

Book review

Karen Healy 2005. *Social Work Theories in Context Creating frameworks for Practice.*

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Karen Healy is Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and Applied Human Sciences at the University of Queensland in Australia. She is a well know author of Social Work among her earlier publications is "Social Work Practices: Contemporary Perspectives on Change" (2000) and numerous publications on social work and social policy. Not only an academician she has practiced as a social worker in health, youth and child protection services. Her writing well reflects her practical approach to social problems making theory an useful tool in practice.

Social Work Theories in Context guides the reader through a wide range of social work theory trying, in my opinion successfully, the application to theory to practice. The book is divided in 11 chapters addressing a wide variety of issues. The first chapter "Practicing Social Work: Why context matters" is a sort of background chapter giving the argument for the book and the importance of addressing context issues. The second chapter " Dominant discourses in Health and Welfare" and the third of "Service Discourses" sorts of paints the picture of Public services and the fourth of "Alternative Service Discourses". The latter being a very important picture in a world with an increasing number of NGOs being active in old welfare states and always being active and important in many other countries. I was particularly happy to notice that Healy address the question of spirituality, the role of NGOs and ethnic and other minorities. All of them fields that are often ignored in the more general social work literature, leaving the subjects to be dealt with in the more specialized literature.

The rest of the chapters address theories in social work having specialized chapters addressing certain theories and theoretical development. The last two chapters address "Post-modern Approaches in Practice" and "Creating Frameworks for Practice". Those two chapters not only deal with practical work of social workers, but also with the larger political issues of the role and responsibility of social workers towards their clients and society.

The book has a well-developed bibliography and index making it a useful tool for those pursuing research and further studies. The references are concentrated upon social work publications and most of them from English, Australian and American publications. However, there are good exceptions illustrating Healy's interest in and awareness of social work traditions in other countries and geographical areas. What I miss in the bibliography is publications from outside the field of social work like in anthropology, social sciences, ethics and so on. From a global perspective I also miss a further discussion of the situation and challenges in those part of the world with dramatic large-scale problems of lack of food, political unrest and repressive policies. In an increasing global economy we are all part of such problems.

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