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Healy L.M. (2014). *Global Education for Social Work: Old Debates and Future Directions for International Social Work*, in: *Global Social Work: Crossing Borders, Blurring Boundaries*, eds. C. Noble, H. Strauss, B. Littlechild, Sydney, Sydney University Press, pp. 369–380

Introduction about the author and about International Social Work

Lynne M. Healy, author of the book entitled *Global Social Work: Crossing Borders, Blurring Boundaries*, is Professor and Director of the Centre for International Social Work Studies at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. She has served as Director in the school's Centre for International Social Work Studies for 21 years. Recent literature includes a special issue of the *Journal of Social Work Education on Globalization and Social Work Education*, published in 2012 with S. Gatenio-Gabel, the *Handbook of International Social Work: Human Rights, Development and the Global Profession* – with R. Link, Oxford University Press, 2012 – and a manual of resources on *Teaching Human Rights* – 2013, with M.C. Hokenstad and U. Segal, CSWE (The International Association of Schools of Social Work, n.d.).

The term 'International Social Work' was born in 1928 thanks to studies that many scholars have dedicated to this phenomenon to better define it; "international social work" is a phenomenon in the context of globalisation that aims to analyse all characteristics of the profession to find the best policies and practices to solve social issues that can be common to many countries. It is a common understanding that International Social Work deeply analyses global social and policy problems, focusing on improving and increasing human rights and developing many aspects and better applications of social work on migration, especially those in international agencies.

International social work encompasses various topics about very large areas of social work, including many global aspects in each sector of competence and concern (Healy 2017). Globalization is related to economic, political, and commercial society, but it can affect people's quality of life and some aspects of the global welfare programme.

In addition, it drives the operation and preparation of social workers in the school in all countries, including the least industrialised, the Third World. Globalization has also guided the attitude to work for those practitioners who considered their work strictly rooted in the local community and conditions (Lyons 2006).

Book chapter summary

In this chapter, Lynne M. Healy, the author of the book, underlines the importance that globalization has and will have in the field of social work. Lynne M. Healy in her work, describes three different definitions about international social work, exploring for all of them both the ideas of expansionism and becoming homegrown. The three directions are: international social works as a movement for universality in the professions and its standards; international or global social work as a form of practice; international social work as the roles and impacts of the profession on the global stage and global issue (Healy 2014).

With regard to the first point, the author compares the theses of authors who encourage a more universal approach to international social work with the opposing theses of authors who, on the other hand, push for more indigenisation. The second part aims to analyse whether global practice really exists and whether this label should be assigned to all those social workers adopting international labour mobility or whether it should be limited to international organizations working on global problems. Global practice includes both international social work and other traditional levels related to individual, group, and community. The debate is whether international social work must be considered only as an aspect of ‘imperialism’, or whether it can be truly effective if supported by adequately educated and professionals with a deep knowledge of the environment, laws, customs and habits of the international places where they operate. Moving on to the third issue, the importance of international social work in the resolution of global as well as individual and community issues is explained. This is also set out in the Global Agenda, which identifies four key areas for social work engagement social and economic inequalities, individual values, the importance of social relations and environmental sustainability. In addition, Healey believes that it is essential to have a minimum level of global literacy in order to operate effectively on the international stage.

With reference to the chapter analysed, the author states that in order to understand the above concepts, the reader must be familiar with the meaning of ‘globalisation.’ The writer Deepak gets ideas from Nandini Gunewardena, Ann E. Kingsolver school, and defines globalisation as “a set of social and economic processes that involve intensified global interconnectedness through the mobility and flows of culture, capital, information, resistance, technologies, production, people, commodities, images, and ideologies” (p. 370), all related to social work. The more globalisation strengthens, the more international aspects of social work lead scholars to recognize that many local problems have a global origin. Alphonse, George, and Moffatt write that globalisation is source of either negative or positive events. Some

negative manifestations of globalisation include pollution, new diseases, structural adjustment policies, migration caused by conflicts, climate change, or economic dislocation, and many more. More positively, there are opportunities for global exchange and networking, participation in global civil society movements, and rapid diffusion of helpful technologies including social work knowledge and interventions (p. 370).

Critical reflections

The main focus of the paper reflects the well-argued opinions with which the author expresses her attempt to persuade the reader of the need to increasingly integrate the global with the local, e.g., to convince of the urgency of collaboration between social service organisations in order to beat global problems, which therefore affect all populations around the world – albeit in different ways e.g., hardship due to social and economic gaps, discrimination, and human rights (Healey 2014).

The author accompanies her arguments with scientifically supported data and clear references to recent literature on the topic of international social work, bringing in both arguments in favour of her thesis and arguments against, such as the thoughts of authors who are increasingly pushing for a more indigenous orientation of social work.

Generally, the ideas the author puts forward are persuasive because they are accompanied by many descriptions, knowledge, and direct quotations from the literature that already exists, as well as statements presumably based on her own work and life experiences:

I argue that the profession should shed its ambivalence and encourage committed social workers from all parts of the world to pursue roles in international development and relief. It is up to educators to ensure that practitioners from social work programmes are well prepared to be partners with local experts and communities and to challenge negative models (p. 374).

In addition, some parts of the chapter offer autonomous points of reflection that the reader can dwell on even before continuing with the reading. The following questions are asked:

the first is whether there is such a thing as ‘international or global practice’ and secondly, if so, whether this is a good idea or something that should be discouraged as inherently imperialistic. And, if there is an international or global practice, how would social work educational programmes prepare students for these roles? Are current educational models adequate preparation? (p. 373),

could be a clear example of them.

Lynne M. Healy examines the issue of education in international social work practice in particular, emphasising the importance of global literacy in educating and training social workers who work on a national level, as well as those who aspire to a more international social work practice focused on solving global problems in addition to the problems concerning a single country or region. Global knowledge is also essential and necessary if social work wants to have an effect on global issues, aims to meet the requirements of the Global Agenda, and seeks to combat fears raised from the exacerbation of the risks of imperialism, which undermine the collaboration between North and South, e.g., between organisations working at a social level throughout the world, to solve problems affecting all the populations around the world (Healey 2014). In addition, the author delves into some issues in a comprehensive way by proposing sub-sections,

such as the one on Global Agenda (p. 375), on education for international social work practice (p. 374), on educational implications (p. 376), and on the need to defend global higher education (p. 376), to demonstrate and explain thoroughly the assumptions made. Finally, in discerning the author's ability to present valid support for many of the assertions made, the reader can recognise the validity of the main argument, although there is always the possibility of disagreeing with the thesis expressed in the paper.

Further research

Since the author already mentioned the Global Agenda launched in 2012 (p. 375), I can make an in-depth analysis about the Global Agenda valid from 2020 until 2030, officially becoming a global movement. The Global Agenda is a joint initiative of the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (IASSW, AIETS, ICSW, IFSW, 2020).

The 2030 Agenda is the new global framework for national and international efforts to find common solutions to the major challenges facing the planet, such as extreme poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, and health crises. The main change introduced in the Global Agenda is sustainable development, which recognises the close connection between human well-being, the health of natural systems, and common international challenges. The three dimensions of sustainable development are interlinked and indivisible: the environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) follow up on the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals that preceded them, and represent common goals on a range of important development issues: fighting poverty, eradicating hunger and combating climate change, to name a few of them. The 'Common Goals' mean that they apply to all countries and all individuals: no one is excluded, nor anyone should be left behind on the path needed to put the world on a sustainable route (Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite 2015).

Another document I would like to refer to is the third edition of 'International Social Work'. Professional Action in an Interdependent World. In particular, the authors, Lynne Moore Healy and Rebecca Leela Thomas (2020), refer to that "social problems are now shared by more and less economically developed countries far more often than in previous decades, making mutual work and exchange more desirable" (p. 3) and that "nations increasingly share social problems, and the actions that any nation takes can directly affect the well-being of the population of other nations" (p. 3).

So, it can be stated that the beliefs expressed by the author herself in the chapter of the book *Global Social Work: Crossing Borders, Blurring Boundaries*, which I have previously analysed, were objectively true and of increasing interest among all states of the world, as can be seen from the quotations I have just given. The interest in a progressively universal orientation of social work has grown even more in recent years, so that

social problems shared by the peoples of the world are recognised as global and have consequences on an international scale.

Conclusion

As early as 2014, Healy presented persuasive testing and investigation on the growing need for cooperation between countries in the field of international social work to jointly face the social hardships affecting populations around the world (Healey 2014). Today the world is still concerned about the topic and it is still trying to universalise social engagement by removing the boundaries between what is global, or international, and what is indigenous, or local, and we can state that countries are even closer to each other and they share and fight against the same social difficulties (Healey, Thomas 2020).

As already shown, the author has efficiently expressed her arguments on the topic of international social work, sometimes supporting them by scientific evidence or personal reflections, and other times justifying them through appropriate quotations from other authors, making this chapter of the book a clearly objective and academic paper covering a professional issue.

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