

The history of Social Work: welfare and coercion

When the Swiss Civil Code (Zivilgesetzbuch, ZGB) came into force in 1912, the concept of *Verwahrlosung* (more emphasis on depravity than neglect) was enshrined in law. From then on, it served to legitimize the monitoring of parents and interventions in their parenting for the sake of child protection. At the same time, the legal status of the wife in relation to her husband was modified: the husband no longer had guardianship over the wife, as had been customary in cantonal codes, and both parents were now responsible for raising the children. Intervention in the family in cases of *Verwahrlosung* was seen as a solution to the *Soziale Frage* ('social question') (Ramsauer, 2000; Rietmann, 2013). The pressure to normalize and conform mainly affected people in poverty (Atzbacher, 2010; Ramsauer, 2000; Ziegler et al., 2012), but also women who did not meet the norms of sexual morality (Jenzer, 2014, p. 162), and people who deviated from what was perceived as a Swiss way of life (Galle & Meier et al., 2009). The measures ranged from institution-

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[1] Until 1981 there was a compulsory measure under Swiss public law that allowed authorities to deprive people of their freedom via an administrative procedure, and to send them to reform schools, work institutes, or even prisons, even though they had committed no crime. This affected people who did not conform to the dominant concepts of morality and who were stigmatized by the authorities as "work-shy" or "dissolute" (Germann & Odier et al., 2019, p. 15). The law was eventually modified under international pressure.

[2] National Research Programme 76, 'Welfare and Coercion', was launched to follow on from the work of the Independent Commission of Experts (IEC), which investigated and documented the history of 'administrative detention' and other coercive care in Switzerland up to 1981. http://www.nfp76.ch/en/Pages/Home.aspx [accessed: 21.11.2011].

alization and the out-of-home placement of children to forced sterilization and forced adoption.[3] These different practices of intervention, but also the concept of *Verwahrlosung*, show how 'welfare' in the early days of Social Work was shaped by morality. They also show the rapid transition to coercive care if the recipients of care proved unwilling to conform. Here Social Work explicitly reveals its nature as a 'force of normalization' (Maurer, 2001, p. 125).

The following section aims to outline the beginnings of the historical analysis of Social Work in the tension between 'welfare and coercion'. It also looks at scholarly work on the processes of professionalization in Switzerland. This is a selective account, and despite efforts to overcome the linguistic boundaries within Switzerland, more space is occupied by German-language research.

Until the late 1980s, there was no systematic history of Social Pedagogy[4] in (German-speaking) Switzerland. Historical accounts were heterogeneous, focusing on specific problem areas. Most of the work available consisted of retrospective studies marking the anniversaries of socio-pedagogical institutions. These provided valuable evidence, but focused on individual institutions (Tuggener, 1989, p. 129). Similarly, different forms of out-of-home care for children in Switzerland were not subjected to critical research until the late 1970s (Huonker 2014, p. 39). Part of the reason why it was difficult to produce a comprehensive historical analysis of socio-pedagogical history was the structures of the old Swiss confederation, where the cantons had considerable autonomy. As a result, scholarly studies were restricted to individual Swiss cantons (Tuggener, 1989, p. 130). In 1987, to address this research gap, the Chair of Educational Science with a Focus on Social Pedagogy, at what was then the Pedagogical Institute at the University of Zurich, organized a seminar on the history of residential care in Switzerland. This led to a documented exhibition and a publication (Schoch et al., 1989). The historical research was conducted in this subdepartment and also in the research centre for Social Pedagogy, founded at the Pedagogical Institute by Heinrich Tuggener.[5] A systematic research programme in the area of residential care was established (Christen et al., 1984, p. 507), with diverse studies exploring the history of children's homes and institutions (Alzinger & Remi et al.,

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[3] For more on the forced adoption of children from abroad in Switzerland see Bitter & Nad--Abonji et al., 2018; Bitter et al., 2020.

[4] We distinguish here between Social Pedagogy and Social Work. From a historical perspective (in the German discourse), a separation between Social Pedagogy and Social Work makes sense, as the two emerged from different roots. Social Work, for example, was based in particular on classical welfare work, while Social Pedagogy dealt with phenomena of youth welfare and early childhood education.

[5] Prof. Dr. Heinrich Tuggener held the chair in 'Educational Science with a Focus on Social Pedagogy', at what was then the Pedagogical Institute at the University of Zurich, from 1972 to 1989.

1987; Keller, 1988), and focusing on socio-pedagogical institutions and welfare practices (Chmelik, 1978; Hochuli Freund, 1999). Subsequently, scholars of history and education carried out research on various topics, such as the emergence of youth welfare and the practices of child removal in the city of Zurich between 1900 and 1945 (Ramsauer, 2000); child welfare and residential care in the city of Zurich from the seventeenth to the first half of the nineteenth century, and the establishment of the orphanage from the context of poor relief (Crespo, 2001); the history of *special education* in German-speaking Switzerland (1800–1950) (Wolfisberg, 2002); and the strategies of legitimation based on the concept of *Verwahrlosung* in youth welfare (Wilhelm, 2005).

The historical investigations into the system of welfare and guardianship existing at the time highlight sometimes inappropriate state interventions in the lives of those affected and call for an examination of questions of legitimation and professionalization. The process of professionalization in Switzerland followed a similar course to that in the international context, although there are differences in comparison to Germany (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011, p. 1319). The following section outlines these Switzerland-specific processes. On the one hand, it has been suggested that the difference lies in the failure to 'scientify' Social Work at the beginning of the twentieth century (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011). On the other hand, Sonja Matter (2015, p. 209) shows that no well-founded discussion of methods took place in Swiss Social Work until the mid-twentieth century. Up to this point, she explains, the training of social workers was mainly oriented towards the requirements of practice (Matter, 2015). In the 1950s, radical processes of change (Matter, 2015) took place in Social Work. These were mainly driven by the reception and introduction of 'social casework'[6], as well as by the liberalization of society. In a related development, the social workers active at the time made increasing reference to the scientific foundation of their profession (Matter, 2015, p. 211); this can be considered as a turning point in their strategies of professionalization.[7]

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[6] Tuggener (1971) traces in detail how the European response to America's 'Social Work' concentrated mainly on the 'casework' method. The Europeans, however, did not adopt the broad complex of methods, nor did they follow the subsequent developments in America. Alongside various (normative and legal) reservations about a transfer to the European context, Tuggener identifies a semantic problem. This is that there were, in the German-speaking area, two target areas for the ideas offered by America: Social Work and Social Pedagogy. Despite many commonalities, these still differ markedly even in the present.

[7] In the nineteenth century, work on social problems was mostly carried out by philanthropic movements and was marked by a gender-related division of labour (Matter, 2011). While men occupied positions of public welfare, and were therefore mainly responsible for administration, organization and strategy, women were active in the guardianship authorities and in private welfare. They were in direct contact with the target groups, provided concrete support services (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012, p. 406), and thus carried out the work of building social relationships.

Up to this point, the 'scientification of the social' (Raphael, 1996, pp. 165–193, as quoted in Matter, 2015, p. 210), and, linked with this, the areas of social welfare and social assistance, were mainly dominated by medicine, psychiatry, and *special education* (Ramsauer, 2000). The experts in these disciplines successfully occupied the 'places of legitimate speaking' (Sarasin, 2003, p. 34, as quoted in Matter, 2015, p. 211), and, in Switzerland, shaped the public law concept of *Verwahrlosung*, in its discursive use for the field of child and youth welfare. From 1927 on, it referred mainly to eugenic and hygienic dimensions, replacing a critical understanding of *Verwahrlosung* as a symptom of social problems (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011, p. 1321). In this context, Matter (2015, p. 211) points out that the imported concept of 'social casework' allowed social workers to refer to a scientific foundation, to boost their status as experts, and to take part in the discourse. With social casework, they could focus attention on scientifically underpinned counselling, diagnoses, and planned support processes (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011, p. 1323), and thus distance themselves from the concept of 'social motherhood' (Matter, 2015, p. 211). Engagement with social casework was important for the scientification of Social Work because it involved critical reflection on the normative foundations of Social Work (Matter, 2015). As the focus shifted to a discourse on human rights and respect for the dignity of service users, a critical view would be taken of compulsory social measures associated with disciplining and controlling mechanisms of Social Work (Matter, 2015, p. 218).

Working methods: The debate on professionalization in the context of 'welfare and coercion'

From the turn of the millennium, there was an upsurge in historical examinations of compulsory measures in Switzerland.[8] On a scholarly level, a cascade of research followed. As part of National Research Programme 51, 'Integration and Exclusion' (2003–2007)[9], research projects explored the history of Social Work models and practices of intervention (Matter, 2011; Schnegg, 2007); social welfare (Frauenfelder et al., 2008); welfare practices and eugenics (Ritter et al., 2009; Ziegler et al., 2012); coercion in psychiatry (Meier et al., 2007); the exclusion of the Yenish people (Huonker, 2009; Huonker & Ludi et al., 2009; Jäger et al., 2004); and the stigmatizing effect of (case) files (Galle & Meier, 2009). These were followed by further projects at national, cantonal or regional level on indentured child labour-

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[8] For a detailed overview see Hafner, 2011; Huonker, 2014; Seglias, 2012 offers a comprehensive history of growing up in institutions.

[9] For further information see https://www.snf.ch/media/de/sX5qMfdkCAX0La4W/NFP51_Kurzportraet_d.pdf [accessed: 19.11.2021].

ers and other forms of out-of-home placement (Businger & Ramsauer et al., 2019; Gnädinger & Rothenbühler et al., 2018; Hauss et al., 2018; Leuenberger et al., 2011; Ries & Beck et al., 2013; Rietmann, 2013).[10] The research findings publicly revealed the deficiencies of welfare practice and of the institutions, as well as the suffering experienced by those affected. A critical view of current practices of Social Work became inescapable.

In the genesis of Social Work in Switzerland, self-reflection through research has so far played a fairly secondary role (Baier et al., 2015). Attention has centred on the development of vocational training programmes (Hauss, 2011), with an emphasis on interdisciplinary theoretical approaches such as psychology, law, education, and sociology. Moreover, as previously discussed, the focus during the professionalization process was on the Social Work methods imported from the Anglo-American world (Matter, 2015). This phase in the professionalization of Social Work, referred to as a phase of pioneering and expansion (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012, p. 407), was shaped by ethical-moral debates on the 'social question' (Castel, 2008), which was based on bourgeois ideals and went hand in hand with disciplinary welfare measures. At the same time, individual actors were already striving to develop scientific foundations for Social Work in the mid-twentieth century (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011). Various training opportunities were created up to the 1960s, such as the 'Social Women's Schools', which largely offered part-time training for working women (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012, p. 407). In the 1960s and 1970s the discipline acquired a firm academic foundation with the establishment of the chairs of Social Pedagogy at the University of Zurich and the chair of Social Work at the University of Fribourg (Gredig & Goldberg, 2012). The process of academization and the diversification of work methods continued with the establishment of the universities of applied science in the 1990s and the founding of the Swiss Society for Social Work (SGSA) (Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011; Gredig & Goldberg, 2012).[11]

Social Work methods can be understood as applying across the whole Social Work profession and resist clear classification. For Switzerland, according to Keller and Schmocker (2015), 'Social Work' can be understood as the generic term, which can – in terms of professional practice – be divided into three different fields: Social Work, Social Pedagogy, and sociocultural animation (Husi & Villiger, 2012). The public mandates of these fields are differentiated against this background. The perception is that Social Work is responsible for the protection of children and

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[10] The edited volume by Furrer et al. (2014) successfully brings together all previous major research in Switzerland on the topic of 'welfare and coercion'.

[11] For more on the education policy background and the genesis see Gredig & Goldberg (2012); for the different disciplinary positioning and anchoring of Social Work and its recognition as an independent academic discipline see Gabriel & Grubenmann (2011).

adults, for securing livelihoods and managing poverty; Social Pedagogy is mandated with the care and education of socially disadvantaged people; and sociocultural animation is responsible for offering and promoting sociocultural activities (Keller & Schmocker, 2015, p. 382). This differentiation between the different areas of Social Work is still reflected today on the level of training. In French-speaking Switzerland, Ticino and German-speaking Switzerland, the universities of applied science offer training in Social Work with opportunities to specialize in the fields of Social Pedagogy, sociocultural animation, or Social Work.[12] At the two universities, Fribourg and Zurich, it is possible to either study Social Work and Social Pedagogy (Fribourg) or take a general course in educational science with a focus on Social Pedagogy (Keller & Schmocker, 2015, p. 385).

Alongside the terminological differentiation between Social Work, Social Pedagogy and sociocultural animation, scholars have described the 'development of theory' in Social Work (for German-speaking Switzerland see Gabriel & Grubenmann, 2011, p. 1324; Sommerfeld & Amez-Droz, 2015; for French-speaking Switzerland see Gredig & Goldberg, 2012, 418; Tabin, 2015). Sommerfeld and Amez-Droz (2015, p. 412) emphasize two distinctive features: in comparison to Germany, Social Work in Switzerland is characterized on the one hand by a relatively strong focus on the practical science, and on the other hand by a close connection to research. These two things, according to Sommerfeld and Amez-Droz, drive the development of theory. This is apparent, they argue, in the diverse scholarly articles in the Social Work journal, *Zeitschrift für Soziale Arbeit* (SGSA).[13]

Giving a general description of the work methods of Social Work is rendered more difficult by the different approaches of the three professional fields, by cantonal and regional differences and organizational structures, and by social change. Tuggener (1989) compares the movements within the areas of practice of Social Pedagogy and Social Work to an anthill – an image that illustrates the constantly occurring changes (132). Work methods and organizational structures are closely

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[12] In French-speaking Switzerland there is a university of applied science with four campuses (Sierre/Valais, Geneva, Lausanne) and the option to complete a bachelor's degree specializing in Social Work, Social Pedagogy, or sociocultural animation. There is also a joint master's course in collaboration with the university of applied science in Ticino. In German-speaking Switzerland it is possible to study Social Pedagogy and Social Work with a focus on specific areas of the profession in Lucerne (HSLU), Bern (BFH), Zurich (ZHAW), St. Gallen (OST) and the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW). Lucerne offers the additional option of sociocultural animation. Three master's courses are also available (combined academic-vocational master's at HSLU/ BFH/ OST and MA at FHNW and ZHAW).

[13] For example, the article by Epple & Kersten et al. (2016), 'In der Sackgasse: Soziale Arbeit zwischen Professionalität und Professionalismus', triggered a debate on disciplinary politics and professional theory (Becker-Lenz, 2017; Grubenmann, 2017; Husi, 2017; Kunstreich, 2017; Schallberger, 2017; Sommerfeld, 2017).

intertwined and mutually dependent. In the past few years there have been efforts in individual professional fields to develop work methods that do justice to the complexity of the social phenomena and to the professional and organizational structures (see for example Biesel et al., 2017). The following section traces organizational transformations which reflect these efforts, using the example of developments around the complex of 'welfare and coercion'.

Organizational structures

In parallel to the professionalization of Social Work methods, reforms have been instituted to change organizational structures. It is not just research findings on compulsory social measures and placements in Switzerland that have intensified the public discourse about the organization of Social Work measures; the voices of those affected have also been instrumental in inspiring debates.

Increasingly, the individuals affected have spoken out in public and/or published their stories (Biondi, 2003; Herger & Looser et al., 2012; Spirig, 2006). Since the 1960s, there has been a growing tendency in Western societies for 'victims' or 'persons affected' to come forward in public (Goltermann, 2017). Wieviorka (2006) speaks of an 'anthropological turn' (82), a social movement which, after 1968, helped to shake up Western societies (85).[14] The 'birth of the victim' (Wieviorka, 2006, p. 81) is linked with prior transformations on various levels. On the one hand, a paradigm change is taking place in numerous countries, strengthening the rights of victims in legislation. On the other hand, humanitarian organizations and psychiatry/psychoanalysis have drawn attention to the fate of war victims, and the women's movement has removed the taboo on discussing women's victimization in the private and public sphere. Finally, the media have enabled victims to become visible (Wieviorka, 2006, pp. 81–84). In Switzerland, the organization of individual victims played a key role in triggering an examination of the history of out-of-home placement; the involvement of Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, then a Federal Councillor, increased the effect of the movement on the media and the public. In 2010, at a commemoration in Hindelbank, she officially apologized to people who had been in administrative detention before 1981. In the same year, the historian Thomas Huonker, together with people affected, founded an online platform on the history of out-of-home placement of children in Switzerland. The goal was to help achieve clarity and transparency on the serious abuses that had

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[14] Wieviorka (2006, p. 88) hypothesizes that this simultaneously weakened the sovereignty of the state, and that the state ceased to be seen as the guarantor of protection for victims; the rise of the figure of the victim simultaneously called the state into question.

taken place in the area of compulsory social measures up to the late 1970s. Three years after the official apology from the national government, the Swiss Parliament rehabilitated the people who had been subjected to administrative detention before 1981[15], and the victims of compulsory social measures were invited to a round table discussion to talk about sources of help and advice, the securing of records and access to records, a nationally financed analysis and processing of this history, and standardized compensation arrangements.[16] In the same year, at a commemoration for former *indentured child labourers*, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga officially apologized for the injustice done to them and the other victims of compulsory social measures. In 2013 the entrepreneur Guido Fluri[17], who had been in residential care as a child, submitted the popular initiative Compensation for *indentured child labourers* and Victims of Compulsory Social Measures. It was accepted by the parliament in 2016, by way of a counterproposal by the Federal Council. As a result, financial compensation for victims – known as 'solidarity contributions' – were enshrined in Swiss federal law.

In 2014 the Federal Council established an Independent Commission of Experts (IEC Unabhängige Expertenkommission Administrative Versorgung UEK) to investigate and document the history of administrative detention and other compulsory social measures in Switzerland up to 1981.[18] Research was once again intensified (Germann & Odier, 2019). The work of the IEC was concerned with people who had been in administrative detention. Research on other compulsory social measures and placements was boosted by the establishment of National Research Programme 76, 'Welfare and Coercion'. Its aim is to analyse the characteristics, mechanisms and effects of Swiss welfare policy and practice in its various contexts, and to identify the possible causes of welfare practices that violated or protected integrity, as well as investigating the impact on those affected. Gnädinger and Rothenbühler (2018, p. 13) speak of a 'substantial research boom' in Switzerland in relation to this topic.

In parallel to this, an institutional and political reform of child and adult protection law took place, along with the establishment of a professional agency, the

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[15] http://walter-emmisberger.ch/der_lange_weg.html [accessed 19.11.2021].

[16] For documentation see http://www.kinderheime-schweiz.ch/ [accessed: 19.11.2021].

[17] Guido Fluri campaigns actively for examination of the compulsory social measures. On the one hand, the foundation which he established supports research projects; on the other hand, the support service 'Kescha', created in 2017, gives free advice to people affected by measures undertaken by the KESB (Kinder- und Erwachsenenschutzbehörde, Child and Adult Protection Authorities). In 2021 he supported a motion submitted to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, 'Justice Initiative', demanding a comprehensive political and societal examination of child abuse in Europe (for further information see https://guidofluri.ch/ [accessed: 21.11.2021]).

[18] For further information see https://www.uek-administrative-versorgungen.ch/home/ [accessed: 21.11.2021].

Child and Adult Protection Authority (KESB). The core goals of the new Child and Adult Protection Law (Kinder- und Erwachsenenschutzrecht, KESR), which came into force in Switzerland in 2013, were to promote the right of affected persons to self-determination or rather to promote parental responsibility; to guarantee the human dignity of people who are temporarily or permanently vulnerable; to understand official measures as subsidiary; and to guarantee the proportionality of interventions. Social Work interventions negotiate a delicate balance between self-determination, parental responsibility and external control (Rosch, 2018, p. 80). A distinction is made between self-determination in adult protection and in child protection since the law relating to children does not provide for any right to self-determination for the child. It does, however, stipulate that children must be granted the freedom to make decisions about their lives in accordance with their maturity, and that their opinions must be taken into consideration (Rosch, 2018, p. 87). In child protection, then, self-determination occurs within the context of the parents' duty to raise their children. Nonetheless, the main principles of adult protection are also valid in child protection (Rosch, 2018, p. 88): self-determination should not only be preserved as far as possible, but also promoted (art. 388 para. 2 ZGB). It follows that even vulnerable individuals should be accorded self-determination, despite their vulnerability, although legal decisions must consider the situation of those concerned, their vulnerability and the need for protection (Rosch, 2018, p. 81). In each case the benefits of external control/state intervention must be weighed against those of self-determination (Rosch, 2018, p. 83).

At organizational level, the reform aimed to replace the existing non-professional guardianship authorities with professional, interdisciplinary agencies, the Child and Adult Protection Authorities (Häfeli, 2013; Rieder et al., 2016). The number of newly formed authorities varies from canton to canton, as does their composition: professionals from law, Social Work, and psychology or education. In other words, there is still diversity. The different regions not only have different languages but also organize their KESBs differently: in some cases, it is a department of the courts; in others it is based in a cantonal administrative centre; elsewhere it is the responsibility of municipalities. Not only are the forms of organization of the KESBs in Switzerland complex and diverse, but in child protection, for example, the organization of the assessment services[19] and the agencies that appoint professional guardians or advisors varies considerably (Rieder et al., 2016). Because of Switzerland's federalist structures[20], these efforts at professionaliza-

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[19] A good overview of the structures in child protection and the organization of child protection authorities in Switzerland can be found in Jud & Knüsel et al., 2019.

[20] Even after the establishment of the modern federal state, with a well-developed social security system, the cantons bear most of the responsibility for social services (Tuggener, 1989, p. 130). As

tion take quite heterogeneous forms. Moreover, the analysis of media discourses[21] shows that professionalized agencies are under critical observation, and that their reputation is the subject of public debate.

Current debates

With regard to current debates on Social Work in Switzerland, in the context of research, it can be assumed that work is being done on various empirical sub-questions, contributing to an examination of Social Work as a force of norm imposition and normalization.[22] Social Work as an academic discipline, shaped by different research questions and approaches, theoretical diversity, and a debate on disciplinary politics, has experienced a 'real boom' (Sommerfeld, 2020) in recent years. It is not possible to do justice to all these elements here, but the following section will briefly consider individual aspects.

As far as the research landscape in Switzerland is concerned, Baier et al. (2015) point out that this is young and diverse, and that the thematic spectrum reflects the varied structures and content of Social Work. They also note the prominence of qualitatively oriented research. On the one hand, they argue, this indicates the exploratory character of the research, and the need to first generate empirically supported knowledge for Social Work (Baier et al., 2015, p. 426). On the other hand, they assume that the preference for these research approaches has to do with the proximity between practical (socio-pedagogical) casework and qualitative research methods (Bock & Miethe, 2010). Baier et al. (2015, p. 429) identify three distinct emphases for German-speaking Switzerland: research on the profession, with an 'inward gaze' (Baier et al., 2015, p. 429), research on target groups, and research on impact. In this last area, Social Work must find a balance between political interests and its own interests. While research on the profession focuses on social practices of professional action, and on social interactions between professionals and the target groups of Social Work (Rüegger et al., 2021), research on target groups concentrates on the self-determining and co-determining role of the users of social support services. For example, there are recent studies based

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a result, the development of institutional structures has been marked by federalism, tendencies of political particularism with a wide range of ideological roots (Tuggener, 1989, p. 131).

[21] Cf. http://www.nfp76.ch/en/projects/child-and-adult-protection/project-sager/ [accessed: 6.12.2021].

[22] The historical reconstructions point to a high pressure to conform and to social control, particularly of 'divergent' groups. Through its integration measures, Social Work proves to be a 'force of normalization' (Maurer, 2001, p. 125), a state instrument of social discipline, which exhorts the 'others' to conform to existing norms.

on qualitative questions looking at interventions by social workers in the form of home visits, within the framework of child and adult protection (Koch et al., 2020) or socio-pedagogical family support (Brauchli, 2021). Among other questions, these projects investigate how 'home visits' are organized, and to what extent social practices of organized outreach socio-pedagogical family support affect the integrity and privacy of those involved. Rüegger et al. (2021) show how essential the building of trust is for socio-pedagogical work relations, and what structural and situational conditions this requires. In addition, studies on child protection relating to the present day demonstrate how ideas about 'good mothering' and about family and parenting (Vogel Campanello et al., 2021) play a central role in decision-making processes about the out-of-home placement of children. Another strand in the discussion consists of recent findings on foster family placements (e.g., Gabriel & Stohler, 2020; Werner, 2019), and on care leavers and leaving care (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2021; Werner & Stohler, 2021). These have led to the establishment of the competence centre 'Leaving Care', which aims to offer services and support to young adults in out-of-home placements, and to provide a platform representing the interests of (former) children in care.[23] Another important area in Switzerland is evaluation and impact research (Baier et al., 2015), which evaluates programmes and practices of Social Work, generally in the form of contract research. Depending on the remit and orientation of the research, it may focus on evaluating underlying conditions, the organization of practice (Mey et al., 2019), or processes (Rieder et al., 2016). Evidence-based research, inspired by the principles of evidence-based practice, investigates the relationship between science and practice. This centres on the research-based identification and further development of 'successful' Social Work practices (Sommerfeld & Hüttemann, 2007). For child and adult protection, for example, research-based guidelines have been developed for the process of child welfare assessments (Biesel et al., 2017).

One striking aspect of the research on welfare and coercion is that questions relating to migration and discussions of transnational ways of life are more the exception than the rule. There is some work in this area. Scholars have pointed out the challenges of occupational integration, and the relevance of knowledge about 'transition mechanisms' for Social Work and potential interventions (Gül & Mey, 2019). They have also discussed the lack of child protection standards and socio-pedagogical support in refugee centres (Mey et al., 2019), and identified challenges in relation to the accommodation and support of unaccompanied minor refugees (Rieker et al., 2020). In this context researchers have also investigated experiences of external control, and unreasonable expectations associated with demands for integration and, for example, foster family placements (Mörgen & Rieker, 2021a;

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[23] For more on this see https://www.careleaver.ch/, https://leaving-care.ch/.

2021b). It is only now[24] that scholars are studying the children of Italian guest workers, and there has been little research into illegal migrants as care-workers in Switzerland (Knoll et al., 2012). In short, there have been some studies on individual aspects of transnational ways of life and perspectives relating to the migration society. However, they remain marginal in comparison to the huge amount of work and current research in the context of coercive care.

Given that transnational and therefore global developments constitute a point of reference for Social Work (Good Gingrich & Köngeter, 2017), ongoing knowledge production in the fields mentioned here – including their interdependencies and thematic relationalities – is crucial. Questions about the relationship between welfare and coercion, and between external control and self-determination, point to processes of social integration and inclusion, and to the relationship between Social Work and democracy. This means ensuring that all population groups are given equal consideration and are able to participate in the public discourse.

Conclusion

The intensification of historical examinations of welfare and coercion has led to a necessary exploration of the norm-imposing role of Social Work, accelerated processes of professionalization, and encouraged a critical view of current welfare practices. Each historical analysis is linked with criticism of forms of welfare, out--of-home care, and social institutions. This criticism is, at the same time, a form of social criticism (Schoch et al., 1989, p. 88), and in each case it is also seen as an opportunity to put into practice certain ideas of communal coexistence (Tuggener, 1989, p. 152). At the same time, these historical analyses are an impetus for professionalization, and demand a critically reflective examination of Social Work in its role as a force of normalization and the imposition of norms. Social Work interventions in private lives not only require legal legitimation but must also be professionally and scientifically justified. Today moral reservations, alternative lifestyles or disabilities are regarded as untenable and unlawful grounds for interventions (in families) or out-of-home placements. Current research within the framework of National Research Programme 76 "Welfare and Coercion" (NRP 76) aims to identify not only historical but also present-day welfare practices that are arbitrary and violate people's integrity. The historical analysis – along with the voices of those affected – calls for a professionalization of welfare practices, agency structures, and Social Work methods as a whole.

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[24] Cf. Schulz, Kristina, Social-history of people who migrate: The "children of the wardrope" [*sic*] (1946–2002), https://p3.snf.ch/project-189017/ [accessed: 14.12.2021].

The last few years have brought forth a wealth of research and developments in work methods. At the same time, we should note, in a spirit of critical self-observation, that different social phenomena do not receive equal amounts of attention. While child protection, for example, attracts a great deal of attention, issues relating to migration are neglected in Social Work and therefore also in child protection. If Social Work understands itself as a reflective profession (Dewe, 2009), it should be aiming to develop perspectives for a transfer of knowledge, and ways of implementing this (Warsewa et al., 2020). This would allow connections to be made between research, practice and politics, bringing advances in all these areas. It would also ensure access to interdisciplinary research-based and practice-based knowledge.

For federalist Switzerland, the challenge is not just to facilitate exchanges between the different language regions, but also to find a balance between regionally autonomous processes, adapted to individual situations, and a unifying professionalization. In particular, interventions in people's private lives demand an individually tailored approach, taking into account the requirements of heterogeneous lifeworlds and adapting measures accordingly. This allows service users to contribute their individual, socially determined experiences. The focus is not on normalization and the imposition of norms, but the recognition of difference, without ignoring real experiences of disadvantage (Heite, 2010). If Social Work follows this path, if it not only deals with social problems, but increases people's opportunities for participation and improves their conditions of life, then it can boost social cohesion and the integrating power of a democratic society.

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