

ABSTRACTS

László Andor: Social Policy in Hungary in European Perspective

Following the fall of state socialism, the dominant doctrines of social policy in Hungary have never been supportive of building a modern welfare state. The transition period followed the judgment of János Kornai, who considered the socialist system a 'premature welfare state'. Lately, Viktor Orbán introduced reforms towards a 'workfare society' resulting in a major divergence from European social policy standards. While poverty, as measured by the 'at risk of poverty or social exclusion' index has recently declined in Hungary, social mobility is extremely weak. Following the social investment paradigm that has developed in most European countries, and advocated by the European Union institutions, could become an alternative to the current prevailing trend.

Péter Győri: Homelessness – Gypsies – Child poverty

Since 1999, the annual „February 3rd” national survey among homeless people has brought to light not only that the ratio of people with a Roma background has been continuously increasing among homeless people, but also that this correlates with a restructuring of the group of homeless people, and the cumulation of further disadvantages. Together with the pauperization of wide groups of poor people, the ethnic, educational and labour-market segregation of the Hungarian Roma has become a major factor of homelessness in Hungary. Research also shows that, compared to the total population, the ratio of people with many children, and of those coming from families with many children, is much higher, and the risk of (housing) crises is more frequent among these families. Simultaneously, in many families homelessness keeps reoccurring from one generation to the other.

Csilla Rubovszky: Taking Care of the Elderly in the Family – the Situation of Family Caregivers in Hungary Today

The aim of this study is to define the circle of family members who, in spite of the new social risks, are willing to take care of the elderly, whose numbers have significantly grown because of a demographic ageing; to explore their real circumstances and their special points of view during this caregiving process in today's Hungary. To achieve the most reliable data a national representative phone survey was conducted at random with the implementation of a standard filter questionnaire. Summarising our results, it can be declared that similarly to international tendencies a family caregiver in Hungary can be described as a middle-aged woman with children, with a below-average income, living in a disadvantaged settlement sharing the flat with the family member she is taking care

of. Thus, starting to take care of the family member means a deterioration of the quality of their life in almost every respect and the only possible solution to this problem might be a balance between formal and informal caregiving.

Domonkos Sik: Social work in late modernity: challenges and practices

The article aims at elaborating a theoretical framework capable of highlighting the possibilities and unintended consequences of social work. In this first part critical theories of late modernity (Bourdieu, Giddens, Habermas, Honneth, Lash) are used in order to identify the idealtypical social pathologies emerging in late modernity. The goal of this analysis is to answer the question concerning the potential targets of social intervention. In the second part the historically evolved practices of social work are analysed. Based on the theoretical discourses those principles and technics are overviewed (psychodynamic, humanist, existentialist, behaviourist, cognitive, task-centred, crisis intervention, role theory, system theory, relational, Marxist, feminist), which frame the aims and intentions of actual social work. By analysing these two levels in parallel, those problems of late modernity may be differentiated, which are covered by social work and which remain in the blind spot.

Gergely Csányi: The structural embeddedness of the psychology of old age. The voluntary death of the elderly and the transcending of the loss-deficit paradigm

In the paper I present two case studies. First, I look at parallels between two short stories, written with an ethnographic sensibility, about the voluntary death of elderly people. Then I proceed to show how a shift occurs in the history of the psychological therapy of elderly people and psychological research into old age, which can be defined as the transcending of the loss-deficit paradigm. Taking a structuralist-constructivist world-systems approach, I then present the different old-age conceptions appearing in ethnography and psychology in different locations and times of the world system. The voluntary death of the elderly described in ethnography is closely related to the agrarian crisis erupting in the first half of the 20th century. In psychology, the transcending of the loss-deficit paradigm mirrors, first, the old-age concept of the welfare states, then that of the neoliberal order.