DE GRUYTER
OLDENBOURG

Lothar Böhnisch, Wolfgang Schröer

SOCIAL WORK

A PROBLEM-ORIENTED INTRODUCTION

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Lothar Böhnisch, Wolfgang Schröer
Social Work

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A Problem-Oriented Introduction

2nd edition

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1 Normalization and Dissolution of Boundaries: Social Work at the Start of the Twenty-First Century

Current discussions within social work are characterized by a prevailing mood of ambivalence. Almost all analyses of current times and predictions of future social developments point to seemingly limitless social challenges. Social work seems to be in demand almost everywhere, from support schemes for children and young people into adulthood to support for elderly people, in community work in cities and rural regions, in disaster relief and in care for refugees. This list could go on forever. In other words, in many regions the twenty-first century has started with a structure of endless challenges for social work.

Looking at some specialist books on social work, by contrast, sometimes gives the impression that the century of social work is behind us. Here, the twentieth century is not infrequently described as the golden age of social work. Many historical analyses focus on the developments which social work underwent in many Western countries during the twentieth century, leading to its current form as defined by international organizations, among others. Thus, while some extensive challenges are on the horizon, confidence in the development of social work seems fairly low among the expert community.

This is mainly due to the fact that the set of social circumstances which led to the current extent and professional structure of social work in many European countries and in North America is linked to their specific welfare policies and welfare states. In the twentieth century, social work became a focal point of socio-political modernization in these countries. In discussions on social science, this period is often regarded as the first modernity (Beck, Giddens & Lash, 1994), with social work being a child of the first modernity. It became established as an agency of socialization and a community-based social policy aimed at constructing a so-called "normal life course" starting out with people's everyday lives.

The focus of the concepts of the twentieth century was on constructing a "normal life course" with typical lines of development and trajectories. Gainful employment and the path leading up to it are one such line. Another line was the stratification of ages, each assigned different functions. As a rule, the concepts thus revolve around the construct of a linearly developing life course: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age are viewed as structuring stages in life and related to institutionalized expectations on education and work (gainful employment). The dual (though internally unequal) structure of production and reproduction, career and family life (hierarchical gender-based division of labour) acted as a line around which gender-typical biographical attributions are grouped. In this context, the dominant constructs were successful socialization processes, typical biographies and contrasting "nonstandard" trajectories, resulting at times in "deviant careers". Thus, in the first modernity, a socializing dualism of normality and deviance can be said to have developed.

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This dualism of normality and deviance is part of social work's success story in the first modernity. It includes the structure which called for social services to be developed in welfare states and is reflected within social work as an institutionalized instance of secondary normalization.

The Social Pedagogical Dilemma of the First Modernity

In the 1920s, the social pedagogue Carl Mennicke coined the term "social pedagogical dilemma" ("sozialpädagogische Verlegenheit"). As he explained, modern people were on the one hand expected to be independent and take their own responsibility for their lives; on the other, they were placed in a society which did not give them any "clear forms of social life" but instead left some people to live in poverty (Mennicke, 1926, p. 332). Moreover, he posited, modern households were being downgraded "to pure consumer communities" and the "pace of economic life" was leaving "less and less space for really fostering" life as a society. The modern family could not, he said, in any case be seen as a reliable community to bring up children, and industrial capitalism had deprived modern working conditions of any "pedagogical quality" (Mennicke, 1926, pp. 323–324). Finally, he believed that as a whole, modern people in a city found little opportunity to "experience the inner demands of life within society". There was no doubt, Mennicke concluded, "that this is causing many individual lives to lose any direction or certainty" (Mennicke, 1928, p. 293): "In the end, the complicated nature of modern social life means we all experience this feeling of uncertainty. All the more, of course, in times of crisis, when young people, more than anyone else, are placed under pressure by their uncertain future" (Mennicke, 1999, p. 73). The "social pedagogical dilemma" thus lay, on the one hand, in people being set free as individuals, but on the other hand in there being no adequate social conditions in which they could develop and experience social agency. Life in modern societies, wrote Mennicke, was "far too strongly concentrated on jointly coping with the burdens of life" (Mennicke, 1928, p. 283). In a nutshell, Mennicke had thus described the structure on which social work was based as regards socialization theory.

1.1 From Normalization to the Dissolution of Boundaries

Discussions within social work during the twentieth century centred on arguments about characterizations of normality, extending as far as the institutionalized normalization of social work itself. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, developments within social work are best described by the term "dissolution of boundaries". This term marks the relationship between the first modernity and the second, or reflexive, modernity. The dissolution of boundaries does not mean that boundaries are disappearing altogether but rather that the frameworks of social life are becoming dynamic. Normalized structures are dissolving or becoming mixed with new ones; boundaries are blurring and new ones appearing. What were once linear reconstructions in people's life courses are fracturing and being questioned.

"Either ... or" structures are turning into "Both ... and" structures (see Beck, 2000). Thus, as the boundaries of gainful employment dissolve, the link between

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people's identity and their work, which was previously central to their life history, is eroding, and as the boundaries of learning blur, education is extending, lasting beyond youth and throughout people's lives. While, during the first modernity, the socialization regime was determined by the collectively felt conflict between normality and deviance, the socialization regime of the second modernity is characterized by blurring boundaries and individualized opportunities, accompanied by enforced self-organization. Nonetheless, the expectations of normality and the regulatory forms of the first modernity have not vanished.

Trans- as a Phenomenon of the Second, or Reflexive, Modernity

In academic discussion on the observed dissolution of boundaries, the terms used to address social topics are increasingly being prefaced with the prefix "trans-". The talk is of transnationalism, transmigration, translocality, transsexuality, transgender, transculturalism, etc. What these different forms of trans-research have in common is that they reflexively question "naturalizations" of social phenomena of the first modernity which are seen as institutionalized, adopting a critical stance and problematizing them in terms of their history and system, as well as the consequences of each subject's scope for action. The research on transnationalism, for example, points towards "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002): "Methodological nationalism is the naturalization of nation-states by the social sciences. Scholars have shared that national borders are the natural unit of study, equate society with nature state, and conflate national interest with the purpose of social sciences" (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002, p. 302). Accordingly, the concept of "methodological nationalism" is used to point out the naturalization of nationalism in social science research and problematize the equation of society with the nation state (Köngeter, 2012). The perspective of socialization theory, finally, clearly calls for reflection on the "methodological institutionalization" of life course policies (Schröer, 2013). This means that the institutionalized expectations or regulations of the first modernity have, in some cases, continued to be naturalized. With regard to blurring boundaries and *trans*itions, on the one hand, these seem to have been socially generated. On the other hand, this is linked to a call to reflect again in each case on how, and to what extent, the subject's scope for action can be increased in each interaction between organizational arrangements, institutionalized expectations and regulations, and the actors' situations in life.

Currently, the question needs to be asked of how, and whether, social work's success story from the first modernity can continue: "What initially still looks like an expansion", during which social work "is seen as a success story, already shows that its institutions and structures are disintegrating: its *boundaries are dissolving*" (Winkler, 1999, p. 96). In view of tendencies for boundaries to blur and social patterns to disintegrate, social work no longer has an overview of the contexts in which its interventions and policies are needed and should be applied. Challenges, Winkler believes, are appearing everywhere: in integration, skills training, management, nursing, supervision and care. It would be almost impossible to subsume these tasks under a coherent description of social work as a profession or a discipline (see Winkler, 1999).

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A blueprint for social work seems to be developing which possesses flexibly applicable knowledge and points towards how to improve that knowledge by means of corresponding interventional modules. These types of knowledge, from running a business to project management to psychosocial diagnostics, can hardly be described as specific to social work any longer. Social work is also subject to constant pressure to be innovative and efficient. In some regions there is even talk of an "efficiency revolution" (Blanke & Bandemer, 1999), as social work today is said to be in competition for "economic superiority".

Thus, the assumption which prevailed in many countries that the need for social work will continue to be met by social workers trained in this sector can no longer be taken for granted. A new market of service provision is on its way, in which decisions are made as to who will deal with social problems; methods on how they should be addressed are increasingly based mostly on economic criteria, indicators which are often as yet obscure. In many places today, there is no answer to questions such as which agents and which settings are to be used to ease social tensions in specific neighbourhoods, to organize employment support programmes or to advise young people. In welfare states, the system at least intended social work to be the means of choice for secondary normalization. Currently, solutions and services are not expected specifically from social work. In other words, tenders are, for example, invited for projects involving regional intervention and design, and social work and other social actors are told to apply with innovative approaches. Then, it is decided which innovative approach best fits.

Social workers can apply anywhere, but their professional skills are not exclusively required, e.g. in the context of welfare policy measures. Other operators and initiatives can also submit offers, and it can no longer be assumed that, for example, out-of-home care, refugee relief or social training in rehabilitation is necessarily the domain of social work. Quality assurance schemes and concepts to prove the effectiveness of social work are an expression of the sector's wish to assert its usual position in this new field of competitors.

1.2 Rediscovery of Welfare Policy and the Welfare State

In the twentieth century, social work, though born from social policy and the welfare state, was also one of their fiercest critics. Today, social work yearns for their organized structure and the buffering "hidden hand" (Leibfried & Pierson, 1998). Welfare policy and the welfare state were a means of preventing the social services from being split up and of keeping them transparently joined together in the hand of the state. Of course, in some countries the institution of the national welfare state continues to guarantee social rights and services. Altogether, however, the concept of the national welfare state is also caught in the pull of blurring boundaries. Looking

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back on the welfare policies and the welfare state of the twentieth century, it can be said that their "methodological nationalism" is becoming obvious. It was more or less nationalized and naturalized in social work, ignoring the fact that it was a specific socio-political structure which had produced the welfare policies and welfare states in the century of national industrial societies.

Activation as a Collective Identity

The social scientist Stephan Lessenich showed how the relationship between the individual, the state and society is shifting in welfare policies and welfare states: "Where the state protected the individual against social risks [. . .] now individuals are expected to make their own provision for risks in the social interest" (Lessenich, 2008, p. 95). According to this line of thought, it is not only about political control but about a governmental organization of the social sphere which is compatible with the law of flexibility under the new capitalism. Social regulation is no longer achieved predominantly by means of the welfare state; instead, all citizens are activated, whether they are unemployed or have been forced out of work in old age.

For Lessenich, the labour policy programmes on labour mobility or on "lifelong learning" which are dominant in Europe are characteristic of a policy which blends "institutional strategies and forms of individual action together to create a new way of governing the social (in a broad sense)" (Lessenich, 2008, p. 116). The welfare state becomes a means of social engineering which keeps people busy, so that they are not a burden on the state and, ideally, produce a surplus which safeguards the common good. The welfare state is then limited to the function of regulating that surplus to benefit the community. The regulatory model of people's entitlements and what can reasonably be expected of them has been replaced by one in which people take care of their own interests and produce a community surplus. This is in line with a concept of humanity in which subjects can be found who are "marketable *and* socially acceptable" *at the same time* (Lessenich, 2008, p. 85).

As both the market and society need to be constantly activated and kept mobile, the subjects who constitute this mobility need to be kept on the move, too. They are expected to experience society not as a collective commitment, as in the past, but as a shifting context of individual safety measures, in that they can feel "part" of the mainstream who are keeping in step with developments. Traditional forms of social security are often seen as causing stagnation. Lessenich (2008), however, also points towards the coping problems which people have in this new socio-political system when he speaks of the "permanent stress" from which subjects suffer due to the constant pressure to remain active.

All citizens can now be productive of their own accord; indeed, they have to be, if the "activating state" offers them such opportunities and the common good is now seen as resulting from the comprehensive application of principles of economic productivity. This turns subjects into "bearers of human capital" and follows the illusion that the world of work under new capitalism is no longer alienating (see also

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Böhnisch & Schröer, 2007). The mobile model of social activation via the principle of individualized human capital lacks the collective identity which the culture of welfare policy and the welfare state was intended to create, at least politically. Collectivity is now something which individuals constantly have to be reminded of in moral terms. It is symbolized accordingly, while in reality social fractures are deepening and the zones of social vulnerability are growing (Castel 2000).

1.3 Disembedding and Reformulation

Fundamentally, in what form social work is required and can play a part and develop within a society depends on the extent to which that society wants to achieve social equality, on how intensive and explicit the prevailing ethical standards of justice and responsibility are and on the balance between people and the economy. Turbulence occurs when this commitment is no longer binding, when paradoxes dominate the social scene and when social norms become obscure. Pierre Bourdieu made a prediction along these lines: “More than ever [. . .] we have to practice a para-doxal mode of thought” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 123). Such social paradoxes affect social work directly since the apparent “if . . . then” linearity of the first modernity has been displaced by the “both . . . and” logic of the second modernity.

Moreover, in view of a globalized economy, transnational interconnections are creating a normative problem, not only for national welfare policies and welfare states, but also for social work in these states. In socio-scientific discourses, this phenomenon is described as “disembedding”: within the global competition among companies, regions and municipalities, decisions on economic location are being made with social consequences, without taking into consideration local developments and social situations. This is keeping the social world under pressure, as it does not seem able to escape the hegemonic pull of the new rules of economic movement.

Today, there are discussions all over the world on how a link can be maintained to this disembedded world in order to wield any kind of influence over it. Local welfare policies intended to safeguard and shape social cohesion and the *social integration* of a society find themselves entangled in transnational dynamics of disintegration in which there is hardly any further scope for social action. The local economic balance (however precarious it used to be) which for decades seemed to make a deliberate social policy possible, and which was designed to develop into something like a *collective identity of being protected by the welfare state*, hardly appears as a reference point any longer. Today, people are required to adapt to the logic of capital, which can now take on an existence independent of labour. The “flexible” individual (Sennett, 1998) has to follow the rhythm of production and submit to the globally controlled dynamics of cost. Precarious working conditions are increasing, occupational security is dwindling and for many in Europe there is no sign of the social safety net which the welfare state was supposed to guarantee for a long time to come.

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Longing for the Naturalization of the Twentieth Century

Altogether, we find ourselves in a period of transition. The individual is being revealed as someone who is vulnerable, obstinate and unpredictable. Factors considered generally agreed upon in previous models of social arrangements are now in urgent need of renegotiation. Occasionally, people long for the old naturalizations of the twentieth century: a life free of the ambivalent complexities of the reflexive modernity. But this nostalgia has negative social consequences. Today's modernization "is thus determined in two ways. On the one hand, it releases us all into the freedom of new opportunities to make decisions and enter new obligations; on the other hand [the new risks, author's note] set off anti-modern ideologies which presuppose the naturalness of nations, races, culture, gender and religion" (Dörre, 1998, p. 59). Born from the first modernity, professional social work is subjected to these dissolutions of boundaries and ambivalences.

With this in mind, in our book we intend to try to describe the field of social work – its themes and methods – in the face of the concept of the second, reflexive modernization. We discuss the second modernity as a time of blurring boundaries. However, social work is used to working with terms which presuppose the existence of boundaries. Its professionalization was, after all, intended to overcome a period in which it was forced to move within a field that was confused and thus, from a professional point of view, arbitrary. Today, it frequently faces the problem that the organized terms of its approaches come up against a social reality which escapes such description; which no longer displays many of the characteristics that social work's terminology takes for granted. The institutional tools cover up more facts than they can reveal. To be able to recognize the individual's situation and suffering in the society of the second modernity, with its blurred boundaries, we thus need to dissect the terms which are so familiar to us – but we do not need to throw overboard all that we have so far discovered on social diagnostics and intervention. Instead, it is about opening up, readjustment and re-evaluation.

At the heart of this re-evaluation lies people's distress and vulnerability. Taking the social pedagogical perspective of coping with life, we try to look behind the "cases", beyond the social problems soothed by the welfare state to reveal the topics which are fundamental to people's lives, without neglecting the interdependent relationship of work and education within society which is so relevant to us. As this is largely conveyed to social work by the welfare state, which is now under considerable pressure, another task is to reformulate the legitimacy of social work by means of the welfare state. In this process, it becomes clear that social work professionalism and socio-political reflexivity in social work are intermeshed. They make up the range of possibilities for taking action – a range that will be put to the test by the demands arising from people's situations of coping; these are difficult to calculate but no less urgent.

1.4 From the Term "Identity" to the Concept of Agency

In view of these dissolutions of boundaries and paradoxes, it is uncertain whether one of the key terms used in social work during the first modernity, that of "identity",

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can continue to rise to these new psychosocial challenges. The idea of a self-determined subject which can sustain some kind of a balance with itself and thus with its social environment has always been a fascination within thought on social work. However, in the light of recent social developments, this idea has to be put into perspective.

The concept of the formation of an identity assumes that there are stable social contexts into which life courses are integrated. According to this view, identity (an internalized image of oneself formed in interaction with others) is embedded in reliable social milieus and institutional arrangements. Faced with the ambivalences of society in the second modernity, this concept proves too rigid. Accordingly, the socio-scientific discourse on identity has now developed in such a way that formation of identity in societies of the second modernity is assumed to be instable and to take place in stops and starts, with identity always being challenged. This points towards biographical coping situations in which an individual is not only made aware of his or her identity in all its fragility but constantly has to “reproduce” it. Today, the term “identity work” has developed to describe this context (see Keupp & Höfer, 1997). This term stems from an understanding of the relationship between the subject and society in which the foremost question is that of how individuals can manage to establish identities for themselves in a social world which has become more confused; how they can, so to speak, cherry-pick those aspects of their social environment which will help them achieve a biography that is a personal success.

This concept is now illustrated by terms such as “DIY” or “patchwork” identities. Identities, so the argument goes, now shift and flow and are only related to one another in terms of the integrity of an individual’s biography and personal life (Smart, 2007). In social research, accordingly, “a narrative identity is presented by individuals with the help of texts and narrative means, in an attempt to establish continuity and long-term units of meaning” (Liebsch, 2002, p. 79). The focus is on “self-presentation”; there is, however, little interest in the term’s counterpart, “self-assertion”, which relates to how people cope with this task.

Abstract Worker–Abstract Consumer

Interactionist psychoanalysis uses the expression “new narcissist” (see Altmeyer, 2000) to describe individuals’ attempts, instead of finding themselves in social Others, to find social connections to their environment which offer a reflection, as an egocentric confirmation, without having to respond to others. Consumer–capitalist industry has long reacted to this development by providing the corresponding means: individuals can buy their own self-confirmation. The expressions “abstract worker” and “abstract consumer” (see Wimbauer, 2000) outsmart the concept of a balanced identity: a digitalized economy now demands identity from people as a joyous plunge into the world of the new economy, availability, fulfilment, which is to develop free of any social inhibition in the disembedded world of intensified work, and endless consumption.

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Meanwhile, how people then get along with themselves and others in the socially embedded everyday world is a challenge for their personal lives. Thus, the social spaces where people can develop an identity are starting to blur. Whatever happens around me, I have to try to remain myself in my personal life: to *stay authentic*. The term “authenticity”, as the imagined identity on the basis of which we interpret our own life history, recurs frequently in the modern discourse on socialization. Identity is thus becoming a self-fulfilment project which makes our own physicality and temporality the central focus of our experience of identity, thereby sidelining sociability. “Individuals’ images of themselves are losing any claim to be durable and binding.” Socially directed identity today frequently only succeeds “as a selective, staged and primarily aesthetic enactment of personality. Communities and society [. . .] no longer provide structures and influences which can be found within individuals [. . .] in the form of identity” (Liebsch, 2002, pp. 79–80). Even where the term “identity work” is used, talk of achieving an identity has been replaced by the idea of the “postmodern self” (see Keupp & Höfer, 1997).

This means that it is no longer so much the aspect of identity-stabilizing coherence as the struggle for *agency* which is at the forefront of analysis. In addition, social psychologist Heiner Keupp now argues that people cannot simply be assumed to have a subjective need for cohesion. Today, it is no longer about cohesion or achieving a balance; it is about repeatedly “being challenged” (Keupp, 2006, p. 32). This perspective of coping, with a recurring struggle to gain agency throughout people’s life courses, even appears in contexts where identities are seen as “reflections of control tests, attempting to minimise the uncertainties and contingencies of people’s social environment” (Holzer, 2006, p. 84). Though the critical relativization of the concept of identity also points to the perspective of *coping with life*, this does not mean we have to give up the basic ideas behind the concept of identity. Identity is still something we look for, but this search is moving more than ever in the fragile direction of striving for agency. This, meanwhile, moves within parameters contingent on social structure which we will later address using the concepts of the situation in life and situation of coping.

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2 Critical Living Circumstances: Distress, Vulnerability and Neediness

One key term used in German social work is that of *Betroffenheit*, which means being affected by something in a neutral sense and also being negatively affected, feeling distress. Users of social services are affected by social disadvantage, by situations of violence, by social exclusion and, connected to this, by a lack of resources. The aspect today described as *Betroffenheit* is what the cultural sociologist Franz Carl Müller-Lyer tried to pinpoint at the start of the twentieth century in his work signally entitled *Sociology of Suffering* (*Soziologie der Leiden*). He saw suffering as the "practical central problem of human society" (Müller-Lyer, 1914, p. VII). When it came down to it, suffering was a result of "social diseases" which could "only be fought by social means" (Müller-Lyer, 1914, p. 57). Müller-Lyer was not by any means a social worker, but he indicated that below the level of society, distress (negative *Betroffenheit*) is expressed as biographical sensitivity; the social problem can be said to be "embodied". Nonetheless, professionalism within social work involves evaluating forms of distress within the context of social problems, giving them a social classification rather than blaming the individual – even if welfare has to start out by paying attention to individuals and finding ways to reach out to them.

Back at the start of the twentieth century, the psychoanalyst Siegfried Bernfeld pointed to the challenge of identifying the social locations of human suffering. Only when pedagogy analyses how the inner structure of conflict behind that suffering interacts with the social structure of conflict can it realize that the social locations of suffering offer a starting point for social pedagogical interventions (cf. Hörster, 1995). Bernfeld's argument makes two quintessential points. Firstly, social work is doomed to failure on an everyday basis as long as it ignores the social paradoxes behind everyday suffering – in the form of *Betroffenheit* – and the urge we have to maintain agency in any given situation. Secondly, vulnerability and distress may be predominantly emotional, but they are also subject to patterns of social structure. Recognizing these structural patterns and being able to identify them in clients' emotional state, understanding them from the point of view of that vulnerability, is an indispensable element of a social worker's basic toolkit. These structural patterns are related, on the one hand, to the social behaviour of people but, on the other hand, they differ socially, ethnically and, above all, in terms of gender. These are, of course, ideal types: the forms actually taken can vary and fluctuate widely.

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Critical Living Environment

Distress, in the form which we attempt to analyse within social work, is generally an element of a *critical living environment*. "Critical" life events and living circumstances are those in which the people affected are themselves no longer capable of dealing with difficulties in their lives unaided, i.e. when they have lost their previous psychological, physical and social resources or when those resources no longer suffice to regain a balance in their personal vulnerability and social behaviour (see Filipp, 2007). In this context, the term "balance" is important as it indicates that people in critical living situations are usually psychologically and socially isolated or excluded, meaning that social support and interventions need to focus on regaining their self-esteem, self-efficacy and social recognition. These factors in turn determine their psychosocial balance.

From research into stress we know something about the urge – what might be called an automatic psychophysical search mechanism – to find a balance in critical life situations. Stress is a momentary mental state of discomfort and pressure, a discomfort which is also felt physically. Though sufferers may speculate about what may have caused it, at the very moment they experience it they lack the necessary self-control. Stress is felt as specific symptoms, but as sufferers cannot make sense of this combination of psychosocial factors, they cannot rationally work it out. Despite this, or perhaps precisely because of this, their body tries to protect itself against the stressful situation, as it has brought their bodily functions into disarray. Thus, the bodies of people experiencing stress do not respond to rational considerations but try to regain a balance, which can take a wide range of forms. The body might, for example, try to regain balance by making the person ill and putting them out of action. Another way to put it might be that the physical and mental ("somatic") driving forces, which are relatively independent of cognitive reasoning, try to achieve a physical balance which may fall beyond the boundaries of health. This is, in other words, striving for balance "at any cost".

This model can be extended to include psychosocial factors. The need to regain psychosocial balance in critical life situations can also induce conditions beyond the boundaries of social health, i.e. beyond the current norms of society or of interpersonal social conduct. Following on from the first example of research into stress, just as a stressed body is in a situation of somatic imbalance, people in critical life situations find themselves in a social imbalance, too. Their self-esteem, social recognition and sense of achievement (self-efficacy) – the "magic triangle" of coping (see Chapter 3) – are weakened or lost and a kind of automatic psychosocial mechanism sets in to regain that balance at any cost, even that of diverging from the norm and resorting to socially destructive or self-destructive behaviour. This psychosocial search for balance takes a social direction but is at the same time also driven by psychosomatic factors. This is the only way to explain the

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irrationality that characterizes many sufferers' coping behaviour, a factor of which they are often unaware, and which leads them further than they had intended.

2.1 Vulnerability

Psychoanalysis sees the subject not as autonomous, but instead as exposed to events: identity as a form of defence. The ongoing process of individualization has liberated us not only in terms of our opportunities but, equally, in terms of risks. The social dissolution of boundaries has changed spatiotemporal dimensions in such a way that ideas of balance and homogeneity no longer apply in the discourse on the subject and identity. Today and in times to come, the processes by which subjectivity is produced can no longer take place within reliable frameworks. There are already signs that the established social work concepts of empowerment and approaches based on social spaces and resources (or even agency theories) often presume unquestioningly that subjects ultimately have control over themselves and are thus pedagogically accessible.

Practitioners are then surprised by the paradoxical ways in which service users react to their intended social work interventions; they do not know how to deal with the situation and sometimes experience feelings of professional failure. For this reason, social work needs to be able to define the term "subject" in such a way that people's internal dynamics of coping can be explained in the context of the dissolution of social boundaries. This is because, in critical life situations, during open-ended or high-risk transitions, or in the case of biographical gaps and losses or conditions of worry and uncertainty, the figure of the "driven subject" suddenly appears – the subject which feels exposed and vulnerable to itself and others, which does things it is not meant to and which feels an urge for self-esteem and recognition and needs to achieve agency.

Most social work discourses still follow the model of "social integration" with reference to the welfare state framework within which social services are positioned. This framework is based on the assumption that integration is basically possible within the welfare state and that no one can fall through this net. Anyone failing to achieve the normality of integration by means of the welfare state is picked up by "secondary integration mechanisms" organized by social workers. As the welfare state model is closely connected to our work-based society, people's level of integration is measured by the degree to which they are included in the system of paid work, focused on a standard working relationship.

However, the blurred boundaries of the second modernity also mean that the focus of integration has shifted from a general, collective framework to one of personal responsibility and individual self-organization.

Exclusion

When people are excluded from a work-based society or put in an insecure working situation, all that remains is their own survival. In this spirit, Niklas Luhmann once described "exclusion" as "an

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existence reduced to the physical in terms of self-perception and external perception, which aims to survive from one day to the next" (Luhmann, 1995, p. 147). That definition was still formulated in the context of an archetypal work-based society where paid work was the sole measure of all things in life. Today, "the distinction between having a job or being unemployed is [. . .] increasingly hazy" (Bude, 2008, p. 437). As the boundary between exclusion and participation has dissolved, a life spent excluded from work-based society no longer necessarily means social exclusion. The "existence reduced to the physical" may thus in fact have positive aspects, at least in terms of a subject's self-esteem and if physical factors can be activated. Even "if completely excluded from working and family life, but with partial access to an institution or physicality, individuals can still get by with a certain level of everyday acceptance" (Bude, 2008, p. 447). This "getting by" is a coping model which many people have to make the most of today to find meaning in their lives. Advertising has long conveyed the message that this can be achieved by means of physicality.

The aestheticization of the body – especially aggressive aestheticization – can give people social attention and thus – seen subjectively – recognition. Young people and young adults in uncertain situations of transition are especially liable to compensate for their coping problems with aggressive physicality. Social workers are coming across these patterns of regressive coping more and more frequently. However, in view of the findings above, it is not enough to categorize them as people who refuse to accept help with integration. Instead, this mental state needs to be met *with understanding in the first place*, and clients‘ agency needs to be extended through the use of appropriate methodological approaches (see Chapter 6).

2.2 Neediness and Failure

Vulnerability, distress and helplessness are closely related. Altogether, they are about how people can manage to regulate their needs, creating a balance between their inner and external life, or *how* they can create that balance. When there are few opportunities for constructing a balance, or when people are denied this opportunity on cultural or social grounds, we can speak of neediness (in German *Bedürftigkeit*). By this we mean a mental state which derives from being denied the realization of needs on a subconscious level, so that it is generally not rationally recognizable or controllable. Crucially, in these situations something is *simultaneously* longed for and denied. This term is used more specifically in a psychodynamic context than the term "neediness" as used in feminist discussions to mean the fundamental human reliance on our fellow human beings, which women, in particular, are constantly forced to generate by means of their role in reproduction (cf. Eckart, 1991).

Gender-typical forms of neediness determine the coping behaviour used by men and women. They are ambivalently structured, which means that expressed behaviour can always hide a different or even contradictory motivation. For example, some men's

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aggressive or violent behaviour reflects their fixation on the external, the pressure they are under to split off their feelings, just as it reflects the longing for a feeling of security and recognition which they are denied and unable to attain in critical situations, forcing them to get what they need through violence. When women retreat into themselves and act self-destructively, this is equally an expression of a female form of aggression and social self-assertion which they are denied and cannot achieve, as they have repeatedly learnt, in all kinds of situations, that they are not given what they need.

Neediness is motivated by our urge to gain *agency* in critical life circumstances. Supporting relationships correspond to a variety of neediness which may often appear contradictory but which are all grounded in the function of neediness. A pedagogical relationship can focus on and articulate the element of resistance so that the underlying need can become accessible. This enables social workers to recognize the act of seeking help as a form of coping. After all, although such behaviour can, as the relationship progresses, be traced back to “structural patterns”, it must first be experienced by the helpers themselves and recognized for what it is. This illustrates the art of the supportive relationship in social work when it comes to meeting sufferers without stereotyping them in advance (by categorizing them as clients) and using this shared experience as a way of opening up wider aspects of coping.

“Failing”

In this context, “failing” is an ascription which, while it is not part of social workers’ professional diagnostic repertoire, nonetheless plays a role in the common understanding of unreached goals, abandoned intentions and discontinuity in people’s biographical trajectories. In social work, failing has two sides: on the one hand, it relates to clients themselves and to their lack of coping abilities, and, on the other hand, to the supporting relationship as such when the support system and client “fail in their relationship with one another” (see Baumann, 2010). This “each other” indicates that failing is not to be seen as a unilateral process that can be blamed on the client, but as an interactive and thus potentially *conflictual* process. Failing to comply with the norms of a “normal biography” and/or the roles and behaviour expected by the support system could therefore not indicate primarily integration problems on the part of clients, but suggest that the social system with its norms and the unequal allocation of opportunities fails to promote integration, operating instead with selection according to the dominant norms of the social welfare system and its prescriptive version of normality. Seen that way, it is not unreasonable to follow Menno Baumann in viewing those who deviate from the norm as “subversives” and “seeing their apparent attempts at disruption and the single-mindedness of their resistance as a strength” (Baumann, 2010, p. 211). On the basis of his empirical reconstruction of how children and young people fail within the care system, he calls upon social workers to recognize behaviour that is usually seen as “disturbed” from the professionals’ classificatory point of view as *coping behaviour* and to open up its potential accordingly. This focuses social work’s attention not only on clients’ vulnerability, helplessness and neediness but also on their hidden energy and “strengths” in their search for agency.

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3 Coping with Life as a Social Pedagogical Concept

In view of this, if any concept of social work is to be theorized and applied in the second modernity, it needs to be able to make sufficiently informative statements on four interlinked levels:

- Firstly, it must be able to elucidate (in the sense of "perception", see Müller, 2007) how, on different levels of social action and on an everyday basis, clients cope with critical or paradoxical situations in life which often involve a spiral of psychodynamic elements.
- Secondly, it must be possible to develop prospects for social work interventions and forms of support which engage with these different levels of action.
- Thirdly, it is important to adjust the social horizons of social work conceptually to reveal how patterns of coping (e.g. patterns relevant to social work) can also be generated within society.
- Fourthly, and finally, thought and action within social work needs social and ethical horizons (linking back to social politics), as social work is still caught between normality and deviance and is thus necessarily confronted with pre-established social values and, at the same time, with criticism of those values.

These four dimensions can be structured and connected using the social pedagogical concept of *coping with life*. This is mainly related to *coping problems* in *critical situations in life* – the kind we generally have to deal with in the field of social work (see above). The "coping with life" perspective, with its central components of *self-esteem, social recognition, self-efficacy and the search for agency to achieve the latter* (see below), structures all our everyday lives and biographies. This means that the precarious world of coping in which social workers' clients live is not divorced from the average person's "normal world"; instead, the boundaries are blurred. In long-lasting critical living situations of the kind found among our clients, however, a particular dynamics of coping can develop which those affected are no longer able to control on their own.

The social pedagogical concept of coping with life can be seen as a *three-zone model* (see Figure 3.1) made up of a personal-psychodynamic zone of *coping behaviour*, a relational-intermediary zone of *coping cultures* and a socio-structural–socio-political zone involving *releasing coping problems* into society, with the opportunities and obstacles (depending on people's *situation in life* and *coping situation*) that this entails. These zones can only be separated in analytical terms: in social reality they are related.

3.1 The Personal-Psychodynamic Zone

This can be described as the magnetic field of the psychosocial urge to gain agency in critical living circumstances – the shared focus of three coping impulses: the longing for stable *self-esteem*, corresponding *social recognition* and the experience of *self-efficacy*

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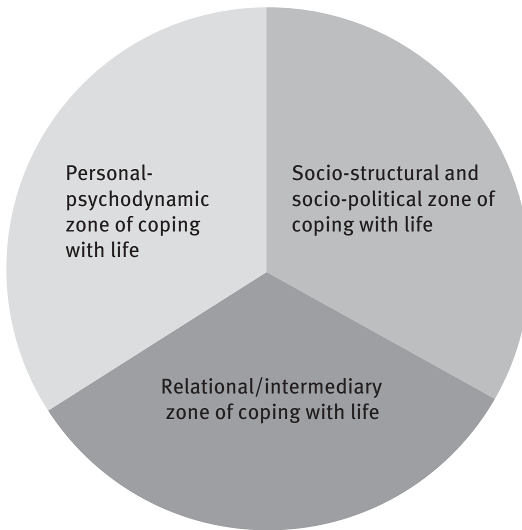

Figure 3.1: The three-zone model of the social pedagogical concept of coping with life (Böhnisch & Schröer, 2013).

(i.e. the feeling of being able to do something, being able to control one's actions and achieve things). This personal magnetic field is polarized towards biographical agency, which causes a desperate urge for social fulfilment, even if it cannot be found in the existing social context. Social recognition can be sought in different ways: both through the social norms for earning recognition within a culture and through attention-grabbing, conspicuous behaviour. A feeling of self-efficacy, meanwhile, can be gained not only through social participation but also through antisocial behaviour, even leading as far as violence (see Böhnisch, 2010). This hypothetical psychodynamic model for coping with life links in with the theory of the power of human self-assertion. This takes a social direction and is operationalized in the psychoanalytical works of Donald W. Winnicott (1984, 1988) and Arno Gruen (1992), for example, in a manner which social work can tap into.

These two writers studied how people develop needs from childhood "of their own accord", i.e. as a result of the intrapersonal driving force of human self-assertion, as they deal with the demands of their social environment. The central medium this involves is language, giving them the ability to bring up their social and personal helplessness and thus deal with it intra-personally, with social self-determination. The inability to express their helplessness, by contrast, leads to antisocial and self-harming venting of emotions. As language is also the most important tool within social work (as a means of addressing life's difficulties), this coping approach touches on a central focus shared by the different social pedagogical fields of action. Our coping concept differs from that found in psychological research into coping (cf. Brüderl, 1988) in that the root of the coping concept – a desperate search for psychological and physical balance – now takes on a social form. Whereas psychologists mainly see coping as related to critical life events in discrete situations, we see the socialization processes of the second modernity, with their dissolution of boundaries and unleashing effect,

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as concentrating and consolidating unresolved biographical situations, which hinder people's attempts to achieve biographical agency. These situations are thus "critical" and turn the biographical socialization process into a series of coping measures requiring frequent adjustment. For this reason, this social pedagogical perspective of coping, based on socialization theory (cf. Böhnisch, Lenz & Schröer, 2009), is aimed not only at the personal zone of coping with life, but also, equally, at the relational/intermediary and socio-structural/socio-political zones.

Types of Agency

We distinguish – admittedly as an ideal scenario – between regressive, simple and extended agency. We speak of regressive agency when those involved are under pressure to vent emotions and can only achieve situational agency by means of antisocial and/or self-destructive behaviour. Simple agency can be described as a socially integrated focus on everyday life aimed at maintaining the subject's own livelihood. The typical aim of social work can be said to be achieving this among clients. By contrast, extended agency, which can, among other things, be encouraged through social pedagogical projects, goes further, including empathy and a realization of how the subject's own actions affect others. This implies a sense of justice and thus the ability to deal with conflicts and take care of others, coming close to Hans Thiersch's term "more successful everyday life" (see Thiersch, 1986).

Coping processes, though they are socially induced, are somatically driven and thus emotionally charged: distress and helplessness in critical situations in life cry out to be put into words (addressed, expressed) or – if that cannot be achieved – to be vented. This explains why some forms of coping are ambivalent and contradictory. For this reason, among others, the psychodynamic approach is indispensible for social work. It also points us towards the different coping patterns adopted by either gender in critical living circumstances, despite any everyday levelling out of gender differences.

At first, men and women are equally affected when confronted with their inner helplessness. The difference lies in their varying capabilities when it comes to coping with their inner helplessness. However, this gender-specific coping behaviour is also judged differently within society: it may be the case that women are subjectively better able to deal with the threat to their self than men, but that this is not given great social recognition. Women withdraw and disappear out of view of society, while men – especially if they vent their helplessness outwards – tend to attract social attention.

This is already a case of the typical "outward" principle that structures male coping behaviour (cf. Neumann & Süfke, 2004; Böhnisch, 2013). Seeds often sown during male socialization – pressure from society and during their upbringing to express themselves outwards, always being denied any access to their own feelings – often grow later into coping patterns (depending on individual biographies). This principle of externalization

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is characterized by outward-oriented perceptions and actions combined with a lack of bonds and connections with themselves (disconnection). At the same time, externalization involves their inner life being banned, with a warning: "If you start looking into yourself, you run the risk of finding out how weak you are." This coping principle corresponds with the traditional definition of masculinity seen in the social division of labour, as part of the gender hierarchy: men are expected to be available for gainful employment and to be competitive, all the while putting social attachments in second place. However, this also corresponds with a deep fear of losing attachments, especially as regards their partnership. The subconscious interplay of externalization and a fear of loss lead to men wanting to have "everything under control". Men need to be able to rely on functioning inwardly and outwardly. This is the only way to explain why some men try to maintain control at any price, even resorting to violence. The principle of control corresponds to the principle of silence. Men talk a lot, about a lot – women, cars, the stock exchange, clubs, bosses, other people's careers – but rarely about themselves. They do not reveal much of themselves: after all, what goes on inside counts for nothing in the joint male competition to keep up the appearance that everything is going fine personally, at home and at work.

Men seem to understand one another with only few words. They are correspondingly under-represented in counselling statistics. When they do come to counselling, the first step is to try to peel off external layers step by step – the problem, the crime, pressure from peers or pressure to function – and offer men a space in which they can talk about their fears, and thus about themselves. This is because many men want to cope with their problems in life rationally, at all costs. This overemphasis on the external logic of things and devaluation of the inner logic of their feelings leads to men feeling comfortable when practical constraints supersede, and uncomfortable when forced to deal with feelings and helplessness. The male principle of outwardness corresponds to the principle of inwardness applied by many women as a means of coping. According to this, women's social behaviour depends more on relationships and attachments; they are afraid that pressure to perform and competition will make them isolated, while men are afraid that attachments will make them lose their independence (and thus their competitive advantage). This inward orientation offers advantages to women in interpersonal situations in that they tend to have greater access to their own inner world than boys and men, learning early on to recognize, express and follow their own feelings, and to be sensitive to others' feelings. However, this inward orientation is often regarded to be of lesser value compared with the outward orientation adopted by boys and men, both by the outside world and, during their childhood and youth, by their parents. Weakness, grief and a need for familiarity tend to be accepted more in girls and women than in boys and men, but are not seen as strengths that should be promoted in girls and women, but as characteristics they happen to have and which should not necessarily be expected of boys and men. As these abilities draw little recognition from their family or the outside world, girls and

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women generally do not try to express themselves externally, but instead bottle things up and take it for granted that they keep the difficulties they have in life to themselves, displaying symptoms of silence (Funk, 1997).

Thematization and Venting Emotions – The Psychodynamic Model of Coping

In critical situations and circumstances in life we are repeatedly afflicted by inner helplessness which we feel compelled to release and shake off. This is a somatic pressure which cannot be controlled by reasoning. Most people try to talk about it with those around them, i.e. seeking out a kind of everyday counselling. Others, meanwhile, seek professional advice to help them address their inner helplessness. Counselling is language and thus basically nothing more than a means of thematization. In social work, however, we often have to deal with clients who have, until that point in their lives, never had the opportunity to express what was going on inside them – to thematize it – and have therefore never learned how to do it. They have always been under outside control in the form of violence or subjected to intense pressure within their relationship. This is seen on every social level. Over time, they have developed an extreme lack of self-esteem – a lack of recognition and denied self-efficacy – which, as they have not been able to address it, has to be "vented" inwards or outwards under internal pressure in an antisocial or self-destructive manner. In this context, "vented" means one of two things. It may mean that their inner helplessness is projected onto other, weaker, people, discharged into them by putting them down and harming them, even going so far as acts of physical violence (this violent form of venting emotions may also be directed at animals or objects). Or (once again, subconsciously) it may be overcompensated for through conspicuous behaviour and the violation of relevant norms. For this reason it is one of the basic principles of social work that we ask what messages (calls for help, even) this behaviour conceals. After all, putting down others and standing out through antisocial behaviour is an attempt to raise one's profile and draw attention to oneself. We will conduct a separate examination of extreme forms related to the thematization of right-wing extremism, bullying and violence against children. But this pattern even includes the schoolboy with an ingrained lack of self-esteem who is only able to draw attention to himself by going on the rampage, leaving teachers feeling unsure of themselves (by putting them in a weaker position) and impressing his schoolmates. He is the king of the castle, if only for a matter of minutes. If he does not get the chance to gain recognition and self-efficacy except by acting up, he will "need" that conspicuous behaviour increasingly often, and at increasingly short intervals, until it becomes an addiction. This is indeed why such children generally cannot develop any awareness of being in the wrong regarding their actions or antisocial behaviour, as they are perceived as a positive experience: they have an inner effect of relieving the pressure and (momentarily) raising their self-esteem. Any attempt to talk them out of it and tell them what is negative about their behaviour can give them the feeling that their only remaining opportunity to experience self-efficacy and recognition (by standing out) is being taken away from them. This is why they need to be shown alternative routes (functional equivalents; see Section 6.2) to prove to them that they are not reliant on their antisocial behaviour to achieve self-esteem. It is only then that they will be able to address this behaviour, with the help of social workers. Internal, self-destructive venting processes (violence against oneself) follow a similar pattern. The Self is split ("dissociation"); their helplessness is subconsciously vented on themselves, on their own bodies.

"Thanks to dissociation, their body can be used as an external object [. . .]. As the aggressiveness is only directed at a split-off part of their Self, the Self as a whole remains intact" (Hirsch, 2002, p. 41). Self-directed physical violence (drug abuse, eating disorders, cutting, etc.) comes second in terms of frequency behind "hidden" forms such as constantly assuming the burden of guilt, depression and

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self-isolation. One explanation for the fact that internal venting processes occur far more often among women than among men is that there is still little social tolerance of conspicuous public behaviour by women and that there are no "models of violence" for women. Instead, conspicuous behaviour by women still tends to be turned into a pathological or psychiatric issue.

3.2 The Relational/Intermediary Zone: Coping Cultures

Coping behaviour is also significantly influenced by the coping cultures within the personal and social groups that people are involved in: their family, their peer group, their school, their company's working world, their Internet community, etc. These cultures are a decisive factor in whether, and how, critical living circumstances can be brought up for discussion. Matthias Grundmann et al. (2006) described a concept of agency in this relational zone which can be used within social work. According to this concept, social "agency" develops as an expression of self-efficacy and recognition in specific milieus. The term "milieu" can be used to describe the interplay between people's social environment and their dynamics of coping. Milieus are structured by intersubjective experiences and corresponding cultural practices which serve as ways of accessing forms of action and become established in group cultures and subject cultures (Reckwitz, 2008). These are socially mediated and shared intersubjectively.

Agency processes also develop in coping situations with a close link to violence – in this case antisocial processes. This once again shows how important it is to distinguish between the different forms of agency: extended coping behaviour is found in open milieus, and regressive coping behaviour in insular milieus. These different coping milieus also affect the density and reciprocity of social spheres of action.

Our main question is whether and how *coping behaviour is influenced* via and within the different coping cultures: in families, groups, organizations or indeed Internet communities.

3.2.1 Familial Coping Cultures

Many social work clients come from families in which they were repeatedly subjected to relationships involving violence or constraint – in which they had no opportunity to voice what was in them and thus to be resistant. They have been prevented from raising the issue of their helplessness and vulnerability, having to suppress it for years, remaining silent and inconspicuous, until their inner pressure to vent their emotions finally forces them into the antisocial behaviour which turns them into social work clients: subconsciously drawing attention to themselves by conspicuous behaviour. It is not

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only lower-class families in which violent forms of communication shape everyday family life. In this context we also come across middle-class families who expect such a lot from their children that they can no longer express their inner sensitivities and feelings of resistance, having to keep them to themselves. The basic, general problem with familial relations involving violence is probably that, in industrial capitalist societies, the modern nuclear family is structurally overtaxed and that this has increased along with the rising rationalization – and thus de-emotionalization – of the world of work. This has led to an increase in the emotional pressure which society places on the family. The family is expected to provide and replace everything that it seems impossible (or no longer possible) to achieve in people's social lives: social ties and social support, reciprocity and fundamental trust. During the process of social individualization, the family has become more than just a unit whose members negotiate their individual interests (in contrast with the traditional hierarchy of families divided into generational roles). In these conditions, it has also become an intimate group of people who rely upon one another but are internally divided, in that they face the problem of constantly having to be socially open to the newly flexible world of work while at the same time – so as to withstand this pressure to open up – being forced to close up into an intimate unit. Defamilialization and refamilialization run alongside one another. If this neediness cannot be communicated within or outside the family, but is instead made a taboo, and if there are no mechanisms to reduce pressure outside the family, then – we hypothesize – this neediness can veer into various forms with close links to violence, whether this is violence among the partners or against children.

However, one thing first needs to be made clear: the mere fact that a family is structurally overtaxed does not in itself cause violent behaviour. This overtaxing has to be coped with on a daily basis. If this coping fails, it can lead to a mixture of helplessness and neediness within the family.

What makes this particularly complicated is that the family is a private space, apparently cut off from public rules and norms in many ways. This makes the family an *exceptional situation*, in which the boundaries between love and violence, trust and dependence, closeness and interference start to blur. Family circumstances are thus generally pervaded by a latent helplessness, which can become virulent in critical living situations of the type suffered by social work clients. What is so precarious about this is that in overtaxing constellations of this kind, different worlds start to merge. The problems needing to be dealt with and balanced out come from a social, outside world, which is controlled by rationality, based on the division of labour, and has distinct norms. These problems come up against an emotional, inner family world which has melted into reciprocity and whose norms are vague. Here, the problems are turned into neediness, feelings of guilt and fear of loss. The social issues and family intimacy become intermingled in the subject and are rendered unrecognizable in their relationship to one another (cf. Brückner, 2009). The ways that helplessness is vented within the family – once matters reach that stage – do not take the form of

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abstractions (such as xenophobia) as they do outside the family, but instead specifically and naturally find their outlet in the traditional balances of power and violence occurring in the man/woman/parent/child hierarchies within the families themselves.

Social Work in Families

Social work itself often plays a part in making it difficult to raise the issue of helplessness. Using coping theory to interpret Martina Richter's (2013) analysis of conversation practices in social work family help, it can be shown that families try to assert themselves in response to social work interventions related to difficult, shameful topics such as child neglect, children on the verge of being taken into care or uncertain paternity. The parents react differently in line with their sex: mothers feel under attack, as if they are being divested of the socially expected skill of being a "good mother", and fathers are afraid of the unspoken accusation that they are not functioning properly. Thus, it is this urge towards demonstrative self-assertion, which families always feel when being examined by the care services, that can encourage a familial culture of coping characterized by non-thematization and venting emotions. In a study of cases where parents (mainly mothers) give up their children into care, Josef Faltermeier (2001) describes how they initially experience it as an autonomous decision, claiming it for themselves, when their child is taken in by a foster family as they are overtaxed. If, then, after some time, the family support services' institutional decision-making procedure leads to a test situation which the mother can no longer grasp, she not only sees her decision as undermined but also slips into a new form of dependency.

The inherent quality of internal familial structures can best be determined using the theoretical tools of systemic family therapy. These can indeed be seen as a psychological counterpart to the systems theory paradigm within sociology. In the form of self-maintaining, harmonizing closed-loop systems, interaction patterns arising from universal cultural meanings ascribed to relationships between partners, parents and children or siblings mingle with developing individual personality patterns. Over time, in the rhythms of everyday life, they become amplified and turn into mutual expectations (cf. Minuchin et al., 2000). These mutual expectations carry within them far-reaching messages regarding the family members' identities: who counts as a family member, how people deal with primary attachments and separation, what shape orderliness takes within the family, how people communicate and deal with conflict, and what compensatory patterns develop. How the system relates to the outside world can be used to identify family cohesion patterns which are taxing for their identity: rigid, unyielding borders to the outside world come hand in hand with poorly developed feelings of belonging, loyalty and empathy within the family. Vague, blurred borders to the outside world and among one another can lead to a low range of opportunities for personal development and a fear of separation. In theory, this can be distinguished from a family cohesion which allows openness and a balance between the inner and outside worlds, accompanied by clear, negotiable roles and the chance to act independently and bring up the subject of

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inner sensitivities (ibid.). Families who are struggling in many ways, on the other hand, are constantly under pressure to maintain a show of normality to the outside world, even though they can no longer shape any relationships within the family based on the options available to them. This is true, among other things, of parents who cannot fulfil their parental role, or can no longer maintain it at all, as they no longer gain any recognition, even as adults. Their helplessness then remains locked within the family, though over time it presses to be vented violently along the hierarchy of family relationships.

3.2.2 The Group

Group members often do things in, through or for the group that they would not do as individuals. This insight into group dynamics applies to groups of adults in organizations (see below) just as much as it applies to young people in peer cultures. In the latter case, however, we can observe some specific characteristics typical of certain ages. Social workers are mainly confronted with this when dealing with antisocial behaviour among youths and young adults who feel part of a group or clique, which is held together by precisely that behaviour. Acting on behalf of its individual members, the clique acts out a coping culture of venting emotions in which the helplessness each member "brings into" the group can turn into a demonstration of group strength (and a corresponding feeling of strength).

The group becomes a medium for coping.

From the point of view of psychoanalysis, sociology and pedagogy, peer groups are a means of regulation typical of a certain age, used to channel urges, develop social distinctions, try out roles and cope with transitional situations. They symbolize both young people's separation from their family of origin ("that which is no longer") and their transition to later adulthood (the deferred "that which is yet to come"), which is unstructured and thus unclear in terms of norms (cf. Schubert, 2012). Yet peer groups serve not only to live youth to the full, but also – hand in hand with this – to develop, refine and act out their sexual identity. This tends to have a more far-reaching significance among boys than among girls, as the boys are now, after a long period of childhood, dominated by and dependent upon women, "finally among men" and culturally independent. Friendships among boys in the form of cliques are not only spaces for young people to experiment, but are also a place where they can search for their male identity (cf. Jösting, 2005).

In the case of young people, the clique and the space blend together to form a particular culture of appropriation. It is in this reciprocal relationship between spatial and interactive verification, and the practices which arise from this, that boys, in particular, feel confirmed *as* boys (cf. Breidenstein, 2005). After all, public spaces are still mainly occupied by boys, marked by their demonstrative actions. Girls are mostly restricted to interim spaces, relational niches and shifting places. Boys control

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spaces; they display territorial behaviour. Male dominance is largely expressed in various forms of spatial dominance. Male spatial behaviour is about controlling, excluding, forcing out other boys who do not belong to the clique, and is, above all, about pushing girls out of the space, too. The first signs of the ambivalent male devaluation of the female appear not only in the boys' spatial behaviour of "chatting up" girls but also in the boys' "protective posture", demonstrated in spatial terms. However, the impression that girls are being pushed out is often deceptive. It is an image shaped by the boys' dominance. The fact that girls seek out their own paths behind the scenes, out of the male spotlight, usually goes unnoticed. While boys tend to be linked to certain territories through their spatial behaviour, girls tend to seek out different places to develop relationships, i.e. they change places from time to time, check whether those places have any quality for them, then leave them again. For this reason it is necessary to develop a particular eye for girls' spatial behaviour, as it is hidden by the boys' dominant spatial behaviour.

One aspect that makes peer relationships particularly important for girls and boys is the fact that they are a separate space in which they can practise social behaviour away from their family, cut off from adult society, where they can acquire social skills.

> Withdrawal from joint activities with their family takes a gender-specific form: the same number of 13- to 15-year-old girls and boys state that they regularly take part in leisure activities with their family. Among 16- to 17-year-old boys, however, only about half regularly take part in activities with their parents or siblings; a figure far lower than girls of the same age. (*Entleitner & Cornelißen, 2012, p. 16*)

This is because masculinity is released in the boys' cliques, far from their families, and becomes the principle that structures clique behaviour both within the group and towards the outside world. The girls in such cliques generally play a subordinate role during outside group activities. The boys use them to give expression to their feelings of male superiority, constantly putting them down or pushing them back, humiliating them. Within these cliques' inner structure, however, girls play a very dominant role, mainly helping keep the clique together; in the case of arguments and conflict they mediate within the group and with the outside world. The inner structure of the group, the inner relationship between collectivity and individuality, affects coping behaviour more than anything else. As we described in our introduction, young people often do things in groups that they would not do as individuals. This is because they often rely on their peer group, so do it for their group status and group cohesion; they adapt, so as not to be excluded. In a group with a collective, authoritarian structure, in which individuality is rejected, the members thus come under pressure to adapt to the group code, to activate it. This is further fuelled by the group dynamics. We thus mainly find masculinity to be the group code among groups with a collective, authoritarian structure, made up of young men and boys

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who otherwise have little opportunity to achieve social and cultural recognition (and thus individuality). They *depend* on the group as their families have not been able to provide them with a supportive environment. It is thus clearly difficult for youth workers to "break" individuals out of the group. Instead, an attempt should be made to involve the clique in a project in which they are assigned different roles, allowing the inner clique structure to become pluralized.

3.2.3 Organizational Cultures

Seen from the point of view of systems theory, organizations such as schools, associations and companies are generally social contexts which try to control their system/environment relationships in a self-referential manner and which try to protect their inner organizational culture against social conflict. As these conflicts cannot be addressed publically within the group, this often generates a corresponding coping culture which, when such conflicts occur, can lead to a group pressure to vent emotions, and corresponding antisocial consequences. Let us describe this using the example of *bullying*. This exclusion of people in school or at the workplace is a form of "everyday" violence which can affect anyone.

Bullying

The process of bullying follows laws which can be explained taking into consideration both coping and group dynamics. Bullying generally originates in non-thematized conflicts in school or at the workplace which lead to a negative climate there and create uncertainty and helplessness which cannot be expressed and thus "have to" be vented, projected onto weaker individuals. In precarious circumstances of this kind, individual uncertainty and helplessness is rife. The search for group cohesion and group security grows. However, this cannot be achieved through communication as the undefined conflict cannot, after all, be brought up. The group thus generally forms around a "negative core" of schoolchildren or workers who are active and motivated to act. They then convey the pressure caused by the group's discomfort, focusing that discomfort on a scapegoat – a schoolchild or worker usually already previously considered somehow "odd", onto whom others can vent and project their own feelings of helplessness. The mechanism of abstraction, of "being surprised by your own actions", is effective. The victim no longer appears recognizable as a friend or co-worker; after all, this is all about the bully's own helplessness, the weight of which is borne by the victim. Group dynamics whip the situation into a frenzy, giving events an even greater pull and drama. The group draws people in who would not take part on their own, as confederates and conspirators, as they depend on the group and its security in the precarious situation. "Joining in" gains them recognition. They are pulled along by the undertow. The victim is sucked into the labelling process and is thus also subjected to uncertainty. He (or she) acts accordingly uncertain and the group feels vindicated in its bullying behaviour towards the victim. In this set of dynamics, the group is unable to develop any awareness of wrong, and afterwards it is always difficult to create a discerning reconstruction of the process together.

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In childhood and adolescence, i.e. when children are in school, bullying is mainly reported in the first years of primary school and during the transition to adolescence. These are unresolved phases of development and transition, in which uncertainties and feelings of helplessness "smoulder" and can develop into bullying situations if the school climate is poor. Exacerbation caused by group dynamics, as well as venting and projection onto someone weaker, and the vague reaction by the victim confirming the group's actions mainly occur during breaks and on children's way to and from school. Teachers thus often only recognize it at a very late stage (too late), mainly as those on duty at break are not able to look out for the signals. The perpetrators' profiles reveal low self-esteem and self-control, accompanied by a poor ability to empathize. At the same time, however, many of the perpetrators have the power gained from being part of a clique and physical strength. Most of the perpetrators are male, and boys and girls behave differently when bullying: boys' bullying is more physical and tangible, and girls tend to favour psychological bullying and excluding others from relationships. The victims are usually individuals, confronted by a core group of up to three bullies, a group of followers and a group of passive onlookers.

The extreme example of bullying shows how important public spaces are in schools and companies as a means and location for thematizing conflict. This applies equally to social work organizations. In this context, our thesis is as follows: it is only if people can talk about conflict in their own organizations that subjects' conflict situations can be sufficiently recognizable. Venting emotions, as a way people can suppress the conflicts they themselves suffer from, can extend into social work activities, too. This entanglement can be seen as specific to the coping cultures in social work organizations. This applies not only to social policy administration units, which exhibit the structural avoidance of conflict typical of bureaucratic organizations, but also to welfare associations, in which an unacknowledged gap can increasingly been seen between social and ethical expectations and managerial reality (cf. Jüster, 2013).

3.2.4 The Internet

When it comes to discussion on the effect of the Internet and computer and video games, especially on adolescents, we discover findings and evaluations ranging from an emphasis on additional opportunities for action to a warning against dangerous risks. However, the extent to which we can assess the *virtual world of media* as a coping culture, and how we can carry out that assessment, depends on the results of media effects research. This is especially true as this is a "parasocial" world, i.e. a world which is in itself socially unreal, but which is given its own social reality when it draws in users and when they interact. These virtual spaces are without doubt a place where recognition and self-efficacy are sought. This alone makes them relevant in terms of coping culture. Yet to what extent does this take root in real-life social activities, as in extended or regressive agency? We shall address this later, based on two examples of media use.

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Adolescents in particular, who experience a unique connection between the real and unreal worlds during puberty, see the virtual network as an especially attractive medium. This applies equally to girls and boys, though in the case of girls, who traditionally grow up within a more limited social space than boys, the Internet has opened up a whole new space for them. Gender-typical thresholds to their social environment are lowered in the virtual world, and the wishes and dreams they suppress in everyday life can be made public.

It is not, however, the case, that a parallel world is created: instead, the ways in which they present themselves and communicate, though these extend beyond any concrete social space, again take shape against the background of people's real, everyday experiences of life and their social embeddedness. Neither does using the Internet change the social bases of girls' virtual activities. "Their 'own room' remains the place where girls negotiate their identity as girls the most. [. . .] However, the girls' personal homepage is different from their room in that it allows them to take a step outside the domestic sphere – their interests and feelings suddenly become visible" (Tillmann, 2008, p. 391). To this extent the Internet is a completely different platform to the traditional diary, where girls wrote their wishes and dreams as secret inner thoughts, which they accordingly kept hidden from others. Internet presentations, on the other hand, promise a parasocial openness which is a social reality, though it is not socially binding. Nonetheless, the girls are given self-affirmation and recognition; they can extend networks and look for additional supportive resources. In spite of all this, it remains the case that not only people's social environment, but also their social position shapes their media opportunities. Things which are distributed in a socially unequal manner in real life may give the impression of being different in second life, but this is not a social reality. Altogether, it can be said that social inequality can be seen among Internet users in the way they use the Internet. This applies both to people using different content and to people using the same content in different ways.

Computer Games

Computer games and video games (consoles) have become a firm fixture of adolescents' media use. It is their potential for interaction which makes them attractive in youth culture. Violent computer games have now become widespread in youth culture. The main problem with violent computer games is that the way in which antisocial, criminally violent acts are portrayed is becoming increasingly precise in terms of technological detail. "Players have to make a greater cognitive effort to distinguish between the virtual and the real world" and the question inevitably arises of whether anything "located in the virtual world could be transferred to the real world" (Fritz & Fehr, 2003, p. 50). Examining the research on computer games with this in mind, it can be seen that though violence cannot be shown to have been causally transferred, it must be assumed that subliminal effects occur in the long term, in terms of a rise in potential aggression. More than anything else, it is the egocentric nature of these computer games which allows people to gradually identify with the virtual figures (cf. Möller, 2007).

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Nonetheless, further differentiation is required. For example, it is in fact necessary to distinguish between violent acts that are obviously fictitious constructs and those that are portrayed in a very realistic manner. A distinction also needs to be made between the short-term and long-term effects, with short-term effects tending to appear as emotional states within and around the game, while long-term effects can develop as a latent disposition to violence (cf. Hartmann, 2006), mainly expressed in gamers' tendency to interpret everyday conflict more aggressively than other adolescents. Even assuming that the players' central focus is more on what they are required to do during the game and less on the game's content, it cannot be ruled out that the lack of compassion the games require leaves its mark on their ability to empathize and that regressive, reciprocal effects appear: "Over time, the mild to moderate short-term effects of using violent computer games add up over a large number of separate gaming sessions, stabilising the aggressive twist to users' thought structures and feelings, which in turn encourages aggressive behaviour (and a drop in pro-social behaviour)" (Hartmann, 2006, p. 92). Here, too, it depends on each person's personal environment, the milieu in which computer games are used. This, in turn, is linked with coping cultures within families and groups.

3.3 The Socio-structural–Socio-political Zone: The Concepts of Situation in Life and Situation of Coping

Social work and social policy share the same goal: to improve socially high-risk living conditions and even out unequal opportunities in life. Social policy is geared towards social structures and social work towards people. Social policy improves living conditions through quantitative and qualitative social reporting: social statistics, reports on poverty, health, equality, ageing, etc. These follow different approaches to ask the question of how structural social conditions affect living conditions and opportunities in life, i.e. what these conditions enable or prevent, what opportunities for fulfilment people have from the point of view of social justice and how this can be affected by social policy. These questions are approached using the concept of "situation in life" (*Lebenslage*). As the fundamental questions posed by social work are similar, though they arise from individuals, the social work clients, the concept of situation in life is relevant not only for their own work but also as a link to social policy. However, this link has to be constructed from a viewpoint specific to social work, too, as social work can only affect living conditions in a socially interactive manner, with little economic or legal influence.

To achieve this, we have developed the concept of "situation of coping" (*Bewältigungslage*). After all, social policy-makers and, of course (above all), social workers are interested not only in influencing socio-economic conditions and people's social environment, but also in asking how people can themselves be enabled to improve their opportunities in life and achieve self-realization against a backdrop of social security, within the context of social pedagogical support and mentoring.

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3.3.1 Situation in Life

The concept of situation in life can be used to address the connection between social developments and the different shapes assumed by social spaces in which people can cope with life in biographically different ways. It describes the context of the material, social and cultural resources for coping with life available to people in the light of these developments, resources which are conveyed and brought to life by coping cultures.

Situation in Life as a Historical Dialectical Concept

The concept of situation in life is a historical dialectical concept. The term is generally used in a non-dialectical manner, i.e. only descriptively, not only in reports on poverty and wealth, but also in analytical discourse (Volkert, 2005; Leßmann, 2007). It was Ingeborg Nahnsen (1975) who recognized the dialectic in the connection between living conditions and social developments not only in historical terms (at a time of increasing industrialization) but also in structural terms: the modernization and continued development of the economy under industrial capitalism also necessitated an improvement in living conditions and the education of the workers, who, after all, bore the weight of that modernization process. During a development of this kind, the subjects' interests in shaping their lives individually and socially grow, extending beyond the purely economic aspect of reproduction. As their living conditions improve along with the economy, so the model goes, people thus come to recognize further interests of their own. They may develop their own strong-minded practices, the principles of which are manifestly or latently at odds with the economically preferable social form. In this dialectical process, social ideas which have previously been of a vague, utopian nature become linked to real social conditions and can thus turn into normative and social stimulants (social ideas) leading to social change.

This is thus a *dialectic of extension* whose basic structure gains influence wherever industrial societies develop, i.e. when they reach the developmental threshold at which this mutual dependency between labour and capital, created by industrial modernization, necessarily has to set in. It is only when this dialectic of extension sets in that people can experience for themselves that more is possible for them socially and culturally and that they can develop and recognize the conditions in which this continued development is possible. In other words, extended interests of this kind do not simply occur of their own accord in subjects but develop because and while their situation in life develops. This is why we speak of people's situation in life as a *web of opportunities*. Accordingly, Nahnsen looks into the "kind of conditions in which people actually become aware of their interests and are able to satisfy them" (Nahnsen, 1975, p. 150).

> Thus the extent to which interests can develop and be fulfilled depends, among other things, on a series of circumstances brought about by social influences which determine how well people can be supplied with goods and services (*scope for provisions and income*). It also depends on

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> the opportunities offered to a larger or lesser extent by maintaining social connections and interacting with others (*scope for connections and cooperation*). People's opportunities to develop interests and fulfil them are influenced considerably by the conditions of socialisation, by what social norms are internalised, and how, by the education and training people happen to have, by their experiences in the world of work, by the extent of their mobility at work and geographically, etc. (*scope for learning and experience*). Another crucial role is played by the psychological and mental demands typically placed upon individuals due to their working conditions, the milieu in which they live and their environment, insecurity about their livelihood: demands which they constantly have to balance *(scope for leisure and revitalisation).* Last but not least, the development and fulfilment of interests is structured by the conditions which decide the extent to which an individual can make decisions in the various areas of life (*scope for planning*). (*Nahnsen, 1975, p. 150; see Krieger & Schläfke, 1987 for commentary*)

In addition, to take into account the situation in life faced by women working in the home, with issues relating to balancing family life and work, another scope was introduced: *social attachment* (Sellach et al., 2006). This now has to be addressed in the case of men, too (cf. Böhnisch, 2013). In terms of the opportunities they offer, these scopes are related to one another. For example, whether or not a person completes further education (scope for learning) depends on their scope for income and scope for revitalization just as much as it does on their opportunities for social participation (scope for planning) and how much relief they get from the demands of reproductive labour (scope for social attachment).

This development in the way they interact took place in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and during the late twentieth century, not in an uncontrolled manner but subject to socio-political regulation by the state and society: a context in which the development of people's situation in life was further promoted by the relationship between labour and capital being balanced out and given an institutional order. The fact that this was mainly the order of a welfare state was linked to nation state traditions, especially in Western Europe. However, the socio-political principle does not necessarily have to be incorporated into a nation state or a welfare state; it still continues to exist even when the outlines of nation states and the configuration of their welfare states become blurred. It makes itself felt by the extent to which industrial capitalism depends on mass labour by workers with increasing levels of qualification as it strives to develop in economic and technological terms (in order to increase profits).

Dialectic of Extension and Agency

Recent discourses on social work heavily feature the term "agency". This viewpoint sees clients in some discourses as agents in terms of their approach to social efficacy and is intended to make them visible as such and turn them into suitable recipients for support. However, to ensure that this does not remain limited to programmatic aspects, there is a need to examine the interacting factors which favour this socially oriented, socially responsible behaviour: "When it comes to identifying agency, rather than starting out from the assumption that

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there are pre-existing groups with certain properties, skills, interests etc., instead there is a need to examine how actors produce their particular identities, motives and intentions (and thus their particular agency) depending on their situation in social structures or social relationships" (Scherr, 2012, p. 234). This is possible using the concept of the dialectic of extension, as developed using the theory of situation in life. Though this dialectic comes from a historical sociological source, in terms of structure it can be used to shed light on the conditions and mechanisms in whose presence extended agency develops. Thus we shall see later how agency can be promoted in the milieu of socially activating projects and their functional equivalents (see below).

However, while, during the twentieth century, institutional regulation of the dialectic of extension took the form of the *welfare state compromise*, especially in Europe, the welfare state has been the receptacle of conflicting social demands and economic interests ever since. It uses the concepts of entitlement and suitability, as laid out constitutionally, in an attempt to regulate the situation.

In other words, instead of social ideas and capital directly conflicting, the welfare state acts as a mediator. From the start, social movements which subsequently arose, such as the women's rights movement or the green movement, went through this mediation process. They, too, arose in the context of this basic conflict between labour and capital, human beings and the economy. As long as it was possible for the welfare state to transform the dialectic of extension generally, as a modernization policy, and specifically, as a model policy, all within the boundaries of corresponding socio-economic and socio-political conditions, people's average situation in life could develop progressively following the path of the normal working relationship.

Now, however, the welfare state's powers of influence are being eroded, which means that the model policy is shifting from a developmental perspective to one of social pacification and prevention. This (driven by economic factors) is making people's situation in life increasingly precarious. Constrictions are beginning to set in. Nonetheless, seen from the point of view of national societies, the welfare state remains a mediator for the development of people's situation in life. However, this mediation is now taking place in a split society, in which the wealthy find their situations in life expanding in the wake of globalized market dynamics, while the increasing numbers of the population threatened by poverty, experiencing a constriction in their situation, continue to be "dealt with" by the welfare state, now more in the form of restrictions.

The Dialectic Disappears: How Subjectification Constricts People's Situation in Life

The industrial capitalist societies of the first modernity allowed the model of the dialectic of extension, in which the socio-political definition of "situation in life" is embedded, to blossom in that the basic conflict between labour and capital (and its transformation within the welfare state) kept national societies in a state of agitation. During the second modernity, this social tension lost some of its

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power. This was mainly due to the processes of rationalization and economic globalization driven by microelectronic technology: processes which burst the limits of economic and social regulation within national societies. Capital, now internationally free-floating, was released from its dependence on national societies and locally available labour, and thus from the restraints of the welfare state, to the extent that its interests in exploiting people were almost given free run. This creates a pressure on people's situation in life which can no longer be sufficiently balanced out by the welfare state. The basic conflict still exists between individuals and the economy, between people's interests in developing and an economic interest in their exploitation. Today, however, this conflict takes place inside people themselves. In postmodern "both one and the other" structures, the social dialectic of extension is now accompanied by an individualized process of constriction. People now have to settle the conflict between labour and capital within themselves, simultaneously becoming the subject and the object of their exploitation as "entrepreneurs of the self". This does not, however, put an end to the basic conflict: instead, it is turned into a personal fate. People in the second modernity now live a self-reliant life caught between opportunity and risk. Situations in life have basically become risk situations; their spheres of action have become ambivalent: "Processes of precarisation and increased social vulnerability are spreading, as a social experience on the level of the actor. They draw people's attention to the paradox effects of radical changes in social structure and force them to take action in the context of and using those effects" (Völker, 2008, p. 85).

3.3.2 Situation of Coping

As social work can only intervene within certain limits into social structure, instead usually acting at the level of the individual, another step which thus needs to be taken is to gain access to people's situation in life via social pedagogical means. This does not mean that social work does not require knowledge of social structure. On the contrary, it is crucial as a source of background information and for reference: it acts both to determine the scope and limits of social work intervention and to link it back in with socio-political aspects. Though social work is considered an instrument of social policy, in that its interventions focus on the biographical manifestations of social risks, it has little or no influence on the central parameters affecting people's situation in life: their income, work and profession, or their rights. It can, however, manipulate social and cultural parameters, to the extent that they can be shaped using interactive pedagogical means. If we now try to examine these parameters from the point of view of what is enabled and prevented, this will give us a picture of *situations of coping* which can be accessed using social pedagogical tools. To put the concept of situations of coping to use, it is useful to start out by identifying the means available to social work for accessing people's situation in life. These means are *language*, *relationships*, *time* and *space*. The model of coping showed us that clients can feel the urge to vent emotions (inwardly, in a self-destructive manner or outwardly, in an antisocial manner) if they are unable to voice their helplessness – to *express* or address it. This indicates that a situation of coping

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silences people, making them incapable of addressing issues – creating a pressure to vent their emotions. At the same time, we know that people are able to address critical configurations in their lives if they are recognized as social problems rather than all the burden and blame being placed on the individual. Another crucial factor here is the sociometric structure of people's situation in life. For this reason we look into not only whether and how people can gain recognition, but also what dependencies they are involved in. Within those dependent relationships we also look for signs of learned helplessness of the kind often seen in victims of violence. By this means, we come to the biographical dimension of time – the issue of behaviours becoming self-perpetuating and fixed.

In these cases, the effects of a deviant career, or a career as a client of the social services, have generally led to people taking on and adapting to the confines of the negative, deficient attributes repeatedly ascribed to them. This means that systems of dependency have developed which the clients basically see as a guarantee of their agency, and which are therefore hard to dismantle, even by providing functional equivalents. Finally, in the context of social space, we are mainly interested in aspects which encourage and prevent adaptation – aspects which can develop from people's situation in life. Thus, altogether, the construct of the situation of coping – a concept linking people's situation in life and how they cope with life – can be divided into four dimensions:

- The dimension of *expression* (opportunities and obstacles facing people wanting to address their inner sensitivities, rather than having to vent emotions).
- The dimension of *recognition* (opportunities and obstacles facing people wanting to become socially integrated).
- The dimension of *dependency* (opportunities and obstacles facing people wanting to act independently).
- The dimension of *appropriation* (opportunities and obstacles facing people wanting to gain a foothold in their social space to extend their personal and social limits).

Finely nuanced links can be traced between the dimensions of people's situation in life and the situation of coping. The parameters of people's situation in life, such as their income, housing conditions and social contacts, influence their opportunities to adapt to their social environment. The connection between the range of income/participation opportunities available to them and their level of dependency is obvious. Their opportunities for learning, education and participation affect their social opportunity to express critical sensitivities, and vice versa. These links are mediated by clients' biography and situation, which means that we need corresponding approaches involving participant observation and biographical narrative methods. The basic hypothesis behind all this is that we can use the dimension of

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the situation of coping not only to gain access as social workers to people's situation in life but also, above all, to influence their *agency in precarious situations in life*, viewed from the point of view of coping. If we manage to pull people back out of regressive forms of action, stabilize them in a situation of simple agency, or even guide them into extended agency, we can hope to affect their situation in life, firstly in that they will generally be able to cope with their own situation in life in a self-reliant manner, i.e. they will be able to deal with risks better, and secondly in that they will be able to perceive and grasp opportunities which arise to improve their situation in life by extending the range of actions open to them.

We have already addressed the point that gender-typical patterns of coping appear (or reappear) in critical living circumstances. These can force dramatic constraints on situations of coping.

Gender is a mediation category which runs through our personal and social lives both by categorizing human feelings and leanings and by categorizing people within the social order. This does not imply that gender determines people's situation in life, but that it is one universal dimension of that situation, and that it is triggered in critical situations in a manner that makes it a dominant coping factor, whatever people's social status or ethnic group. In almost every case in social work which involves critical living circumstances and related psychosocial coping problems – addiction, unemployment, poverty, violence, social withdrawal, migration conflicts, homelessness – we come across gender-specific patterns of coping.

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4 The Four Dimensions of the Situation of Coping as Means of Access for Social Work

The four dimensions of the situation of coping – dependency, expression, appropriation and recognition – are closely interlinked. For example, anyone living in a state of extreme *dependency* generally has few opportunities to raise this issue (*expression*) and usually suffers from a lack of *appropriation opportunities* and a lack of *recognition*. A similar set of links can be formed starting out from any dimension.

4.1 Dependency

Dependency is a relationship forced upon people, and thus one of power, in which a situation of coping can be extremely constrained by people being undermined, stigmatized, de facto disempowered, prevented from participating and losing their options. The borders between dependency and vulnerability are fluid. Dependency comes in many forms, extending into the zone of indirect situations known as "codependency". The social work strategy of empowerment (see Section 6.3) aims to achieve independence, as a path towards escaping dependency. The term "social dependency" is always at odds with the fact that people are social beings who rely on one another, i.e. on other people. When it comes to the process of the social division of labour in the context of the tension between social differentiation and social integration, our structural dependency on one another is a central prerequisite for social stability. The same is true of the stability of everyday social interaction. This tension is particularly evident and causes conflict in the spheres of education and social support. In New Zealand you will find the sentence: "Independency is a quality of interdependency." Children rely upon their parents; educational generational relationships at home and in school can only succeed if there is a healthy balance between dependency and independence. In social work, on the other hand, the structure of supportive relationships makes them dependent relationships, with corresponding imbalances of power. The fact that the social workers and clients rely upon one another during supportive processes, to make them work, is often paid little attention. "The risk of dependency, of limited autonomy. Differences, different strategies for action and interaction conflicts are normal in supportive processes. It requires people to constantly come to an understanding" (Schefold, 2011, p. 23). The "client's situation of coping" are, however, not only an interpersonal matter but can – e.g. in the case of poverty – often also be defined as a situation of dependency in terms of social structure. This can become problematic if the interpersonal dependency relationship masks the dependency caused by social structure, hiding clients' status as socially vulnerable individuals. Werner Schefold puts this down to the fact that, as an interpersonal relationship, support restricts a case to the people involved.

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"Interaction problems often eclipse the problems which led to support being provided" (Schefold, 2011, p. 23).

Structures of dependency mainly evolve in group relationships. Youth workers and street workers see all too often how, for the sake of belonging to the group, young people in deviant cliques display conspicuous behaviour or even commit offences which they would not as individuals. Labelling processes can give rise to processes of dependency in that, over time, those who are labelled subconsciously adopt the characteristics ascribed to them and thus also meet the stereotypical expectations held by those supervising them.

Basic configurations of this type can be found in many fields of social work. They take on a particularly well-defined form in the case of intimate relationships. This is generally also where codependency comes in, e.g. in the case of alcoholism. Codependency begins when dealing with the alcoholic takes up more time and psychosocial energy than anything else, and this fixation on the alcoholic leads to emotional and social dependency, being bound to him (or her). "Eventually, this dependency on another person becomes a pathological condition which has a negative effect on all the codependent person's other relationships" (Rennert, 1990, p. 160). The phases which the codependent person goes through can be compared with the phases typical of an alcoholic: keeping up a facade; trying to exert personal control over the addict so as to manage or divert the focus from his consumption; taking on responsibilities which have previously been fulfilled by the addict; accepting the addict's rationalization mechanisms (e.g. that alcohol encourages creativity); collaboration (helping buy alcohol), and finally submitting to the logic of concealment and avoidance (Rennert, 1990, p. 160). As suggested in this example, it is mainly women who stray into the zones of codependency. Support workers for the homeless, for example, come across women who should really leave their dependent relationship, but do not have the material and social opportunities to do so – or women who have entered a forced partnership for these reasons. They have been sucked into a learned "inability" to care for themselves, which becomes fixed in dependent relationships. Workers at women's refuges have discovered that women's dependent status within their family continues even when they are in their refuge. Support workers have always been helpless in the face of women who, despite suffering extreme violence, return to the perpetrators and accept the blame, as they want to keep their family and relationship.

4.2 Expression

The field of social work is structured by *language*. Within the concept of coping, the central focus of any intervention is seen as providing support as a chance for people to give expression to their helplessness. This is based on the central insight that patterns of behaviour conceal messages which can be decoded and vocalized. Children have to learn at an early stage that they are something in their own right; they need to

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have the feeling that whatever comes out of them will not be instantly belittled. They need the experience that they can voice their feelings; that they will be accepted as they are; and that they have an effect, in that others take them into account. Rigid social adaptation and undervaluing of children's feelings, on the other hand, causes an inner helplessness which needs to be vented and disregarded. Later, as time passes, this may be expressed as a hatred of their own inner weakness and a hatred of anything helpless, weak or unfamiliar in their environment (cf. Gruen, 1992). This is the starting point for Winnicott (1988, p. 109ff.): the deprived child (left entirely to his own devices) gives up, becomes submissive and is hopelessly unhappy, initially showing no signs of deviance (Winnicott in Davis & Wallbridge, 1983, p. 127). If his environmental conditions improve, then, according to Winnicott, the child "begins to become hopeful again, and organizes antisocial acts in hope" (Winnicott in Davis & Wallbridge 1983, p. 127). "The antisocial tendency implies hope" (Winnicott 1988, p. 161). By committing offences such as stealing he is subconsciously trying to get others to engage with him, wants to draw attention to himself or carries out acts of destruction – violence towards objects or other children – to challenge his social environment or its firm actions and strength (in order to gain attention). This apparent paradox – attention seeking in hope as the driving force behind deviant behaviour – can be taken apart as follows. To the child, driven back into himself by rejection and lacking any empathy from his overtaxed family environment, any legitimate means of access to social attention seem to be barred out. When people who pay attention to him, such as youth workers, appear, this plants a seed of hope that he will be accepted for what he is after all. However, for some time, during what might be called a transition period, he continues to clutch at the means of deviant behaviour, as he has never previously succeeded in gaining attention by orthodox means (and is poorly equipped to compete with others to do so). If social workers recognize this link, they will find it easier to deal with this negative transitional situation. Being able to express distress, to raise it as an *issue* and thus escape from a vulnerable position and position oneself in relation to oneself and others without feeling any pressure to vent it through antisocial behaviour or self-harming is a basic configuration of social work which brings together the threads of diagnosis and intervention in the support relationship, not only among children and young people but equally among adults in precarious living circumstances. This reveals that language is a social medium which we navigate in and use to deal with ourselves and our environment, to gain certainty about ourselves in a social context. Language is at the heart of every counselling session. Language can thus certainly be understood as a way to address the difficulties in life which give people a sense of helplessness within themselves, though those involved can no longer put that helplessness into words. They feel a pressure to vent, which can be relieved during the counselling process. The aim is for them to regain an inner autonomy, giving them independent access to their own inner world as a basis on which to reconfigure their relationship with themselves and with their social environment. Language is the medium to achieve this.

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4.3 Appropriation

The concept of appropriation has until now mainly been used to describe the phase of childhood and adolescence. According to this theory, part of children's development involves a constant extension of their close social circle as they grow older (cf. Deinet & Reutlinger, 2006). During adolescence, the process of appropriating social spaces mainly takes place through their peer group and the joint appropriation of spaces and styles that this facilitates. The attitudes and spaces adopted by young people in cliques are a reflection of their shared interests, independence and dissociation from adult culture.

Meanwhile, in the adult world, which is characterized more by functions and roles than by reference to social spaces, the perspective of appropriation takes on a new meaning, especially when it comes to the structural changes occurring in our work-based society. It is not only the unemployed and workers in precarious employment relationships who are prevented from appropriating workspaces as a form of identity work. As work becomes both more extensive and more intensive, many people involved in the labour process are today put under pressure and find it hard to establish stable work contexts for appropriation across their life course. In old age, when social functions and roles fade in importance or are relinquished, the dimension of concrete spaces once again takes on an important role. As they enter old age, most people notice a switch in the spaces they occupy: they no longer take the route to work which once structured their everyday lives, and a territorial withdrawal into their home, or an old folk's home, begins. As well as this new emphasis on the function of the home, the area in which they live also gains a new status. Old people rely more heavily on their physically close environment, losing at least some of their spatial mobility as they age. Integration or exclusion is now largely experienced within their social space. The development of *interactive technologies* has added a new quality to the perspective of appropriation:

> Children and young people who grow up in a media-dominated society or live in an insular life-world develop not only different understandings of spaces [. . .] but also the ability to act in various spaces at once. They create connections between different spaces, for example linking the specific biographical space they currently inhabit to distant places and social spaces with which they can communicate (on their mobile phones or computers), or to virtual spaces on the Internet (chat rooms) which are in some ways also understood as social spaces. (*Deinet & Reutlinger, 2006, p. 304*)

However, the new information and communication technologies work more with images and less with language. There is no longer any need for explanation; all that counts is what people like or not. At the same time, the media environment is both open to appropriation and contains its own means of appropriation. Thus, the process of appropriation within social spaces has today been extended considerably in a parasocial manner but involves ambivalent "appropriation quality".

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The perspectives of appropriation and coping mainly start to merge whenever urban development provides fewer and fewer spaces in which young people can gain public attention (recognition) and present themselves (self-efficacy). Many feel that they cannot use “their” spaces and patterns of appropriating and extending spaces as a means of integrating into society; instead they tend to feel excluded.

> In a segmented work-based society with living situations which are segmented in an “uncontrolled” manner, it must be assumed that if young people’s territorializing does not lead to their integration into the system, this is because its integrative structures no longer always admit them: acts of appropriation are increasingly becoming detached from their integrative function and are left in a closed loop, i.e. without content. “Adolescents’ actions are losing their participative character; they are becoming increasingly left to their own devices, excluded from the structure [...]. Youths who are ‘visible’ are growing less representative” (Werlen & Reutlinger, 2006, p. 63).

The perspective of connecting appropriation and coping, as described by Werlen & Reutlinger (among others), can be applied beyond childhood and adolescence, throughout a person’s life course – especially considering that the borders between the ages are blurring (see Chapter 7). This paints a picture of an archetypal trajectory starting out with more physical, territorially rooted forms of appropriation in childhood, moving on to group-related appropriation in adolescence, then the way spaces are experienced in adulthood, mainly during coping crises (experiences of being excluded), and finishing with appropriative behaviour during old age which is once again more physical and territorial.

4.4 Recognition

Recognition seems to be the dimension of the situation of coping which runs through all the other dimensions: the undermining involved in dependency; recognition as a necessary requirement for being able to talk about oneself, and recognition as an “amplifier” of appropriation processes. It is not without reason that social recognition is described as a “transitory identity”.

> Due to the intersubjective character of interpersonal recognition, its daily practices involve pressure to reciprocate [...]. Recognising the other person becomes a precondition for being recognised oneself. However, the central aspect helping members of society develop an identity and fulfilling the functional needs of the community is not only recognition from one’s personal environment but also that coming from “various generalised other people”. Modern societies can thus been seen as a web of finely nuanced spheres of recognition; as socially established patterns of interaction which each give rise to different recognition principles. (*Honneth, 2010, p. 38*)

From social work experience, however, we know that the interpersonal and social dimensions of social recognition can diverge. It is not rare for even social workers to

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find themselves developing a good relationship to their clients but preferring to stay at a distance to the milieu they come from. This is the case because most professionals not only come from other lifeworlds but have also been socialized according to norms which often clash with those of their clients' background milieu. Each social worker needs to be able to address this and balance it against their personal recognition of the client. In this context, it is a professional requirement to differentiate between functional and personal recognition.

Functional recognition is at the heart of acceptance-based social work: as a social worker I have to be able to recognize and accept (not approve of!) the fact that the client's antisocial or self-destructive behaviour, which it is my duty to combat, often has positive connotations for the client, as it is their only achievable means of coping. If this is accompanied by a personal relationship developing during the support process, this also needs to be brought into balance with functional recognition (closeness and distance). The aim of the *acceptance-based* approach is to show clients that their social workers not only appreciate the amount of energy they need to expend on coping; they also realize that their clients have certain qualities which, taking the standard view of them as suffering from deficits, have never been recognized as strengths and have thus never come into play. It makes a difference whether, when providing family support, I view the family solely as overtaxed by their disorganized situation, or whether I am nonetheless impressed at how they have managed to just about scrape by for years, despite the adverse conditions. If processes of recognition are to succeed, they thus have to be mutual. Social workers have to be able to show clients that they too want to be recognized and valued by them and that the support work is a joint effort. This also gives the clients recognition. At the same time, recognition can be considered an interpersonal medium which can be used to set limits within a client relationship – one which clients usually accept, as a sign of mutual respect (cf. Heeg & Paul, 2013).

As we established from coping theory, our absolute urge for biographical agency involves an urge to be recognized at any price. We can use the concept of coping to show how people use antisocial behaviour, subconsciously, to draw attention to themselves, using their conspicuous behaviour as what might be called a last-ditch attempt to achieve recognition and make contact. This is also the key to Honneth's observation on social pathologies resulting from people being denied recognition in a neo-capitalist society:

> The struggle for recognition seems to have shifted into the subject's inner, whether in the form of various fears of failure, or in the form of cold, impotent rage. [. . .] If the drive to use society as a means of developing self-esteem cannot reliably be fulfilled as there are no longer any spheres which are established as standard for this purpose, that drive does not just wither away. With no legitimising principle to lean upon, it becomes curiously unlocalised and seeks out alternative forms of expression. We can describe this social situation as a social pathology: to those who are cut off from any means of accessing established spheres of recognition, this kind of situation means they no longer have any way to gain self-esteem by participating in social life. (*Honneth, 2010, p. 44*)

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For this reason, their search for recognition “takes the uncontrolled form of a mere struggle for public visibility or compensatory respect” (Honneth, 2010, p. 44f). We know the “stigma flaunters” of antisocial settings who are not ashamed of their destructive, conspicuous behaviour but instead proudly present their stigma as it is the only way they have to express the helplessness at its root – to have it recognized by society. The pressure of neo-capitalism has repressed the culture of recognizing helplessness, once fairly well promoted by the welfare state. One of social work’s future tasks should be to develop that culture, at least in the communal area, along with civic society initiatives and social movements.

4.5 Situation in Life, Situation of Coping and Status as a Client

In the critical discourses of the 1970s and 1980s, social work was revealed to be a means of social control, a site of labelling and a cause of deviant careers. Since then, reforms have been introduced and designed with the aim of reforming social work’s organizational structures to prevent them from becoming labelling traps or launch pads for deviant careers. Systems for integrated family support (one-stop support services) have been set up to avoid clients being passed from one door to the next and thus inevitably turning into another case for the files. Programmes within service users’ social spaces are intended to free them from the institutional isolation of their status as clients – to reveal them as actors within their social environment, offering an unhindered view of the everyday conditions and skills which social workers can build upon as part of their support plans. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the living and coping situations experienced by the recipients of social care are largely determined by the framework for intervention and control set up by social work services, and in part by their status as clients. This is often not taken into sufficient consideration, at a time when the social work discourse is putting its trust in the “civil society” programme and would prefer to describe clients as “citizens”. In that case, the radical question must be asked of what it means for social work if users are no longer seen as generally dependent clients, but instead act as independent subjects with a legal personality and, possibly, formulate demands which fall outside the boundaries of social work support. The modern-day professionalization of social work has also led to professional expectations of clients now “being in good hands”. One subject not yet broached in this context is the usually hidden conflict “between helpers full of good intentions and clients who are increasingly formulating their own demands”, with “the aspect of rights, as an independent basis for justifying actions or lack or action, being left out of the picture” (Keupp, 1996, p. 165).

Clients’ situation of coping must thus be elucidated from a different angle to their situation in life and seen as contrasting with it. This particularly applies to the dimensions of dependency, expression and appropriation. Methodologically, an analysis of the client’s situation of coping should involve two steps. The first step

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places the social worker at the focus of attention. Supervision should not only be able to address mutual interdependencies within the client relationship but also to help social workers recognize the aspects of their own controlling behaviour which might repress statements made by clients in which they express their urge to become independent of the support. The second, important step in this context is for the support relationship to be fundamentally understood as a conflictive relationship, allowing a third-party perspective to be adopted, as in the conflict model (see Section 6.5). In other words, it is important to make the most of every opportunity which offers clients a chance to escape the two-person support relationship and find new social connections. This may be through forms of open group work or neighbourhood meet-ups, or by taking part in projects which give them social recognition from other people apart from "their" social worker and thus allow them to leave behind their status as clients. No more needs to be said about people's situation in life and their situation of coping, seen as their position as a client in the stricter sense. The wider (socio-political) meaning of "situation in life" is about ensuring that precarious situations in life and situations of coping are accepted within social policy. Does the current definition of poverty, as set out by the welfare state, really cover clients' situation in life – not only in material terms? Is social work open to definitions of poverty aimed at contexts in which avenues are opened up within policy on poverty (rather than just being designed to manage and ring-fence poverty)? In what areas have new, risky situation in life remained unrecognized, and thus unaccepted, by social policy, for example young adults' precarious transitional situation or the patterns of excessive demand and violence seen in care for the elderly at home? Is there gender-political acceptance of the hidden risks faced by men? After all, the amount of public attention accorded to precarious situations of coping depends on the degree of socio-political acceptance they enjoy. Finally, this is also connected to clients' chances of escaping the framework of social work, and how they do so.

However, it is not just the question of socio-political acceptance on the part of the state which is of significance when it comes to extending the definition of "situation in life" beyond people's status as a client. Social acceptance of the way in which the recipients of social services are cared for and supported by the welfare state includes acceptance by other social groups. The aspect of key importance in this respect is acceptance by the middle class, representing social normality. However, in recent years this class has started to put an undefined pressure on social work and its service users. The middle class's fear of dropping down the social ladder appears to be increasing once again, giving them a wish to distance themselves from socially disadvantaged groups. This pressure is particularly well developed in discussion in the media. In the discourse on young people and families, for instance, the spotlight of social attention is once again falling on problem youths and incapable families, rather than the social circumstances producing them. Thus, social work is again coming under pressure, following the principle of personal blame. For this reason it is once again a matter of urgency to carry out awareness-raising work starting from the immediate

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community, and to build up support networks, in order to create initial socio-political public spheres for social work.

4.6 Excursus: The Situation in Life Approach and the Capability Approach

The capability approach, as developed by Amartya Sen in the 1980s, is actually an approach designed to fight poverty in the societies of Asia, Africa and South America which do not have any well-developed social policy. In essence, this approach can be generally described as an attempt to "create a relation" between the resources people possess and the use that they can (could) make of them. It is part of a programme focusing on the "good life", in which basic needs and values are achieved in a globally shared understanding of humanity (along the same lines, for example, as the Human Rights Convention) in democratic agreement. Sen's point is that instead of focusing generally on gaining these primary goods, it is necessary to open up individual abilities to gain them: "the relevant personal characteristics that govern the conversation of primary goods into the person's ability to promote her ends" (Sen, 1999, p. 74). The central focus here is on the degree of freedom they have to gain them: what options do I have when it comes to making something of what I have in me? How can I personally develop the options for a good life and put them into practice? "According to the capability approach, people's chances of achieving what they want are a better measurement of wellbeing than other parameters such as income (or gross national income), available goods, utility or satisfaction" (Volkert, 2005, p. 13).

In the recent socio-political discourse, the capability approach and the situation in life approach are also seen as complementary. The capability approach is even seen as an "internationally widespread version of the situation in life approach" (Volkert, 2005, p. 143; see also Leßmann, 2007). The main reason that we do not share this understanding is that the concept of the situation in life it uses is only understood in a descriptive manner, not in a historical, dialectical manner. After all, in order to open up windows in society giving people a chance of achieving what they want (see Otto & Ziegler, 2007), the capability approach would need to have a socio-historical theory of how living conditions and capabilities are developed and made possible, as is the case via the situation in life approach, in the dialectic of extension. The European form of the capability approach shifts it from the context of social history and development policy in which it came about in the 1970s and 1980s, relocating it in the European discourse on welfare policy, so to speak as a combinable module.

Sen developed the concept in a socio-historical and socio-political landscape in which – more so than today – there was still absolutely no sign of a welfare state developing of the kind in European industrial societies. Similarly to the Declaration of Human Rights, in a situation where no collective social processes are in sight, what is required is to make social potential for development (going beyond a mere everyday

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struggle for survival) visible and worthwhile for individuals. However, in the long term, this cannot replace adhering to the principle of the welfare state. The capability approach is blind in terms of social history and social structure, even if its advocates point out that Sen does in fact bring up the conditional socio-economic context in the shape of his socially determined "instrumental freedoms" such as political freedom, social opportunities or social security (see Sen, 2002). However, this remains programmatic and does not come from a historical, empirical source as with the concept of situation in life. This means that the concept remains appellative, and it comes as no surprise if criticism of the approach is mixed with the suspicion that modern capitalism is all too happy to deal with programmes of this kind, whose social criticism is merely appellative; that it can adapt them and market them for its own purposes. If the individual is pinpointed as the agent of his or her needs and wishes, then what sets that individual apart, after all, from the figure of the "worker as entrepreneur" and the "optimiser of one's own human capital" as has been introduced and presented in the liberalist discussion on work and education for some years now? A second critical question is directed at the subject theory implicit in the capability approach. Can one really simply take it for granted that subjects have access to themselves like this and that the resources which are "in them" can be activated this way? Inside, people often react quite differently to what might be expected from external cues. We can examine this in the concept of coping with life. The naivety of the capability approach regarding inner dynamics can easily lead to untested assumptions with an optimistic view of how people act. More than anything else, the capability approach is a normative concept. It sets down the goals of a "good life" made up of basic socio-anthropological findings and ideas taken from global human rights agreements. In this manner, Martha Nussbaum (1999) developed a list of capabilities leading to a "good life". Sen is against the prescription of aims; on principle, he would like to see goals being set which are open, left up to individuals or agreed upon by means of democratic discourse. After all, the whole point is to give actors individual freedom and options. This reveals how difficult it is, if not problematic, to combine universal goals linked to the collective with individual ideas of what makes a "good life". In terms of social policy, what we are dealing with here is a free-floating programme, as the goals and opportunities for achieving them are not linked in turn to social conflict or the conditions (in respect of social history or social structure) in which those goals develop and can be experienced.

For this reason, we prefer the term "better life" to that of "good life", as it serves to tie in the normative aspect with the empirical social conditions of people's current situation in life. After all, it has always been the discourse on the welfare state in which the empirical, and thus tangible, levels of a life befitting human beings have been established and – against a background of social conflict – constantly re-established. At this juncture it should be pointed out once again that the normative aspect only becomes clear to clients if they have the opportunity to reflect on their situation of distress by *experiencing* alternative possibilities and thus seeing contrasts

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with a better life. In social work practice, the idea has long taken root that it is not rational explanation which promises to change normative attitudes, but the provision of "functional equivalents". In other words, projects on which people can see themselves in a new light in different social contexts, promoting self-esteem, recognition and self-efficacy. It is only when alternatives of this kind have been experienced that normative schemes can have any effect in a manner relevant to coping. This is just as true of human rights as it is of the principles of a good life. On the subjective level, by contrast, the *capability* approach fits in very well with the idea of extended agency as proposed in the coping concept. Extended agency starts out, radically, from people's freedom to achieve fulfilment and sets out to measure social conditions by whether they offer individuals positive freedoms of this kind (see Section 6.3).

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5 The Socio-Political, Socio-Ethical Perspective: Social and Generational Justice

What is new and obvious about the current global situation is that it tends to divide into two normative universes based on contradictory principles regarding their functioning and justification. The global money market knows no boundaries, but it is a lack of boundaries that human beings, with their social ties, cannot get to grips with, although it produces crises with serious consequences for them. This sends out shockwaves of injustice which cannot, however, lead to a socially related discourse on justice, precisely because the injustice which is sensed or felt cannot be determined in socially mediated contexts. Equally, doubt is growing about the policy on justice put forward by the welfare state, which is not equipped to combat those global changes. In view of this it was only to be expected that the discourse on justice within society, previously centred on the welfare state, would break up into a number of discussions seeking new focuses. Considering these developments, social work can no longer rely as a matter of course on the formula for justice proposed by the welfare state but is instead forced to build up a perspective on justice from situations it comes across in practice and then find a new place for this perspective within social policy. This is where David Miller's theory of justice, with its empirical social links, can help us. Miller (2008) distinguishes between three principles of justice which take effect in three empirically identifiable spheres of everyday understandings of justice. The first is an awareness that citizens have equal rights; the second is a meritocratic recognition that people deserve different incomes and earnings depending on the different values of their function within an organization, and the third principle is a feeling for the fundamental needs which exist within social milieus and social relationships – needs which are often not subjectively comparable. Miller thus proposes a pluralist account of justice in which the principle of equality among citizens has just as much of an effect as the meritocratic principle within organizations and the market, or the principle of need within solidary communities. These principles of justice can exist alongside one another, compete with one another and be related to one another.

We can draw an analogy between this empirical concept of justice and the cosmos of justice in which social work clients live. In this regard, our theory is that the way in which the socially disadvantaged experience and are able to live out justice depends on the effects of the socio-political safety net beneath them and the opportunities and obstacles this creates. This can be seen empirically in extended or regressive forms of coping. If the welfare state's web of justice, as in a socio-political safety net, rips apart, this can trigger attitudes in people which involve their sense of justice coming undone from the ties of the welfare state and, so to speak, undergoing a U-turn. After all, the sense of justice promoted by the welfare state even predominates within groups on the margins of society as long as they still perceive themselves as a social

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group which has socio-political recognition, though (being on the margins) they do not usually look for any comparison group beyond their own milieu. Where required, they usually see the socio-political principle of care as a principle of justice which they can demand within their rights as citizens. However, if this socio-political safety net is at risk, even those standing on the margins seek out social comparison groups, though not usually within the intrasocietal hierarchy of status and income (which is of course traditionally left alone) but within groups of similar status from which they can dissociate themselves. These are mainly migrants and refugees, on whom their newly awakened sense of injustice is projected.

Thus, there are close connections between people's sense of justice and their pressure to cope. Social justice must be addressed alongside *gender justice*. The main impetus for this comes from the works of Nancy Fraser (1996). "Following this line of thought, the justice of the welfare state is characterised by the two principles of social justice/the distribution of the wealth and a symmetrical recognition of the sexes" (Klein, 2009, p. 300). Considering that in structural terms, there is still a hierarchical gender-based division of labour, this makes sense, as the discourse on social justice leaves out (usually implicitly) the field of reproduction. In other words, socially necessary labour needs to take up a position alongside economically necessary labour, with a regime of its own legitimized by civil society. This will, however, require a key socio-ethical idea which can counterbalance the socially disembedded logic of economics. In this context it is worthwhile for social work, in particular, to take up the thread of the discussion on care. The care perspective covers our society's future socio-economic problems: the redefinition of the meaning of "work", strategies to counter social disembedding and the development of a perspective of social citizenship involving family and public care (see Brückner, 2011). Society's future problems, or those left behind by today's generation, will have to be dealt with by later generations. For this reason, the modern discourse on justice must necessarily include the issue of forward-looking *generational justice* and thus *sustainability*. "Sustainability" is originally an environmental term, but sustainability is also a social problem, as human beings must be understood as part of nature; our lives cannot easily be disengaged from that connection. This does not just mean that environmental problems cause social problems, as seen from the way poverty has developed in African or Asian regions. Our aim is, more importantly, to show that economization, in capitalizing on nature and social factors, triggers a single, consolidated sustainability problem. Under pressure from the market and from the urge to maximize profits, social goods are used in much the same way as natural goods. The welfare state has created lasting social infrastructures to counter this situation, in the institutional form of the public services, but these are at risk of being dismantled step by step. Protecting them against that risk and developing them further is thus considered the central issue of socio-political sustainability. As a result, the social and socio-political standing of social work will also be considerably influenced in the future by whether, and to what extent, social

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work can play a part in sustainably maintaining the social infrastructure and, above all, whether it deliberately seeks out this means of entry into social policy.

It is of interest for the discourse on sustainability within social work whether sustainability-related approaches can be found within the economic discourse itself; concepts objecting to the continuation of the market-centred formula for growth, which ignores the market's failure as regards the social costs of the current economic system.

> The fact that two billion people have now fallen beneath the poverty line was seen as a failure on the part of the market, despite the global economic output increasing as a whole. Continuing to follow the productivist approach amounts to a hastening of that trend, in that it promotes routines of growth which, instead of improving matters, tend as a whole to exacerbate the crisis situations. (*Diefenbacher & Zieschank, 2008, p. 12*)

In Western Europe, the welfare state has so far been thought of as able to control and limit poverty. Now, even in affluent European regions, many people are gripped by a fear of new forms of poverty (e.g. "the working poor") and are watching the familiar socio-political safety net wear away. Social problems previously held in check could become topics of *vital importance in people's lives*, putting once privileged sections of the population in a comparable position to those in the world's poorest regions, at least in terms of risk theory. People are also gaining personal experience of what happens when a global economy is based on expropriation. The privatization of public goods (commons), especially basic goods such as water and power, is triggering distress and an experience of collective dependency, provoking discussion on sustainability. This opens up opportunities for social workers to find their own, new positions and join others in showing that social achievements are one of the fundamental principles of social sustainability. It must constantly be reiterated that these achievements are the historical result of social conflicts being played out in public and transformed through a social filter. Democratic conflict and social sustainability are mutually dependent.

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6 Recommendations for Action

Social work theories are intended not only to explain situations but also to provide ideas about which practical methods to follow: leading from the concept, what approaches are recommended? Starting out from the concept of coping, it is no great leap to come up with the basic theory that antisocial and/or self-destructive behaviour is always, in part, a way of coping in critical situations in life and that the *urge to achieve agency*, as identified in the coping perspective, often plays out without taking into account any conformance with norms. This means that the approach must be an accepting one, i.e. one that recognizes the subjective meaning which clients' behaviour has for them, without actually having to approve of it. It also means that clients can only be made to talk once they no longer depend on the antisocial or self-destructive behaviour which has, after all, repeatedly at least given them situational agency. This is something they need to experience in settings which enable them to know and encounter recognition and self-efficacy in a context other than that of their previous behaviour. After all, these are mainly clients whose social origins and/or backgrounds have not given them the opportunity to develop the social and communicational skills of empathy and self-control that would have enabled them to behave in a pro-social manner in critical living circumstances. One of the advantages of the concept of coping is that it can create a link between theory and practice: it can be used as the basis for developing central recommendations for action. In this context, before anything else, the essential point is that the concept reformulates the traditional social work methodology of *case assessment based on the coping perspective*. This leads to the insight that clients need to be provided with scope for action, within whose boundaries they earn recognition, thus managing to detach themselves from their previous situation and address the subject of their sensitivity. This can be achieved by creating *functional equivalents*, a way to show that the clients have a great deal of potential – something that cannot be discovered using one-dimensional, casuist approaches. The perspective of *capability* can take up this thread, extending the traditional concept of empowerment by adding coping-based and social elements. Here, it is important that social work itself sees these support "settings" (see Müller & Schwabe, 2009) as coping cultures and organizes them accordingly. We plan to attempt this using the methodological approach of *milieu formation*.

All this repeatedly demonstrates how necessary the gender-differentiated approach is when arguing in terms of coping theory. The example of case assessment, and particularly counselling – the key method used in social work – can be used to work through this as an example.

6.1 Case Assessment from the Perspective of the Coping Concept

Even if social work is in future able to gain new connections and open up further in terms of social space, it will still be dealing with "cases", i.e. with particular

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personal situations (and the problems attributed to them) which are assigned to social work by other social authorities. In social work, the process of case-based (casuist) assessment is generally described as having three dimensions, with tension arising between the clients' *external symptoms* and *inner experience of discrepancy*, and the development of a *support relationship* between the social workers and their clients (see Hörster, 2001).

The external symptoms depend on the way that behaviour is visibly defined as conforming or nonconforming against the background of social expectations of normality. The inner experience of discrepancy, meanwhile, hidden behind the external symptoms, follows other laws. The clients, after all, are under pressure to achieve agency, often regardless of accepted norms. At the same time, in their relationship with the clients, social workers not only need to be able to mediate between the contradictory worlds of definition and experience; they also have to be able to reflect on the experiences of discrepancy which they inevitably encounter themselves.

If this basic casuistic model is now structured using the coping concept, a new way can be found to reconcile the three dimensions – a way which can, in fact, reveal a model for recommended action; not only one which social workers can follow for guidance, but also one which they can learn from. This means a shift in perspective. The focus is now on the clients' right to make their coping behaviour – "their concept", so to speak – the yardstick of the intervention, thus releasing it from any dependency on social work typification. For clients it is all about "regaining autonomy over their life practices" (Müller, 2001, p. 1200), not about how the institution fits with the client. Of course, there is pressure to create a fit, especially when working in the contexts of administrative support and supervision. Of course, the situation is also affected by the empathic relationship, which comes across in a multifaceted manner.

To that extent, if the aim is to open up the client's cage, what is needed is not only supervisory, but also socio-political reflection. Service users need to be able to be brought out of their status as clients and seen as citizens. This gives the support relationship the character (or at least the imagined character) of a contract, which is an emergent deviation from the construct of "understanding". After all, it is precisely the construct of understanding which hides the pitfalls of mixing the intimacy and the contractual nature of action within social work – pitfalls which are hard to avoid, eventually often leading to relationships of power and dependency in the care context (which are professionally legitimized) actually being stabilized.

Though the professional and administrative steps attempt to detach the case from the muddle of definitions, relationships and feelings and turn it into a neat construct (see Hörster, 2001, p. 922), this can in turn lead to the case systematically being fitted into the support system while at the same time being "excised" from the client's situation in life and situation of coping. Above all, approaches of this kind generally ignore the fact that the support relationship involves two kinds of hidden conflict: firstly an inner coping conflict among the clients, and secondly an inner definition conflict among the social workers. Both are emotionally involved, repeatedly exploring not

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just rationality but also empathy. This is why a reflective third dimension is required which can raise the case onto the socio-political level and thus give it the imagined status of a contract, with the clients being given an imagined status as citizens. This casework inspired by coping theory uses analysis of the situation of coping as a framework to understand both sides of the support process. Within the dimension of dependency, it sheds light on the client's dependency on the social worker; within the dimension of expression, it explains not only the issues sought to be addressed by means of diagnosis but also, equally, the expectations they involve.

Within the dimension of appropriation, the case is reframed as a context of enablement and, finally, within the dimension of recognition, thought is given during case diagnosis to how acknowledgement can be gained beyond the support relationship.

6.2 Functional Equivalents

When we talk of creating and designing *functional equivalents*, we mean a method which social workers can use to add to the range of people's situations in life and situations of coping. Functional equivalents are project settings in which clients can discover for the first time, and over a period of time, that they do not need their antisocial or self-harming behaviour to achieve self-esteem, social acknowledgement or self-efficacy.

The model of "functional equivalents" comes from structural functionalist sociology and can be seen as a "metamethodological" concept in social work to be used in many practical methodological approaches, including the following. As the name implies, the relevant project settings and the activities they involve need to contain elements (now in different contexts) which once gave the clients, during their previous antisocial/self-destructive behaviour, what they perceived as attention, sometimes efficacy and, above all, somatic tension relief (see Section 3.1). In this context it has proven effective to use educational projects involving activities, culture and adventure, focusing on people relying on one another and developing acknowledgement, self-efficacy and even self-esteem by playing out various roles. Altogether, even in counselling and group work, the effect here comes from the alternative social pedagogical "relational milieu", which can create trust and thus help make people relax and experience acknowledgement. This then becomes a basis for addressing their own inner helplessness without fear. The new group experience plays a central role in this, as the helplessness, previously seen as an individual issue, can now be revealed as a shared, even a social issue, making it something which can be expressed. Here, an accepting attitude is required of social workers (see Section 4.4).

6.3 Empowerment

The ultimate aim of social work is to enable its clients to play a role in solving their problems themselves, giving them the ability to activate any available social support,

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especially in their immediate social setting, from a socio-ecological point of view (Stark, 1996) and thus from the perspective of the milieu (see below). This is generally termed "empowerment". The aim is to seek out clients' strengths rather than their weaknesses and to develop support measures based on the actor's perspective. H. Keupp (1996) added to this interactive, personal frame of reference as follows: "Instead of subjects being integrated into existing social contexts, people are [...] required to develop an ability to create such contexts themselves" (Keupp, 1996, p. 164). Empowerment is thus also described as "creative coping" (Stark, 1996, p. 94ff). However, it is not enough merely to follow a schedule in which clients are mentored through activities to help them recognize their values and strengths and then are integrated into their environment thanks to social acknowledgement. Human beings' hidden, presumed strengths and skills are not simply there "on demand": they have to develop, and it is this development which allows people to experience them (see also Herriger, 2010).

If empowerment strategies are to succeed, they thus have to link in with clients' situation of coping; they cannot simply be imposed, and they require, more than anything, knowledge of psychodynamic coping urges. The term "resource-based", which is often used in the discourse on empowerment, is far too superficial in this respect. It suggests that psychosocial urges of the kind imagined by the professionals to activate the support process are already "available" to the clients and thus to the supportive interaction. However, we know from coping theory that, in critical situations in life, a coping dynamic is triggered in clients which initially involves the development of a regressive coping pattern, with the clients striving for agency "at any price", including that of violating norms through antisocial and self-harming behaviour. A "creative", or as we put it, an "extended" outlook on coping thus needs to be preceded by an examination of the regressive coping urges triggered by psychodynamic factors. Here, we can see that alternative routes need to be taken, namely by providing functional equivalents (see above), which can show clients through experience that they no longer need the deviant behaviour to achieve self-esteem, self-efficacy and acknowledgement. These are prerequisites to ensure that empowerment strategies are not too much for clients; that they allow for regressive phases, and that, more than anything else, they use techniques such as functional equivalents to strengthen the social contextual conditions which can create necessary spaces for empowerment in the first place. This is the only way to make certain that empowerment strategies do not become an individualistic process, i.e. putting everything on the clients' shoulders (for a critique of empowerment, see Seckinger, 2011).

Yet clients are not only subjects in a support relationship designed to help them find their way back into society; they are also subjects with a legal personality. And within that status they remain – as long as they lose none of their citizens' rights – members of society the same as everyone else, even if they behave in a socially deviant manner or are socially excluded.

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> The most important insight [. . .] is that into the dialectic of rights and needs [. . .]. It was not until the 1970s that rights were "discovered" as an independent basis for justifying actions or lack of action. This was partly due to serious conflict between helpers full of good intentions and clients who were increasingly formulating their own demands [. . .]. Now that the social budget is growing, by contrast, the idea is growing that clients' affairs are in good hands when left to us professionals. [. . .] The crisis in the welfare state has also made it clear to many service users that their rights are by no means guaranteed in the welfare services, and that as these services are dismantled, their rights are being put at risk, meaning that they have to stand up for them and protect them. (*Keupp, 1996, p. 165*)

This brings up the subject of people's freedom to achieve fulfilment beyond their status as a client, as set out in our perspective of extended coping.

Empowerment and Capability Approach

In this context we can also take inspiration from the capability approach (see above), whose intervention programme centres around people's freedom to achieve fulfilment, how this "positive liberty" can be made possible and how people can be empowered to follow that route. In principle, people should have the freedom of the option. In the German take on the capability approach, this is related as follows to the duty which social work has to resocialize people: "The capabilities approach does not exclusively focus on integration into work [. . .]. Instead, it is based on a wide-reaching understanding of fundamental capabilities in various fields of life and society; an understanding which needs to be empirically supported and context-sensitive" (Oelkers, Otto & Ziegler, 2008, p. 89). But this is precisely what we social workers promoting employment have been practising for years, even though we have also experienced the conflicts involved in pushing through this option-based perspective within a society centred around gainful employment. For example, one central principle of social work with "unemployable" youths is the idea that they need to be built back up in zones outside that of market-driven gainful employment; that they are first given an opportunity to experience acknowledgement and efficacy as people who can develop skills in a context other than that of employment and contribute them to projects which are not market driven. In this context, however, the concept of coping with life also offers us the insight that the option-based perspective which the capability approach forces us into should not be restricted only to the individuals and their particular biographical condition. We have, after all, learnt that the situation of coping must be acknowledged by society, if the biographical option is to be transformed into a social variable. At least, the capability approach also makes us aware that we need to cast a critical eye on the social work relationship, recognizing that this relationship generally ties those accessing social care to their status as a client, which can itself limit the potential variety of capabilities. After all, the empowerment concept, precisely as it is emancipatory, requires a normative perspective, with social work measures taking a corresponding direction. The capability approach, too, draws our attention to the fact that social work, with its ties to the welfare state, is actually aligned with normative practice, as it has to work with a usually unquestioned average social definition of normality. This conflict between social normality and ascribed deviances from that normality has driven social work since the 1960s, when light was shed on these normative everyday obfuscations (Verdeckungszusammenhänge) thanks to the labelling approach (cf. Böhnisch, 2010), which originated in critical criminology.

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6.4 Social Space Orientation and Milieu Formation

Though the empowerment concept requires social work to adopt a biographical/ spatial orientation, the theory cannot do full justice to it. Yet empowerment should also create the *conditions* for independent activity and activation. Activation requires both a space in which new processes of appropriation can take place and a psychosocial support to lean upon, giving people the feeling of being equal to the situation. We sum up these conditions under the concepts of *focus on social space* and *milieu formation*.

Fabian Kessl and Christian Reutlinger (2007) pointed out the different dilemmas which social work projects based on social spaces can become caught up in. For example, existing social networks and influential milieus in communal spaces can influence social work networking projects such that they come out better off, but that the socially disadvantaged clients of social work remain excluded, despite all well-intended efforts.

An evaluation of the German funding programme “Soziale Stadt” shows that socially disadvantaged groups “quickly withdraw their involvement if there is no sign of any concrete result” (Lange et al., 2003, p. 14).

In view of this, Kessl and Reutlinger recommend determining the position which social work is to take within the space at an early stage – the position from which to address the opportunities and barriers involved in extending the social space. As Kessl and Reutlinger do not operationalize this any further, we shall make an attempt to do so here, with our coping theory approach. Following this approach, the position is initially determined by the coping situation of those involved. This is the baseline position from which an initial assessment can be made of how the case in question is positioned within the social space, i.e. where the clients are located in that space. Generally, their situations of coping are regressive, with social isolation (dimension of appropriation), open or hidden stigmatization (dimension of acknowledgement), extreme dependency as part of what have become entrenched dissocial careers (dimension of dependency) and no ability, or a loss of the ability to address their helplessness (dimension of expression). As a result, they are basically placeless, have no connections to the space and have to start out by finding a position by extending their situation of coping. It is only then that we can speak of “motivation” or “starting out from clients’ interests”. The social work strategies with which we can create this position can be described using the term “milieu formation”. Within the milieu of social work, clients can experience a social lightening of the burden – social support and belonging. The social work milieu, rather than the individual case, finds a position within a local space, allowing the focus to be placed on individuals, as members of this milieu. The social work milieu protects individuals if any of them revert to their previous antisocial or self-destructive behaviour, as well as being able to build bridges for individuals

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to enter the local milieus. To achieve this, milieus need to radiate out into the local space; they must be positioned within the framework of local social policy and it must be possible to justify them accordingly. This makes them attractive to citizens and groups from other milieus, who can find starting points in them not only for social commitment but also for cooperation (win–win situations). Youth centres, old folks' centres, employment projects, group homes, etc., can use this bridge to other milieus to stop being seen as institutions imposed upon people by the state (tolerated but best avoided) and instead be viewed as an integral part of the local lifeworld when it comes to making the municipality or city district a more pleasant place to live.

We consider the process of *milieu formation* to be of central importance for structuring social work. We can describe the milieu as a biographically available context of reciprocity with regard to the social space and socio-emotional processes – a context in which coping skills develop and which is linked to acts of normalization. Social work is guided by the perspective of "open milieu formation", as only open, democratic milieus with the right balance of collectivism and individuality can activate coping skills in the sense of extended agency.

One structuring characteristic of an open milieu is a respectful attitude towards others' integrity within and outside the limits of the milieu. In regressive milieus, by contrast, their members seek support, familiarity and reciprocity at the cost of others – in fact, by oppressing and excluding others. Violence, for example, occurs against the background of regressive, ethnocentric milieu formation. Thus, as the term "milieu formation" alone is ambivalent, the more precise term "open milieu" should be used. This does not exclude the possibility of us understanding (in the spirit of *acceptance-based* youth work and social work) why clients feel at home and at ease in regressive, authoritarian milieus. After all, we have learnt how helplessness is split off, projected onto weaker people and transformed into violence. It is only if we understand this context and accept it as a subjective step taken by clients that we can offer them a different form of open milieu formation within institutions and projects run by social workers and hope to achieve an equivalent effect.

Networking

Traditionally, the milieu concept places emphasis on experiencing the self in terms of the lifeworld and emotions, through experiences of *community* and *like-mindedness* from belonging to the milieu. The network concept, or concept of social support, by contrast, foregrounds the interactive, cognitive level of reciprocity and mutuality of *interests* (for the social pedagogical discourse on networks see Otto, 2011). The two concepts' socially integrative qualities are thus different, with the milieu concept positioned far more in the immediate lifeworld and the network concept more in the middle ground (meso-area) between the lifeworld and systemic/social contexts (see Nestmann, 1989). Social networks are thus "intermediary" constructs which can create links to

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the milieu and to society. This is probably the most evident in the case of self-help initiatives and network organizations in the psychosocial and health sector: experiences of suffering and distress which are consolidated by the milieu (on the micro-level) combine with a recognized mutuality of interests (meso-level), leading to the public articulation and organization of a social problem (macro-level). In this configuration it is easy to recognize that the network concept has a milieu aspect but only overlaps with one segment of the term "milieu", whereas the term "milieu" overlaps to a great extent with the term "network" when one considers its socio-emotional and socio-ecological assumptions (see Bauer & Otto, 2005). Thus, for an action-driven construction of the milieu paradigm of the kind we have begun to develop in the social work concept of "open milieu formation", we need to link in with the network concept. In the interests of pragmatism, we are adhering to the "meso" perspective, as mapped out in some detail in the discussion on networks. According to this, a network "creates a 'bridge' between those involved in people's primary social environment and their ties to the wider social structure of the community" (Nestmann, 1989, p. 109). Social networks can add a social dimension to individuals' biographical agency. "These networks made up of groups of people [occur] according to criteria of relative equality in terms of socially ascribed characteristics [and] can also [. . .] be defined as marketplaces for social negotiation. The actors' equality reveals who shares what skills and characters with others, the different ways in which these are valued by society and the benefits they bring the actors" (Grundmann et al., 2006, p. 137). This necessitates a reflective ability to see things from others' perspective and (within the dimension of extended coping) recognize that there is a shared interest which overrides individual interests. This shared, or social, interest is what actually gives social networks their own, specific social character. The "bridge" which this network perspective could build for our concept of open milieu formation might look something like this: as the milieu perspective is opened up into a network perspective, a "second level" is brought into play. In other words, the emotional dimension, under the influence of the milieu, is joined by the dimension of shared interests, which extends its limits and opens it up, thus activating it. After all, when milieus are placed under social pressure – poor milieus, milieus with high unemployment, milieus involving disadvantaged youths leaning towards violence – they tend to develop "inwards", becoming regressive and ethnocentric or shifting towards helplessness and apathy. It is then usually only through network interventions that they can be opened up, outwards: if the youths are given the experience that, despite their situation, they still have something to offer others and that others are interested in them (dimension of self-esteem); that they are better off not distancing or shielding themselves through violence and belittling others, or in social isolation; that instead, they can use relationships with other people (even strangers) for their own purposes, and that this kind of milieu-opening relational network, made up of people who were once strangers and not equals, can produce a whole new level of activity. Altogether, almost any social work with socially disadvantaged people and those affected by critical life events can be said to require both a milieu perspective and a network perspective: it is only via the network orientation that the programme of "open milieu formation" can be achieved and their activation can be organized starting out from the milieu. Before anything else, milieu-related work as we have described it means facilitating and preserving an everyday socio-emotional basis guaranteeing trust, implicit understanding, safety and normality. The network perspective gives structure to this everyday basis along the lines of unlocking and activating people's own and mutual opportunities for use as resources, and searching for "connections" extending beyond the limits of the milieu. This applies equally to work in homes for young people, addiction counselling, work with the homeless or family support and geriatric care.

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6.5 Conflict Orientation

Social conflict can be seen as a historically evolving driving force behind changes in living conditions. The welfare state, as an institutional form of social compromise, developed from the dialectic of the conflict between labour and capital. This meant that social conflicts were pacified by the social state, but the conflictive structure of social processes remains. In social work, a tool of the welfare state's social policy which extends into lifeworlds, this conflictive structure can be seen in the tug of war between support and control.

For this reason, one guiding principle of coping-based social work is to designate the category of conflict (a category it is itself subject to) one of its central conceptual parameters. People's situations in life and situations of coping can be assessed according to the extent to which they allow conflicts to be settled in a prosocial manner rather than drifting into the zones of antisocial violence. From the point of view of coping theory, the ability to settle conflicts is the basis for extended agency.

Conflicts are complex. They can be open or hidden and often play out differently in people's heads to the way they do in their social environment. Social conflicts are shifted into people's inner selves. Intrapersonal conflicts, imbalances and disturbances can be split off, leading to antisocial configurations which we then no longer describe using the word "conflict", instead referring to them in terms of violence. Biographical conflicts and critical living circumstances never remain restricted to the self: they always tie in with society, through disruptive behaviour, participation and acknowledgement, leading as far as violence. We have seen how we can find the key to this by means of the concept of coping. An inability to resolve conflicts leads to dependency, and lack of conflict conceals situations of power and suffering. This strikes the nerve of social work, whose approaches are crucially dependent on whether the coping problems they are set up to deal with are publically recognized, or whether they are hidden and privatized. In view of this, we see conflict as a stimulus category: the driving force behind historical change, which not only has a structure within society but also has exactly the same structure within people themselves. In other words, a category which pervades people's lives not only socially but also biographically. In this sense, Ralf Dahrendorf saw conflict as located in the uncertainty of human existence in the world (Dahrendorf, 1965, p. 150) – in terms both of society and of social anthropology. In the discourse on socialization we find positions which see conflict as a basal category of the process of socialization. This is the argument Micha Brumlik is making when he speaks of a "structured relationship" between "ways of settling conflicts, different understandings of people and fundamental, basal attitudes towards the world in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-appreciation" (Brumlik, 1991, p. 255). He differentiates between a conventional step in conflictive behaviour, characterized by simple patterns of mutual

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reconcilement of interests, and a post-conventional step during which conflict can become a "sought-out medium" for socially reflective self-development. This points towards the perspective of extended coping behaviour. At this point, it should again be emphasized that the conflict perspective is a central part of our concept of coping. It is about aspects preventing and facilitating internal psychological and social conflict resolution, under the pressure of antisocial and self-destructive splitting which affects our clients.

Situations in life, situations of coping and coping with life are embedded in conflict structures, which is why any social work oriented towards situations in life and coping needs to understand itself as being conflict-oriented. To that extent, it is both naive and undialectical to try to build up a "good life" to counter existing conditions without any foundations in conflict theory, as, for example, the capability approach attempts to do (see Section 4.6), at least implicitly. Behind this is a free-floating and what might be called autonomous emancipatory pretension, a characteristic which Klaus Mollenhauer (1968) criticized some time ago with regard to emancipatory pedagogical programmes. In the idea of an educational science which tended to be autonomous with regard to society, he saw a tendency to become immune to social conflicts, whether that educational science was following emancipatory aims or not.

> It is no coincidence that the term "conflict" has until now played no appreciable role in pedagogical theories. That would have meant theorists' reflections including a basic consideration of the social character of education. Though autonomous pedagogy based on the humanities chose an emancipatory starting point for its thoughts, it followed a different path. It minimised and depoliticised the problem of conflict by constructing a pedagogical counter-world which, although it took a critical stance to the status quo, nonetheless paid the price which any poor utopian dream does, in that it could not achieve anything socially. This counter-world had been purged of conflict; it no longer [...] bore any trace of the actual conflicts of real-life education. (*Mollenhauer, 1968, p. 27*)

The structure of the conflict can be used to come to conclusions about any social work actions to be taken. Conflict settlement is by nature dialectic. Its aim is to bring contradictory interests (openly acknowledged or hidden) into an integrative perspective which does not level out the opposites but instead recognizes them, while still finding a way to guide participants to a different, new level, maintaining their mutual respect. It is not only the clients' situation of coping which can be interpreted as a situation of conflict; the basic structure of the support relationship is a conflictive pattern of interaction, too. After all, it generally involves two opposing positions with contradictory interests. Looking back to the basic findings of the concept of coping with life, the clients' antisocial/self-destructive behaviour starts out with what they see as a subjectively positive function. This function is opposed by the intentions of social intervention, which sees the antisocial and self-destructive elements of the behaviour and thus (necessarily) judges it negatively. The mutual perspective of conflict settlement and finally integration then develops through a methodology of acceptance and functional equivalents. In the meantime, situations of conflicting interaction repeatedly arise. Thus, the ability to settle conflicts is not only a capability which clients

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are helped to achieve; it is also a professional capability which needs to be acquired, especially, of course, as social workers frequently come from different social strata to their clients. When analysing people's situations in life and situations of coping, and in coping-based intervention planning, it is thus necessary to find the key to these inner structures of conflict.

6.6 Excursus: New Spaces, Different Times?

Social work today deals with, and will continue to deal with, clients who have grown up with the digital world of the new media, live in it and see it as a space for coping. This is particularly true of children and young people. In social work we deal with adolescents whose experience of self-efficacy is frequently fed by extensive use of digital media. What is new in terms of the social significance of new technologies and their media is that they no longer work with language, but instead now largely work with images:

> The power of images is based on the fact that they are perceived as reality, rather than as encrypted symbolic systems. Under the conditions of Technology II, it is all about the effects which images have on the subjects and how society deals with knowledge and entertainment. [.] It is not necessarily about whether, as critics believe, the images herald the end of thought. [. . .] What seems far more important is that images are changing the way in which knowledge is transferred; how information is packaged and how thought is shaped. Today, images can be produced and altered at will, making it easier for anyone to integrate them into their own presentations. (*Tully, 2003, p. 208f*)

The parasocial dynamic of abstraction emanating from the digital web gives people a whole new connection to the world. As modern technologies are "open-ended in their use and the results they produce" (Tully, 2003, p. 208f) they can become part of people – such a part of human activities that, though the technologies shape those activities, people can believe that they themselves are behind such transformations. One crucial process can be observed, however: whereas traditional technology, based on function, had (and still has) a focus on rationality, the digital technologies are no longer tied down to pre-established concepts and measures of what is appropriate. Changing images trigger emotions. What counts is whatever promises individuals situational or biographical fulfilment. This link to biographical fulfilment, which is more libidinous than socially structured, means that as technology is used in a manner which is not tied to a specific function, this can cause the impressions left by its images to be incorporated in an identity-altering manner. The virtual network gives puberty, in particular, with its unique interweaving of the real and the unreal, a medium which adolescents find especially attractive (cf. Tully & Wahler, 2004). It provides a social space which they can "talk their way into", in which gender-typical social thresholds are lowered and where wishes and dreams which are suppressed in everyday life can be revealed (cf. Tillmann, 2008). The networks of peers can be kept

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in motion, too. In spite of all this, it remains the case that not only people's social environment, but also their social position shape their media opportunities.

> The unequal availability of resources in real life also has implications for media use [...]. This can be seen, for example, in the available range of strategies for appropriating unfamiliar content structures, the degree to which people reflect on information and identities, and even the extent to which, or the range of different spaces in which they participate. (*Kutscher & Otto, 2006, p. 98*)

Altogether it can be assumed that among users, "the classic variables of social inequality" correspond with "differences in Internet use" (Iske et al., 2007, p. 54). This affects both the use of different content and the different ways in which people use the Internet. The adolescents now enter the medium themselves and can present themselves there as young people, with all their experimental lack of inhibition. They find a space where they can reproduce their experience of life. They can try out things which society forbids them to do. And the possibilities are unending. Sixteen-year-olds can already set themselves up as bloggers or alternatively perform deviant behaviour. Spaces for experimentation can be opened up, while at the same time young people can enjoy the status of adults, one normally denied to them, from an early age. It is the simultaneous existence of these contradictory possibilities which make the Internet so interesting.

The digital moratorium of the new media exerts an undeniable fascination. It fully corresponds with the emotional drama of adolescence. It allows the inner chaos of puberty, which is so hard and so risky to express in society, to be stage-managed through the media in an uninhibited, unlimited manner. In light of this, can social work continue to insist that young people need spaces for experimentation which are tied to society? This can be discussed based on the example of violent computer and video games, which are well known for being attractive, especially for adolescents who come into community youth work. Their attraction lies in their potential for interaction. In their own way, they can immerse you in a whole new reality. More than anything else, it is the egocentric nature of these computer games that can make people identify with them. All in all, however, research into the effects of violent media has been unable to prove that there is any direct effect on the real world; at best it has "proved that unwanted effects can occur in certain people with specific social backgrounds" (Fritz & Fehr, 2003, p. 53). For this reason, researchers into the effects of violent media are united in believing that whether or not certain effects come into play depends on the social and cultural milieus in which violent games are played. From that point of view, community youth work in particular can gain access by taking social work steps involving milieu formation (cf. Section 6.4).

Social work needs its own times in which to take effect if it is to do justice to its clients' situations of coping, as these clients have generally slipped out of the time schemes of socially defined normality. Social work is "pushed for time" in view of the fall-off in the welfare state's formative creative influence and the increased

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emphasis on its controlling and disciplinary function. This is not the result of an administrative programme, but is above all caused by a change in *social time* which, in the sociological analysis of the transition from the modern to the postmodern age, can be explained in the context of globalization.

Linear time of the kind we normally follow is a social construct of the modern industrial age and its logic of production and work. According to this, time is so closely connected to paid work that gaps in people's working biographies can lead to considerable fractures in their experience of time. The now classic 1930s study on *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community* (Jahoda et al., 1933) was the first to systematically explore how, when the jobless no longer have times of paid work, they also lose their usual, everyday schedule. Men, in particular, were observed to undergo a dramatic decline in their sense of time, linked to a drop in their self-esteem and purpose in life. This can mainly be explained by the fact that modern male identity is linked in an unbalanced manner to men's role as workers, a sign of the gender-specific nature of people's experience of time, which is continuing to evolve, if in different ways, even today.

The relativity of time can also be seen in people's different biographical impressions of time and, notably, in the fact that individuals perceive time biographically, as finite, even though time extends beyond any individual human existence. This philosophical perspective on time takes on significance for thought in the social sciences when it comes to recommended actions whose effects outlast individuals' biographical lifetimes, as in the case of the discourse on sustainability. In an age of microelectronic technologization and globalization, time is being socially disembedded and digitalized, confronting us with problems which require analysis from the perspective of the philosophy of time. In our technologically transformed economy, time is becoming digitalized, leading to problems not only with mediation between the subject and society but also with individual coping. These problems are a constant threat to individuals' biographical agency. As the boundaries of transitions dissolve (cf. Section 7.5), people are spending more time in education and their educational biographies are differing more widely. Their route into employment is more winding and features more gaps. At the same time, the newly flexible labour market is calling for people to be available "on the spot" and to be qualified to meet current demand, irrespective of biographical development times and coping problems. Temporal conflicts of this kind, involving different logics, also occur in the tug of war between family planning and career planning, especially among young adults. The time slot during which it seems possible for couples to become parents while maintaining their careers has become so narrow that it can be described as a "rush hour" in life. At the same time, the acceleration and externalization which characterize the temporal rhythm of the second modernity are making people want to take "breathers" and "me time" and, above all, to "decelerate".

This "new age" which has been emerging since the start of the twenty-first century, not only in chronological terms but also with respect to the work-based society, has started to break through the temporal straitjacket which is characteristic

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of the industrial society. The balance has been upset between the industrial pace of time and people's own time, tied in with their circadian rhythm. Private time is becoming ever more economized and interwoven with paid work. The dynamics of social disembedding, spurred on by the new technologies, are increasingly causing people to lose their grip on "their" time as a context within which to organize their lives. As the traditional contexts of education and work become less and less reliable means of structuring people's available time, time is increasingly having to be *managed*: "The potential for equilibrium which was rooted in the regularity and predictability of social, task-based time scheduling is being lost as borders become blurred. The number of short-term arrangements is rising. The pressure to constantly manage time is increasing" (Geißler, 2004, p. 9).

At the same time, the temporal structure of the Internet is pervading everyday life, creating the situation that different logics of time can be related to and connected with one another almost arbitrarily. However, in people's actual everyday lives this does not generally work out, and temporal dilemmas arise, for example in the balance between paid work and caring or work within the family, each of which have "different logics of time, relations and action. Looking after people's physical and emotional wellbeing cannot be compared with paid work following the market model, or organised in the same way [. . .]. As paid work, care is formally organised and rationalised to conform to the market. The economic logic of time thus pervades areas of life which it had previously escaped" (Zeiher, 2004, p. 3).

This digitalization and acceleration of social time is opposed by a discourse on time within the social sciences which aims to develop perspectives for "deceleration" and deconstruct existing temporal structures. The accelerations currently being triggered affect all ages and all aspects of life. It cannot be overlooked, for example, that the quantity of new information requiring regular processing is disproportionately greater than only a few decades ago and, moreover, continues to grow. This is seen not only in the technological world of fast-growing communications media but also in social areas of life: legal regulations quickly become outdated and traditional means of entering professions and rising through the ranks are obsolete. In an extensive analysis of changes in temporal structures in the second modernity, Rosa (2013) proposes a typology which distinguishes between three kinds of social acceleration process: technical acceleration, the acceleration of social change and the acceleration of the pace of life. He sees these three forms as joined in a circle of acceleration, meaning that they are understood to be self-propelling: "Therefore, within that circle, acceleration always and inevitably produces more acceleration: it becomes a self-reinforcing 'feedback system'" (Rosa, 2013, p. 151). This means that people are not only under pressure from acceleration; they are also themselves involved in its dynamics, which may mean that they feel simultaneously like both agents and victims of acceleration. Thus, options and constraints are closely associated. Agency constantly needs to be regenerated and digitalized structures adapted. Though the number of options which

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people can choose between is growing, they are exposed not only to freedoms but also to forced decision-making.

As there is unlikely to be a “deceleration” in the medium term, the opportunities available in terms of coping will depend upon how people’s situations life correspond with those challenges, i.e. whether their living conditions continue to become socially disembedded or whether “breather” zones can be created. More than anything else, this will affect those who are fully exposed to the increasing intensity and flexibility of the labour market. Time which people dedicate to their relationships and themselves within their families or local area might act as breather zones. Social work clients are also among those affected by these acceleration processes, which act, so to speak, as mechanisms of exclusion that make it even harder to gain a foothold in society or keep up with social development. At the same time, this pressure to accelerate is putting pressure on professional social workers to rationalize, meaning that social work clients could be caught in a two-pronged temporal trap. Social work depends upon this deceleration. It needs its *own* time, separate to the continually accelerating functional times of economic and social rationalization; it needs alternative routes as demanded under the logic of functional equivalents.

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7 Enablement in Light of the Blurring Life Stage Borders

Critical living circumstances must be managed on a personal, biographical level and are often limited to that level due to the nature of their origins (e.g. relationship-threatening conflicts, the loss of a partner or life-threatening illness). In social work, we deal with situations of this kind, but also, above all, with critical living circumstances which have a social background, even though they may manifest as personal on the level of coping. Knowledge about these social backgrounds is important to social work in two ways. First, it can reveal the limits and opportunities within which social work can operate. This is of practical consequence, in that it lightens social pressure placed on social workers regarding their remit and responsibility. Second, the institution of social work is constantly required to draw attention to the social backgrounds behind these situations, exposing the scandalous nature of these social problems and thus fulfilling its role as a social seismograph. This is also a measure of social work's relative socio-political significance.

Social work interventions are linked to the life course. The social tension caused in the second modernity by the dissolution of boundaries, on the one hand, and coping, on the other, comes to a head, but is also the easiest to address, whenever social work intervenes into or accompanies people's biographies. When stanchions of the life course (work, education) start to crumble, this frequently causes critical living circumstances which require social assistance and support. However, the dissolution of boundaries does not only affect the level on which social work operates. In fact, it also blurs the outlines of the social axes of normality and deviance, though in a paradoxical manner. While work is no longer the central focus of many people's lives, for others it is more so than ever, as it is becoming more intense and drawing everything in, even in their private lives. For social work, the former phenomenon means a lightening of the load, as the discipline no longer seems forced to base resocialization and reintegration purely on paid work. At the same time, however, as work is being rationalized the labour market is becoming increasingly cramped, and access to it is accordingly more difficult for the clients of social work. Social work risks being caught in a dilemma about which path to take. It is thus all the more important to develop milieus in which both options can be recognized and maintained. Meanwhile, the field of education has opened up to social work, and especially to youth work, in that the labour market increasingly also demands social skills, and informal education processes have gained in importance. At the same time, however, education is becoming increasingly economized: today it is less about character building and more about building human capital (for a detailed description see Böhnisch, Lenz & Schröer, 2009). This is not only restricting the ways in which social work can leave its mark in the field of education; in this competitive neo-capitalist culture, social work's clients are also under threat

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from a constant devaluation of the skills they acquire as they go through social pedagogical integration.

Similar problems confront us as the boundaries between the genders become blurred. On the one hand, in our culture, we see gender differences being levelled out, while on the other hand, gender-specific patterns of coping continue to exert a hidden influence and frequently erupt again in critical living circumstances. This too puts social work in a dilemma about which path to take with its clients, not only as it inevitably leads to conflicts of perception and interpretation with them, but also as it constantly puts our discipline in the awkward position of having to contradict the public programme of balancing out gender differences.

Though knowledge of the socially triggered blurring of boundaries in work, education and gender is important for social work's social reflexivity, it is not enough to forge the link that is needed to the level of action. This link can, however, be forged using the concept of *life stages* – a concept which relates equally to both society and the individual. If we see the structure of the life stages as historically formed and thus changeable social arrangements, and therefore as the backbone of the life course in the modern age (cf. Böhnisch, 2012), this gives us a framework which encompasses education, work and gender while also linking in with the demands made of social work action. It also includes every group of beneficiaries. After all, the life stages are not only character-building contexts in a person's life course; they are also social constructions. As such they lay out corresponding collective, institutionalized expectations made of children, adolescents, adults of working age and old people, placing demands on them in terms of coping. They are thus age-graded dimensions of collective living and coping situations.

We can use the perspective of *enablement* to bring up this framework as a call for action, as in biographical agency being enabled in the critical living circumstances which are triggered as the boundaries between the life stages dissolve, and which have to be coped with on a biographical basis. In this context, social work involves opening up ways for people to expand and alter their situation of coping.

7.1 Enabling Childhood

When we now speak of "enabling" childhood, one question we are asking is what opportunities for achieving fulfilment are open to children in our society, considering that children's living and coping situations are caught between development and education, leading their own lives and being raised. At the same time, we are asking how social work can extend the range of opportunities open to them. The model of childhood we have in mind here developed historically in the dialectic of expansion and is also intended to lay out the limits within which children can achieve fulfilment starting out from their coping situation – limits within which social work can

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operate. If we view the life stages, as in the introduction, as a social construction, then, even in childhood, we already find the tension between human beings and the economy which is inherent to the concept of the "situation in life" and runs through every stage in life. Thus, discourses on childhood in the social sciences revolve around sets of circumstances forming a background for social development and giving rise to childhood as an independent life context (for an overview cf. Liebel, 2012). By contrast, the socio-political discourse on childhood as a situation in life is not yet as well developed. The examples of child poverty and violence against children show that childhood is not only a phase of development; children also have to go through risk-laden coping scenarios at an early age. The concept of modern childhood, meanwhile, assumes that children need their own social space in which they can develop a life of their own. At the same time, in the modern age, this "life of their own" was qualified and pedagogically transformed by various childraising approaches. This tension between being raised and developing a life of their own is the situation in which children are expected to develop agency and become increasingly independent (though within the ties of the family) and forms the socio-pedagogical basis of modern childhood. This tension is tied up in an economic and social process which needs to be discussed if we are to understand how childhood has developed until now as a living and coping situation. Pedagogical childhood came into being at the start of the modern age due to the industrial division of labour, which separated family life from paid work and established the "nuclear family" as an intimate relational unit and a basic pedagogical form. As a result, in industrial societies, the progress of economic modernization increasingly shifted childraising and education into the sphere of society, by which means childhood was to some extent relocated outside the family. Thus, in the twentieth century, the dialectic of expansion in the balance between work and capital affected the spheres of childhood (and adolescence) in that steps had to be taken at an early age in people's life courses to ensure that there were enough qualified workers for the modernization of capital.

According to the logic of the dialectic of extension, this resulted – and still results – in new social interpretations of childhood which go beyond a family childhood. On the one hand, childhood is today seen as an early stage in the development of human capital and is framed by a policy on families which is also designed to activate the parents' human capital, especially that of the woman (cf. Mangold, Muche & Volk, 2013). On the other hand, the question is being asked of whether the traditional pedagogical childhood might block the child's development into an independent actor, denying the child opportunities for self-realization. Both issues are instructive for social work, as they help position the social work approach to children. The economic potential of children in our societies is being accessed not only via the consumer market but also via the education system, as can be seen from the education plans for kindergartens. Children have been recognized as young bearers of human capital. Children are expected to develop targeted skills at an early age, while children's games, as an open space for appropriation, are increasingly being treated as a skills

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development method. Ideas of socialization are being redefined as individual plans for accumulating human capital. There is no more space for the conflict-oriented models of learning and coping which are typical of this life stage. In the theory of human capital, after all, individuals are defined as independent entrepreneurs managing their own manpower, which they each place on the labour market through their own means. This calls for them to learn flexible skills at a young age.

Champions of the human capital approach believe that criticism of the concept's focus on exploitation looks past the fact that the skills outlook relates to all human capital and thus includes extended possibilities for personality development. Nonetheless, childhood has become an ambivalent situation in life which is constituted through social attributions and expectations emerging from different, even contradictory discourses. The argument against the skills discourse says that children's social agency only forms as they develop and are raised, and that the physical and mental processes of development and maturing which occur until the end of puberty cannot be replaced by imposed skills which do not relate to their development (cf. Göppel, 1997). Thus, the argument goes, the term "skill" is purely theoretical and obscures the fact that children are reliant for their survival on systems of support and encouragement within the family and society: as actors, children are adults in the making, meaning that childhood is a relational construct, rather than an autonomous one. Moreover, it is said, the focus on the empirical approach to childhood only fits in to a limited extent with the sociological argument that children lead their own lives.

Children, according to this argument, have a hierarchical view of themselves in relation to adults which extends far into their lifeworlds, even though they may indeed develop their own stand on matters and play a role as actors. In this area of conflict between children leading their own lives, educational expectations, dependency on the family and an emerging tendency towards children's lives being geared towards work, living and coping situations require a milieu which relates all these aspects and balances them against one another. This requirement is often too much for families in the lower classes with socially disadvantaged situations in life, where social work's clients come from.

> The cultural practices and habitus of children from low-capital milieus are characterised by the fact that the world they experience every day after school contrasts more with scholastic demands and content than is the case for children from milieus with greater capital [...]. Equally, they have less experience of organised leisure activities such as lessons after school, which are used not only to help children catch up on classwork but also to help them accumulate cultural capital. At some point this then "pays off" in other contexts. This includes an experience of planning their schedule and coordinating various appointments or attachment figures. At the same time, these contexts offer opportunities to deal with others' definitions of their success or failure, and gain an "understanding" of the idea that their achievements come from making an effort, and earn them acknowledgement. These are all key features of the formal education system. From the point of view of the family context, it can equally be seen that children from milieus with lower capital systematically undergo different experiences to children from higher-capital

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> milieus. [. . .] These children [. . .] find that their mothers less frequently go to parents' evenings or become involved in school matters than is the case with others in their class from milieus with more extensive capitals. [. . .] Finally, the children cannot rely as extensively on their parents for direct help with their homework. (*Betz, 2008, p. 293 ff.*)

In her secondary analysis of recent empirical research into childhood and of social reports on children, Tanja Betz generally finds evidence of "clearly distinguishable patterns of childhood which are typical of each milieu and can be seen in the children's emotional conditions, cultural practices and habitus in the three social settings of recreation, family and school. These reveal that socially unequal educational forms are a constitutive condition of unequal childhoods. Childhood is socially structured" (Betz, 2008, p. 384).

In this context, Betz makes another important finding – that as a factor of inequality, "ethnic belonging" is closely linked to the factor of "social belonging" (Betz, 2008, p. 363).

Children in Spatially Restricted Circumstances

Imagining an estate on the outskirts of a city, it is easy to see how a family's background circumstances and their spatial environment interact. Children who are neglected by their families, in particular, use the local surroundings to act out the moods and feelings which are rejected at home; feelings whose antisocial tendencies are amplified by the fact that, where they live, they come across rigid social control (people want their private peace and quiet) and are kept out of certain spaces (almost every square metre is set aside for a certain function). The tall blocks of flats provide an uninterrupted view of the streets, meaning that they are "monitored": their only option is to go to other parts of town or wait until nightfall to spray graffiti and cause damage. Social workers describe how supermarket break-ins are not so much about the goods but more about the "uproar" caused, which draws the neighbourhood's attention to the children. Here, adventure playgrounds and children's day-care centres play a primary role as supportive environments which allow, but also channel, aggression, diverting it into functional equivalents: building something themselves (e.g. shacks) which also gives them personal experience of the effects of destruction; entering into relationships which make them feel as if they are someone, even if they do lose control occasionally; being involved with adults who discuss matters and set limits which reduce rather than adding to the burden placed on them.

Childhood thus emerges as an inherently varied living and coping situation. Social work, which mainly deals with socially disadvantaged children, i.e. those with low "capital", is now faced with the task of transforming this diagnosed situation in life by means of social work. The outlined findings point towards a set of living circumstances which trigger a specific set of coping mechanisms, and a context of prevention which denies socially disadvantaged children access to various means of appropriation offered in and outside school by an education system aimed at the middle classes and supported by corresponding milieus. At the same time, the social work angle also makes it clear to us that this system ignores those of the children's skills which do not fit into it: these are not acknowledged. For this reason, those of us

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working in social work should not immediately focus on children's deficits and their problems adapting to the school education system. Instead, we should allow them to achieve self-realization in contexts where it is what comes from them that counts – where they can make use of the practices developed through habit in a natural, creative manner without experiencing discrimination. Projects of this nature create small-scale milieus of acknowledgement in which children can develop agency (which schools often deny them) and which they can use as a basis to articulate their states of mind and the interests which have now come to light (coping dimension of expression).

In other words, we approach children not only from the one-sided perspective of education, but also from the point of view of coping – acknowledgement and self-efficacy – with both aspects (education and coping) running into one another. Thus, in this context, "enabling childhood" means, in relational social work activities, finding the balance between coping, education and the development of independence, which occurs more in families with "greater capital". This is because, as the education system is generally geared towards the middle classes, in their case the spaces in which education occurs can overlap with spaces allowing everyday appropriation.

Socially disadvantaged children's educational worlds generally do not overlap with their everyday world after school, meaning that they lack the balance which middle-class families usually provide, or try to provide. This insight is a particular challenge for those of us in social work, as it means we are dealing with a split situation in life. Social work with children cannot fully provide that balance; that much is certain, as it has little influence on the families. From experience, we can thus only hope that the children will themselves bring their parents to understand that the work is good for them and that the parents will adjust their behaviour towards their children accordingly. It is often the children who ask if their parents can come along too, or who bring them along.

Children want to achieve something and expect suggestions as to what to do. As might be expected considering the open-ended nature of child culture, this wish, and children's related expectations, are generally not guided by any particular function and there is little purpose behind them. Instead, children are driven by a wish to have fun and achieve emotional satisfaction. Children from family and home milieus which provide little stimulation are thus in particular need of habits and rituals – structures which allow them to enter new, unfamiliar territory. This is precisely the point of the structuring activities and themed initiatives of child pedagogy, though, when it comes down to it, their acceptance depends on the children's state of mind, and it must be possible to add to or alter what is made available. This stimulating, reassuring adult influence can stabilize children's expectations with regard to being able to achieve something. Of course, children (mainly older children) want to provoke the adults with whom they are in close contact at the children's day-care centre or adventure playground. Staff constantly have to reckon with provocation; children testing the limits of what is allowed, venting their feelings and withdrawing.

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Some children also arrive with serious experience of loss in their families. They are looking for attention and affection, even if they act aggressively, terrorize younger children or steal things from their surroundings. This antisocial behaviour comes from their experience of loss. Being disruptive is the final resort they turn to in their attempt to get the acknowledgement and agency which is usually denied them (cf. Böhnisch, 2010). For this reason, social workers in community children's centres also need to be able to act as participant observers. Even without these antisocial outbursts, however, it can generally be assumed that though children today become independent at an early age, this can often leave them feeling left to their own devices. This independence makes them recognize their position within the family, and – if they cannot make a strong enough connection to their family – they search for a "replacement family" elsewhere, for example in community children's centres. This is especially common if their parents neglect them or place too great an emotional burden on them, or if their family has become too disorganized and stressful for them. Community work with children cannot, however, replace the family; it merely offers functional equivalents for what the children are missing out on in their families, attempting to extend the spaces in which this occurs and the intensity of their relationships. Thus, of the dimensions of childhood as a situation of coping, appropriation and acknowledgement are the dimensions which can be activated especially effectively in social work with children.

Violence in Families

Childhood is disenabled whenever *violence* comes in. The phenomenon of cruelty to children can generally be traced back to partnership and family structures which are so disorganized as to result in violence (cf. Honig, 1992; Kavemann, 2006). The parents are often incapable of generating parenthood. They have entered into marriage in the hope that this, and having children, would give them the affection and acknowledgement they did not get from their parents. Now, they are incapable of giving their children the same thing; instead, they look to their children to fulfil their dreams. The perpetrators are frequently women with their own experience of childhood violence, followed by violent situations in their partnership, and who have been the victims of physical abuse (cf. Bender & Lösel, 2005). This can be explained using our coping model. Women who are the domestic victims of male violence cannot address the subject, as they cannot escape this domestic dependency, and are usually forced to split off inwards. Their self-esteem is undermined and they suffer feelings of guilt. They withdraw and bide their time, often counting on men's fear of being abandoned. The men, however, split off their fear in the form of increased control and forcing the woman into submission. The woman's feelings of guilt continue to tie her to the perpetrator. This condition cannot be withstood for long, however, and also has to be split off. This takes place either self-destructively, through the abuse of alcohol or prescription medicines, or, indeed, in the form of splitting off and projecting their own helplessness and powerlessness onto the children. The abstraction mechanism comes into play, and the women cannot usually themselves understand why they are acting violently towards the children. These are the patterns of behaviour behind the cycle of violence described by Bender & Lösel (2005, p. 223), according to which traumatic experiences from people's childhood and youth, such as violence and a lack of acknowledgement, or even rejection or sexual abuse, are passed on from the parents to the next generation. Thus, there is a link "between the child abuse which people experience themselves

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and the fact that they mistreat their own children. However, a distinction should be made between parental behaviour which is transmitted absolutely and that which is transmitted relatively" (Bender & Lösel, 2005, p. 223). In other words, it is by no means the case that all parents simply hand on their own experience of violence; it always also depends on the current situation of their partnership and family.

Similarly to violent scenarios within partnerships, child neglect occurs disproportionately often in socially disadvantaged families. These parents' situations in life are characterized by low levels of education, low family incomes, a lack of social connections, cramped living spaces and bad neighbourhoods. It is believed that by far the majority of negligent families in Germany are poor. This is often complicated by inconsistencies in the family make-up, with frequent separations and relatively fast changes from one partner to the next, meaning that relationship structures can often no longer be regulated. Inconsistent family circumstances are a particular burden on the children: they blur the environmental boundaries which children need in order to feel sure of themselves and secure in a relationship.

The options available in terms of social prevention and intervention are restricted to the tiny playing field resulting from the private nature of the family in our society. For this reason, footholds should mainly be sought in the transitional area between these families and their social environment, as one thing which stands out among negligent families is their dearth of social connections: they are socially isolated. Thus, the best way to gain access to these wellsprings of violence is for social workers to oversee the creation of local networks which are in close touch with the community. Here, the bridge can be built between extra-familial work with children and family support. The hope is always that parents will notice and, with time, come to appreciate the fact that their children have changed, that they are no longer the victims of the parents' neediness, and that this new status will have a positive effect on them. Otherwise, children may find themselves in a split coping situation. However, youth welfare workers frequently report that most children are in fact capable of switching between the coping cultures of their family and youth work, though the two often conflict.

7.2 Enabling Youth

Social work's aim of "enabling youth" arises out of the particular set of circumstances which youth throws up in terms of situation of life and coping. Social work generally aims to extend young people's range of opportunities for protected experimentation, to give them an experience of efficacy, to form open milieus and to create cultures of acknowledgement in youth welfare and youth projects. Moreover, young people are to be given relationships and spaces which allow them

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to retreat and recover from the stress of puberty and the alternating cultures which young people are constantly drawn into by an education- and consumption-based society, placing them before first demands and then challenges. In advanced industrial societies, the stage of youth has an inherently contradictory structure and gives rise to *needy* young people. This state of mind, in which the steps which people feel obliged to take, and do their best to achieve, are at the same time denied them, is of a typically youthful nature. Adolescents are constantly prevented from being socio-culturally independent at an early age due to the constraints on coping imposed by an education- and work-driven society. If social work sees itself not only as a setting for resocialization and social learning, but also as a *living environment*, then its task is to clear these obstacles and extend the spaces where young people can experience appropriation and acknowledgement (cf. Böhnisch, Rudolph & Wolf, 1998).

Community Youth Work: Enabling Youth by Opening up Spaces

Traditionally, unlike the youth work carried out within associations, community youth work predominantly (if not exclusively) deals with socially disadvantaged young people. In 1931, the Viennese educationalist and sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld introduced the term "shortened puberty" in relation to the young proletarians who had to go straight from basic schooling into work, without being able to experiment with youth culture. Ever since, one aim of community youth work has been to "enable youth". Today, one aspect of this is the coping problems connected to the extension and intensification of education, which leaves young people with little time to experiment with or live out their youth. The two most important means of enabling offered by youth work in this respect are spaces and relationships. While adults tend to focus on status and position, spatial processes of appropriation which young people choose themselves are an especially effective way for them to develop through experimentation and have identity-building experiences. In this context we often come across distinctive gender-based differences, e.g. in the case of adolescent boys, especially from socially weaker families with cramped housing and from districts where there are clearly limited and obstructed chances for appropriation. The fewer opportunities and recourses these boys have for appropriation within their social spaces, the more likely they are to fall back on types of behaviour and manners which stress masculine displays of dominance, and the more they reduce their patterns of social expression to an emphasis on physical strength. The perspective of social spaces reveals the externality which is often found in such boys' and men's objectivist social relationships. Youth workers dealing with boys thus have to try to reduce the externality of the boys' behaviour in their social spaces – to let them discover that they can benefit from venturing into the inner spaces of their own state of mind. This teaches them that spaces offer more than just an opportunity to constantly draw attention to themselves: that they can come up against other people and enter into respecting relationships with them. When working with girls, the aim is to open up visible spaces for them, allowing them to present themselves in their own way (cf. Bitzan & Daigler, 2003; Bütow, 2006). With boys, however, it is important to lead them out of the spaces which they dominate and guide them back towards themselves, introducing new "inner" personality elements into the boys' behaviour. In this way, the spaces in which youth culture flourishes are relieved of the boys' classic externally focused, dominantly masculine behaviour (cf. Sturzenhecker & Winter, 2002); they learn how to behave in sensitive social intermediary spaces instead of simply taking over spaces externally. Work

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with girls, meanwhile, tries to open up spaces in which girls can behave in a self-determined manner within cliques, as this has specifically been recognized as a key means of experimenting with relational and transitional practices.

It is not only in community youth work, however, that young people have a right to youth, and that youth thus needs to be enabled. The same is true in out-of-home social care services. This means that the adolescents' socio-cultural opportunities (joining in with their peer culture, being independent within and towards the institution) should not just be made to fit in with the institution, and thus restricted; the institution also needs to be able to open up to them. Some forms of protest among adolescents (dimension of expression) which have always been seen as inner "revolts" in residential care can be traced back to the fact that young people's distress and the needs they have in terms of youth culture come up against the brick wall of the institution, rebound onto the young people and are then split off in the form of violent acts of aggression.

Altogether, the moratorium, the protected social space of youth, has become porous. The boundaries of youth are said to be blurring: youth is no longer a stage of life between the ages of 14 and 18 but now sometimes lasts 15 years, from ages 12 to 27. Yet this dissolution of boundaries is not only expressed temporally: it is becoming almost impossible to distinguish youth from other stages in life – to separate the characteristics peculiar to adolescence from other functional social spheres (paid work, politics, family). Moreover, we are seeing youth open up in the media and society. In these conditions, the uninhibited experimentation which is (was) characteristic of the youth culture stage in life has become a biographical and social risk for many. As a result, the issue of youth is becoming a social issue, too; youth policy is veering into social policy zones. However, in some European countries, institutional youth policy is still deflecting this tendency, meaning that, unsurprisingly, the youth issue has been increasingly shifted into the arena of criminal policy. The public discussion has focused more on young people as a high-risk group than on the next generation's social potential. It thus comes as no surprise that most adolescents are starting to strategically prepare for adulthood at an early age, manoeuvring in that direction. They place emphasis on their interest in making their own way, more than on experimentally locking horns with adult society.

High-Risk Behaviour

When we talk about high-risk behaviour among young people, we mean behaviour on the outer edges of socially accepted behaviour, which may extend so far beyond those boundaries as to appear antisocial and/or self-damaging. High-risk behaviour includes excessive tobacco and alcohol consumption, the abuse of prescription medicines and drug use, joyriding or even playing

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violent video games. From the coping perspective, the first question which arises is that of what "messages" risk-taking among children and adolescents conceals. In the research on youth, high-risk behaviour is said to have a specific functional significance in the process of growing up. Children and younger teenagers use high-risk practices as "symbols of maturity" to show that they are stepping out of parental control and to present themselves to other young people as no longer being children. Adolescents use this to demonstrate their independence, extending as far as symbolic, often risk-taking opposition to normal, habitual adult life. Their own bodies are the medium through which they feel and experience the high-risk behaviour. In other words, risk-taking can in fact be interpreted as "identity work" and at the same time as a "subjectively risky opportunity – which of course runs the risk of failure" (Litau, 2011, p. 174). Apart from this, for both sexes, entering into risks is a way to assure themselves of peer group solidarity and vitality in the face of adult culture (cf. Raithel, 2005).

High-risk behaviour in adolescence generally has characteristics typical of each developmental stage and generation, meaning that it falls within the normal range of growing up. Thus, an important social work maxim applies: if high-risk behaviour is a phenomenon occurring within the culture of youth in the context of identity development and coping with developmental challenges, then the main aim must be to help young people maintain independent agency rather than becoming dependent. From the perspective of the coping approach, this means that they should be capable of addressing their state of mind within society and avoiding the risk of coming under constant pressure to split it off. For this reason, the aim of social work with young people is to look beyond the general phenomenon of this developmental form within the culture of youth, pinpointing "compulsive" high-risk practices as a means of coping which arises in particularly difficult situations in life and focusing on ensuring that the high-risk behaviour does not remain entrenched even after adolescence. During adolescence we find a link between problems, everyday coping and high-risk behaviour within the school and family in every social class. For a long time, for example, there have been reports on the relatively widespread syndrome of "failure" among 13- to 17-year-olds, which takes place when underachievement in school is combined with unmet parental expectations in that regard. Today, this failure can no longer simply be glossed over by youth culture, as used to be the case when adolescence was relatively well protected behind a social shield. Instead, it is experienced as a biographical failure before adolescence is even over. These circumstances can pose a considerable threat to young people's well-being, leading to reactions which can put their health at risk. Here, there is a tendency towards gender-typical differences: in boys, high-risk behaviour tends to be focused outwards, directly at other people. It involves competition and ignores any risks threatening their own bodies. Girls' reactions, meanwhile, tend to be hidden and more often inward facing, with their high-risk behaviour sometimes deliberately directed at their own body in the form of self-harming.

Studies on young people are finding it increasingly difficult to present them as a single generational unit within society. This split in the generational issue is leading adolescents into an independence trap. On the one hand, the socialization process gives them their freedom in that they become socio-culturally independent at an early age, but at the same time they feel social pressure to rein themselves in and suppress the dynamics of adolescence. Youth no longer seems to make a new entrance into culture: it clashes less and less with adult society and instead tries to hide within it, finding a place within it. However, this puts young people under pressure. They have to undertake a bizarre balancing act, staying for as long as possible in the family they are supposed to be cutting their ties with, while at the same time being able to experiment with youth culture though still worming their way as flexibly as possible into

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a society with which they can no longer really lock horns. Many adopt the model of flexibilization and "keeping up with the Joneses" which is imposed by the economy of our growing society. This means that instead of using politics to act out their openness to new ideas, or the uninhibited nature of youth culture, they express this through the use of new technologies which they can deal with in a more natural, spectacular manner than adults.

At the same time – and this is seen not only from youth poverty – adolescence involves processes of social segmentation. As shown by Heinz-Hermann Krüger and Birgit Reißig (2011) using data from the German Youth Institute's AIDA survey, "institutional paths through adolescent biographies" are currently strongly shaped by the "family's educational milieu":

> Put extremely simply, it can be said that adolescents whose parents have a high level of education can afford to delay and decelerate their journey through various educational institutions. Surprisingly, this applies not only to those with 12 years of general education but also those leaving school after 9 or 10 years. By contrast, young people whose parents have a low level of education have to take direct, institutional paths through their adolescent biography, within a condensed time period. Additionally, there is a third group of adolescents whose educational careers are at risk of failure, as they leave without any vocational qualifications. These are [. . .] mainly adolescents of immigrant origin and/or with the lowest school qualification, at most. Condensing them into three types, seen from the angle of the theory of inequality, there are thus three different biographical paths through education and training: those from well-educated families who draw out their educational biography, those from more poorly educated families who rush through their educational biography, and those with a risk-laden biographical path through education and training, mainly coming from families of immigrant origin. (*Krüger & Reißig, 2011, p. 21*)

In view of this development, there thus needs to be public discussion on a new social model of youth. The twentieth-century social definition of youth saw that stage in life as an exception from the work-based society, with adolescents allowed to develop and gain qualifications in a moratorium, after which their newly acquired status enabled them to integrate securely into society. That model no longer works: it was broken for good at the start of the twenty-first century. A new social model of youth is thus required which can relate to the tensions inherent to the blurred boundaries of today's adolescence. As adolescents now become socio-culturally independent at an early age, they need society's recognition for their social achievements (dimension of acknowledgement). However, as they are simultaneously caught up in generational competition, they need to continue to enjoy social protection. Young people's situation of coping has, after all, become ambivalent and subject to considerable risk. Today, as the boundaries of youth have become blurred, coping entails hidden traps which await many young people – not only those who are socially disadvantaged. We thus see this *model of coping traps*, as outlined below, as a suitable model for a youth welfare system designed to deal with the dissolution of boundaries occurring at the start of the second modernity.

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Demographic forecasts and employment market figures cannot hide the fact that, fundamentally, the transition to adulthood seems to be taking on a new form. Studies by Barbara Stauber and Andreas Walther (2008) showed repeatedly that this transition is characterized by *open-endedness* and *uncertainty*. This is particularly true of the stage of young adulthood, when people are no longer adolescents but have not yet become adults either (if the status of economic independence is taken as a criterion), though the stage extends temporally well into adulthood. At this stage, particularly intense pressure is felt to find paid work, with education now also being brought back into young people's biographies, though they continue mainly to identify with and be ascribed characteristics of youth culture (*transition trap*). Though many transitional situations are managed by means of biographical detours, extended status passages and transition management with familial and institutional support, and thus lead to new, secure statuses, other, precarious transitional circumstances have come about whose outcomes are unpredictable and uncertain. These are characterized by problems with acknowledgement and appropriation. However, as labour market forecasts, buoyed by demographic developments, are currently positive, the chances of these issues being brought up for discussion are sinking.

Altogether, research into youth indicates that, for most young people, integration into the employment sector is being delayed and the stage of institutionalized education drawn out accordingly. Many people believe that this offers adolescents much greater opportunities for managing the time available to them and for structuring their own everyday life. However, at the same time, schools, institutions of continuing or vocational education and universities involve intense learning and pressure to perform and offer only limited experience of responsibility, while young people's actions in those settings are very much externally guided. The result of this drawn-out institutionalization in the education sector is that it takes a relatively long time before young people experience their own direct social usefulness, the everyday application of the norms of calculated rationalism outside school, or their own ability to earn their keep (*education trap*). Educational institutions also have a far more homogeneous age structure compared with companies. Thus, this tendency for schooling to take over adolescence results in young people remaining in homogeneous age groups for longer. At the same time, their strategy for coping with life comes up against an educational paradox: though they spend more time in education and training, they must nonetheless be prepared to jump into line at any moment as fully trained employees.

When one considers that, in some European countries at the start of the twenty-first century, almost half of the young working population does not have job security and that career and job uncertainty are something which even young adolescents start to think about, then it makes sense that young men suffer from identity disorders when confronted early on with job insecurity and competition for training posts – especially in view of the strong link between masculine identity and paid work. It is thus no longer an unusual occurrence for young men who unobtrusively spend

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their week in monotonous jobs with little contact to join violent, xenophobic crowds at the weekend and go on the rampage on the street or at football matches. Coming into closer contact with boys and young men of this kind, it soon becomes clear that they are looking for places where they can live out and demonstrate their masculinity. In most cases, their weekly workflows are so drained of physicality and masculinity that boys and men who rely on masculinity for their self-esteem and acknowledgement are sent looking for places where they can carry out aggressive, masculine acts (*masculinity trap*). In doing so, they are demonstrating their version of the aggressive success-driven culture they come across in society. This relapse into an archaic, physical masculinity is one of those unrepressed, recurrent developmental faults which smoulder away beneath the surface of an enlightened civilization, only to erupt every now and then.

The idea of the moratorium which characterized twentieth-century discourses on youth said that adolescents had to be protected, allowing them to experiment without risk. Today, they experiment in the unprotected spaces of digital media, with the risk of their present-day exploits forever being dug up again in the future. So far, people's "youthful transgressions" have always remained hidden behind the veil of the moratorium. They were not just tolerated, but actively encouraged. Young people were expected to experiment, to cross lines, so as to learn how to deal with limits and borders later on in life. The experimental spaces of the moratorium were both ephemeral and socially, culturally and legally protected. It was (and still is) one of youth work's central tasks to offer young people protected spaces of this kind, and thus to enable youth, as the digital space of the Internet cannot be protected in that manner. For this reason, educationalists in digital literacy believe that young people should be given the skills they need to set their own limits when it comes to dealing with the digital media. Otherwise, the boundless nature of the Internet will crash back down upon them, leaving behind disorientation and hopelessness which are split off into violence. Thus, if limits cannot be set within digital spaces, they will have to be created within people. Young people are to be taught "digital literacy" so as to create the moratorium within themselves. This, however, clashes with the idea of youth as an experimental period of limit testing. Being urged into high-risk experimentation by the dynamics of adolescent development while *simultaneously* feeling the pressure of expectations to set limits on themselves from an early age can lead to blocks and renewed splitting (*digital media trap*). This decision that young people need to be personally responsible for avoiding risks is applied in preventive programmes, especially, without asking whether a generally preventive programme which has a stigmatizing effect right from the outset is in any way suited to the conditions of development and coping which prevail during adolescence (*prevention trap*). Nonetheless, a generally preventive programme has taken widespread hold which is imposed upon young people and which does not ask what experience they themselves would like to have with alcohol and drug consumption. If that question were

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asked, it would become clear that most are interested in regulating their consumption themselves and testing their own limits. A policy of making the subject taboo and condemning young people in advance only drives their risk-taking underground, into a sphere where they no longer feel any demand to take responsibility for considering and agreeing upon limits. These phenomena of social withdrawal also occur when urban politics no longer sees socially marginalized neighbourhoods as zones which can be shaped, only seeing them as zones of social disruption which need to be controlled and fenced off. The effect this can have on adolescents is that they form regressive milieus which are cut off from the outside world and within which aggression may build up (*segregation trap*). The main group to which this applies is that of young adults whose situation in life is characterized by denial, putting them under pressure to split off their own antisocial means of enablement. Territorial spaces in the populated zones of modern industrial societies are not dead space: in fact, this is where society – reflecting its historical origins – is concretized in a very special way. In these times when the regulatory powers of the welfare state have been weakened, the spatialization of social conflicts is particularly apparent and, without the filters of the welfare state, people are directly exposed to them. This may then be expressed in patterns of coping based on social spaces, such as people retreating indoors, into social isolation, or – especially among adolescents – aggressive spatial behaviour. The greater the social pressure felt by adolescents and young adults, the more urgently they seek out spaces which they can use as coping zones. However, the greater their need for spaces not only to experiment with youth culture but also for coping (to give them visibility, draw attention to themselves and thus gain acknowledgement and efficacy), the more explosive their spatial appropriation becomes, taking on the character of a territorial battle.

Although almost every report on children and young people calls for discussion and impetus for reform, there is little sign of any reaction in *youth (welfare) policy*. Child and youth welfare is so heavily invested in education policy's current focus on childhood and organizational, regional and fiscal considerations that, in many places, there is little interest in taking the additional risk of rethinking the way in which adolescence is seen and possibly having to take on new challenges. As a result, child and youth welfare is tending to become detached from developments related to youth as a situation in life. This contrasts with the experiences of many social workers in child and youth welfare, who are confronted with these changes affecting youth as a living and coping situation. In children's social care, for instance, there has been a great deal of discussion about how to meet the need for support felt by adolescents or young adults who have been accompanied through social care or who are now in need of support in early adulthood, as they do not have the resources today required to cope with the risks of this transitional stage, unlike their peers. Here, too, the social split among young people is clearly visible. All in all, in view of the social divisions and altered living conditions experienced by young people, the child and youth welfare system needs to see the life stage of youth not only as a phase

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of education and development but equally – socio-politically – as a living and coping situation. For community youth work that would be a legitimizing advantage, as the lines are blurring in the field's everyday work between activities geared towards youth culture versus social advice and support based on the coping problems suffered by young people due to the dissolution of youth's boundaries.

Youth Work as Enabling Relationships with "Different Adults"

In the 1970s and 1980s, youth culture was turned into nothing less than a pedagogical cult. Everything which young people came up with themselves was appropriate for young people and had to be accepted unconditionally by youth workers and pedagogically legitimized as the basis for work accompanying youth culture. Judgements made by educationalists were seen as interfering with the authenticity and autonomy of youth culture. However, young people do seem to have other needs apart from the spaces required for youth culture – though social workers find it hard to explain why adolescents approach them as people and make use of their help. Though they feel that their personal presence is evidently important to young people – that they are needed, not as buddies, but still as people who are different to teachers and parents – they can find no pedagogical explanation for this. Their work, centring on youth culture, skews their view of the matter. Thus, this fixation on youth culture still remains the pedagogical taboo of youth work. Adolescents become curious about how youth workers act when conflicts arise within the team, or towards their partners; how they go about leading their lives; what stances they take and how far their patience can be tested. A personal relationship develops between the workers and the adolescents which the former do not simply see as a role model relationship, on the one hand, or even a buddy relationship, on the other. Many youth workers are vehemently opposed to being described as buddies, especially as many of them have negative experiences of this, i.e. have felt personally overburdened in this respect. They have learned that the role of the buddy (whether staff offer to play it with adolescents or whether adolescents take the liberty) upsets the specific balance of distance and closeness inherent to their position as a "different kind of adult". In this context, it should be explained, youth workers see themselves as different to teachers in school or other high-status adults in the way that they deal with boundaries, based on their understanding of their pedagogical task. The developmental dimension of youth calls for a pedagogy which is aimed not only at the peer group, but also at the perspective of becoming adult. The central thesis is that, according to the pedagogical law of development particular to adolescence, throughout their youth, young people strive to achieve an adult status which they do not yet know but which they can sense in terms of the subject of development. To achieve it they equally need both their own, separate youth culture and the ("different") adults. The thesis which is important to social work is thus that adolescence always needs to be addressed on two levels at once: that of youth culture and that of becoming an adult. "At once" means that the conventional, everyday theory of adolescence which is implicit in youth research and youth work – that young people first live out their youth culture and later make the transition into adulthood – does not hold. Even while young people are still undergoing personal development through youth culture, there are already glimpses of their later adulthood. They want to be adults, but refracted through their youth culture, "different" to the licensed adults in their families, schools, training centres and public institutions. It is especially important to provide "different adults" today, in a time when adults themselves no longer feel secure in their "adult status" and young people thus have difficulties locking horns with them. The increasingly stiff competition for attractive jobs and consumer goods demands "youthfulness" from every age group. In our society, at the end of the twentieth century, the difficulty of becoming an adult is closely connected to that of being an adult.

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Adolescents include girls and boys. During prepuberty, i.e. from age 9 to 12, *boys* are caught in a typical coping trap. Boys enter puberty a good year later than girls. Thus, many find that girls of their own age, now with a "womanly" appearance and corresponding mental and physical behaviour, turn away from "immature" boys of their age and worship older boys. This can lead to considerable problems of self-esteem and acknowledgement among the boys – to helplessness which they then often split off through sexism and pornography. They make up for the humiliation they suffer from the girls through shows of sexism. In schools, the boys' toilets are filled with sexist slogans and pornographic graffiti. Today, smartphones are used as well. Depending on their previous experiences of coping with being a boy, the tension can reappear between idolizing the masculine and belittling the feminine (cf. Böhnisch, 2013). What is key here is to offer boys relationships, spaces and projects (mainly in school but of course also in child and youth work) where they can achieve acknowledgement, self-esteem and efficacy, all the while feeling that their self-esteem is not only hanging from what at this age is the thin thread of masculine recognition.

During puberty, from age 13 to 16, when peer culture plays a central role in identity formation and social orientation, the male-dominated cliques continue to stand out, even though by this point the girls have started to look for their own social groups to participate in youth culture together. When they form a male clique, boys could be said to be in a truly "all male" social group for the first time and can now follow the lead set by "men" (of their own age). However, depending on their previous biographical experience of coping, and corresponding social opportunities, the cliques are made up of boys who are themselves not yet sure of their transition to manhood. Both the homosexuality taboo which still haunts male socialization, and the group's ethnocentricity, can then set the merry-go-round of male idolization and female belittlement turning once again. This is precisely the point where youth work with boys comes in, with its task of providing male role models and developing projects which show the boys how perceived weaknesses can in fact be strengths, allowing them to experiment with gender role behaviour at an advanced level. After all, as a "second chance" for male socialization, adolescence is a time when boys once again discover the strength of feelings.

While the primary complaint with regard to male socialization is that boys have few effective everyday role models during early and middle childhood, mainly being cared for by women in kindergarten and primary school, a similar problem now arises for the *girls* during puberty. This stage is, after all, about the transition to an adult status, and society largely defines this transition in masculine terms (cf. Jurczyk & Lange 2009 among others). The model which women are expected to choose of reconciling a family life with a career, with all its challenges and conflicts, is not yet brought to the table so openly that adolescents perceive it as standing alongside the model of

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employment or enjoying at least equal validity. The subject of parental detachment, considered a central developmental task during adolescence, is rarely discussed in terms of gender differences; during the process of detachment, girls are oriented more strongly towards the family than to youth culture, which is more of a focus for the boys. Girls tend to seek acknowledgement from their father, to escape the close identification attachment they have to their mother, though they remain "bound" to their mother as they need her for emotional support. This all usually takes the form of aggressive conflicts featuring "pull and push" behaviour, though the girls do not generally see anything unusual about this, partly as it is expected of them. However, girls are adolescents as well and, like boys, achieve emancipation through youth culture. They get many of their strengths not from their future position as women but through this adolescence. It is a force in its own right, which is constantly curbed and channelled as (in contrast to the boys) it does not have enough cultural outlets. This is why one of the deciding factors behind many modern girls' self-esteem is whether they can let out their natural instincts and promote themselves by gaining access to a culture of youth. Spaces are occupied by boys and men, with pre-existing patriarchal structures and no chance for girls and women to gain their own experience there. For girls, looking for their own spaces means wanting to gain their own experience of female independence. One aspect of this is that spaces are traditionally separated into the private and the public, with a gender-specific structure: women were (and still are, in many areas) consigned to private spaces while the public ones are largely male. The problem of violence within the family, as mentioned earlier, shows how laden with ideological meaning these two spheres, the "public" and the "private", are. Private spaces have always mainly been seen as insulating, protective spaces for girls and women, and public spaces as dangerous. In the discussion on sexual violence within the family, these meanings have almost reversed – or, at least, a major question mark hangs over whether the family is a protective space. Deviant behaviour, meanwhile, tends to be something public among boys and is also publically sanctioned, while the difficulties which girls have in life, and their deviant behaviour, are less public; they are made private. Many girls and young women have to cope with them alone, left to their own devices.

In this context the fact should not be overlooked that girls seek out and shape their own relational spaces in what might be called the intermediate worlds of public adolescence. When they emerge, they are usually again in the boys' shadow and are subjected to boys' external definitions and sexualization. "Girls also play an active role in this, though there is no reflection on this matter within their gender group. As a result, they cannot offer any collective resistance to the put-downs" (Bütow, 2006, p. 225f.). For this reason, one main aim of social work with girls is to give greater *spatial* visibility, especially, to girls' self-willed, self-determined nature, enabling cultural alternatives to the male view.

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7.3 Enabling Adults and People of Working Age from the Perspective of Agency

For a long time, one basic hypothesis of socialization research was that, after the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the dynamic force of people's development was largely spent. After that, people's identity was "fully developed" and all they had to do was take on and manage social and familial roles. Adulthood was not ascribed any particular developmental typology. Today it has long been known that, as the boundaries between the life stages become blurred, increasingly incalculable biographical risks and constraints have become a matter of course, especially in adulthood, and can force people to move in a new direction or even totally restart their career, partnership or social relationships. When this is taken alongside the precarious process of people's accumulated professional and socio-biographical experience being devaluated, part of the accelerating process of change in new technologies and social media and then little trace remains of the "fully developed adult" living in the secure milieu of a local community, in a safe job with a firmly established family. This does not mean that this conventional category no longer exists, but rather that the traditional status of adulthood is no longer a matter of course and can thus no longer be the only benchmark to guide people entering adulthood or coping with biographical challenges and risks as adults. Nonetheless, surveys since the 1990s have shown that many adolescents and young adults continue to believe in a stable adulthood with a secure career and family.

Today, adult learning has long been a subject of discussion: adults are constantly expected to actively tackle their changing technological and social environment, at the same time reshaping themselves in what can certainly be seen as a process of continued development (cf. Kade, 2001). This means that the coping approach also necessarily plays a role, especially when processes of education and counselling intersect in the context of critical living circumstances (cf. Schröer & Stiehler, 2008). In adulthood, a coping conflict then arises which is, however, far more consciously experienced and independently controlled than is the case among adolescents. Whereas young people venture into the culture of their society for the first time, with no biases around the past, adults typically reinterpret past stages in life to fit in with the present and future, reintegrating them into their self-images (cf. Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This becomes especially apparent in critical living circumstances and can lead to unexpected crises of coping. These crises particularly affect social work's clients, coming as they do from a socially disadvantaged background with few economic or social certainties to lean upon. What we would like to do next is to attempt to describe the coping situations and coping problems affecting men and women in a selection of different critical living circumstances (such as unemployment, addiction, homelessness and migration) or compulsive coping behaviour such as self-directed violence (self-harming) and to

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discuss at least some initial ideas for social work action. This also shows us how, in these precarious sets of circumstances, gender-specific patterns of coping can clearly be made out. The main problem which family social work has to deal with in this regard is the precarious coping situation of *jeopardized parenthood*. First of all, this jeopardy generally comes from the ambivalent expectations placed on the family. Society paints a picture of secure intimacy within a family which, however, rarely corresponds with the real private lives within families where people who are overtaxed by relationship conflicts vent this in sometimes violent confrontations to which, apart from anything else, the children are also subjected. Many parents have internalized this division between the public and the private so fully that they repeatedly reproduce and stabilize it in their everyday behaviour. Gender-typical differences can usually be seen: mothers are so concerned with keeping the family together that, based on their perceived gender role within the family (as the emotional glue holding it together), they develop feelings of guilt, believing that they have done too little for the family and caused the problems themselves. Fathers, by contrast, as dominant figures outside the family, often desperately try to keep up appearances in public, among their pub regulars, their colleagues and at work, to show that "their" family, and thus they themselves, are functional. Stereotypical convictions such as "a family belongs together" have, moreover, become so well established and customary that people continue to see them as incontrovertible and worth aspiring to. The result can be that family members cling all the more tightly to the stereotypes the more their family is at risk of becoming dysfunctional; their everyday family life loses its meaning and the family is in danger of falling apart. This often produces a defensive attitude, the effects of which are felt by family support workers: a wall is built up in front of them, the family blocks them out and family members see the intervention more as an attack on the family than as support. This can cause a syndrome of helplessness and incapacity to build up within the family, which is then projected onto the children, too. This occurs especially often in families which have lost their social contact to the outside world due to poverty and unemployment and are forced into psychosocial isolation in their homes. If the family members on the social fringes of the family do not have any social status, expect no recognition and cannot bring up the subject for discussion, the family automatically becomes a surface on which problems are projected and the setting for precarious attempts at coping. Agency can then no longer be generated by means of the family. Family social workers' main task is then to thaw out the frozen inner ties and to create social links to the outside world. Projects of this kind, e.g. family centres, attempt to integrate women from socially disadvantaged families into social networks, to guide them out of the restrictive family situation of bearing the guilt, and to enable them to address the subject of their coping situation in a group of women sharing the same problem.

This idea of addressing problems in discussion-based support programmes as a means of breaking open the black box of the coping situation is also at the

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focus of family social work. This service works “in the context of children’s well-being and parental responsibility” (Richter, 2013, p. 30) juggling the knotty tasks of “representing the child or adolescent’s interests, respecting the parents’ rights and fostering the family as a setting for socialisation” (Richter, 2013, p. 32). Family social work also works with families dealing with multiple difficulties and under pressure to appear normal to the outside world, although inside they have run out of all means of maintaining relationships. This is particularly true of parents who cannot fulfil their role in the family or when the parents’ and children’s roles are reversed. This means they are exposed to an external and internal *situation of dependency*. With outsiders they are forced into a defensive position which entails an increasing loss of self-determination. This is aggravated by the family help services ascribing deficits to them. “The professionals do not explicitly show them the ascribed deficits, but nonetheless there are structural factors within” the family social work “which seem to produce these meta-reflective labels” (Richter, 2013, p. 283). Within the family, biographical life course experiences rear their heads again: unresolved relational problems from childhood or unprocessable experiences of violence and dependency which can lead to negative cycles in the “system” of family relationships. This *situation of dependency* may initially actually be heightened by the unequal balance of power in the “institutional dialogues” conducted by social workers (coping dimension of *expression*). This asymmetry “due to differences in the two parties’ access to both knowledge and communicative resources” (Richter, 2013, p. 263) not only needs to be brought to light through self-reflection but can also be evened out by opening up the institutional conversational stage to the outside world, allowing the clients to become visible and vocal in the discussion as citizens. In this context, what is important is the signs of *recognition* which counter this asymmetry. It makes a difference if I first examine the disorganization of the family or if I ask myself what strengths a family might nonetheless possess if, despite three years of disorganization, they have managed to survive as a family. Can this energy which has until now been channelled into regressive defence be transformed into socially productive energy? This does, however, require intensive, professionally reliable support based on trusting, respectful cooperation with the parents. This often first has to be built up. Finally, it must always be borne in mind that an intervention is taking place which is risky for everyone involved and involves the outside world encroaching on the family’s privacy. Institutions are brought in which are unknown to the family and have their own, varying logics, meaning that there are bound to be mismatches (cf. Albert et al., 2010).

Unemployment is a situation of coping in which serious difficulties can arise in all four coping dimensions – recognition, dependency, appropriation and expression – especially among the long-term unemployed. Empirical investigations do show, however, that the unemployed develop different coping strategies. Coping also has a gender-typical structure due to the fact that the masculine identity, unlike the

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feminine one, still depends directly and exclusively on paid work. Looking at long-term unemployment in this context (the form which most often requires social work), gender-specific situations of coping can be identified. Among men, unemployment automatically places them in the centre of everyday family life, which is unfamiliar to them. Their role within the family was previously determined through their work (as the main earner or head of the family). For this reason they find it hard to productively take on the new family role forced upon them. For many men, masculinity still goes hand in hand with external employment outside the family, so many see losing their job as losing their masculinity. They feel as if they are being pushed into a feminine domain which they have always semi-consciously undervalued, as if they are now being dragged down into that devaluation. Bearing this in mind and examining the coping situation in which men find themselves during long-term unemployment, all four dimensions are in a precarious range. With their fixed view of unemployment and gender roles, they are almost incapable of addressing their helplessness and powerlessness (dimension of *expression*); they find it hard to appropriate a family role (dimension of *appropriation*); they feel forced into a position of *dependency*, caught between their family and losing their job and have lost their old sources of *recognition*, which were previously defined by their work. Few manage to bring off the option of becoming a househusband; there is no socially supported role model for this. Consequently, unemployed men fall into a helplessness which is reinforced by gender-typical factors and feel pressure to split this off. This often involves traditional masculine patterns being magnified: a man who is unemployed in the long term strives to maintain his masculinity by increasing his control over his family and thus (generally without realizing it) forces all family activities to revolve around supporting his masculinity. This can go so far as to make the woman and children co-dependent on the man. At the same time, these men are afraid of losing their authority and relationships and often expect the social workers supporting the case to reinstate their status and authority. For this reason, it is especially important for social work to add a *social* dimension to the support relationship by means of functional equivalents and setting up project milieus, giving the affected men means of recognition and appropriation, and the opportunity to discuss their situation in a context other than the labour market.

Unemployed women, on the other hand, tend to enjoy greater acceptance than unemployed men in our society. If her spouse is the only one going out to work and earns enough money, a wife is not seen as unemployed; her role as a housewife is viewed as complementing the man's working role, as well as being a role of its own within the family. Nonetheless, there has been a considerable rise in women wanting to work in recent years. At the same time, however, many women who stay at home are not only materially dependent on their husbands; they are also subject to the gradual decline in value of the qualifications they once acquired through their training and work. This often makes it harder for them to re-enter the workplace. For this reason there is a hidden link

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between being limited to the role of the housewife and unemployment, which frequently comes to the surface in times of crisis (divorce, loss of a partner). This is especially true of socially disadvantaged women who do not have a sufficient level of schooling or vocational training and are thus forced into social isolation. This makes them doubly dependent, before and after divorce, which forces them into social isolation and can spoil their chances of finding alternative forms of appropriation. However, women and girls who are not forced onto the fringes of society can also get into precarious situations of coping. This is because there is still a gender division on the labour market in a lot of European countries, pushing women into jobs which are the first to be hit by unemployment or into unprotected work where they are considered flexible and are hired and fired just as flexibly. The problem of discrimination against women in the workplace thus seems to have shifted. It is no longer a question of whether women can work just like men; instead, the problem today is that women's jobs put them at greater risk of unemployment than men's. Thus, most part-time jobs are taken by women. Even during vocational training, there is a predominant prejudice that it is harder to find jobs for girls than for boys, as they are limited to so few vocations. If the girls then act accordingly, looking for the kind of job that will let them in, then this gender-typical definition cycle is complete. Another prejudice which is hard to shake is that girls focus on their family and relationships when dealing with their jobs and careers, so are not as fully available or able to take on as much work as men. At the same time, however, it is obvious that the aspect of work and a career is a source of support for women, especially in crises. Middle-aged women deal with unemployment in very different ways. This depends on how they can process their drop in value and whether it is acknowledged and taken seriously. Social workers frequently come across two forms of coping. On the one hand, there are depressive forms of coping. These women are more likely to take antidepressants and are more prone to illness. On the other hand, there are women who try to make use of their unemployment to move in a new direction, using job creation schemes to get into alternative kinds of work and lifestyles. The inferior quality of the job creation schemes often stands in their way. Their ability to switch paths depends, of course, on their previous qualifications and how long they have been employed. Nonetheless, women seem to navigate their unemployment more flexibly and with greater mobility than men (dimension of appropriation), as their identity does not depend as strongly on the role of the worker, and they can swap between roles at work and roles within the family. They are also more capable of addressing their precarious situation, as can be seen from the higher percentage of women at advice centres. On the other hand, women's unemployment is often seen as less dramatic than men's (dimension of recognition).

Homelessness

The *homeless* are not only found on the street. Many also live in shelters or are at risk of homelessness, on the verge of losing their home. Homelessness usually comes at the end of a career which begins in the family: violence leading as far as sexual abuse, being thrown out or running away (as can be seen among street urchins), living in care homes, dropping out of vocational training, failing at

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work, failing through unemployment, a breakdown in their ability to run their everyday lives. At some point, they can no longer cope with everyday life; the facade crumbles and every dimension of their coping situation is precarious. Insolvent and suffering from social stigma, their chances of finding a home grow ever smaller. The fate of homelessness is thus the tail end of a series of events in which personal, biographical and social factors are interwoven. Homeless people founder on the shores of a competitive society which likes to think of them as its flotsam, which helps create these careers and only looks after them if they cause a nuisance. Visible homeless people on the street often try to stabilize the social spaces of their situation of coping by appropriating certain zones. The fact that more homeless men can be seen on the street than homeless women should not mislead anyone into seeing homelessness as a mainly male problem. It is an effect of the gender-specific inside/outside mechanism which we came across in the context of the coping model. Women not only try to hide their life on the street; they even enter into new relationships of dependency and violence with men in order to avoid the risk of ending up on the streets. Every dimension of their coping situation is precarious: hiding instead of addressing their problem, dependency, isolation and stigmatization, especially if they nonetheless choose the street. This is because, for homeless women, life on the street goes entirely against the conventional image of women and the female gender role. They have to face the consequences of this: their life on the street is not only seen as extremely inappropriate, it is also quickly sexualized, with women gaining a moral reputation of being sexually available and thus one step away from prostitution. It is thus no wonder that many women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness try to prevent their precarious situation from becoming common knowledge. They would rather enter into forced relationships with men – anything but end up on the street. Outwardly, it then looks as if the women have chosen a violent relationship of their own accord. In social work, homeless women's precarious coping situation are often misjudged. There is hardly any other problematic psychosocial area in which social workers themselves are so drawn to stereotypes. With women, the focus is on the failures in the fields of relationships and caring, often neglecting the aspect of the material and cultural independence which they are denied. In the case of men, by contrast, "failure at gainful employment" is often in the foreground of the definition during social work diagnosis. In many diagnostic materials, men's experiences of loss and their relational fears, which do in fact come up in biographical discussions, play no role at all. This is, of course, amplified by the men's outward-directed behaviour, as they cannot process experiences of loss inwardly, or as a result address the issue, but instead – typically of male coping – see these experiences as a loss of control which they try to make up for through increasingly controlling outward behaviour in their homeless milieu (coping dimension of expression). Organizing help for homeless men and women is a two-edged sword (cf. Lutz & Simon, 2007). It often overlooks the pride of the homeless, who, though they may need help, are not needy and would in fact appreciate some respect for their urge to exert their free will even in these circumstances (dimension of recognition). After all, many of them – mainly women – stay in the homeless milieu precisely because they have been prevented from exerting their free will in the private sphere of their home. In the homeless milieu, meanwhile, they have more chance of looking after themselves, despite the risk of becoming dependent again. For this reason, social work's motto must be to accept their life in the homeless milieu not only as a way of coping in a crisis, but also as a quest for independence, while also taking action to ensure that the women do not become dependent once more. This necessary social pedagogical reflexivity when it comes to addressing the dimension of dependency in homeless people's situation of coping also, importantly, applies to men, whose conspicuous public behaviour can almost be said to attract the social services. When homeless men see themselves as a subculture and have brought in their own bonding rituals, they often see no point in accepting help, as they are afraid that this will make them all the more stigmatized. A newspaper for the homeless once warned of a three-pronged risk: that of belittling exclusion by passers-by in public, violence from far-right extremists and being beleaguered by caring social workers.

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The coping situation of addiction also has clearly differentiated forms for each gender. We would like to lay this out in the following using the example of alcoholism. The pattern of addictive behaviour among men can be neatly divided into the coping patterns of externalizing, physical distance and control. Loss of control is a serious rupture in the addictive career of an alcoholic. From the point of view of masculine coping with life, it means not only that the masculine coping principle of control has failed, but also that it is actually turning against the addict. This psychophysical loss of self-control is generally combined with a social loss of reality and control. Even if their social environment (work, friends) has long crumbled away, alcoholics still try to gain external control by means of aggression and clinginess. In their families it is then usually the other family members' co-dependency which keeps up appearances and suggests to the alcoholic that he (or she) is still at the top of the social ladder, even if he is haunted by a dark sense of the opposite during the typical alcoholic mood swings and depressive lows. He has lost control over himself and others but still has to do everything he can to maintain that control. This problem is thus a situation of coping characterized by the ambivalent nature of the dimension of dependency. Even after starting in-patient treatment, men still try to demonstrate the strength of their control somehow, by maintaining external control over themselves, i.e. not wanting to display any signs of weakness. This splitting off of their inner helplessness makes it impossible to address the problem at first (dimension of expression). Reports from therapeutic practice tell how men in therapy groups continually cling to clique behaviour, i.e. demonstrative masculine displays of strength and belittlement in the group, to suppress their weakness and fear (dimension of recognition). The masculine coping mechanism of control – outwardly keeping everything under control and inwardly prohibiting any feelings of weakness or helplessness – breaks down when the false crutch of co-dependency is taken away during the men's treatment in hospital. Here, the addict is confronted with his total biographical defeat, with the realization that things will never again be the same they once were. At the same time, however, he is offered new relationships which, by accepting his own weakness, he can enter into, becoming increasingly socially integrated. It is then the task of clinical social work to show the patient that even this enforced admission of helplessness does not lead to destruction, but that other social avenues open up which no longer have to be illusionary escape routes (dimension of appropriation). The topic of biographical integrity takes a radically new shape: the past is now something they have overcome, though it still belongs to their biography, and is thus part of a new biography of coping which is yet to be written. The benchmark for their future outlook on life is not their past biographical achievements, but instead what they have coped with (dimension of recognition).

In the case of alcoholic women, two different sets of background circumstances can be observed. One group of women concentrates on honouring their duties to

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maintain a good partnership and keep their family intact. Other ambitions, such as wanting to have their own experiences or satisfying their own needs, come second. Their behaviour in relationship conflicts is characterized by submission. Such behaviour is generally demanded of women and suggested to them by psychodynamic means. However, it leads to overtaxing situations which many women cannot deal with. When they flip out – which often only occurs under the influence of alcohol, and is thus correspondingly uncontrolled – and their partners react with violence, they then generally blame themselves for both. Their hope of using this constant compliance to calm things down and make their relationship happy is a model of exerting influence through submission which does not stand up in real conflicts. A direct connection can be made between this and a fundamental lack of acknowledgement which women suffer from, which always makes it hard for them to stand up for their own needs, address them and persevere through the resulting risk-laden conflicts (coping dimensions of expression, dependency, acknowledgement). The second group of alcoholic women, when coping with their wrecked self-esteem, turns to alcohol. They are repeatedly exposed to violence on an everyday basis and have often been the victims of sexual abuse at an early age in childhood. Alcohol and other substances are intended to help them deal with the after-effects of these experiences of violence by calming them down and dulling their inner turmoil, shame, guilt and aggression.

But they also drink as a way of dealing with their disappointed longing for relationships or as a way of allowing any kind of physical contact. They join cliques in which alcohol and violence again become the rule, meaning that their longing for love and security again goes unanswered (dimensions of dependency and expression). In later relationships, too, they are no longer capable of recognizing conflictive or threatening elements in a partner's behaviour (dimension of dependency). Their guilty feelings, especially, make them unable to take part in conflicts. They do not have their own regulative framework which would allow them to dare set their own rules and see them all the way through (dimension of appropriation). For this reason it is particularly important, when working with women who are, or who are at risk of becoming, alcoholics, to support them in creating their own set of rules and applying them in social situations. *Extreme self-directed violence (self-harming)* – self-injury, eating disorders or excessive prescription medicine abuse – reveals a dynamic of coping which we described as "inward splitting". This splitting off (dissociation) of the self is generally followed by self-hatred, which sets off the whole process of projection. Those affected are not consciously self-injuring; what counts for them is that they can feel something and draw others' attention: a feeling of recognition gained by extremely aberrant behaviour. Self-harmers, most of whom are young women displaying inward-directed coping behaviour, have usually experienced belittlement in their life so far and have not been acknowledged. The psychotherapeutic description of "cutting" reflects the coping theory approach. Therapeutic practice also confirms

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that self-harming is an attempt to gain attention (subconsciously) to make up for a lack of recognition. The psychogenic eating disorder of anorexia can also be reconstructed following this model. In this case, extreme breakdowns in people's self-esteem and acknowledgement again play a key role. "The psychoanalytical understanding is that, among sufferers, food can also represent a longing for open discussion in relationships, for being appreciated" (Subkowski, 2002, p. 113). According to the basic diagnostic description of anorexia, aggressive fasting up to the brink of death, it is interpreted as an inwardly directed form of coping used to "reject not only the expectations and roles demanded of the young woman but also her budding sexual desires [...] by rejecting the female body" (Subkowski, 2002, p. 114), by inward splitting. The fact that sufferers tend to come from the middle class indicates that it could be the neurotic childraising configurations within that class which put too much pressure on the girls. The fact that young men now fall victim to these eating disorders as well (albeit in far lower numbers) suggests that the quest for masculinity has today become more delicate as the male role in our society has lost its previously unquestioned dominance, leaving men unsure of which path to take. At the same time, many young men feel unsettled by the self-confidence which women now display towards them and feel exposed to ambivalent expectations in that connection (of being simultaneously masculine and able to maintain a relationship) for which there are no specific models in everyday life.

Interventions for eating disorders generally take the form of therapy. The basis for this treatment is creating relationships which promise security and trust. The emphasis is placed on the art of correctly interpreting the message being sent out, as self-harming is understood as a cry for help, a sign of previous experiences of abuse and neglect. This takes us back to our coping-based diagnosis. To that extent, social work can take up a supportive relationship. It goes without saying, however, that this work has to be within a network, involving cooperation with therapeutic care.

Migration creates situations and cultures of coping which each have their own, specific make-up. In some discourses on migration, there is an undercurrent leading towards culturalization. The term "culturalization" means that migrants are classified using gender-specific cultural stereotypes which then provoke ambivalent feelings among locals (dimension of recognition). "Asian studiousness", for example, is just as much of a stereotype as "Turkish machos"; people no longer register that there are both good and bad Asian students and just as many non-macho as macho Turkish men. Stereotypes of this kind are widespread in social work, too: foreign men cannot be clever; if anyone is clever, it is foreign women. In the case of local men, a typical interpersonal process of augmentation takes place which not even social workers are immune to, with the image of the foreign macho as a competitor in the masculinity stakes who "needs" this archaic masculinity to make up for his lack of education. The Turkish macho, the Eastern European prostitute, the Indian IT specialist and, finally, the black African migrant who is still subjected to

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the colonial stereotype of belittlement: social work with migrants must always start out by breaking down these stereotypes. This means giving people the opportunity to present and express themselves as they are, rather than forcing them into the stereotypes even in the context of social work (dimensions of acknowledgement and expression). It is not so much in community work that such problems of derogatory classification can become virulent; social work is much more susceptible to this in the field of family support and children's social care, providing social support and following up criminal offences. Here, the focus is on the "case", which calls out to be classified. If the people thus classified then behave accordingly – following the pattern of labelling and the typical behaviour of label transference and acceptance – the stereotypes are confirmed and legitimized as categories to guide and explain any kind of intervention. This is why it is so important, when carrying out casework with migrants, to allow them spaces and relationships in which they can escape from the ascribed characteristics, show what they have in them and gain the experience of recognition extending beyond their classification. This is the only way to give voice to their cultural dynamics and accompanying neediness and address the issue in terms of providing help and support. If, of all forms of work with migrants, that involving young women has developed the furthest, this is no doubt related to the spurs from the women's movement, which did not get caught up in intercultural stereotypes, as it placed special emphasis on the women's dependencies and brought them into the field's own understanding of its work. An attempt was made to look past these ethnicizing ascriptions, shedding light on ostensibly culturally determined patriarchal family set-ups which were ascribed to archaic religious beliefs. The idea was to reveal the violence these involved by fathers, grandsons or brothers, thus enabling women to confront their dependencies. However, this only works if group relationships, ideally with other women of the same ethnic origins, can be built up so as to offer women the intercultural intermediary spaces which are essential for social work with migrant women. This angle then raises the question of the social workers' ethnic identity. While German social workers are often too hesitant to question gender-typical hierarchical structures and dependencies, out of respect for the other culture and religion, workers with the same ethnic background as the girls and young women tend to be more capable of doing so, as they are better able to judge whether a set-up is different to the cultural circumstances in the country of origin.

7.4 Enabling Ageing

What makes old age and ageing hard to pin down as a living and coping situation is the fact that the demographically induced emancipation of old age, and thus its new social significance, clashes with the social reality of ageing. The critical factor behind

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this is a double discrepancy. On the one hand, there is a lack of any social role in old age, which continues to be the case despite the increasing number of biographical opportunities at that stage. On the other hand, there is a social division in old age, with an increasing percentage of elderly people being able to extend their range of lifestyle options, while another large section of the population are excluded from this (for an overview, see Backes & Clemens, 2008).

Social work is one of the main areas in which the division of this situation in life – old age – is felt. The field mainly deals with socially disadvantaged old people who cannot make use of the widening range of opportunities available in old age. This means that social work with the elderly runs the risk of being pushed onto the sidelines as a profession. At the same time, however, our demographically changing society will doubtless realize that the social division in the elderly population will – in demographic terms – turn into a division in society as a whole unless the welfare state develops prospects for integration. This realization will benefit social work. Accordingly, social work focusing on people's situation in life will have to develop a dual perspective. On the one hand, it will adapt its work to suit older clients and their coping situation characterized by social exclusion. On the other hand, its self-image will be based on the prospects for enablement promised in the second modernity by developments in ageing as a situation in life. In this context the field should, above all, bear in mind – and create greater public awareness of – the fact that it has not only a socio-political mandate (social integration) but also a socio-ethical one. Disadvantaged old age is, after all, a telling sign of whether a society is able to offer people a life befitting of human beings, especially on its margins.

Altogether, old age, as a situation in life, is characterized by a significant connection with time. First there is the aspect of mortality, the contours of which are growing clearer on the horizon. Then there is the time that old people have lived; their biography, which continues to leave its mark on them and helps determine the coping options available in old age. Finally, their physical constitution and related physical and mental state – commonly still labelled "degeneration" – have a major effect on their situation in life. In old age, a particular principle of integrity comes into effect. Just as adults have to come to terms with their previous biography in order to develop a stable self-concept, now old people have to be capable of admitting that, from now on, they have their limits. This is a precondition for remaining at a level which they can use as the basis for finding ways to develop in or through their old age. Recognizing their own mortality by no means entails a reduction in their social responsibility. The further the principle of sustainability extends beyond its ecological meaning and becomes a principle of sociation, the more demand there will be for old people's experiences with regard to the future. This is the form taken in old age by the conflict between technologically advanced, externalized development and a decelerating outlook on sustainability. This is reflected in the old people themselves: a noticeable degeneration in their fluid, mechanical ability (such as a

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drop in processing speed) contrasts with a build-up of segments of a crystallized quality, such as experience, expertise and biographical distance. Making these psychogerontological findings socially palatable, pointing out the importance of these skills acquired through experience for the discourse on the future, is not only a reason which justifies socially activating work with the elderly, but can also strengthen social work's socio-political mandate for the future. Another point is to maintain the typical balance at this age between activity and withdrawal. This coping balance can then be used to give a structure to the four dimensions of the coping situation of old age: expression, dependency, recognition and appropriation. Once again, it becomes clear that the options available in terms of expression – i.e. the chances the old people have to raise the subject of their state of mind in old age – depend very much on the kind of social recognition accorded to the elderly. This is not only about the vital issues of mortality and frailty, but also about the key question of what social roles old people are recognized as having, apart from their private role as grandparents. The discrepancy between people's subjective perception of their own abilities and the lack of any social role accorded to the elderly, in particular, can lead to blocking and thus to regressive patterns of coping. This is why it is so important that social work with the elderly, at least, can create milieus and cultures of recognition in their environment by modifying roles and developing networks.

The more that specific structures of dependency regulate old age, the more it becomes social work's task to reduce dependency in the social sphere. Care for the elderly – more in residential homes than in care within the family – can open up a devastating rift: increased specialist care and specialist services for the elderly often increase their socio-cultural ghettoization and thus their traditional status as people who are no longer needed, but instead only need looking after. In families, this is reduced on an individual basis thanks to family ties, but socio-cultural independence, which is a key prerequisite for self-determined old age, is difficult to achieve when old people rely exclusively on their family, from whom they should in fact detach when developing an "old age of their own". Care in the family does, after all, always involve coping with the precarious reversal of the parent–child relationship. In the future, domestic violence against old people will become a volatile, long-term issue unless municipal structures can be created for aid and assistance, into which elderly care in the family can be integrated. One central aspect of the coping situation of ageing is the dimension of (re-)appropriation. In old age, this issue must be addressed in terms of space, time and finding a meaning for life. Many elderly people notice a rupture in the spaces they occupy: they no longer take the route to work which once structured their everyday life, and a territorial withdrawal into their home, or an old folk's home, begins. Their home now shifts into the centre of their lifestyle and, for many, this requires deliberate effort, as in mid-life they have focused very much on making their home externally functional, i.e. adapting

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it to meet the needs of the work process and childraising. For this reason, during mid-life, they have not been able to develop much further sense of shaping their lifeworld in their home, to take with them into old age. Before and while starting a family, people still crowd into home décor showrooms; their home is part of their shared life dream. Later, when this ebbs away, they lose interest in the appearance of their living environment, and the excited burst of creativity gives way to functionalism. In old age, people thus typically have to relearn how to see and recreate their home as the focal point of their life. As well as this new emphasis on the function of the home, the area in which they live also gains a new status in old age. Old people are more reliant on their immediate spatial surroundings, since as they age they tend to lose at least some of the spatial mobility which they developed through travelling to work every day or from the social contact they acquired through their profession and work. What now makes a difference is whether, during their mid-life, they have been able to gain spatial mobility in other ways than through work, and practise that mobility. This is where the social work departure point of enablement comes in. The aim is for old people to (re-)appropriate their immediate social surroundings. For many of them, these may be familiar in some ways, but are not an activating social world, as social events in old age cannot create structure in socially significant spaces. The South European societies, with their boules and piazzas for old people, might provide more fertile ground in that respect. We talk about the spaces and cultures of children and young people, but not about the spaces and cultures of the elderly. The picture of children's appropriation of their social spaces which we put together in the chapter on "Enabling childhood" is thus coming back to us, only now it has been reversed, as the immediacy of childhood impressions has now disappeared, through their biography. However, even in old age, the question is how people can find and manifest themselves in their spatial environment in a manner appropriate to their life stage. For most people, the transition from being of working age to being retired involves a radical temporal adjustment in their biographies, as the structure of their mid-life biography was based on the linearity of the modern work process. They saw working as a *professional career* with constant prospects, during which new work experience was gained and old experiences were allotted new significance or lost their value. The incredible acceleration of technological change in industry, the service sector and administration, above anything else, has spurred on that linearity. People had to – still have to – be prepared for new developments, though it is becoming increasingly difficult to relate any of this innovation to their own previous biographical experience, leaving them fully exposed to it. The phrases "*keeping up*" or "*falling behind*" have long entered everyday speech as synonyms for the absolute linearity of these processes of technological and economic growth and their social consequences. But even outside paid work, the average household is subjected to the imposed linear schedule of working parents and schoolchildren.

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> With old age comes a growing awareness of the rift [...] between the socially rooted concept of accelerated time and the metabolic time of a far slower body. In old age, the strategy of speeding up time to avoid the finite nature of life loses its effect, no longer providing reassurance. The elderly are dislodged from the socially rooted time frame, sparking feelings of perplexity, loneliness and fear. (*Wulf, 1996, p. 45*)

This is because the linear temporal understanding of the modern technological age, chained to constant, accelerated growth and a widening distance between production and consumption, stands at odds with the cyclical experience of time linked to human beings' innermost nature. The human body, its psychophysical energies, the surrounding natural world which alternates between day and night, the seasons and the recurring rhythm of plant and animal growth and life, all have a cyclical structure. Human beings need this as temporal contexts to regenerate and find their way back to themselves. However, we live in the paradoxical situation that, although our human nature means we depend upon cyclical aspects of life, nonetheless a mentality develops in the hectic linearity of work and consumption which devalues that reliance and hides it from public view. In old age there is then a relatively abrupt transition from a linear to a cyclical experience of time – in other words, to ruptures in time which need to be dealt with. It is thus a key point of social work with the elderly to help people experience the individual, biographical value of cyclical living and the new opportunities this generates for the community, while at the same time addressing the subject of the social value of cyclical lifestyles from the angle of sustainability as well. This again extends into the dimension of recognition and expression in the coping situation of old age.

Social Work with the Elderly from the Perspective of Civil Society

If the trend towards economization and a society based on the market model continues, and if no new, socially integrative models are developed, then it is to be feared that the "elderly society" will increasingly be divided into the "young elderly", the "active elderly" (mainly pensioners who do not rely on outside help), the "old elderly" (who rely partly on outside help) and the "elderly in need of care" (reliant entirely on outside help). The large group of elderly people in need of care, especially, are entirely at the mercy of the market model; their social segregation has long begun. There is a risk that the elderly will be divided into those who are still active artists at age 75, or travel the world, and those who gain a reputation for not having dealt responsibly with their life and now being "guilty" of being a burden on society. Accordingly, in the second modernity, society requires a civil society definition of old age after retirement in which this stage is recognized as a category of sociation and can become one of the driving forces shaping society. This would open up a socially connected arena for acknowledgement in which different age groups with different combinations of activity and withdrawal could reappraise their biographies as *citizens*. Elderly people's coping horizons would be considerably expanded. For many, the pursuit of biographical agency would no longer be determined by a fixation on their own mortality and physical frailty; a meaningful outlook promoted by society and given a concrete public form could make that pursuit easier and give it a new biographical content. Until now, the discourse in civil society has largely bypassed old age. However, the fact that a new civil

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society definition of old age is not only theoretically but, above all, empirically crucial is clear from the discourse on demographic change, with its prediction that the average life expectancy will be rising, creating a new need to address health issues which were previously treated as taboo. If frailty is to be integrated into society based on this argument, this will necessitate a public culture of care and the recognition of helplessness as a fundamental part of being human. This would allow care to be placed on the public healthcare agenda, making it a "developmental task for both generations" (Gröning & Lietzau, 2011, p. 1086). By this means, the rift could be overcome between health and frailty if, through this new outlook on old age, we recognize that life, with all its risks and coping, is expressed just as much in frailty as it is in health.

The far-reaching effect of this temporal rift during the transition into old age is because market-defined paid work is the only benchmark, and old age is seen as the loss of work and deprofessionalization. If, when of working age, we were able to base our social identity on a considerably extended, and thus socially acknowledged, definition of work – our life's work, including housework and relationship work – then these rifts during the transition into old age would be considerably reduced and there would be a chance to carry out socially acknowledged work even in old age. If housework, social relationship work and community services work, which are generally performed away from the labour market, and are thus accorded less social value, were valued by society as highly as conventional work, then people would have a chance to take their experiences of work from their mid-life with them into the stage of old age, developing them further into a new working identity befitting their status as elderly people and the autonomy of old age. That is a decisive step towards greater integration of the elderly into the society of the second modernity, one consequence being that old age can (in turn) come into effect as a social principle, making structural demands upon society.

As, during the modern industrial age, the meaning of life has become linked in with paid work and related work in the family, the stages and circumstances in life which are characterized by a loss of earnings have tended to become "meaningless" stages in life. This work-centred modern way of thinking does not, of course, include the early stages of development – childhood and youth – leading up to a "meaningful" working and professional life. For this reason, the discourse on the meaning of life in old age needs to take a similar form to that regarding the subject of time: breaking its link to conventional paid work, we need to connect it to the states of being which are typical of each life stage. It especially needs to be linked to the fact that old age is an opportunity to find a direct relationship with ourselves and our natural, cyclical human nature. The rediscovery of this living environment could help us develop a new relationship with social matters: a relationship which, through its physical and mental self-will and its nonconformity (thanks to the lightening of the biographical burden), can create a culture of interest in life. "Whether or not they themselves want to, old people question their lifelong efforts to conform: they provoke dissent, may

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awaken desires to cross borders, creating the basis for a life which goes against the grain" (Schachtner, 1988, p. 221). This latent potential in old people can be released in stimulating milieus, which social work can play a key role in developing and influencing. So far, the only images of old age as a chaotic time of rebellion have been those filling the film industry's cinemas. We find ourselves back in the dimension of recognition with regard to old age as a situation in life. Recognizing old age as having a basic social status of experimentation, rather than writing it off from the outset as "detached from time", would be another step towards acknowledging old age as a category of sociation. The issue of gender, meanwhile, does not come to the fore in old age as it does during working age. In old age, male and female gender roles appear to become increasingly similar. Nonetheless, it is fair to assume that the biographical rupture is far more drastic for many men than it is for women. In old age, many things seem to come together for men which have built up and become established over their biographies, and which now have a negative effect: their fixation on the external, their need to function, their inability to deal with inner helplessness, their focus on performance and competition. Thus, it is not unusual for old men that, as they lose their external social connections, they also separate themselves radically from their external environment, rejecting social ties in order to subjectively maintain control over themselves and the world. Women, by contrast, have built up their own local networks through family work and childraising, and these may remain in place even after the children move out and the women are deprofessionalized. Statistical surveys confirm that, as women grow older, they become more externally oriented, whereas old men adopt a clearly more internal orientation. Thus, in old age, women can unleash and give shape to the external competencies which they were forced to suppress during mid-life as a result of male dominance in the domain of external relationships. Accordingly, we can certainly speak of old age as a gender-specific situation of coping. From the perspective of coping, which is after all the basis of social work with the elderly, the roles appear to be reversed: socially speaking, men are now more likely to need to be enabled to enter public life beyond the world of work.

One of the main problems which social work with the elderly has to contend with is that old people are still thought of as not having any current socio-spatial abilities or capacity for development. What can be said is that old people's socio-ecological value is now appreciated. This may, for example, take the form of old people bearing witness to and raising awareness of organic, historical urban and community development. This earns them respect as special stakeholders in the citizens' forums on municipal development planning. This "remembering" is generally the central focus of biographical work as a means of working with the elderly. However, another aspect of equal importance is the realization that, when old age is recognized as a separate stage of development and socialization, the scope for social self-realization among the elderly (especially among those who cannot be mobile consumers) needs to be redefined.

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Yet social work is easily led into applying models of development and learning in old age which actually derive from the pedagogy of youth. It is, of course, important in old age to achieve self-esteem through agency and social acknowledgement. Old people still need to make new social connections to replace their old ones, which have largely vanished due to deprofessionalization, the loss of a partner or spatial withdrawal. If elderly people want to make something of the fourth stage in their life, they need to be able to take stock of their life so far as a basis for developing new life plans and perspectives. This now needs to take place actively, in the form of rediscovering themselves and being prepared to develop (not only passively, in the traditional sense of keeping up the courage to face life, as in the past). The wide, busy range of education and tourism schemes revolving around learning and discovery for older and elderly people might give the impression that old age could be another stage of boundless, unbridled, perhaps even reckless activism. Old people have nothing left to lose; they can just live as they please. This criticism is sometimes levelled by younger people. This actionist image conceals the fact that the ageing and aged are constantly, increasingly confronted with their own physical finitude, having to shape their life around that finitude. On the other hand, the elderly are no longer restricted to the roles imposed upon them by the work-based society; they can lean back and take a breather. Of course, this trump card held in old age can only come into play if old people are not isolated; if they can use this chance to pause for a moment in the context of reciprocal social relationships; if they can reflect it off onto others and gain social recognition in return. This is also the starting point for milieu-forming work with the elderly. Programmes of this kind need to create a stimulating milieu which does not look askance at the old people's deficits, but instead offers social reassurance and encouragement for their otherness, which is often hidden, as it is passed by. Such programmes need to arouse the old people's curiosity and make them keen to know one another. Stimulating milieus of this kind also allow different lifestyles to develop. Lifestyles are a sign not only of personality but also of participation in and belonging to a social culture from beneath – especially as society, with its rigid, deficit-based roles for the elderly, still fails to provide any social impetus for old age. Activating lifestyles can thus be linked to the concepts of milieu formation and network-based work (see Section 6.4).

We now need to distinguish between two groups of old people. The first group has sufficient capital in terms of health, wealth and culture to develop mobile lifestyles in their old age extending beyond their immediate setting. The second group depends on their immediate social surroundings and thus a reliable milieu. The latter are more likely to be social work clients. However, this places even greater emphasis on the social pedagogical task of opening up these milieus, preventing them from becoming regressive, stereotypical, homogeneous "old-age milieus" in which dependable, familiar everyday routines become fixed, artificial rituals. Instead, in work with the elderly, open milieus can be recognized by the fact that they allow individuality and biographically distinct lifestyle approaches even in people's local

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environment and can always gently activate such approaches. In the regional social cooperatives and social supermarkets which need to be created in order to combat the trend towards centralization and turn people into social actors once more, old people can play an important role. These kinds of local social economies (direct marketing, social and cultural services, new ways of combining work and life) can be imagined as forming a market on which certain goods play certain roles and thus take on a pecuniary value which is almost entirely overlooked in the predatory environment of purely economic competition: social relationships, the experience of living together and being reliant on one another. Old people, fully or partly funded by their pension, can recultivate economic fallow land left behind by predatory market competition. In the services sector, the label for this is "community shops": when small shops fall victim to market concentration, the elderly can reopen them, not only for old people, but also for all other locals, and run them in a way that combines their old use as a meeting place with a modern function as a marketplace for information and services. Joint multi-generational housing projects can not only help the generations understand one another better; they can also produce work-sharing models involving the mutual provision of services and help. This would also call for community-oriented social work in the form of a social agency, encouraging ties which could develop into a network, allowing people to retain biographical continuity and even encouraging those who, through their biographies, feel that social developments are too much for them. "Biographical continuity" means more than just adapting to the latest social developments; it also means people successfully living with the dissonance and balance between their previous biographical experiences and current coping requirements (cf. Schweppe, 2011).

7.5 Enabling Agency during Transitions which Have Grown Unpredictable and Riskier

At the heart of the research into transitions that has been carried out within the social sciences and, specifically, social work is the observation that individual biographies are drifting out of line with institutional passages of status, creating unusual living and coping situations (cf. Schröer et al., 2013). This is especially true of young people on the threshold of a work-based society or in the process of care leaving. However, critical transitional situations are not only generated among young adults but also, particularly, among people of working age during phases of unemployment and precarious employment statuses. These are situations of coping which are mainly characterized by problems with dependency, recognition and appropriation and which become increasingly difficult to bring up for debate as the transitional situation continues. In a work-based society whose boundaries are blurring, individuals are no longer seen as restricted by the limits of industrial paid work but are instead defined as self-organized masters of their own stages in life and working lifetimes.

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The term for the framework to this is the *human capital theory*. According to the human capital theory, integration into the work-based society is not a task managed by the welfare state: rather, the citizens are themselves declared the agents responsible for their own position on the labour market. As both citizens *and* the owners of their human capital, they are pronounced independent actors (entrepreneurs) on the labour market. The distinction between the worker as a person and as labour power is pushed into the background:

> In human capital theory, individuals are defined as participants in the labour market. They play a double role, first as labour power and secondly as a citizen who owns that labour power as human capital. The labour power is equivalent to physical capital in that it can be put to instrumental use. According to the human capital theory, the citizens themselves are in control of the labour power; according to the manpower-planning approach the control must ultimately lie within state planning. (*Lenhardt, 2001, p. 316*)

Therefore, the "labour power owners" have to try to position themselves on the labour market. This triggers new kinds of coping problems, especially during the period in which people need to integrate into the workplace as a means of entering a professional career. As the boundaries of the work-based society's structures have become blurred, this transitional phase has become unpredictable and risky for many. Transitional circumstances have begun to arise which have no clear time limits or social positioning and can radically alter people's life courses. Altogether, as the transitions for increasing numbers of people between the ages of twenty and thirty have lengthened and lost their structure, a life stage has come about which no longer counts as youth, but does not yet count as adulthood either, if the status of economic independence is taken as a criteria. This "intermediate stage" is thus still transitional in nature for many young people, though they are already clearly focused on status and income (cf. Stauber & Walther, 2008).

Students, a group of people who have always had a special status between youth and adulthood, have now been joined by a growing number of men and women who are still in or have returned to training or employability schemes, or are simply unemployed. While the students have a defined transitional perspective and are embedded in a setting with social and cultural structure and a defined status, many adults who are not students are stranded in a stage in life whose transitional character is vague and fragile and which lacks any social models (of the kind available to students or those in paid employment) for how to live their life or integrate into society (Stauber & Walther, 2002).

To put this another way, "young adulthood" is currently the socialization phase which is most radically affected by the trend towards a blurring of boundaries in the work-based society. While the stage of youth is still largely regulated by the education system, that trend towards blurred boundaries is fundamentally restructuring young adulthood. There are young entrepreneurs and students who still believe that their degree will give them a high social status; young mothers and fathers working

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part-time who see caring for their children as an equally valuable job; care leavers who have to organize their everyday life in a new frame, and unemployed single people who privately believe that all their options have run out; while some are looking for classic male occupations, others are thinking of emigrating. The blurring of boundaries is materializing in people's biographies, and the issue of transitional structures is becoming obvious.

The central point here would appear to be that young adults in this free-floating, confused and uncertain transition, the outcome of which cannot be predicted – e.g. when unemployed, on an "into work" scheme or collecting benefits – can only develop a perspective for their lives based on their current coping contexts. They are particularly reliant on public acknowledgement of the issues affecting them. They are under pressure from society to gain a status, yet at the same time they are forced to rely upon the casual structures of youth culture to remain socially and culturally mobile despite their material predicament.

After all, while people generally more or less "succeed" in passing through the status passages, they only "cope" with transitions. This is not about their coping ability, but about characterizing their coping behaviour – regressive, simple, extended – with a view to the potential they can unlock (as in developing competency). This means that the term "integrity" (Erikson, 1973) comes before that of "identity": the static nature of the latter is still an obstacle to biographical research, forcing scholars to resort to fairly desperate makeshift terms such as "patchwork identity" or "identity work" (Keupp & Höfer, 1997). Stopgap concepts of this kind are designed to take in the aspects of the pluralization and fragmentation of people's life course perspectives and the need to work hard on a daily basis throughout their lives to achieve harmony between their self and their social role.

However, it is precisely this finding that the life course is now pluralized which indicates that individuals are not so much looking for a definitive self-conception as striving to retain agency in everyday life and translating that striving for agency into biographical sequences. That is what the term "integrity" means: always reassuring themselves of the biographical platform which they can use as a basis to put past events into perspective and position themselves for the future. This "platform" should not be thought of as a developmental stage in a linear developmental view, but as a horizontally and vertically mobile biographical "intermediate position" from which they can determine what goals (old or new) they can achieve.

In young adulthood an emancipatory paradox thus comes about which mainly derives from the ambivalence and ambiguity of the economy. Young people are required to complete their training early and with a specific target in mind ("on the dot") – to be available as "fully formed" participants in the work process. However, whether or not this provides them with biographical security in the medium or long term remains uncertain; it is their private business. For this reason, for many people, instrumental professional qualifications and a biographical perspective on life can only be related to one another after their youth. It is this context which makes young

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adulthood a key time in life, featuring a biographical search for a personal identity and social integration. It is not only the group of 18- to 25-year-olds who are still in or returning to training who are drawn into this context of coping. Young adults who have already achieved a social average status in terms of their income and family are today more than ever at the mercy of the structural change in the labour society, of the pressure of the culture of achievement and replacement implied by the economic and technological conditions. In the two social spheres of young adulthood – that of economic independence and that of unpredictable, socio-economically uncertain transition – socializing dynamics come into effect which can no longer be made to fit in with the image of an "extension of youth". Many already have an independent life behind them, yet nonetheless see themselves, despite being in this position, as set back to a level at which questions of identity and integration arise once again, though in a different way to their youth. The term "quarter-life crisis" has long been in circulation in the media.

This integrity issue often presents in a gender-typical manner. As, in our society, masculinity and the male role are closely linked to normal employment, but this can no longer be independently achieved, male patterns of pushiness and competition sometimes take hold, even if they had little effect on a male's socialization during his youth. Young women, meanwhile, who have taken to heart and follow the social role model of balancing a family life with a career, are seeing themselves forced out of that model and back into a family role due to increasing competition between the sexes for good, safe jobs. Socially, it is considered fair to expect them to hold back in their "leaning towards employment" considering the crisis on the labour market. This puts them in the situation of not being able to make their own biographical decisions and thus not being able to develop any self-determined prospects for their life. This is made all the more problematic by the fact that even girls and young women who are relegated to a "socially disadvantaged" status are still generally focused on a generally employment-based outlook on life, despite all the obstacles placed in their way, but always have to tone down their aims and content themselves with gender-typical restrictions (cf. Schittenhelm, 1998). In young adulthood they thus fall into a gender-typical "recognition trap". In this context, social work (in the form of youth welfare) faces the challenge of growing out of its compensatory, marginal position in the employment-related social services and becoming a new focal point of regional transitional and educational structures (cf. Walther et al., 2002). As educational routes are formalized and centre on employment, and employment support programmes focus on the primary labour market (from school to vocational training to employment), the child and youth welfare services have so far not managed to take on their own range of functions as, so to speak, a *third pillar* alongside school and the various forms of education and training. But child and youth welfare does not rise to current challenges as long as it only offers compensatory support and makes plans for vocational training and advice for socially disadvantaged youth and young adults to accompany or help them catch up with mainstream programmes, merely

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complementing the educational sequences in their life courses which are intended to lead on to paid work.

This opening up of youth welfare to the world of work can no longer be covered by the current terms “informal education” or “social learning”, and its general tendency is also different to the “social skills training” which has been introduced as a learning concept in “into work” schemes for young people. It requires the transition to adulthood to be reshaped, taking in the perspectives of the labour society, civil society and social spaces and giving consideration to the young people’s different sets of biographical circumstances. The key question is how, starting out from the young people’s *everyday coping with life*, social work approaches can be applied in *contexts relevant to public life, regional economics and educational and social policy* and transformed into transitional structures which are social, rather than only connected to the world of work. With this in mind, the question of what opportunities for participation are open to the young people also takes on a new form. It is not about a separate, transitional moratorium in which young people and young adults can play at participation and work, but about rights to social participation in the region, in the sense of civil rights. Of course, the typical developmental status of youth still means that it occupies a special position within society, but this is not without socially binding force: it needs to be integrated into a transitional model which is binding with regard to both civil society and the work-based society. The child and youth welfare services today have to encompass and combine structural and subject-oriented requirements for action. To follow the recent discussion in this field, there is a lot that speaks in favour of cooperative forums being set up on a municipal or regional level as part of a “transition policy” (Muche, Noack & Oehme, 2008), taking an initial step in this direction.

This social work discourse on transition can be used to derive new links with the discourse on education, too. After all, from the perspective of coping, the blurring of life stage boundaries mainly takes place as *biographization*. Efforts to achieve agency during transitions are made in a biographized tension between institutionalized patterns, the blurring of their boundaries and the opportunities and pressures involved in independently organizing one’s own life-nexus. It is becoming clear that, from the point of view of coping, transitions both trigger and themselves produce a pursuit of biographical agency. This pursuit of biographical agency in transitional circumstances has been connected to social work aims by means of the approach of developing skills (without focusing on their exploitation) (Oehme, 2007).

While the term “qualification” refers to learning and the acquisition of knowledge in distinct educational status passages and corresponding careers, seen from the perspective of normal employment, the term “skill” takes into account the blurring of boundaries in institutionalized life courses and the unpredictable outcome of transitional situations. “Skill” (as a structural term) is understood as a person’s all-round capacity for agency, both potential and actual. This is to be developed and acknowledged via transitional arrangements which are not only formal but also “non-formal” and “informal”.

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In this context, Pais and Pohl (2003) call for a fundamental revision of the education system. The focus, they believe, should no longer be on the learning settings of an institutional life course (with its fixation on careers): instead, the spotlight should be shone directly on learning during transitions, while the educational organizations should widen their reflections to include the learners' biographies and their different learning environments. The guiding principles behind lifelong learning processes should not be "short-term goals and rewards" (Pais & Pohl, 2003, p. 238) linked in with certain stages in life and thus suggesting what is achievable: rather, those principles should be the acceptance of unpredictability and uncertainty across people's lives and the related principle of sustainability. According to Pais and Pohl, this would not only create a link between development and coping; more than this, there would be a greater focus on the learning-based dimensions of enabling extended agency.

Right-Wing Extremism among Young Men

Groups with a propensity for extreme right-wing violence – most of whom are men – mainly come from the age group of young adults. This is a special form of extreme coping behaviour to the extent that their splitting and projection is not only aimed directly at individuals or groups but can also be positioned within the sphere of a specific programme. Extreme right-wing programmes provide a surface onto which people can project split-off, biographically entrenched disorders of their self-esteem and recognition. Ranging between ethnocentricity and racism, they offer the chance not only to belittle others and thus raise the young men above them, but also to join up and collectively confirm one another in like-minded social groups. From the coping perspective, the situation can be formulated as follows. Young adults who are unable to address the issue of their helplessness and powerlessness when experiencing signs of disintegration come under pressure to project these feelings and split them off onto weaker individuals. In this context, racist and extreme right-wing patterns of projection and abstraction develop. The apparent paradox that, to achieve this, the young adults have to submit to the authoritarian ideology of a group or leader is resolved by the fact that submitting to the group and participating in the ideology or programme jointly creates a positive effect: in showing submission, my path is made clear and, in participating in the political programme, I can also participate in the strength it promises. I can achieve this power and strength as the extremist right-wing programme gives rise to precisely those deep psychological mechanisms of splitting, projection onto weaker individuals and turning them into abstract figures which motivate me from the depths of my being (see also Reinhardt, 2006). "On the other hand, surprisingly, it can be seen that young men with a positive self-concept (some of whom even overestimate themselves) tend to have even stronger authoritarian and nationalist leanings than those with a negative self-concept (some of whom suffer from feelings of inferiority)" (Wahl, 1993, p. 39). On this point, the coping concept can offer a further interpretation through the category of agency: this can explain how both low and excessive self-esteem are linked to an extremist right-wing attitude. If excessive representations of a young man's self-esteem do not meet with social recognition, but instead lead to social rejection and can thus not be put to socially integrative effect, this creates an inner imbalance as well and thus a helplessness which leads to projection and splitting, if the issue cannot be addressed or integrated into legal contexts of competition. If dominant male behaviour cannot be realized in everyday social life, it seeks out social contexts in which that particular behaviour is

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symbolically elevated to an excessive level and has an integrative effect. Right-wing groups are a sign of dominant masculinity with a propensity towards violence. The group within which extreme right-wing violence forms gains its feeling of solidarity from dissociating itself from weaker individuals, especially foreigners, and putting them down. In this dimension of denigration, violence and right-wing extremism merge into one another (see also Baier & Boehnke, 2008). Xenophobia is the hub and linchpin of the group process. It always has to be demonstrated verbally and in public harassment. Xenophobic events and everyday flare-ups, mostly instigated by individual clique members, raise their standing in the group, thus strengthening their fragile self-esteem. As a result, it comes as no surprise that many young men with a propensity towards violence appear to have no consciousness of doing wrong. The lads do it for the group; many of them do not really see offences as wrongdoing towards others but in fact want to prove themselves in front of the group. It is thus unsurprising that roughly four fifths of all xenophobic acts in Germany are committed by members of a group (cf. Landua et al., 2001). In this right-wing scene we come across youths, and above all young adults, whose socio-biographical background makes them reliant on clique solidarity and who thus perceive the clique's extreme right-wing, deviant culture not as deviant but as emotionally attractive and biographically functional: empowerment, social backing, familiarity, belonging and the experience of participation offer them a felt status which would not be possible for them to that degree within society. As this is created by means of group belonging and, above all, submission to group authority, from a pedagogical point of view there is little point in wanting to break up the group, as individuals have been assimilated into the group identity. Nonetheless, this imbalance between the group pressure and individuality is the strategic starting point for social interventions which aim not to break up the group, but to attempt to develop functionally equivalent projects which allow people to realize that they are no longer reliant on denigration and violence if in need of acknowledgement and self-efficacy.

7.6 Excursus: Diversity and Intersectionality

If the category of gender is so dominant, where does that leave the significance of other social and cultural factors? Does that not contradict the principle of diversity, of recognizing variety, which is expected to increase social work awareness? When we call for reflection on and sensitivity to gender as fundamental principles of professional social work, that does not mean that all girls and boys, men and women feel the same and behave the same socially. It does of course make a difference what social class the clients belong to, what level of education they have achieved, what ethnical background they identify with, what milieus they are integrated into or what lifestyle they have encountered over the course of their biography. Nonetheless, this emphasis on diversity must not be allowed to hide the structure of the division of labour under gender hierarchy (a structure conveyed in different social, ethnic and biographical ways) which gives rise to male and female coping behaviour in its basic forms. At the same time, the intention is not simply to rank the category of gender above those of social class or ethnic belonging. Instead, it is about gender as a means of social work *access*: the forms of psychosocial distress which result from social disadvantage or ethnic stigmatization are generally expressed in gender-specific manners. Gender

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extends into and is conveyed through more dimensions than any other category – physical, mental and psychosocial conduct, social interaction and social structure. For this reason, the category of gender cannot simply stand alongside other social and cultural categories within social work; its multi-dimensional perspective and status as a means of social work access give it a special position. Seen from this point of view, diversity too means more than just perceiving and recognizing social and cultural variety or lifestyles which do not fit into the dominant social definition of normality. After all, these are elements which have shaped the field of modern social work for a long time and do not call for new terminology. Age-old conflicts spring to mind between institutionally defined cases and real lifeworlds, between "normality" and "deviance", between labelling and destigmatization. Social workers in all fields of practice were already well versed in this phenomenon before the social science community came up with this new terminological filter. They have always faced the task of recognizing social diversity, on the one hand, and integrating that diversity into society, on the other. In other words, if the term is to achieve anything for social work, in theoretical terms "diversity" must be positioned opposite the issue of social integration and, in practical terms, opposite the issue of participation. This then reveals the diversity behind the scenes of the social world: who can afford their own personal "Eigenwelt" and who cannot; where people can exert their free will and where they are under constraint; who has no other choice than to adapt. "Diversity-conscious social work" (Leiprecht, 2011) thus calls for professional skill in dealing with that conflict. In this context, Leiprecht speaks of the perspective of "subjective opportunities"; an outlook which reveals the effect of the many different physical, social and cultural ways that we assert our free will and impose our will upon others, along with the bidirectional conflict this naturally causes, allowing social workers to identify that effect in their work. Opportunities of this kind can be opened up in the development of functional equivalents and the practice of milieu formation. The concept of diversity is related to the paradigm of *intersectionality*. Here, too, the aim is to put the dominance of the gender perspective into perspective, mainly emphasizing the *interaction* of different (though mainly gender-based, social and ethnic) inequalities (see Lutz et al., 2011) in the construction of social positions.

Here, too, we adopt the theory of "relative relativization", leaving the category of gender its special significance despite any interdependence. Here, too, after all, it should not be forgotten that gender is a distinctive category in that it is rooted not only in the deep dynamics of our personality but also in the different combinations of social interaction and in the division of labour within society. In the discussion on intersectionality, there has so far been a lot of talk about the fact that the different categories interact, but not enough about how they interact. For this reason, we favour the term "interdependence", which is aimed at the level of action – this is, after all, the level on which social work is active. Discourses on intersectionality do, in fact, usually remain on the structural level. In her examination of intersectionality,

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Katharina Walgenbach (2012), for example, speaks of “interdependent categories” or “interdependencies” as interrelations between or within the categories. Here, again, the question of how these interactions occur is of course central. In what relational contexts are gender, class (or socio-structural elements), ethnic group and related lines of discourse triggered by power and dependency, and what (specific or unspecific) significance does this give them? The example of the gender category of masculinity can be used to show how, in precarious social situations, masculine and/or ethnocentric behaviours can be triggered as coping patterns. Thus, it is not the masculine behaviour itself which is of interest for analysis, but the related category of coping, which points to their precarious social situation and to cultural processes of attribution. At the same time, however, the question is thrown up of whether this so clearly presented masculinity is self-contained or in fact heterogeneous. Perhaps, in different conditions, in other fields of life it is expressed very differently.

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8 Social Problems and Social Integration

Social workers' professional interest, focused on personal support, does not necessarily coincide with that of social policy. When dealing with unemployment, poverty, addiction or homelessness, it is not the people involved who are of primary interest, but the related "social problem" which these factors can create for social integration. This needs to be regulated and reined in or contained. This interest in control is part of the political programme of "solving social problems". Social workers need to be aware of and reflect on this ambivalence in the conflict between the interests of social work (in clients' agency) and the interests of social policy (in social stability). Social problems are constituted in the welfare state discourse (in other words, they are social constructions) and usually relate to social conflicts and difficulties with life that are continually triggered within society and registered by the public due to their frequency and the persistence with which they appear. Above all, then, there needs to be agreement within social policy that the welfare state must intervene (see Albrecht, 1999). One factor which is key to defining and recognizing social problems is thus the collectively shared idea that their appearance poses a potential risk to social cohesion, especially if they are caused by social inequality. Another important issue is that of which definitions and solutions are eventually recognized by social policy. Thus, social problems can change depending on the current state of the discourse and how economic and political plans are being implemented.

Integration and Inclusion

In the recent discourse on social work, the term "inclusion" is often applied so widely (in society) that it almost seems intended to replace the usual term "social integration" as introduced by the social sciences. As we are using the term "social integration" here, the two terms should be compared to show that the term "inclusion" cannot by any means replace that of "integration" as its use is too firmly tied to context: the term "social inclusion" primarily refers to an organization while the term "integration" refers to the question of what holds a society together, as well as the position a person holds within society and how that person can participate. Everyone is contained in that society (all "members of society"): no one has to be "included". Social inclusion, meanwhile, is explicitly linked to organizations: it means the emancipatory opportunity for socially disadvantaged people to be included equally in organizations which have previously excluded them. In other words it is a term from the vocabulary of organizational reform, linked to organizations becoming socially receptive. The classic example – and the context in which the term "inclusion" emerged – is the inclusion of disabled children and young people in kindergartens and schools, instead of standard special needs institutions. As the meaning of "inclusion" seems to cover everything in this context (as the disadvantage appears to be linked to the body, rather than to society), it often seems as if the term "inclusion" might no longer be needed. Yet disabled people can just as easily fall into a (particularly serious) socially marginalized position if they live in socially precarious circumstances. This is what scandalized the various 1970s movements by disabled people which aimed to change the way people thought about disability, introducing a social model. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities also goes beyond calling for inclusion, pointing out the need for social participation and social integration.

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In the field of social work, Hans Scherpner (1962) formalized the ambivalent context in which social problems are constituted as a *conflict between person-based social support and social integration*. According to this view, "integration" is a structural term which relates not to those accessing support but to the social stability and instability of a society. We intend to shed light on the basic structure of the integration hypothesis based on the problem areas of poverty and migration.

According to this hypothesis, social integration is at risk if, for example, gaining wealth at the cost of the poor undermines and breaks down the current structure according to which people earn a living without having developed another structure. In his work on the "poor" as far back as 1908, Georg Simmel pointed out that social support for the poor is not provided out of an interest or concern for poor people themselves, as people, but in fact from the systemic perspective of social integration:

> Assistance to the poor [. . .] is focused in its concrete activity on the individual and his situation. And indeed this individual, in the abstract modern type of welfare, is the final action but in no way the final purpose, which consists solely in the protection and furtherance of the community. The poor cannot even be considered as a means of this end – which would improve their position – for social action does not make use of them, but only of certain objective material and administrative means aimed at suppressing the dangers and losses which the poor imply for the common good. (*Simmel, 1908, p. 459*)

The question of integration as posed until today, however, hides the fact that the poor are subject to forces which are inherent to social structure. These are expressed, above all, in tendencies towards segregation which are experienced spatially and physically. They experience not just poverty but also society.

> Nothing is more misleading than to describe the poor as excluded. Though they are largely left out from the material blessings of the modern economic system, they are not cut out of the system itself. In fact they are subjected to its constraints more than anyone else. [. . .] And the most hellish aspect of all this is that they cannot simply opt out and go somewhere where you can build a life for yourself, unaffected by the magnetic pull of the market. Wherever you go, it has got there before you. It clings to the heels of those it lets down the most. Those who are the most excluded from it are those it fences in the most. (*Türcke, 1998, p. 126f.*)

Poverty is generated via the same market which creates wealth. If social welfare recipients tend to spend a large part of their money in the first ten days of the month, they are quickly accused of being bad at planning and exercising self-control. Yet they are subjected to a contradictory social situation: they are poor in a rich society where you only count for anything if you can "keep up". They, too, have to somehow present themselves, if they do not want to hide themselves and isolate themselves completely from society. Their only remaining means of participating in this society is that of consumption, however limited it may be. Meanwhile, the market is creating further polarization by making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Globalized capitalism has

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widened that gap, extending and complicating the question of integration, as the middle class is now being drawn into the risks of poverty.

The difficulty and thus complexity of mediating between the social work bias towards support and the social interest in solving social problems can best be described based on the *issue of migration*.

As when applied to the poor, the term "integration" when applied to migrants and asylum-seekers is not defined by the difficult situation which those affected have to cope with, but by the interests in stability felt by the society they are migrating to. "Integration" has become a term which no longer encourages people to discuss equal social opportunities and which no longer stands for opening doors to spaces where migrants can shape society and politics. Instead it is simply a focus for ascribing deficits: migrants are only allowed to stay in the long term if they are prepared to make up for their deficits in the German language, culture and social etiquette. This increasing attention to deficits and separation loses sight of the migrants' skills and strengths. Young migrants, especially, have learnt to overcome transitions, to make sophisticated distinctions, to adapt to change and to adopt open-minded ways of living (see Hamburger, 1999).

However, they cannot make the most of this ability they have gained from their situation in life, and are thus not infrequently driven into patterns of demonstrative disassociation. Social work feels the effects of this dilemma on both sides, among both native and foreign youth and young adults. As access to them is closely linked to institutions, refugees and non-citizens are often only discovered when they become a problem for the child and youth welfare services as underage refugees or draw attention in schools as the children of resettling families of German descent from abroad. Those who are without papers are not taken into account at all. One thing which has, however, become very clear is that, with the complexity and many veiled aspects of contemporary migration, the traditional perspective on integration can no longer be maintained. Many social workers dealing with migrants have long known that though they should be focusing on their biographical coping problems, they constantly come under pressure from socio-political institutions, which would like to partition off the issue of foreign citizens both legally and socially, consolidating it further to keep it politically predictable. The new, complex reality of migration related to the problems of globalized capitalism is thus stigmatized based on individual cases. The path thus covertly being taken towards belonging is becoming a problem for social work because social services are turning into a focus point for migrants who are unable to access or transition into the work-based society or the educational and social system. This carries the risk that their exclusion will simply carry on within these institutions. Though social work opens up to the migrants' different situations in life, if the field attempts to follow the conventional model of integration then it falls into an interventional trap: the migrants' coping problems are redefined as personal barriers to integration, and their different attempts at coping relabelled as forms of deviant

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behaviour. Many social workers working with migrants therefore no longer rely on the welfare state and social policy, instead adopting a position of their own within local and regional networks when it comes to migration and social policy. They are turning away from the discourse on belonging, with its fixation on integration, towards the discourse on coping, and trying to focus on the belongings which the migrants create for themselves through their forms of coping. The range of actions open to social work are thus mainly measured against the integration-based socio-political definition of critical living circumstances, falling into the category of social problems. Socio-political reflection is thus a necessary item in social workers' professional toolbox.

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9 Professional Agency

The ambivalent structure of social support – empathetic yet personally distant, related to yet extending across different aspects of everyday life – long gave social work the reputation of being a “semi-profession” which fell under the professionally nebulous category of reproduction. Modern professionality, by contrast, was said to rise above everyday activities through its link to rationality and scientifically based expertise, with claims to autonomy from the organizations the professionals work for. As these claims can never truly be achieved, typical conflicts can always occur between organizational and professional principles. The professions are characterized by signs of quality which can be identified at a general, rather than an individual level and can thus be evaluated. The professions include scientifically and institutionally supported models of practice (e.g. the medical model) which may in turn develop a dynamic of their own within the system in that they only allow certain ways of approaching problems which are allocated to that profession, excluding others through the self-referential nature of their system. The professions lay claim to authority in terms of expertise and knowledge which may clash with the standards of their sponsor organizations. This is where the continuing demotion of social work to the level of a “semi-profession” comes in again – still in relation to its multidisciplinary scientific canon and inferior rights of status and advocation compared, for example, to established professionals such as doctors and teachers. It must be said that the term “semi-profession” is derived from this traditional institutional term “profession” and is thus not suited to describe the specifics of social work, which has become increasingly differentiated over the last two decades. For this reason, we propose a definition of professionality which is based on *action theory* and is thus *relational*.

“In this ideal concept, a professional practitioner is a ‘mediator’ between sociocultural and individual values and interpretations of reality. Professionals are thus intermediary actors located between individually based support and social monitoring, legitimised by the socio-political model of regulating people’s entitlements and what can reasonably be expected of them.” This calls for “reflective professionality”: “professionals who have adopted a reflective stance [see themselves] as ‘relational’ actors; social figures with a relationship to the client on the one hand, but who, if need be, also have a relationship with decision-makers, on the other hand” (*Dewe & Otto, 2001, 1418f.*).

Relational Professionality

In a study on working relationships with parents in the field of residential care, Stefan Köngeter reported on how social workers themselves become part of the problem, which is in fact an expression of their relational professionality:

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> First, professionals enter into the set of problems and become part of it. Second, by doing this they change (or even worsen) the relational dilemma, though also opening up an opportunity to tentatively identify the problem: if they themselves become involved in the processual structures in the network of social and working relationships, this gives them a chance to understand the dynamics of those structures. Third, this can lead to joint actions and strategies being agreed upon with the clients which add to the range of actions which can be taken. Fourth, this changes the way they are involved with regard to the relational dilemma. This involvement, in turn, leads to professionals sometimes overlooking things as they take them for granted. (*Köngeter, 2009, p. 298*)

This action-based understanding of the autonomy of professional social work would, however, be falling into a trap if it did not itself address the subject of how society judges this form of practice. After all, despite its social normalization, it remains within the system of the hierarchical gender-based division of labour. Social occupations offer a particularly good chance to observe the construction of femininity and related attributions. Loving attention and care are still mainly projected upon women's family work and enshrouded by an air of unquestioned normality. Though they are assigned high normative value, their economic status is low. This view is persistent, even though from the male point of view the social-rational side of social work is underlined and from the female point of view there are demands for the practice of care to be recognized within society "as a criterion for policy-making" (Eckhart, 2000, p. 18). Thus, the continued failure to address this devaluation is associated with an assumption that social work is gaining a higher status from its ascribed integrative social functions with regard to the social dissolution of boundaries. This means that two whole worlds of professional theory exist alongside one another: a male world of science which (gender-neutrally) lays claim to social work as a model of rationality, and a female world of science which continues to decry the low status allotted to the profession of social pedagogy through the gender hierarchy.

This fits in with the way social work and care work are currently being restructured into two groups. One is in high demand on the market and valued accordingly in view of demographic change and foreseeable social problems. It is the realm of the professional intermediary with specialized knowledge of intervention. Meanwhile, the masses who are not able to access the market, and depend upon care and support, are allotted to the second group of social services (usually underpaid or on an unquestioned voluntary basis) which are said not to fulfil the criterion of rational professionality as they involve elements of work which do not count according to the latest quality standards. The caring abilities traditionally defined as a "strength" in social professions are thus made into this group's "weakness in terms of professional structure". Processes of rationalization within social work run the risk of excluding aspects around feelings and relationships – of excluding care itself. In managerially controlled fields of social work, especially, direct attitudes of care and support, and aspects of work building upon the reliability of the relationship, are now considered of least value and rarely come up in debates on quality development. They are seen as vaguely necessary, required on an everyday basis, and

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expected to be carried out even under rationalized working conditions, but are not publicly negotiable and thus cannot be presented as achieved outcomes, even by staff. Thus, though workers act in a formal, professional manner in operational aspects, they are forced to allow their actual social pedagogical skills to be devalued. "Influenced by criteria of rationality and efficiency which guide their actions and are economically restricted in a one-dimensional manner, actors 'learn' [...] to standardise their workflows, and are thus simultaneously disempowered, to some extent at their own hand" (Roman, 2013, p. 263).

This again reveals the contradiction which is usually ignored in discussion on the professionalization of social work: the modern social discourse on professionalization follows patterns of rationality which, according to the logic of their structure, call for reproduction-related activities to be split off or expect that split as a prerequisite. As a result, the externalized growth policy of a neo-capitalist society continues to force social work to serve the needs of that reproductive aspect in as unremarkable, yet efficient, a manner as it can: social work as a form of social pacification. This draws the field into a new downwards spiral of devaluation, in which it is now nonetheless required to submit to criteria of economic rationality.

These criteria have now developed into corresponding regulations on *outcome testing*. In the future, you will have to prove more often, and in a different way, whether your support and programmes are working! After all, your clients have a right to effective services, and the state has a duty to ensure that public funding is being used effectively and efficiently. For this reason, funding is only to be provided to programmes and schemes which can prove they have the "desired" effect. Schemes which lead to "undesired side effects" are no longer to receive funding. This is the main reasoning behind "evidence-based" outcome management of the kind which is expected to develop in social work nowadays. Undesired side effects? The youth centres immediately come to mind. Populist reports now describe them as strongholds of revolt, aberrant behaviour and even the production of criminality. Take the social workers out of the youth centres and put them in schools!

Looking beneath the surface of these reports, which have also been driven by the media, a whole different set of effects comes to light. Of course, there are disruptive youths in community centres working with children and young people; this kind of work is far from simple. The young people first have to learn to deal with the unrestricted situation in the youth centre and need to realize that they can gain recognition even without using aberrant behaviour to draw attention. There are activating projects at centres for this purpose, but they do require time. It is not possible to measure any causal effect in this case; such effects can only be communicated in the often paradoxical causalities of their coping. Though predictions can be made, what is mainly required is trust. The "side effects" and detours of work in youth centres then turn out to be important links in a chain of effects which may not, of course, always be complete, but for which there is no alternative – unless one considers police intervention and even a prison sentence to be an alternative.

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> The "old" model of management by professionality is based on the assumption that the provision of individually tailored social services can only be usefully standardised to a limited extent, if at all. Individualised services are said to rely on personal ties taking place in the here and now, and characterised by a specific subject/subject relationship. Even major attempts to rationalise these services or change the "technology" by which they are provided would thus only reduce the work and working hours involved to a very limited extent. (*Otto & Ziegler, 2007, p. 14*)

Now the target is "managerial" outcome management:

> This is a fundamental change in the logic of providing social services and, ultimately, that of the welfare state itself. Above all, as part of the reorganisation of the social services it is being pointed out that the way support is provided and the structure of the organisation need to be based on weighing up the costs and benefits. Put thus, the issue of measuring a scheme's value becomes one of how effective it will be. (*Otto & Ziegler, 2007, p. 15*)

This cost-benefit analysis brings us to the market. It is really not so much about clients having a right to effective services, but more about provisions which can meet the needs of the market for social services and health, rather than meeting clients' needs. To achieve this, they must be modular and offer if-then justification. A package of measures can no longer be approved with reservations (regarding social and biographical conditions which cannot be monitored). What is required is training programmes which clients then just have to be adjusted to fit. What is social work being pushed into? Constructing modules which can be slotted into a building-block system of psychosocial activation, into a training programme? That is more the domain of medicine and psychology, the fields where models of that type in fact come from.

In other words, social work is increasingly sliding into a socio-technologically styled professionality managed according to a hidden logic it can no longer control. It is running the risk of losing its own powers of critical reflection. This can be seen, for example, whenever client profiling is required during work with children and young people, without considering whether the system is sliding into a new set of labelling processes. The labelling approach is, after all, one of the most important instruments of reflection within social work – an achievement, so to speak, which is once more being insisted upon.

Yet professional counterarguments are apparently no longer enough: socio-political reflexivity needs to be activated. Behind socio-technological outcome testing there also lies a corresponding socio-political understanding of monitoring and pacification which fears unplanned side effects and demands clear distinctions. The impending reduction of the welfare state's horizons to a policy of social pacification means that social work runs the risk of being constricted by monitoring. This is why the professional discourse needs to open up to the discourse within civil society, as the latter has assigned new social value to the role of social services as a resource for local and regional development (see Böhnisch & Schröer, 2007). It is no longer about "attracting" citizens into social projects even though they benefit people they have nothing to do with. Instead, as the long history of social contracts shows, programmes need to link

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in with the integrative needs of the citizens themselves. You and your family will only feel at home in this town and this corner of society if you realize that your own children only get on well at kindergarten and school if something is done for other children and young people. You need to understand that improving *everyone's* life opportunities is more likely to improve cultural quality and social well-being within the community than ghettoization, which produces exclusion, defence and fear and thus has a regressive effect on the community atmosphere. And, finally, if you want to grow old in our town, you also need to take care of generational relationships there – giving old people a public presence within society and coming to an agreement on this with other citizens. In this discursive model, municipal institutions are no longer the first (and usually the only) place for people to turn to; they are now gaining the added function of inaugurating discourses on new social contracts and providing a space for them to come about. Discourses and agreements on new social contracts start out small, hoping for later municipal synergies: contracts between teachers and pupils in their classes, contracts between parents relating to kindergartens, contracts between the police and youths, contracts between old folks' homes and clubs, intercultural contracts between groups of residents in a neighbourhood, and social contracts with local companies which negotiate and set out their social duties within the municipality. Formal and informal contracts of this kind can act as a prerequisite and basis for "processes of negotiation on municipal policy" (Marquard, 2011).

In these contractual discourses, social work tends to play the indirect role of a mediator. It attempts to help bring together professionality with the civic interest. After all, the fact that the time is ripe for social discourses of this type is not a problem among professionals, but one within civic society, and thus a political problem. In view of the social and spatial disembeddedness of increasingly globalized economic relationships, what is needed is to increase the number of networks linked to specific social spaces, which make people aware of their own humanity, allowing them to feel and practise it – but which also support them as social beings. These social contexts do, however, still have to be linked back to the welfare state if they are to have any socio-political effect (providing a voice), or local aspects will fade in the shadow of globalized development. This kind of socio-political tension fired up "from below" emerges from people's coping problems and challenges social policy as a "policy of coping".

It is thus possible to imagine a professionality starting to open up to civil society, developing out of social work itself. But that is just one side of the coin. On the other, the citizens themselves have taken the reins of civil society, registering and asserting their social interests in local initiatives and movements, to the amazement of social work. This is rephrasing the old question of how social work relates to social movements.

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10 Social Work and Welfare Policy

Social work and welfare policy are closely interlinked. In this context, social work is seen as a living inventory of social policy. While social policy relates to social protection against standardized risks such as illness, unemployment and poverty, social work deals with the various biographical results and side effects of these risks, as well as individuals' other psychosocial problems. Until now, the welfare state has been the central institution for the social policy of most European countries. However, an examination only of state activities and the responsibilities they directly and indirectly delegate to municipalities and associations is not enough to gain a picture of social work's true socio-political environment. Looking merely at civil society activities or the social services and nursing market, which complements the state sector while also being privately operated, there is talk of a "welfare mix" where social work needs to find and form networks, mainly within the region and the municipality.

Here, social work complies with the terminological distinction made by Franz-Xaver Kaufmann (2003), who sees socio-political tasks as including not only the legal and economic field of social policy (legal equality, transitional employment services, the equalization of burdens and social spending) but also the field of social infrastructure development (including social work services) and pedagogical intervention.

The welfare state has developed within the boundaries of each nation state. Over the process of globalization, these borders have started to crumble; national welfare states have lost their power to shape the system. This has also affected the opportunities and limits of social work, as an agency belonging to the welfare state. For this reason it needs to rethink its welfare policy; it requires *socio-political reflexivity*.

10.1 The Social Consequences of Globalization

The process of globalization did not take place overnight; it began to come to the surface in the last third of the twentieth century, emerging properly in the 1990s. It is part of the fifth "long wave", described in Kondratiev's model as a long period of capitalist industrial development extending beyond economic cycles. It was triggered by an interplay between basic electronic and informational innovations, the corresponding intensification and rationalization of labour accompanied by state regulation, and the nonetheless extensive internationalization of relations in the fields of production and capital. Long waves, as epochal periods of development, are characterized by a combination of economic, social and political factors which lead to the development of a specific pattern of growth. It is not mainly the business world which itself generates new growth; when the old pattern of growth is exhausted and no new wave is in sight, it is above all the state regulatory systems which are called upon to induce and encourage the conditions for a new pattern. This does of course mean that the state attracts socio-economic conflict. The main characteristic of the period

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of globalization, and that which sets it apart from previous periods, is that corporate networks are spreading out onto a supranational level, with international production and services; they are correspondingly coordinated and face one another in global competition (see OECD, 1994).

What makes *globalization* so influential and such a threat to national welfare states is the fact that an autonomous international regulatory mechanism has formed over the internationalized financial capital and financial markets, increasingly independent from nation states' regulations, channelling the flow of capital and making decisions on international economic development and the distribution of investment and employment, with long-term (as structural) national consequences. Internationally floating capital is shifting jobs into low-wage countries and passing on the social costs to the welfare state in the form of unemployment and wage pressures.

National societies are becoming increasingly incapable of creating the necessary social balance in their countries for a socially acceptable modernization of capitalism, as the capital has moved out of their hands and now only follows the rules of the international capital markets. Critics discussing capitalism say that anarchic individual capitals must be tamed socially in order to modernize capitalism socially. Rather than merely submitting to shared rules on labour protection, wage rates and taxation, they should develop responsibility for social stability and the common good as well. Today's "roaming" capital does not do either of these things. It constantly attempts to break free of national rules and does not see itself as responsible for local society's common good. However, experts differ as to whether the globalized economy, in the form of transnational corporate groups, can act in a totally unrestricted, nationally inconsiderate manner. Instead, they point out, these groups remain dependent on regulatory conditions in the three global economic blocs (Europe, North America and Southeast Asia) and the nation states which belong to them. At the same time, though, it is accepted that the effects of globalization are fundamental and radical when it comes to the industrial organization of operations and labour or to the future meaning of labour as a factor – i.e. as key socio-political factors.

Meanwhile, the state continues to set regulations, but with less and less ability to shape the programme. The fiscal crisis has become an ongoing one; though social cutbacks and privatization can diminish it, there is no structural solution. As, under regulated capitalism, all claims are aimed at the state, the latter is caught in a triple "fix". Globalized companies competing on the international stock markets are constantly calling for new local state subventions and competitive assistance at the state budget's and taxpayers' expense. The people, in turn, are gradually losing trust in the state (crisis of legitimacy) and the unions are demanding an end to social cutbacks, more state spending to improve employment figures and state measures against the proliferation of expanding private capital. Caught in this triple "fix", the state risks losing its socio-political manoeuvrability.

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Capital-driven globalization is also destructuring traditional social patterns of understanding. Social time patterns are being shaped by interest payment dates, loan settlement dates, exchange rate fluctuations and bull or bear markets. Structures of social inequality are being formed which differ greatly from the usual structures of inequality: money is divided into creditors and debtors, national and international, and this gap is progressively widening. For some time now, there has thus been a risk of the traditional socio-political principle of the redistribution of wealth being superseded and undermined by an abstract monetary principle beyond the reach of any regulatory social contract.

Digital Capitalism

The term “digital capitalism”, which has arisen along with this post-Fordian economic development, refers to the phenomenon of the social disembedding of the economy, the consequent detachment between work and social ties, and the rootlessness of global capital circulation. Here, “digital” refers to the fact that the almost infinite number of connections made possible by microelectronic technology and global capital movements have created a new, hegemonic structure of constantly changing but ultimately globally interlinked nodes of economic power which is increasingly permeating the national political power blocs and causing them to crumble. Altogether, under digital capitalism, the economy seems to be characterized by abstract global networks. This network structure is basically shaped by the expansion of global trade and increased division of labour among national economies, the increase in the significance of transnational corporate groups and internationally interlinked capital, the advancing internationalization of production sites, and the unrestricted mobility of capital. Though the capitalist economy has always worked on an international basis, modern-day globalization is a qualitatively new phenomenon, as information technology has become the basis for an internationalization of capital investment and speculation regulated by supranational agents (“stock market capitalism”). The structural law behind this unbinding from social ties is that of accelerating change, in line with which the global information society’s computer systems have improved exponentially since the 1980s. Michel Foucault also described the acceleration system which is now developing in such an unrestricted, undirected manner as the law governing the acceleration of an industrial growth-based society: “it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces” (Foucault, 1977, p. 154). Since then, however, digitization has triggered a qualitative leap in that acceleration of a kind which Foucault could not have imagined. The increases in productivity constantly being induced by technology are outstripping work. The intensification and regulation of work has also taken on whole new dimensions during the third industrial revolution, the main novelty being that work is becoming increasingly detached from social spaces, and being managed abstractly on a global scale. This means that in structural terms, work has lost its power of social integration, a power still clung onto not only by the population but also by institutions of public administration and education.

Thus, the global increase in the speed of rationalization and the growing risk of labour becoming disembedded from society have created a complex condition of anomie. The situation is becoming socially unclear and unregulated (“anomic”) for people as

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they do not understand that their work is no longer needed and as they cannot see how that fits in with a combination of accelerated prosperity and accelerated crisis. Relations are blurring, both for those gaining from the accelerating capital flow, and left wanting more, and for the remaining masses left in the care of the welfare state and having to put up with their lot. This new phenomenon of *globalized anomie* is characterized by the unhindered excesses of the "global winners" and the powerlessness of the masses, the "global losers". It is also giving rise to a social and life-world paradox: globally induced anomie is intensified by the fact that we hang on to the model of a society which is fully employed, even though there is no longer any indication of how long mass multi-generational unemployment is likely to last. We cling on to this idea of paid work all the harder, the greater the risk is that we will continue to lose it. More seriously, this is crippling the political and cultural discourse, preventing any redefinition of the "worker", which society has long required. Economic powers, driven or at least inspired by globalization, are freeing themselves from the historical realities of societies in their social spaces. Taking on a life of their own, they accelerate developments, creating anomie, and anomie creates stress. Stress, in turn, produces restrictive strategies of defence and survival, limiting planning capacity. The globalized societies of stress can no longer create utopias (Sloterdijk, 1993). The precarious balance between labour and capital, which enabled social policy to lean for decades towards planning, allowing the population to develop something like a *collective identity of being protected by the welfare state*, no longer exists. The welfare state and social work have hit home at the point where social inequality is seen in economic terms as a dynamic factor of economic and social development. Increasingly, there is talk of "social differentiation as the driving force behind economic growth". This is exaggerated by a "shareholder mentality" whose values are at odds with those on which social work relies. The more the corporate landscape is characterized by shareholders and their funds with no connection to the companies and their social environment, the more priority there is on abstract profit-making. If companies then rationalize and outsource work, "letting go" of workers, their anticipated profits rise on the stock exchange along with their rating. Even medium-sized companies which are not listed on the stock exchange are now being drawn into this system, when they supply or purchase from large companies and thus rely on them. This turns employees into cost factors who are under constant pressure from cost-cutting and whose being let go – made unemployed – is of correspondingly positive economic value. The market is not interested in whether they are left to the welfare state. A process which we in social work see as a social scandal is celebrated in the economic discourse as innovative and geared to market requirements. This split in values goes hand in hand with a social split of a historically unprecedented scale and structure. Poverty and wealth are no longer different aspects of one market; they are developing on two separate markets – two different worlds. While there seems to be no limit to the new wealth developing via globally active, interwoven financial markets, regional labour markets and social systems are being placed under such

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pressure that they automatically produce more relative and absolute poverty than they can combat. However, as the wealth of the few is bursting into a world which is beyond average citizens' everyday understanding, that wealth does not have to be legitimized to them.

10.2 Social Work and Globalization

The effect which all this can have on social work is that its perspective on integration may no longer chime with society's views. In other words, if the welfare state itself has got caught up in a globally induced integrative dilemma, it is necessarily required to shift its integration policy away from fringe groups and into the heart of society. Thus, if it continues to follow its previous pattern of delegating welfare state issues, social work could be forced back into the functional downward spiral of *managing social marginality*.

Here, we reach the point where social work's basis in social welfare, which remains its basic legitimacy, may be its undoing. This is the context in which the attempts should be seen, as described above, to reposition social work within society: as part of a civil society with local initiatives which are aimed at activation and thus designed to be of service to social work, so to speak. However, as a whole, social work practice and the practical discourse among experts have not strayed from the pathway of the welfare state. This has automatically drawn them into the dilemmas of the welfare state, as the balance between people's entitlements and what can reasonably be expected of them under the welfare state is evidently out of kilter. Criteria for expectations are no longer phrased in relation to entitlements but instead in relation to costs. Moreover, the further the municipalities are drawn into the pull of competition among locations, creating a risk of further social division, the greater the danger that social work will become a striking instrument designed to make a location more attractive. The welfare state's now well-established maxim of "rights and responsibilities" is also directed at the individual and – in a certain sense – his or her personal liability and is thus closely linked to the neoliberal postulate of self-organization and taking personal responsibility for one's own social destiny. This is not to criticize the intention of encouraging and strengthening people's powers of self-organization; rather, attention needs to be drawn to the problem that the welfare state's old ambition of creating a basic, collective safety net has long been displaced.

This politico-economic blow hits social work at a developmental stage when professionals engaged in discourse believed they had found a balance between professional autonomy and dependence on the welfare state. Now it has become clear that even this kind of balance comes under pressure when the globalization dynamics of the twenty-first century undermine or even derail the welfare state, with both local and regional impacts. This is not to say that we should turn away from the welfare state. It is important to be able to rely on a basic, collective safety net and that this

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net cannot just be held out, but must be constantly adapted. In future, however, social work reflection will have to extend beyond the welfare state if the new vortex of social problems being created and forming is to be recognized in all its transnational complexities. Creating a balance between globalism and regionalism will be a key aspect of future theorizing.

Today, we have almost become accustomed to the idea of social work's clients being considered social losers – write-offs thanks to globalization. It is also obvious that when global developments reach a crisis, this is on a regional level. Precarious working conditions, shrinking regions, the growing gap between rich and poor: all this can be ascribed to the economic and technological dynamics of globalization. To that extent it comes as no surprise if the social sciences, and along with them social work, now mainly work with the term "social exclusion". The point no longer seems to be about reintegrating marginal groups or about the prospect of secondary integration. These phrases belong (and have long belonged) to social work under the welfare state and signalize that even those on the social margins can still be seen as belonging – as capable of being integrated. Now, they suddenly seem to be outside: superfluous.

There is simply no longer much confidence in the welfare state's abilities. The term "post-welfare state" is spreading in professional socio-scientific discourse. Just because dirges of this kind are being sung for the welfare state, this does not, of course, mean that it will no longer exist in future. Even under digital capitalism, social regulation and a basic safety net will still offer necessary stabilization and support to some groups of people. However, from the point of view of social work, the welfare state's Achilles heel is that it has lost its ability to shape society and social policy. Moreover, this is accompanied by (the two elements are dependent) a change in policy which will have a dramatic effect on our profession: the nature of the welfare state is increasingly being reduced to policies of regulation and control which lean towards repression.

However, the international financial crises of the 2000s and 2010s, if nothing else, have shown that the sheer limitlessness of the current neo-capitalist model of sociation involving economically driven activation and movement can put capitalization itself at risk and lead to its destruction. Suddenly even the neo-capitalist protagonists are calling for the dynamics of capital to be restricted and for state regulation. Moreover, the widening gap between rich and poor is increasingly being brought up even in neoliberal circles from the viewpoint of the economic balance being thrown off kilter. However, the point in all this is not to revive the "old" welfare state with its national boundaries, but to search for a new balance in the relationship between economic and social issues, now in the context of globalized structures. One thing which must be remembered is that the welfare state is a way of institutionalizing the socio-political principle which *developed over history*; which formed in the dialectic of national industrial development of the late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth centuries. Thus, when discussing the future of social policy (as a

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socio-political framework for social work), we are not primarily examining what will become of the welfare state but are asking how the socio-political principle can today be put into practice in a new, different way and how this subject can be brought up accordingly.

Social Theory of Capitalism

The principle of social policy as a resultant of the structural conflict between labour and capital, between the social concept of humanity and our economic exploitation, was summed up neatly in the 1920s by Eduard Heimann in his “Soziale Theorie des Kapitalismus” (*Social Theory of Capitalism*, 1929). Put briefly (for more detail see Böhnisch & Schröer, 2012), analysis of the development of industrial capitalism assumes that capitalism, which can see people only as goods (today, “cost factors”), is nonetheless forced to “fit in the foreign body” of social issues if it wants to develop (constantly modernize itself) with its driving principle of increasing profit. To achieve this it needs qualified work, and thus also qualified workers, whose living circumstances need to be improved accordingly. To do so it must accept that workers, with their constantly improving living conditions and educational requirements, will develop outlooks on economic and social planning which extend beyond reproducing labour power and may even go against the capitalist principle and its social consequences. The social standpoints generated in this dialectic of enhancement have traditionally formed within the labour movements (and later the unions). This is the means by which a dialectical arrangement of the relationship between labour and capital came about, a synthesis which is still the socio-political principle of today. It regulates modern capitalism in a manner which gives capital its social reproduction while simultaneously allowing workers to develop socially in a manner worthy of human beings and giving them social participation in capitalism. This dialectical model which says that modern capitalism relies fundamentally on the social idea and the activation of the social principle in which it results can still be thought out further and developed today, though with one serious restriction: Heimann was thinking in terms of national boundaries. Local capital relied on local qualified mass labour. In the era of globalization, that is no longer the case. Globally active capital is no longer reliant on mass labour within national societies; above all, it looks for qualified workers in places where the social idea and its institutions have not (yet) formed, so there is (as yet) no basis for this dialectical configuration. The socio-political principle has not spread as far as in the old industrial societies, so has not undergone such a sweeping socio-political transformation. As an applied form of the socio-political principle, social work has thus hardly developed at all in those countries where capital seeks out the least expensive qualified workers. In some places, however, especially East Asian and South American threshold countries, conditions of socio-economic conflict have developed which are leading (so far mostly on a regional basis) to social movements indicating that the socio-political principle will inevitably win through in the medium to long term.

For this reason and others, the socio-political principle continues to apply when the future of social policy and social work is assessed. Yet there are now other points in the socio-economic universe where it and its possible effect can be discussed: today, of all times, it is once again clear that capitalism poses a threat to itself, putting itself at risk of destruction if it is not subject to external limits. Globalization has created

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a second world of capital – free-floating financial capital, the speed of which has hypostasized the capitalist illusion of unrestricted economic growth. With financial capital freeing itself from the first world's market-based capitalism, capital's own creation has turned against it. Boundaries urgently need to be established which capitalism itself cannot create, for which it needs the state to an extent which was previously unimaginable. With even more far-reaching consequences, the neo-capitalist principle requiring constant movement and digitalization has become obsolete. Suddenly, limitations and a standstill no longer mean regression or blockage; they now mean balance and development.

10.3 Regional Development

This is said to demonstrate the obstacles today blocking the path of the national approach. Globalization and its media, many argue, reach everyone, so do not know any exclusion per se; exclusion is always a counterpart to inclusion, and there is no more "inside" and "outside" any more. Instead, so the argument goes, various points of inclusion and exclusion are now developing which come into effect depending on the dynamics of transnational flows and are thus always relative. The globe is said to be in movement, with this movement including everyone whom the welfare state declares to be among the excluded. Global issues are said to be unleashing new, different powers within the local arena – powers which need to be analysed as resources and put to use as such. Social work, so the argument goes, should stop complaining about its supposed exclusionary stigma and should turn to the new powers inherent in local and regional spheres.

There have certainly never been so many local and regional movements as during this current period of globalization. A peculiar, yet typical dialectic has developed: globalization, with its tendencies towards the dissolution of boundaries and disembedding, triggers local and regional searches for stability, boundaries and a socially safeguarded identity. This is creating new mixtures through movements of adaptation and resistance; social problems and key life issues are overstepping the boundaries of their old definition under the welfare state. As the screens of the national welfare state become less effective and people are exposed to crises unprotected, their distress and mental state are reaching a critical level, and they want to know they are being treated as such. Suddenly, the safeguards provided by the welfare state and the knowledge conveyed by social workers are seen by many as mere placation; people start looking for direct means of action, and populist campaigns appear attractive. The local area with its promise of boundaries and certainty becomes a scene of identity struggles and withdrawal.

Seen from this point of view, it will be almost impossible for future social work to have any regional or local power to shape the system. The situation takes on a different air, however, if we view the current stagnation of the welfare state as transitional

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and ask how the tension between globality and regionality will continue to develop and one day settle down as a regulatory relationship. To judge the future possibilities of social work, various scenarios can be imagined on the question of how the institutions of the welfare state will develop in terms of their power of intervention in view of this relationship between globality and regionality. In view of the theory of the dialectic of the global and local, which can be empirically traced back, things are unlikely to go so far that the pull of globalization sucks in regional cultures and actually makes them disappear. After all, the opposite constantly proves to be the case, as local and regional countercultures develop which are also able to draw the social institutions into their sphere of influence. This can create new amalgamations in the development of the relationship between spatially altered social problems and related social institutions. The "old" patterns of regulation under the welfare state are shifted into the context of providing a social safety net; new regulatory contexts based on social spaces come about from beneath, in local "spacings", where ties and identities now form as people in the social spaces become aware of what they have in common.

For this reason, when it comes to the development of the future relationship between the global and local, it is more creative to rely on the effect of the newly formulated socio-political principle as described above. While the socio-political dynamics behind the development of the continuing conflict between labour and capital have now been weakened or brought to a halt, and will remain so in the near future, a new dialectical constellation has developed in the conflictive relationship between restrictions and an absence of restriction, between the economic need to keep moving and the human need to decelerate, and between social disembedding and social attachment. Based on this, it can be claimed that even globally active capital structurally relies on regional and local ties. In view of this socio-political perspective, the future will not only be about global colonization but also about the mediatization of the welfare state. In his work "Globale Dynamik, lokale Lebenswelten" (1998), Richard Münch placed this aspect in the foreground:

> In the course of the globalisation of economic exchange, the division of labour, political problems and cultural communication, the nation states are increasingly losing their significance as political units which help people construct an identity. Supranational units and global organisations, by contrast, are coming to the fore. At the same time, this is creating new scope for regional autonomy among the nation states. In this process, the nation states are not becoming superfluous, but their role is changing. They are now becoming the mediators between global and regional units; they are required to bring together internal, regional and external, global diversity. [...] On the one hand they have to leave space for regional diversity; on the other they need to be able to represent global diversity within their boundaries. (*Münch, 1998, p. 37*)

This offers a starting point from which the welfare state and social work can take on a new shape, taking into account the fact that globalized capital relies on regional developments and the mediating function of the welfare state. Thus – by guaranteeing a domestic socio-political safety net and more – the welfare state will be able to

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develop new perspectives for regulating socio-economic and cultural mediatization. The international financial crises of the start of the twenty-first century have triggered this need for regulation with regard to the social economy. When it comes to social and cultural planning, it will be the dynamics of transnational migration, more than anything else, which force the welfare state to adopt the pluralist formation which Münch predicted. The local sphere no longer has to be seen, so to speak, as a counterworld outwardly opposing digital capitalism. In the context of the newly extended socio-political principle, it acts as a separate force within the overall context of economic and social development. With this new flexibility of socio-political mediatization, social work institutions and projects will also have to search out the opportunities available to them on a regional scale, bearing in mind that social work is not external to the economy, but can make its own specific contributions to "relocalizing" socio-economic action in the form of *endogenous regional development*.

Now, however, the first step is to decide what socio-political situation of enablement would be required in order for such developments even to be imaginable. In the discussion on this subject, the relatively universal view is now that the most promising policy perspective is offered by linking the activating (enabling) welfare state and parallel structures within civil society. Thus, regional networks could develop which would offer new stimuli for social inclusion and activation. However, this would require youth welfare and social work to undergo a drastic structural reform, as they would have to distance themselves from their traditional apparatus centred around sponsors and measures and start to act within social spaces, moving in the direction of a welfare mix by seeking out spaces in the networks created by local planning processes and the third sector. However, social work can only open up in that way, so the argument goes, if it develops a new view of its service users: they should no longer be seen as clients, but as citizens who need to be made capable of asserting their social rights not only outside social work but, if needs be, sometimes even against social work. This perspective fits in with the European programme of "new governance", which aims to provide a new framework for the population's social and political integration in view of the diminishing integrative powers of the work-based society, designed to reinforce the intermediary level of civic participation. For this reason, we would now like to examine the more recent European perspective of social work.

10.4 The European Perspective

So far it has become apparent that the discourse around a "social Europe" is following a similar logic to that with which we are already familiar from national societies. After all, modern social policy developed within a combination of industrialization and increasing national regulation. To that extent, the outlook for European social policy is always linked to the issue of whether national social policies can continue

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to exist. This became clear from the socio-political discussion on Europe in the period following the Maastricht Treaty, when there was a relatively reserved, finely nuanced view (which has lasted until today) of the future of centrally governed European social policy and the establishment of a strong European welfare state at the expense of national social policy: "The future of the social dimension [of Europe] is [. . .] characterised by the nucleus of the welfare state remaining nationally specific, while supranational influence is limited to the few areas crucial to market integration" (Leibfried & Pierson, 1998, p. 102). These welfare state nuclei within Europe can be told apart – ideally – from the different traditions emerging from their national cultures and social histories (see Esping-Andersen, 1990).

In this context, the perspective of the "welfare regimes" can be used to create a typology which Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990) summed up in the phrase "the three worlds of welfare capitalism". This typology distinguishes between welfare models which are social democratic (Scandinavia), liberal (UK) and conservative, centring on labour or production (central and southern Europe):

> Social democratic welfare states (especially Scandinavia) which are characterised by the right to work, by all citizens having equal rights to comprehensive social benefits, and by a high employment rate within the public sector; liberal welfare states (e.g. the UK) in which there is a universal and individual right to "basic" benefits, while maintaining living standards generally falls to private provisions; conservative welfare states (such as Germany or France) which involve actors and institutions organised on the corporate model (social partners, professional groups, churches) to prioritise comprehensive social security for specific groups and situations in life, such as normal working conditions. (*Walther et al., 2002, p. 1149*)

This model has now been extended by critics. The main complaint is that it only takes into account the "borders drawn between the market and the state" and not the "relationship between de-familialisation and familiality", i.e. the differing degrees to which responsibility which actually falls under social policy is privatized and placed in the hands of the family (Leibfried & Obinger, 2001, p. 175). Feminist critics, meanwhile, bemoan the typology's bias towards the standard model of the male breadwinner, with the woman being correspondingly dependant; they call for concepts which can address the opportunity of women gaining material and social independence within the family (exit option).

Despite globalization's dynamic of the dissolution of boundaries, the basic structures of these welfare state nuclei are relatively stable and continuous (see Leibfried & Obinger, 2001). There are now indeed plenty of supranational programmes and interventions which affect national social policy to such a great extent that states have given up some of their sovereignty and become "semi-sovereign welfare states" (Leibfried & Pierson, 1998), but there is still not a single, unified, sovereign European welfare state. Instead, the EU's socio-political regulatory mechanism is seen as complementary to national social policy. At the end of the 1980s there was still discussion as to whether, and how, the nations' individual socio-political systems could be

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harmonized using various models, and whether convergence was desirable or possible. Since then, the perspective has won through among political decision-makers that for the foreseeable future there will not be any European social policy which is unified in a similar way to policy on economics, agriculture or structural planning. At the same time, however, in the 1990s, the member states, most of which were under social democratic governments, pushed through a common policy on employment (though still on the familiar level of supranational programmes). This, at the latest, showed the structural need for central, sovereign European social policy – though at the same time also demonstrating how indispensable national social policies are, as it is not, after all, an institutional problem, but a structural problem of supranational social development.

Since the 1956 Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community, the primacy of the market economy has applied. The aim was for a free European market to foster an economic power which would automatically fuel social policy. “Economic policy is the best social policy” was the member states’ motto at the time; this was depicted as an ideal for a united Europe, even though it was already far from functioning within national policies. Thus, Europe was made a surface onto which the neoliberal ideology of the time was projected, and the western European states, enjoying the economic upswing of the post-war period, accordingly wanted a Europe with a “common market” rather than a European social pact.

Today, at the start of the twenty-first century, that free European market, under the influence of globalization, is creating social problems – renewed poverty, mass unemployment, social exclusion, the unsolved problems of migration and asylum-seeking – which almost call out for a central European social policy and demand a supranational welfare state capable of regulation. Under this social pressure, at the planning level of European multi-level policy, increasing numbers of socio-political support schemes and initiatives were set up which, while they improved the social infrastructure of the disadvantaged regions and reduced social exclusion, did not change the principle of the social regulation model. This is still shaped by the maxim that the market regulates, and everything which this free European market sees as getting in the way is ignored under European policy. The maxim for regulation is market compatibility.

On the one hand, this logic blocks national welfare developments, but, on the other hand, it also prevents a supranational welfare state on a European level. The national welfare state nuclei are each stagnating, the European nucleus of social policy remains empty. This means that the floodgates are open to *structural* social deregulation on both sides. The European standardization of the single market and – since Maastricht – the service industry has intensified competition on the internal market to such an extent that it has created rampant pressure on social costs among the competing European providers. At the same time, the weight of globalization presses down on Europe as a location just as it does on national areas. In this process, the national social policies have lost some of their power to shape

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the situation, but the European Union has not taken on that socio-political power to any noteworthy degree.

We can thus see that studying the institutions and organizations of the European Union is not enough for us to understand the outlook on European social policy or think one step ahead. We need to go into the structure of fractures and inconsistencies which, in the end, constitute *the socio-political process*. Thus, even in a European context, we can apply the structural laws according to which we believe social policy will develop in the second modernity. In other words, here, too, we apply the constitutive model of the *socio-political* which we developed starting out with Heimann and leading up to the criticism of globalization.

The terrain is dominated by a capitalism which the pull of globalization has made aggressive – one which is pressing for modernization (with the idea of gaining a local advantage) and thus exerts pressure not only on national social policies but also on European social policy. However, this is confronted not by a united European social movement but by one weakened by the fact that capitalism no longer relies on mass labour as a production factor in order to be modernized. This leaves the dimension of state policy. The old dialectical tension between labour and capital has given way to a one-dimensional battle for capital to dominate (with multinational concerns becoming increasingly interconnected).

Accordingly, as long as there is no sign of any market-ready social opposition from the unions and other social movements, or of a central European welfare state, the key to socio-political renewal, even for Europe as a whole, lies with the institution which was in fact supposed to be dissolved as part of the process of Europeanization: the national welfare state. This is where the dialectic is developing today which will turn into future social policy in Europe – despite the fact that the welfare state is caught in a dilemma. On the one hand, it is coming under pressure from globalization, which is further intensified by the dynamics of the single European market creating a kind of “dual competition among locations”; on the other hand, unemployment and reductions in social benefits are putting it in a legitimacy crisis which, if the national welfare state gets any weaker, may concentrate within Europe and lead to unpredictable anti-democratic developments, e.g. if nationalist and extreme right-wing movements unite on a European level.

The regional perspective on Europe (a Europe of regions) corresponds with this link back from the European social perspective to the national welfare state. Originally opposing the nation state, and intended to span the states of Europe, the regional perspective has taken on a new significance as a socially integrative outlook, thanks to the tendencies towards globalization. Though the European programmes are designed for regional target areas which need regional social development, in terms of structure there is the guarantee that they are provided for by the national welfare state. The idea of the “welfare state from the bottom up” – having a balance between a state guarantee and regional social initiative – is still sustained by national potential. In view of the effects of social exclusion caused by globalization, the political

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idea behind Europe also remains dependent on the nation states' ability to create social integration.

Consequently, the model of European social policy – if by that we mean the structural principles of the socio-political, and not the European institutions of social policy – needs to be thought of in three interrelated dimensions: regional, national and European dimensions. The European dimension of social policy relates to the basic issues of social justice, comparable living conditions and preventing social exclusion. The national welfare state, which is both legitimized and threatened in its legitimacy, remains the guarantee of social security and the national location where opposing social powers can form, bearing responsibility to national history (and which can then certainly be transformed into something European). The regions develop their own markets and social contracts; they are the place where the social idea feeds once again on people (threatened as they are by the climate of globalization) being aware of their belonging and need for reciprocity. The regional arena as seen this way, aware that it can no longer rely on the guarantee of the welfare state, also offers an opportunity for European understanding and common goals which arise not from the market, but from the people. In this respect, the three-dimensional relationship produces an interdependent European model of social policy.

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11 Transnational Approaches: Commons, Citizenship, Care

In our discussion so far on the relationship between social work and society, our argumentation has mainly been based on European societies and their welfare states. We have thus remained within our national shell and might ask what models we can take on and integrate into our system. First migration research and the related subject of transnational studies, and now social work with migrants, not to mention the social discussions and campaigns on the global Internet, have drawn our attention to the fact that connections have formed which go beyond national entities, transcending political, cultural and social boundaries – connections within which we need to find our place, as they affect our national social work.

Within this discourse, certain "transnational goods" have crystallized for social work; though the national societies have historically related to these differently, they have now become established as key transnational themes for social work in such a way that communication is possible on those subjects anywhere within social work. These are the recourse to shared *commons* which are essential to life, which can also be used by social work; social work's integration into civil society, or *citizenship*, and the legitimizing issue of *care*, on which social work should be based with regard to both social ethics and society. These lines of discourse have formed in different ways. In Europe, they were triggered by the erosion of the welfare state's safety net; in East Asian and South American threshold countries, they developed as a form of direct anti-capitalist resistance, a possible escape from powerlessness. They extend well beyond the field of discourse within social work, while at the same time magically attracting it, as these perspectives offer two hopes: firstly that of the "depillarization" and corresponding new legitimacy of the internal structure of social work, and secondly that of linking it in with a discourse that is not restricted to the welfare state, which could make social work "socially acceptable" once again, now on a transnational level. How successful that will be remains to be seen, but we believe these lines of discourse are a suitable way of extending social work reflection considerably. However, we do need to make sure that we do not adopt these transnationally shared terms unconsidered. Going down the transnational path within social work, e.g. in terms of human rights, can become hollow, remaining programmatic, if there is no analysis of the historical and social conditions in which it can be effective.

11.1 Commons

According to the prevailing public opinion, there is no point trying to develop and push through an alternative to the predominant model of *shareholder value* capitalism.

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This forgets the fact that during the development of the modern industrial era there have been other economic aims than an absolute need to raise profits – necessarily, as it was the only way to achieve that sustainable social stability which, after all, the globalized economies rely upon. In corporate circles, too, groups have now formed which are proclaiming that the economy needs "rebedding", as in economic roundedness and sustainability. In this context, two differently positioned models of the future, occupying two different discursive poles, are of interest to social work: the model of *rebedding* digital capitalism by means of socially compatible innovations and – on a local level – that of *community economics*.

The model of the socially compatible regulation of economic innovations (i.e. their socially regulated feasibility) is based on the idea that there is not necessarily any automatic urge towards globalization and economic innovation. Instead, it says, this originates in the dynamics of social disembedding and generalization resulting from the new profit model of digital capitalism, the shareholder value model of stock market capitalism. According to the model, the latter subscribes to a philosophy whereby

> all companies want nothing but profit. And most economists, who see the arena of the free market as no more or less than the basic model for any society, support that view with their fiction of the solitary, egoist *homo oeconomicus* in a hostile environment. But this image is wrong. Firstly, even companies have to follow social rules; rules usually set up as collective reactions to corresponding good or bad social experiences. Rules on occupational health and safety, rules on environmental conservation, rules on credit supervision or rules on money laundering are not the product of a bureaucratic whim but represent advances across civilisation in how people deal with one another; taxes are a tribute legitimised by democratic agreement and paid in return for politics, which ensure that the infrastructure works and rules are followed. (*Blomert, 2003, p. 179*)

However, implementing models of this kind, going against the flow of globalization under stock market capitalism, requires a political willpower of a kind which is, for example, now beginning to form during the search for a new financial economy for Europe. Corresponding scenarios thus picture Europe as a strong political unit, while simultaneously assuming that the European countries, in particular, still feature the diversified social economic structures needed for sustainable, rounded economics (strong SMEs, municipalities run on a public budget). Blomert describes this as a model of the "Fourth Way", which can lead to a European welfare state developing as a manifestation of the much-invoked "social Europe".

> In this new Europe, fusions and takeovers will be carefully checked in terms of their competitive prospects and the effect they will have on employment. Labour costs will have risen, and wages will even outstrip the inflation rate. Companies will pay high taxes unless an exception is made for purposes of safeguarding employment. High social security contributions and strict conditions with regard to occupational safety and health or product safety will then force such companies to operate within a strictly regulated environment. Due to high state investment, companies will only survive if they take part in state and regional tendering processes for infrastructural, educational and research projects. The companies will thus become members of an "interactive

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> civic society". [They] will lean once again towards long-term planning and long-lasting relationships with suppliers, and will once more embrace sustainable, long-term investment to achieve sustainable, long-term returns. Employees will then no longer be seen as a cost factor, but instead viewed as fixed assets, and companies will do their best to avoid any employment risks. (*Blomert, 2003, pp. 164f.*)

These forms of alternative economic activity have so far seemed to meet with little interest, as the situational advantages of cheap consumption hide the long-term disadvantages of a digital economy.

Alternatives of this kind to disembedded, digitalized shareholder management of the economy have been discussed for some time now using the term "stakeholder capitalism" (Kelly, Kelly & Gamble, 1997); above all they aim at re-embedding the economy in structures for creating social obligation, reorganizing labour relations, and ensuring that economic development programmes (and the corresponding updating of the welfare state) are long term. Going against mainstream development, corporate cultures which are "alternative" yet very much powerful are showing signs of new approaches, e.g. for structuring working hours, for linking working hours and family time, for gender justice and for additional social structures, such as for childcare. However, in view of the reality of the globalization process, which cannot, after all, be undone, this can no longer be regulated along the lines of the traditional national, cooperative welfare state.

> One of the main aims of the stakeholder approach is [thus] for international institutions to develop, becoming stronger and, above all, democratised. Where they exist, these institutions are weak. One example is the European Union. In the case of the re-regulation of international capitalism, this could be given a function as a kind of pilot. The EU is an almost sealed-off macro-regional economic area. Currently the largest single market in the world, it is certainly attractive enough to competitors for there to be social and economic conditions for entry. (*Dörre, 2001, p. 87*)

This policy of re-regulation (see also Leibfried & Pierson, 1998) would provide

> the chance to recombine the strengths of the old model [that of capitalism tamed by the welfare state – the author] in a new manner, especially its ability to unite wide social compromise with great economic flexibility. This would mean a chance to live in a transnational context again; it would be a programme of revival for unions and social associations, a gradual Europeanisation of long-term contractual relationships and welfare state associations. In brief, it would be a programme of a shift in priority within the European integration process, which could offer a social alternative to the ghost of a "disorganised capitalism". (*Dörre, 2001, pp. 87f.*)

With the fiscal crisis becoming more obvious not only in national welfare states but also in municipalities, there are first signs of the pressure to privatize that this has triggered, also leading to the economization of fundamental necessities of life which were previously around as a matter of course: water, air, space, power. Plans aimed at combining the economy, sustainability and quality of life are not

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only also shaping general programmes, but now, additionally, specific social initiatives. Municipal policy groups are forming to fight for the collective maintenance of "common property" and develop local models of participation and security to protect people against industrial takeovers. In this context, social work is looking for and finding a link to the perspective of *community economics*, which, by reactivating the cooperative principle of the common good, offers solutions "for reorganising public and private affairs, and taking on tasks resulting from a change in social needs" (Elsen, 2004, p. 44). Unlike classic cooperatives, which developed from the solidarity of the milieu, today these are groups of citizens not only brought together by their shared interest in maintaining the fundamental basics of life but also discovering the intrinsic biographical value of cooperative activity for themselves: This comes down to the fact

> that, in cooperatives, consumers are their own suppliers, tenants are their own landlords, borrowers are their own lenders and employees are their own employers. This identity principle allows market interests to be negated, provides direct regulation, proactive customer behaviour and great consideration for members' interests. Moreover, it offers an excellent basis for political efforts to introduce processes of self-organisation in socio-political fields, not only making state funding targeted (rather than hit-and-miss) but also mobilising people's willingness to help themselves, reinforcing the effect of that state funding. (*Elsen, 2004, p. 44*)

This kind of local cooperative cyclical model can activate a local tension between the civic and the socio-political perspectives, thus becoming independent correlates in a welfare state which does not just hand out booster funds but – now involved in discourses on citizens' entitlements – is reminded of its opportunities for shaping the socio-political environment. "Managing common property" (Pankoke, 2000), especially, can lead precisely to that interweaving of the civic society and economic perspective which – "correcting" the market, so to speak – can provide access and chances for participation to disadvantaged social groups, in particular.

In contrast to the 1970s, when self-help businesses were considered part of the niche economy, today there are weighty voices in the global economic debate which not only believe that community economics can act on a regional scale to balance out the socio-economic effect of globalized business, but also point out its importance in developing sustainable socio-economic structures (see Stiglitz, 2004). After all, the membership structure and thus the quality structure in community economies of the kind developing in the tertiary sector have changed considerably. As rationalization drives do not stop at either banks or the new ITC companies, there are now not just plenty of qualified people interested in local production cooperatives alongside the large companies; there is also commitment on the part of social associations, cooperatives and civic business initiatives, backed up by economic and entrepreneurial qualifications.

Altogether, we today seem to have been transported, so to speak, back to the era when the industrial capitalism of the modern age began to set in, in the late nineteenth

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century. Then, as now (though in the past the context was the nation state) the idea was for individuals to cultivate their common ground and, above all, for democratically and socially safeguarded margins for negotiation to be promoted, offsetting capitalist forms of sociation and allowing people to play an active role in shaping society rather than being seen as the victims of social circumstances. Correspondingly, one achievement of social policy in the national welfare states of the twentieth century was that instead of calls for "human rights" in general, moral terms and speaking of "poor" people as different to others, now – with talk of people having "less of" and being refused or having less "participation in" historically defined social and cultural goods, values and rights – a whole range of concrete points became sharply visible and negotiable for the first time (Evers & Nowotny, 1987, p. 161). However, this also means (especially today, now that the welfare state has become indispensable as a barrier against the pull of globalized capitalism) that community economics initiatives can make use of this safety net offered by the welfare state, just as the welfare state itself can benefit from its ability to create social interests and shape the local environment. This is also the basis for the socio-political legitimacy behind combining community economics with social work. In our opinion, this principle of *tying in with the welfare state* applies to all civic-society models, even those which developed during the crisis of the welfare state.

11.2 Citizenship

Since at least the 1990s, the concept of civil society as a preliminary plan for socio-political regulation has joined the model of the welfare state in social work discourses. According to this, justice, freedom and shaping social phenomena should no longer be conditioned within the walls of state regulation and bureaucratization but should be left to the unrestricted interplay of civic forces. After all, say critics, the model of safety under the welfare state contradicts the social and emancipatory rights of the individual at the end of the twentieth century. With its rationalizing procedures and aspirations to equality, the welfare state, they say, does no justice either to people's self-wills or to the pluralized ways they live in the society of the second modernity. Moreover, goes the criticism, it alienates people (who are cut off from their traditional social ties and ways of life) from actively taking responsibility for leading their own lives; in fact, it "nationalizes" or collectivizes responsibility for individual life courses and the common good precisely at a time when people rely on their own biographies as their main social project. Accordingly, being governed from above by the state was pilloried as "being besieged by care" (Keupp, 1996) or as the recipient of assistance taking the passive attitude of a consumer towards welfare state benefits. The tension between the security of the welfare state and human autonomy was seen as increasingly irreconcilable.

With this in mind, ever since there have been calls for the state to open up to civil society, following the US model, with the state seeing itself as providing a service

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for individualized people, as individuals can strengthen the common good most effectively when they take personal responsibility for their biographical life project: the idea was that citizens who are responsible for themselves also feel responsible for others as a result. Following the epoch of state regulation, the era of blossoming individual civic power is expected to start, of its own accord, on the path to a new common interest, fuelled by individuals themselves. The social issue, which is seen as being managed by the welfare state and thus as incapacitating society, is to be released from the cage of concession into the river of participation. Leaving the state behind, a new political constitution of society is to be born where citizens themselves are the active regulators. The construct of the active citizen is to be used to revitalize social design, responsibility and justice within the community, shifting them into an *intermediary* sphere of action. The initiatives and associations which develop within these intermediary civic structures (local campaigns, round tables, periodic alliances of interests and even transnational networks and NGOs) are to transform the way that socially active citizens behave within society. In this spirit, the term "civil society" covered all the non-state institutions which created "a network of institutions that are independent from the state", "which by their very existence, or by their activities, can bring influence to bear on policy" (Taylor, 1991, p. 52).

However, this entire argumentation ignores the fact that it is also the values and principles of civil society which have had a crucial effect on the development of the European countries since the turn of the twentieth century (see Eley, 1991). Moreover, it is rarely mentioned that even the social movements and reformatory trends of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, which fought for the social taming of capitalism and the humanization of capitalist industrialized society, were intended to support people as social citizens in the process of shaping society and thus to give society a mien of social justice. In the German discourse on the civil society, this conflictive perspective with its criticism of capitalism was largely ignored. It had, incidentally, accompanied the implementation of community organizations in English-speaking countries from the very start, one obvious example being the battles fought by Jane Addams in Chicago. Today, fundraising, social sponsoring and the strategy of corporate citizenship are intended to bridge the gap between economic and social interests.

However, for social work, it is not only the hostile attitude towards the welfare state which makes this kind of civil society discourse problematic. One of the most serious problems is that the focus is basically always on working adult citizens. There is almost no focus on citizens in dependent situations in life and situations of coping, especially the young and old. Though this discourse is praised as countering that of the welfare state, in fact it is tied in with the welfare state model of a work-based society, if indirectly. Young and old people, who either are not yet or are no longer members of this work-based society, thus also appear as what might be called social groups which are incapable of citizenship, but who always need to be taken care of, unless they take care of one another. Many projects run by local civic trusts or by supranational foundations which portray themselves as being part of civil society are

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projects borne from social responsibility for such groups and thus often nothing less than a replacement or stopgap with relation to the welfare state.

In this context, families take on importance once again as a key resource in achieving a firm social status and thus for "producing" citizens. This is because the groups of citizens who are active within the community, forming from civil society practice and showing civil society commitment to social work or helping the elderly, are nourished by the economic surplus provided by their individual biographical resources: a local group of "fully formed surplus-capable" citizens "take care" of the socially disadvantaged or of projects which, though they represent a sense of civic duty, say little about the civic status of those whom the "fully formed citizens" are looking after. In other words, the clients among the citizenry are not assigned conflict-resistant participation rights but are conceded patrimonial participation. A civic society of this kind turns out to be an asymmetric society of concession. The "fully formed citizens" need those who are "incapable of citizenship" to display their status as citizens. For this reason, at some point, conflict breaks out within the civic trusts over the question of how the targets of civic involvement can have a say in procedures of concession (which are not, after all, protected under social security law).

11.3 Care

Within the historical, empirical definition, care has a socio-anthropological, an interactive and a social dimension. From the point of view of social anthropology, care can be described as a human experience of being taken care of, as a basic form of attachment, internalized in early childhood. The description of human beings as social beings fits in with the interactive aspect of care as a context of being reliant upon one another. Finally, from the point of view of the social system, we define care as public contexts of substituted inclusion. These three dimensions do not each stand alone but are linked in different ways and in different contexts, resulting in the *ambivalence* of caring and being cared for. As a category of relationship which is rooted in the unconscious and has a social effect, care is asymmetrical in structure and characterized by correspondingly confused power relationships. As care is liberated by the dynamics of the current dissolution of boundaries, this ambivalence is coming into public view. Here, we are once more coming up against one of the characteristic paradoxes of advanced capitalism: care is being liberated and, at the same time, commercialized again – transformed within economized cultures of appropriation. The neo-capitalist processes of social disembedding, the social dissolution of boundaries and the erosion of the welfare state which form the background to the liberation of care are being turned into links with consumerist structuring. A commercial culture of the appropriation of care is forming in linguistic symbolism and recurring events. A network of charity events is turning commercial and privatized care into a social network whose structures hide the fact that care is a commodity. In the mediatized

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world of the advertising industry, care is offered everywhere in modules: as kits combining elements of care and structuring, however contradictory they may be. This includes advertising for cars, insurance and real estate. Wolfgang Fritz Haug described this process of modularization in his book on the dissolution of boundaries within commodity aestheticism, "Entgrenzung der Warenästhetik" (2001). In the virtual world of the new capitalism, the product is no longer produced in the factory; now it becomes a consumerist product in the media. The goods and their images merge together to appeal to our feelings. They have a reassuring effect: commodity aesthetics can turn our cares into a carefree feeling.

At the same time, in line with the dynamics of globalization under advanced capitalism, a globalized culture of care has developed. Citizens of the world are reliant on one another. The headlines are dominated by discourses on climate change, migration, poverty and wealth, but closer inspection shows that these care-related discourses are characterized by asymmetry. They are the discourses of a fortress mentality: we have to deal with the poor and those who have fallen behind; we have to take care of them so that they do not become a threat one day, standing in even greater numbers outside our walls. Socio-economic and political conflicts are turned into relationships of care. The world's billionaires deal with the world's problems. The US "success and benefits" model is getting a grip worldwide: if you have economic success, however you got hold of your money (e.g. at the cost of others), you are morally obliged to give some of it away to those who are not rich. Of course, they can then be expected to behave accordingly, not to disappoint the donor. Thus, existing power relations can be reinterpreted as relationships of care and thus kept stable, though with a new legitimacy. Cultures of care thus become cultures of concealment.

The privatization of public care this involves can, however, be seen not only globally but also locally. As the welfare state's safety net has worn away, there has been a tendency to shift care which was previously public into the private confines of the close family. Public care is thus not just moving from the state to the market, but to the families as well. Public care has always been embedded in the social policy of the welfare state. This came about historically due to the conflict between labour and capital. The welfare state's social policy is an institutionalized attempt to balance out labour and capital to some extent and create an equilibrium, however fragile. Advanced capitalism, with its dynamics of globalization and rationalization, has almost destroyed that equilibrium, creating an imbalance between labour and capital in national societies which has thrown the welfare state into financial and political crisis. This is also linked to a dissolution of boundaries in the context of welfare state care. Social risks are increasingly being privatized; the recently much-discussed tendency for living circumstances to become increasingly precarious has been shifted into the centre of society, the empirical effect of a new dynamics of sociation which is characterized by care. People are driven to work on their biographies both by a fear of sliding down the social ladder and by a hope of being among those who manoeuvre their way to success under the new capitalism.

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These dynamics of growing care are also affecting two key areas in people's life course: adolescence and generational relationships. Today, the construct of the moratorium for young people has become increasingly fragile; youth has come under social pressure. In youth research, adolescence is defined as a social prototype for substituted inclusion as well, and thus as a situation of care. Young people are expected to develop within a protected social space, experimenting without any biographical risk. As young people are no longer seen as being in a special stage of development, but instead viewed socially as potential human capital, while at the same time the transition to the labour society has become unregulated and full of risk, a fine line separates the zones of experiment and risk for young people. In this extended transition period, young people remain reliant on their parents; the process of separation is delayed and family care is extended. Here, too, we are again experiencing the familialization of this transition: the family of origin is under pressure to make the strains of this transition its business. The parents have to set aside their own coping problems while at the same time trying to manage the problems of the transition using the resources of the family world of intimate relationships. This can lead to young people who are forced to reach a consensus with their family and thus prefer always to adapt their behaviour, rather than entering into a conflict of interests (see Menz, 2008). The familialization of transitions into the world of work, which are dealt with in public, is turning transitional relationships into intimate contexts of care with strong ties to the pursuit of agency. This means that, in many places, the generational relationship has become a caring relationship. Generational conflict, once seen as a necessary part of socialization, driving personality development, has increasingly faded into the background. At the same time, a split can be seen in generational relations: on the one hand, the families and their young people are forced by necessity to draw closer, cutting themselves off from social conflict; on the other, competition between the generations is entering the public sphere. In the digital world of being constantly on the ball, neither biographical development nor biographical experience counts. Thirty-five-year-old workers are confronted by twenty-year-olds competing for their job on the same level as them.

The privatization of care and the transformation of transitional problems and generational relationships within relationships of care are causing the boundaries to dissolve between public and private life in a way that was in fact the target of the feminist discourses of the 1980s and 1990s – though with an odd twist. The twentieth-century feminist discourse on care followed the women's movements and their research discourses in the direction of deprivatizing care work. The idea was that care should move from having feminine connotations to being a principle of social design (see Salomon, 1931). Socially recognized and integrated care work was to give growth-fixated, externalized capitalism a human face, impose a social curb upon it. However, this also assumed that maternal care work would have to be placed on an equal setting with paid work. Yet this social transformation of care is not so simple to crack: as a private matter in the feminine world of the family, care loses its self-evident

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nature if it is to be transferred to the contractual world of the work-based society. After all, care is not a contractual category; it does not involve any "promise of reciprocity" but is upheld through the experience and "acceptance of a relationship" (Eckart, 2000, p. 19). In the contractual world, care can become a vessel for unspoken conflict; it can undermine contractual relationships and make hidden relational powers more potent. As the boundaries of labour dissolve and work pervades everyday life, meanwhile, familial spheres of care are being drawn in by work, and further pressure can develop for care work to be privatized. Simultaneously, care work is increasingly being marketed, creating divisions within the sphere of care.

In the discourse throughout Europe, care is coming to be understood as the "core" of a feminist social policy which will increasingly permeate the social policy of the welfare state. Here, the aim is not only to extend the concept of work by recognizing childraising as a job, but also to achieve "social practice" whose activation lies "in public (and no longer private) responsibility, retaining private aspects of care without being established as an aspect of women's identity and duties" (Brückner, 2001, p. 133). What is important here is thus that the care perspective is socially and socio-politically separated from the gendered (female) definition, otherwise economic and social policy can always cite that link and demand that women withdraw from the social process of work. This would be reinforced by the fact that women themselves commit to being carers. For this reason, Brückner believes, care should no longer be labelled a feminine property, but should be seen as a skill which, in the socio-political sociation process, arises from women, and which should be made non-gendered:

> The feminist criticism that work and love (for one's family or one's neighbour) are only placed on the same setting for women only applies to their social function, not to care work per se. After all, care is seen as of central importance in view of the human urge to feel needed, which remains devaluated and invisible as long as it is considered a female gender attribute and not a general social task. (*Brückner, 2001, p. 173*)

In view of the erosion of standard working conditions (with their masculine connotations) and the increasing need for social reintegration activities as a consequence of globalization, this would be an almost ideal way of restructuring society.

The pressure to make decisions of this kind is now starting to be felt more strongly. This has basically revived the old subject of conflict under industrial modernity: what should be the aim of the economy; who is it there for, how can you measure its value, and should that value not come before the market? In this connection, one project is currently of interest which comes from economic theory and has now, finally, been brought into political discourse as well. Fast on its way to becoming a global discourse with political support, it is the search for a human-friendly formula for growth. The discourse on the humanization of growth is reigniting the conflict between capital and the social idea. As this perspective of humanization necessarily precedes that of care, this may open up a gateway into society for social

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work which the new programme of the welfare state, among other things, seemed to have slammed shut. The current starting point for this is the discourse on evaluating social economic development – the indicators according to which development and growth can be judged, a discourse which appears within science in works on a "national welfare index" (see Diefenbacher & Zieschank, 2008). This calculates, for example, voluntary activities and the value of family housework among welfare provisions; criminality rates are counted among the costs of welfare. In view of the increasing social and ecological costs of economic growth using a one-dimensional definition, GDP, the previous key value for measuring the wealth of a modern society, has also come under fire as it has become evident that advancing, accelerated economic growth does not automatically improve people's lives. Above a certain level of wealth, increasing the income per capita no longer necessarily leads to an improvement in people's well-being, as it only relates to the number of goods and services and maximizing them as they appear on the markets. It does not take into account the ecological and social costs of consuming resources and of processes of social disintegration. As well as neglecting the services provided within families, homes and the voluntary sector, it also ignores the infrastructural effects of social integration which result from social work, extending beyond individual measures. Altogether it is thus no longer predominantly about the market level of quality of life; instead, it is about its social relativization and the social embeddedness of living circumstances. This puts the economic principle of growth at odds with social development.

11.4 Social Justice

Social work is intended to help allow living circumstances to develop in a more socially just manner. *Social justice* is the socio-ethical dimension of welfare policy. It is not an abstract factor but a historically developed construct and a central institution of the welfare state. It developed historically in that it is backed by two hundred years of development of the social modernization of industrial societies, from the liberty and civil rights of the French Revolution to the social rights which were fought for by social movements, eventually institutionalized in the form of the welfare state. Within the welfare state, it was the conflict between the social movements which found a historical compromise in capital (and thus, so to speak, found a middle ground in the struggle for justice). As a result, social justice is not only seen as being ordained from above, by the state, but also as coming from below, as the citizens' will. This will, as a sign of approval, was generally assumed to come from the effects of a collective welfare state identity drawing its empirical power from the guarantee of a socio-political safety net and the certainty of integration. "In this interpretation, deficits in justice do not manifest as comparative inequality" (Schramme, 2006, p. 237), but as deficits in integration. At the same time, people need to have opportunities for political and social participation which put them in a position to get justice within

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the welfare state for themselves. It was with this in mind that the construct of "justice of access" was developed within the social pedagogical discourse (see Böhnisch, Schröer & Thiersch, 2005).

The institutionalized justice of the welfare state thus has three central determining principles. Firstly, it developed historically through struggles for justice, even though the welfare state later mediated those struggles, so it can only come into effect in a society which can recognize and support conflicts as a basic pattern of sociation. Secondly, social justice is based on the foundations of social integration, in that a collective safety net is guaranteed. Thirdly and finally, it takes effect within the principle of restriction, which is not only regulated through the welfare state mechanism of entitlements and expectations but is also, especially, expressed in the fact that modern industrial societies tend to gravitate towards their social centre. In other words, they are based on a middle class which makes deviation either upward or downward appear socially acceptable rather than socially divisive. Moreover, similarly to the socio-philosophical model developed by Rawls (1975), as long as socially disadvantaged people feel collectively secure and able to participate, they will not necessarily see their position as unfair. In this context, consumption has become a medium of perceived justice and belonging as it conveys a subjective impression of participation. This is why, in the second half of the twentieth century, welfare state programmes and measures have mainly focused on enabling socially disadvantaged groups, in particular, to be consumers: what might well be described as a policy of "shopping basket justice".

As the boundaries of the welfare state have blurred due to globalization, the welfare state tie to the perspective of justice has loosened considerably, and it will erode even further in the future. The new dissolution of boundaries is replacing the traditional principle of restriction and mediatization. Exclusion and inclusion are no longer counterpoles; in a digital world they are shifting social points which constantly seem to change and are almost without borders. The financial and economic crises of the 2000s pulled the middle classes into a vortex of potential failure, striking at the social foundations of the welfare state model of justice. At the same time, the principle of justice that is the boundary – as in a restriction – has been lastingly damaged. Lastingly, as in the foreseeable future there seems to be no chance either of drawing nationally accessible boundaries or of achieving transnationally binding restrictions. What is new and obvious about the current global situation is that it tends to divide into two normative universes based on contradictory principles regarding their functioning and justification. The global money market knows no boundaries, but it is a lack of boundaries that human beings, with their social ties, cannot get to grips with, although it produces crises with serious consequences for them. This sends out shockwaves of injustice which cannot, however, lead to a socially related discourse on justice, precisely because the injustice which is sensed or assumed to exist cannot be determined in socially mediated contexts. Equally, doubt is growing about the policy on justice put forward by the welfare state, which is poorly equipped to combat this global affliction.

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In view of this it was only to be expected that the discourse on justice within society, previously centred on the welfare state, would blur into a number of discussions seeking new focuses. This blurring of boundaries means that within social work, we can no longer so routinely refer to the welfare state formula for justice; instead, we are forced to reconstruct a perspective on justice which is oriented towards our clients, enabling them to be repositioned in terms of social policy. This is where David Miller's theory of justice, with its empirical links, can help us. Miller distinguishes between three principles of justice which take effect in three empirically identifiable spheres of everyday understandings of justice. The first is an awareness that citizens have equal rights; the second is a meritocratic recognition that people deserve different incomes and earnings depending on the different values of their function within an organization, and the third principle is a feeling for the fundamental needs which exist within social milieus and social relationships – needs which are often not comparable. Miller thus proposes a pluralist account of justice in which the principle of equality among citizens has just as much of an effect as the meritocratic principle within organizations and the market, or the principle of need within solidary communities. These principles of justice can exist alongside one another, compete with one another and be related to one another.

Welfare state programmes aiming at justice do not promise it directly but take their rationale from the perspective of *striving for justice*. This absolutely allows us to imagine differentiated contexts of justice within a society. This is precisely why Miller's concept of justice, with its empirically distinct tableaus of justice, is of interest to us within social work. It proposes that different attitudes towards justice and practices have formed within the populations of modern industrial societies. People develop different views of justice because they live in different social relational contexts: as citizens, as the holders of certain roles within organizations, and as members of communities tied to certain milieus.

> Within solidaristic communities, the substantive principle of justice is distribution according to need. [...] The second mode of relationship is instrumental association. [...] Insofar as relationships among a group of people approximate to instrumental association, the relevant principle of justice is distribution according to desert. Each person comes to the association [...] with a set of skills and talents that he deploys to advance its goals. Justice is done when he receives back by way of reward an equivalent to the contribution he makes. [...] The third relevant mode of association relevant to my theory of justice is citizenship. [...] The primary distributive principle of distribution of citizenship association is equality. The status of citizen is an equal status: each person enjoys the same set of liberties and rights. (*Miller, 2003, p. 27ff*)

These three basic dimensions can (as in the case of state welfare benefits, for example) be related: the social consensus is that the unemployed, for instance, must be given "just" support to maintain their *citizenship* according to the *principle of desert* (defined by the wage gap principle) and the *principle of need* (determined according to the principle of a minimum living wage fit to maintain human dignity). "For

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Miller there thus seems to be no theoretical justification for norms of social justice, but instead only a practical foundation in human life. When principles are not lived out, where there is no longer a shared understanding, they vanish as principles of justice" (Schramme, 2006, p. 115).

This interpretation of Millerian logic is important for us; we can use it to bridge the gap to the universe of justice in which the clients of social work live. In this regard, our theory is that the way in which the socially disadvantaged experience and are able to live out justice depends on the effects of the socio-political safety net beneath them and the opportunities and obstacles this creates. Empirically, they can be seen in extended or regressive forms of coping. If the welfare state's web of justice, as in a socio-political safety net, rips apart, this can trigger attitudes in people which involve their sense of justice coming undone from the ties of the welfare state and, so to speak, undertaking a U-turn. After all, the sense of justice promoted by the welfare state even predominates within groups on the margins of society as long as they still perceive themselves as a social group which has socio-political recognition, though (being on the margins) they do not usually look for any comparison group. Usually, the principle of justice which they follow is the principle of direct care under the welfare state. However, if this socio-political safety net is under threat, even those on the margins look for comparison groups, though not usually within the intrasocietal hierarchy of status and income (which has of course traditionally been left alone) but within groups of similar status from which they can dissociate themselves. These are mainly migrants and refugees, onto whom their newly awakened sense of injustice is projected. A sense of justice is thus closely linked to the way people cope with life. This also means that the perspective of justice can be operationalized for the field of social work: extended agency, as encouraged on social pedagogical projects, can produce the social surplus which allows people to appreciate the consequences their own actions will have on other, thus directing their sense of justice away from antisocial splitting to a self-determined articulation of interests.

This is the set of conditions under which social work could transform social justice, making it effective on an everyday basis in a welfare state. In the future, social work's clients will remain dependent on the welfare state, just as the latter will place restrictions on global dynamics whenever they threaten social integration. However, the safety net which can be offered by the welfare state will remain fragile. For this reason, regional social and cultural networks offering social support and recognition will continue to grow in importance, though they will have to be mediated by social workers to make them accessible to our clients (see Munsch, 2005).

The fact that we stick to the perspective of the welfare state (thus formulated) cannot, however, mean that social work is, so to speak, isolated in a globalized social environment, trying to keep its beneficiaries away from global dynamics. After all, the globalization process, with its transnational dissolution of boundaries, is letting loose fundamental life-related issues which previously appeared to be tucked quietly away in the drawers provided for such problems by the nation state and welfare state.

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Even today, this is already on a greater scale than that which developed nationally. What effect do images of drastically collapsing situations of poverty in the world have on our domestic discourse on poverty? What notions of justice do migrants have when they come to our country and make demands? On a transnational level we cannot speak (at least not within the foreseeable future) of socio-politically backed social justice. Miller, too, differentiates between social and global justice, though he has reason to hope that there will be interaction between the global and the social perspective on justice.

> Globalizers are wrong to assume that the promotion of social justice is impossible in a globalized economy, because some elements of social justice have a positive (or at least a neutral) effect on economic efficiency, but they are right to point out that other elements, particularly the reduction of inequality element, become problematic to the extent that economic agents are able to escape the constraints imposed by nation-states. [. . .] In these circumstances, the pursuit of social justice requires a two-handed strategy. On the one hand, we have to look to new ways of promoting old principles [. . .] On the other hand, recognizing that nation-states have so far been the main instruments of social justice, we must look for ways of reinforcing their authority and effectiveness in the face of the global economy. This may mean creating new political units that correspond better than existing ones to the identities that matter most to citizens, or it may mean more cross-national institutions that can cope better with the challenges posed by globalization and multiculturalism. (*Miller, 2003, p. 264f.*)

The social pedagogical discourse of the future will have to play out on these three interacting levels. On the one hand, for example, it will have to keep addressing the subject of how the perspective of the welfare state can be reformulated *in terms of the civil society* such that people are emancipated from absolute dependence on the work-based society but can still rely on a socio-political safety net (see Böhnisch & Schröer, 2002). On the other hand, and at the same time, the perspective of setting up regional network structures *with a socio-political focus* will have to be spurred on. Finally, social work, too will have to react to the dissolution of national boundaries by making what were once international connections *transnational* and strengthening them, i.e. not only drawing socio-political comparisons with social workers in other countries but working on shared transnational topics which are fundamental to life and can no longer be confined within national boundaries.

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