

# Social Work in Context

Theory and Concepts

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# CHAPTER 1

## Theory, Ideology and Discourse in Social Work

Whenever I pick up a newspaper and read about what is happening in the world and read about a particular event or story the question which comes into my head is 'Why is this so?' As soon as this thought comes to the front of my consciousness I would argue I am beginning to theorise. I am trying to understand why a particular event has happened, what might have caused this to happen and how might I make sense of it. When I talk to students about their experiences on their practice placements it is not uncommon for them to relate conversations they have had with some social workers who tell them to forget all that theory they have learnt at university now that they are in the real world. Of course that in itself is a theoretical statement albeit in an attenuated form about the nature of the real world as those social workers perceive it to be. It is not possible to go through life without trying to make sense of the social world that we live in. We need to do this in order to be able to function on a daily basis through understanding the challenges that a constantly changing world presents to us and our fellow human beings.

Social workers who hold to this idea of theoryless practice nonetheless have to construct some kind of conceptual framework whereby they can make sense of the world they inhabit in order to practise social work. The theories that they hold may not be explicit and they may not be formally thought through but they are theories nonetheless albeit constructed on an informal basis. Such informal theory develops from practical experience on a day-to-day basis. Informal theory is an important source of knowledge in social work but it is theory. The problem with social workers telling students to forget theory is that they do not make explicit the use of their own theories. More importantly they do not recognise the importance of making their thinking explicit so that their ideas can be open to challenge and therefore open to be investigated for their coherence and clarity. In so doing we are opening up our ideas about the world to critical scrutiny so that alternative explanations can be explored to see if we can construct more coherent explanations that will help us practise in a more effective manner.

It is not enough for student social workers to be assailed by demands to forget theory from their colleagues but depressingly for me successive government ministers

and their functionaries (see Nairey 2014) have also criticised social work education for its apparent commitment to teaching too much theory. As long ago as the 1980s, the criticism by the head of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) Jeffrey Greenwood was that social work education was focused excessively upon teaching anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice (AOP), by the time New Labour assumed power Health Minister Jacqui Smith (2002) was showing her concern:

Social work, like teaching, is a practical job. It is about protecting people and changing lives, not about being able to give a fluent and theoretical explanation of why they got into difficulties in the first place.

More recently former Minister of Education Michael Gove (2013) had this to say about social work training:

Theories of society predominate over an effective understanding of child development, the cognitive damage that accrues through neglect and appropriate thresholds for taking children into care.

In too many cases, social work training involves idealistic students being told that the individuals with whom they will work have been disempowered by society. They will be encouraged to see these individuals as victims of social injustice whose fate is overwhelmingly decreed by the economic forces and inherent inequalities which scar our society.

This analysis is, sadly, as widespread as it is pernicious. It robs individuals of the power of agency and breaks the link between an individual's actions and the consequences. It risks explaining away substance abuse, domestic violence and personal irresponsibility, rather than doing away with them.

As McLaughlin (2008) argues this criticism of theory that was taught in universities led to governments responding by introducing competence based education in social work which has focused more on assessing social work students through what they do at the expense of integrating this with what they understand. This process of distancing students from what is taught in terms of theory has developed through a number of iterations culminating in the further removal of some elements of social work education from universities and moving it into the workplace (Frontline, 2016). This book is therefore committed to enabling social workers to see the importance of what critics call a focus upon theories of society and to show how these theories are intimately related to practice. Thus the theories presented here have a central role to play in social work practice and it is argued that a practical focus without theory leads to ineffective and dangerous social work. The explicit use of theory enables social workers to think more about the context of the situation they are working with and enables them to plan and structure their work and therefore develop practical solutions with a far greater chance of success. Thinking and doing are inextricably linked, whilst thinking about theory we are practising social work, we are constantly evaluating and reflecting upon our actions. A useful term for this is praxis, a process whereby there is a continual interplay between thought and action which Gadamer encapsulates below.

As we think about what we want to achieve, we alter the way we might achieve that. As we think about the way we might go about something, we change what we might aim at. There is a continual interplay between ends and means. In just the same way there is a continual interplay between thought and action. This process involves interpretation, understanding and application in one unified process. (Gadamer, 1979: 275)

As professional social workers we have to justify our actions on a daily basis. This may be in a court room when presenting evidence in regard to a child protection case, in a multiagency team when we are working with other professionals or in the front room of a service user's house in justifying a decision we have made in relation to an aspect of their care. In making our decisions and justifying them then we should have good reasons for following a particular course of action. The more we can open up our reasoning to challenge and debate then the more we can justify our actions to others and develop effective practice. Using theory, both informal and formal, which is open to challenge is therefore at the heart of practising social work. When I first qualified as a social worker I made many mistakes, sometimes by being too driven to care before actually thinking about what I should be doing. I would take on too much work to show my more experienced colleagues how well I was coping. This of course led to some poor outcomes for the people I was trying to help. One comment by an experienced worker in my team who had no formal training made me stop and re-evaluate what I was doing she said:

Lester, you must care with your head as well as your heart.

Taking theory seriously, both formally and informally, speaks to the sense of what my colleague said to me and encapsulates all that is valuable in embracing theory in social work.

A theory can therefore be useful for helping us:

- predict what might happen in the future
- understand what caused a specific event
- it might help us decide on which action to take.

Theory helps us to reflect and think critically about social work and the specific practice situations that we face. In doing so it helps us to formulate the right kinds of questions to ask and to not make assumptions about what is being presented to us. One of the many inquiries conducted into child deaths in the UK concerned the death of Victoria Climbié (Laming, 2003). This is what Lord Laming had to say about some aspects of the practice that involved the agencies who came into contact with Victoria:

1.17 In his opening statement to the Inquiry, Neil Garnham QC listed no fewer than 12 key occasions when the relevant services had the opportunity to successfully intervene in the life of Victoria. As evidence to the Inquiry unfolded, several other opportunities emerged. Not one of these required great skill or would have made heavy demands on time to take some form of action.

Sometimes it needed nothing more than a manager doing their job by asking pertinent questions or taking the trouble to look in a case file. There can be no excuse for such sloppy and unprofessional performance. (Lamming, 2003: 3)

In a later section of his report he also reflected on issues of race:

16.3 I do not for one moment suggest that the ill-treatment of Victoria by Kouao and Manning was either condoned or deliberately ignored by those responsible for Victoria's case. However, it may be that assumptions made about Victoria and her situation diverted caring people from noting and acting upon signs of neglect or ill-treatment.

16.4 Examples of such assumptions at work may include the following:

- the social worker [my insertion] said that when she heard of Victoria 'standing to attention' before Kouao and Manning she 'concluded that this type of relationship was one that can be seen in many Afro-Caribbean families' because respect and obedience are very important features of the Afro-Caribbean family script. Victoria's parents, however, made it clear that she was not required to stand in this formal way when she was at home with them. Therefore it seems that [my insertion] assumption was unfounded, in Victoria's case at least.
- Pastor Pascal Orome told me that he attributed Victoria's potentially concerning behaviour to the fact that she had come 'freshly' from Africa. This of course was not the case – Victoria had been in Europe for almost a year by the time she came to his attention.
- On more than one occasion, medical practitioners who noticed marks on Victoria's body considered the possibility that children who have grown up in Africa may be expected to have more marks on their bodies than those who have been raised in Europe. This assumption, regardless of whether it is valid or not, may prevent a full assessment of those marks being made (Laming, 2003: 346).

A firmer grounding in theory about different cultures would have led to the possibility of asking pertinent questions and not acting upon assumptions without verification. A more considered study of and reflection upon Victoria's social background would have meant a better outcome for Victoria was possible.

## BUILDING THEORY

In order to develop explanations about the world that we encounter we build up our theory using concepts. A concept is a symbolic representation of an actual thing such as a house, a blanket, etc.. A concept may not necessarily have a link with an actual object but can relate to an idea such as oppression or freedom. When we think of concepts in this way we can use the term 'construct', i.e. a concept that has no physical presence.



Although we may not be able to touch or see oppression as an actual physical object we can certainly measure its consequences. Many people with black skin regularly experience oppression in the form of racism with the consequence that they may, for example, not be able to get the kind of employment they want. A Department for Work and Pensions sponsored study (Wood et al., 2009) sent similar Curricula Vitae (CVs) to the same employer advertising job vacancies. The only difference was in the name of the candidate. A candidate with a recognisable name from an ethnic minority was found to be less likely to be called interview than a candidate with a more anglicised name. The study observed that:

High levels of name-based net discrimination were found in favour of white applicants. This is consistent with the high levels of discrimination found in studies in other countries in recent years. This relates only to the early stage of the recruitment process, and there are limitations with the approach in terms of the occupations and vacancies that it was possible to cover. Nevertheless, candidates were denied access to a range of jobs in a range of sectors across British cities as a result of having a name associated with an ethnic minority background. (Wood et al., 2009: 5)

Theory is therefore developed through the building of concepts or constructs and observing how these concepts relate to one another. So theories of oppression derive from black people's experiences linking the concept of race with prejudice and discrimination which leads to, for example, lack of access to valued opportunities in society. So here we can see how the development of constructs such as race and discrimination are then linked to the construct of opportunity to develop an explanation for how black people are oppressed in the labour market. When two constructs are linked together like this we can define these as expressing a principle which can lead us to ask questions about the relationship between such constructs to see if there are connections between them which might lead us to investigate any causal links in order to help us to understand the effects of racism. As we investigate these links we begin to develop explanations which can lead us into creating theory. Theory is therefore the way we organise related concepts and principles to enable us to explain, in this case, how racism occurs in our example above, but it also helps us to predict what might happen to black people in general who experience racism.

Let's use another example that most people would recognise whenever they walk down the street.

### *Activity 1.1*

Sitting in a doorway on the high street where you often do your shopping a person sits with a tin box asking for change from the people passing by. Over the past few years you have noticed an increasing number of people asking for change on the high street. Some of the people have all their worldly possessions with them and they look as if they have been sleeping rough. You might ask yourself why there are an increasing number of people living homeless on the streets begging for money.



## DISCUSSION

For some people they may immediately try and explain the increasing numbers of people who are homeless in individual terms, that is, they are 'inadequate' in some way. They are unable to support themselves and therefore they have fallen on hard times. Some people may be more negative than this and suggest that they are homeless because they are lazy and are happy to scrounge off others. These ideas often become the focus for marginalising homeless people from the rest of society. However, if we stopped to think about homelessness and began to talk to homeless people about why they find themselves in this position then we might begin to build a completely different explanation for why some people find themselves living on the street.

From interviewing homeless people then we might get a number of reasons for their homelessness which might help us develop our understanding in more individual terms. However, this may not help us to understand why a person remains homeless; therefore we would need to look for explanations beyond the control of individuals. Here we might then investigate the way in which structural factors in society both contribute to a person becoming homeless, for example poverty, and factors which may contribute to a person remaining homeless, such as a lack of affordable housing or the rules on housing benefit. Therefore we begin to link these different concepts and constructs into developing a theory of homelessness. Thus theory helps us to name what we observe through the construction of concepts to recognise the relationships between concepts and to build an explanation which not only helps us to understand what we see with the person lying in a sleeping bag in a shop doorway but also to give us the information and reasoning to help us do something about it.

## IDEOLOGY

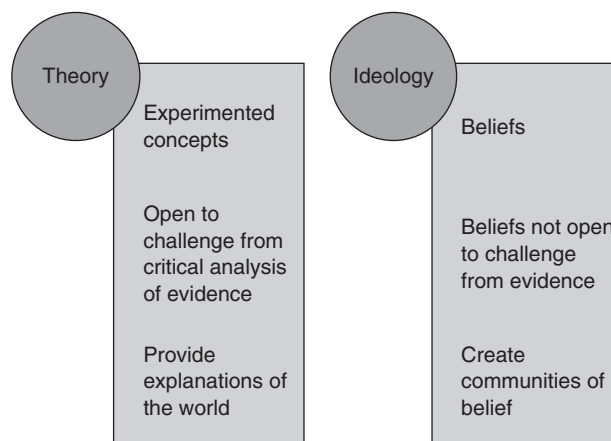
Theory and ideology are connected but are also fundamentally different in what they actually mean and how helpful they can be to further our understanding of social work. Theory, if we relate it to social work in its formal sense, seeks to understand the worlds of social workers and service users and the society they inhabit in order to develop effective social work practice. The applicability of a theory is measured by how well it enables us to make sense of and act in the world and if it fails to do so then we might very well seek another theory which helps us to do this better. Theory therefore is developed from an analysis of a particular subject and as a result of a systematic process of enquiry which can be followed in a logical and coherent way. Theory does not seek to convince us by emotion, to inspire us to take action or to make us feel guilty that we are not behaving correctly but constructs a rational framework of reasoning which presents a coherent view of the world which is open to challenge and therefore amendment. Theory is a result of an analysis. So theory is a consequence of

analysing the evidence and making the evidence available for others to scrutinise for its truthfulness and accuracy.

Ideology on the other hand, as the name suggests, takes us into studying ideas and how ideas help motivate us to action. Ideology and the specific ideas it promotes therefore seeks to recruit us into its ranks and not only offers us a way of seeing the world but also a way of changing it by giving us a blueprint which we can follow. Political ideologies are very much involved in this process. In the next chapter we will look at the work of Hayek and the role of markets which has become very influential in the organisation of social work and the services it delivers. The theory of markets which Hayek developed has then been expanded and taken up by many politicians, for example, from the right of the political spectrum (but not exclusively) to persuade us that this approach is the most beneficial for our wealth and prosperity. Hayek's theoretical work therefore provided the underpinning ideas by which those politicians and thinkers who adopted his approach sought to convince others of the correctness of their view of society and the way forward to a better society as they see it.

Ideologies are far less open to a process of critical evaluation because they present a vision of what they consider to be a better world which is self-evident if only we believe in the vision. Examples of this kind of thinking can be identified in forms of Christian and Islamic fundamentalism or in the political sphere, for example, Fascism and Stalinism.

Ideologies try to persuade us not by dint of rational argument but by drawing upon our beliefs, sometimes our prejudices, and our aspirations for ourselves and others. Ideologies operate to convince by presenting to us a vision which is more compelling, efficient and effective but also morally justified and better than other visions of how we should be and act.



**Figure 1.1** What is the difference between ideology and theory?

## DISCUSSION

Many politicians from across the political spectrum have emphasised the importance of work as a means to escape poverty. Over the past 20 years successive governments in the UK have increased sanctions for unemployed people, requiring that they spend time searching for work (currently 35 hours a week). Much of these expectations are underpinned by the notion that the individual is solely responsible for finding work and if only they were motivated they would be able to return to employment and begin to move out of poverty. However, figures from the Department for Work and Pensions (2015) show that:

Work does not provide a guaranteed route out of poverty in the UK. Two-thirds (64 per cent) of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one member works.

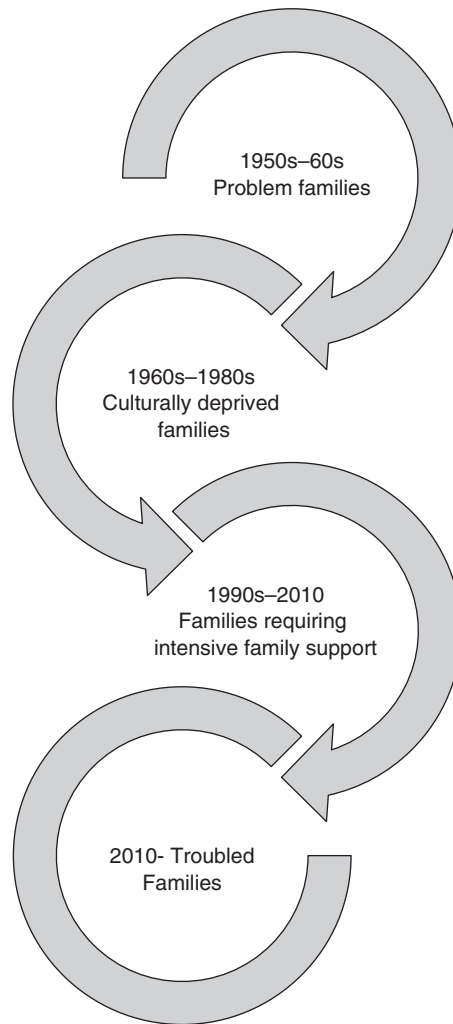
From this process we can then begin to develop some explanations regarding the possible causes of poverty. In turn they will help us to be more effective in offering help to service users living in poverty because we might assume without this knowledge that a person in work will be necessarily better off and therefore may not require certain kinds of financial help and advice. Social workers have been slow to recognise the impact of poverty upon service users and their lack of knowledge and commitment to this subject has been documented by Becker (1997) and by Parrott (2014). The consequences have been acknowledged by service users who have criticised social workers' lack of theoretical and practical knowledge regarding the impact of poverty on their lives (see Parrott, 2014).

Thus a lack of theoretical and practical knowledge in respect to any issue which confronts social workers and service users leads ultimately to an impoverished service for those people social workers seek to help.

## DISCOURSE

Discourse is a concept closely related to ideology but focuses on the way we think about the world and how we act in it as influenced by the use of language. In this conception it is language which influences how we think and how we act. Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is important here as the word archaeology conveys how we can unearth the way we talk about the world, how we can dig down and scrape away at the different layers of meaning which convey how we understand the world as it is and then how we act in it. Discourses are: systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, and beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak.

For example, the way certain families who have been subject to social work intervention have often been described in pejorative terms which can be traced back to the early days of social work through to the present day, so that a fairly cursory reflection from the 1950s onwards would give us a lineage of terms:

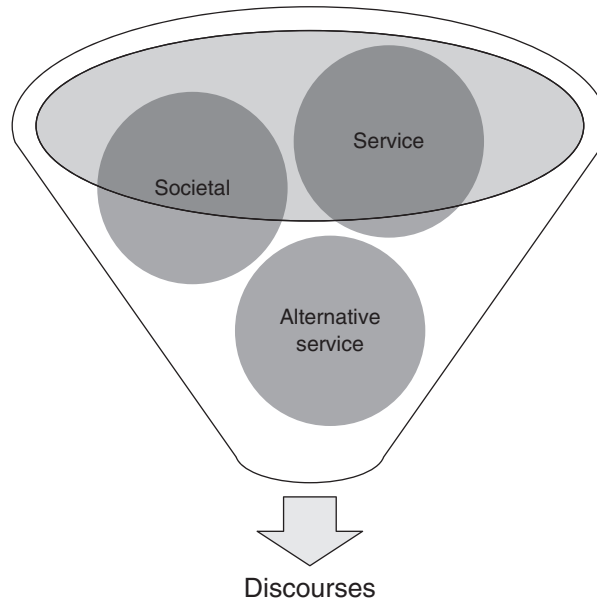


**Figure 1.2** Families subject to social work intervention

Discourse, as argued above, has played an important role in the work of Michel Foucault (1972) who was particularly interested in how certain disciplines such as law, medicine, science and social science were constructed through discourse. Healey (2005) in developing some of Foucault's ideas on this subject has identified a number of overarching discourses around social work (see Figure 1.3).

## SOCIETAL DISCOURSES

Those which tend to dominate at present are medical, legal and economic. As we will see below in our example of discourses of risk in social work, these dominant discourses impact upon how we see service users in terms of why they become clients of social work and what their status is. Healey argues, as does Foucault, that social work tends to defer intentionally or otherwise towards the medical, legal and policy



**Figure 1.3** Social Work Discourses

making professions. This relates to social work's relative powerlessness in society compared to the medical and legal professions.

## SERVICE DISCOURSES

These discourses concern the way social workers understand the issues that they are required to work with both in relation to service users and the organisations which employ social workers. It involves, in the main, discourses derived from sociology and psychology. This book will look at some of these discourses derived from economics, management theory and sociology.

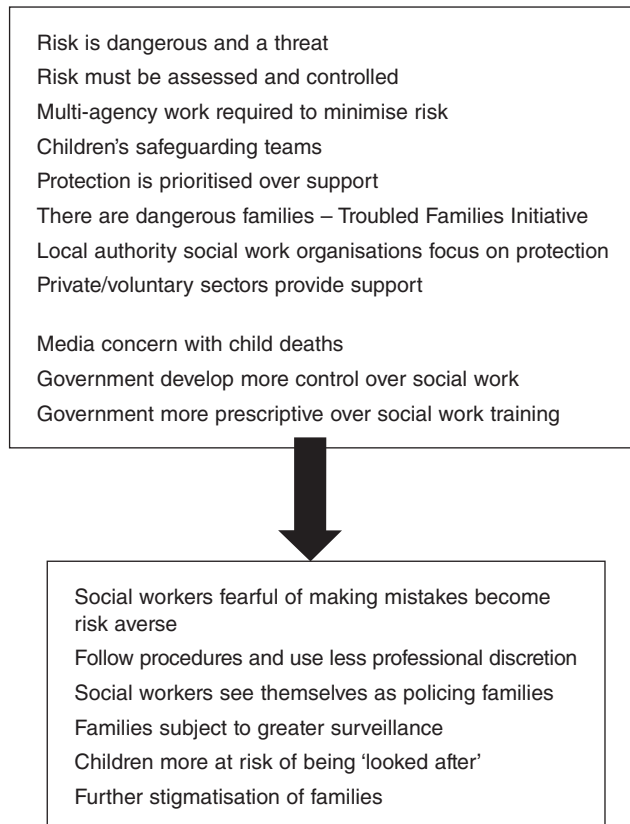
## ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DISCOURSES

These discourses derive from the rise in power and prominence of social and service user movements. The importance of service user involvement and the importance of social justice and human rights in social work is a relatively recent phenomenon. To give a personal example, my training as a social worker in 1979 did not dwell to any great extent on any of these aspects explicitly and were certainly not a necessary requirement to be studied on the course.

## EXAMPLE

In Chapter 4 we will look at risk and the theory of moral panic investigating its usefulness in explaining how social work has become more risk averse particularly in

working with children and families. It is possible to construct a specific discourse of risk which could show how social workers and service users are therefore influenced by such a discourse. You may find it useful to go to Chapter 4 before reading this section.



**Figure 1.4** Discourse of risk in child protection

## DISCUSSION

In the first text box above we can see how social workers think and talk about risk as it occurs within social work organisations. Risk as a threat must be controlled by introducing more complex procedures to control what social workers do when assessing families. The fear of risk results in governments becoming more sensitive to the political implications of child protection and how the media portray professional response to such cases. The amplification of the discourse of risk then has significant consequences for social workers and families (see the second text box). Discourse analysis therefore follows the process of construction of how social and psychological theory, social work practices and the organizations in which social workers are employed influence the way they understand and speak about their work and the way they practice. Discourses therefore provide an archaeology of ideology, unearthing the assumptions, scratching away at the ideas and excavating the practices under the umbrella of ideology.

In this book you will come across different theories such as Hayek's which may influence ideologies in society, such as that of the free market, and which may well reflect different discourses of social work, for example that social work has to provide value for money, be more efficient and produce more for less. It is for you and this book to use this framework to identify how these different concepts and theories interact with one another in order to clarify their practice value for social work.

This book is aimed at social work students who have difficulty in engaging with theory. The book will apply a range of concepts and theories to help students make sense of some key topics in social work. The book will not cover in their entirety the works of the authors presented here. There are a number of books which do this far better than I could and you are advised to seek these out. For example Garrett (2013) has provided an excellent overview of a range of authors who have important insights which help us understand social work and therefore you are advised to read his book for that purpose.

This book will investigate a number of social work issues which in my view make a significant impact upon service users and social workers. Its aim is to enable social workers and social work students to use ideas drawn from different theories to help them understand their everyday practice. This is not to say that you should not critically evaluate the theories presented. I hope the book comes from a critical standpoint and in so doing can develop your own understanding of the issue under investigation. Theory can be used for a number of purposes to understand the nature of social work: it can enable social workers to work directly with people who use social work services; it can help social workers to understand the social context within which people who use social work services live their daily lives; and finally it can help social workers to understand the nature of social work itself by, for example, examining the organisational context which influences their working lives. Sibeon (1990) outlines these distinctions more explicitly so that social work theory explores:

1. What social work is. These theories are more formal which you might have encountered studying on a previous course, for example, concerned with understanding society using such social theories as Marxism or Feminism. These kinds of theories try to explain the nature and meaning of social work within the context of wider society. For example, there has been a renewed interest in applying Marxist theories. Authors such as Lavalette, Ferguson and Mooney have all applied ideas derived from Marxism to enable social workers to understand the nature of their working lives. For example Ferguson and Lavalette (2004) argue that the concept of alienation can help social workers understand the increased feelings of powerlessness and loss of control they experience over their work.
2. Understanding the world of the service user in terms of the social context which impacts upon them. For example, service users who may experience the challenges of mental health or who have a learning disability are often discriminated against. One such theory which seeks to explain these experiences will be covered in this book, the theory of stigma. This theory has recently attracted new interest from writers such as Wacquant and Tyler (see Chapter 6) who use the original insights developed through the work of Goffman to further understand its significance within a wider social context.



3. Theories which help social workers in their practice to work in a planned and organised way directly with service users. These practice theories, such as task centred work, or crisis intervention, will not form any part of this book.

This book covers the application of theory derived from Sibeon's first two classifications. Chapter 2 begins with an exploration of how the idea of markets and consumerism has begun to dominate many aspects of service delivery in social work. In doing so it will explore Hayek's approach to markets and his influence upon policy and the political debate on market economies. The goal of such authors as Hayek is to reduce the role of the state in all aspects of people's lives so that they are free to make their own choices as to how they want to live. In particular we will be looking at the influence of introducing market-like policies into social work to achieve such freedom. These policies have influenced successive governments, both Labour and Conservative, and have assumed a new resonance in the current policies pursued by the Conservative government in the United Kingdom. However, at the time of writing the current Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May has sought to apparently modify her government's stance by arguing that the government and the state does have a role to play in ensuring the fairness of markets. It remains to be seen how far her government will modify such unfairness.

Chapter 3 will then explore a related topic: managerialism. If the policy of using the market to deliver services has gained an increasing foothold then it has been argued that we need to bring in the techniques of modern private sector management to regulate the operation of markets. Management techniques that are imported from the private sector are, it is argued, essential to achieve the effectiveness and efficiency that modern markets can bring to social work. Markets therefore have to be managed and this has led to the proliferation of policy and procedure to shape the delivery of social work.

Chapter 4 looks at the way risk has come to dominate thinking in certain aspects of social work. A number of theories will be introduced to explore some of the reasons why social work departments and social workers have become increasingly risk averse. These will include theories of risk society and moral panic and it will also consider the arguments of Furedi (2005). Within the constraints that an increase in managerial control brings to social work we will explore the possibilities that still occur for social workers to exercise discretion and maintain elements of control over their work.

Chapter 5 will explore the work of Pierre Bourdieu where co-author Noreen Maguinness will outline the impact of Bourdieu's thought upon how social workers think about and act within Bourdieu's frame of reference in relation to his concepts of field and habitus.

Chapter 6 will consider some recent developments in renewing the theory of stigma and will explain how authors such as Wacquant (2008a and 2008b) and Tyler (2013) incorporate ideas of stigma into a broader structural analysis of how certain groups are oppressed by the modern neoliberal state.

Chapter 7 considers anew theories of poverty which focus upon the lifestyles and cultural beliefs of the poor. Considerable attention has been given by Prime Minister Theresa May to the problems of poverty outlined in her first speech when she became prime minister. This concern with the poor, I will argue, has been

underpinned by government policy which uses such cultural and lifestyle analysis to inform its policy on poverty alleviation.

Chapter 8 concludes with an investigation into Sklair's theory of globalisation and looks at the implications of his analysis for social work. It will explore both the supply side of social work in terms of the delivery of services and the challenges to social workers in working with an increasingly diverse population of service users that the onset of globalisation has wrought.

In analysing the concepts and theories presented in this book it is important to assess their usefulness for practice. Any theory presented to you in this book must be able to contribute in some meaningful way to your understanding of social work practice. This may require considerable effort on your part to think about the concepts presented and how they may contribute to your understanding of theory. This involves an act of imagination for you to think through the links that the ideas presented in this book have with practice. There is no easy fit between theory as it is presented and the reality of practice as you experience it. The theories presented in this book have to be thought through into your practice. There may be many competing theories which may be relevant in a particular situation but the point is that this is an active process whereby you are able to evaluate the worth and relevance of a theory by the way in which it enables you to work more creatively and effectively with service users. Social workers are increasingly expected to follow pre-given guidelines and procedures, apply a risk assessment here and follow a safeguarding procedure there, but what they must do more of is explicitly link thought with action. Being able to theorise and draw out connections between the constructs we make enables our practice to be a product of careful and serious deliberation. By following this process the social worker becomes professional in the sense of being able to draw upon a knowledge base, put that knowledge to practical use and be able to justify their practice because of the thoroughness of their deliberation in applying theory which is valid and relevant to the situation in hand.

In order to do this, social workers might consider the following questions:

- What does the theory say about human nature?
- Does the theory have any implications for anti-oppressive practice?
- How can I apply the theory to the case/situation under consideration?
- Why is the theory applicable?
- In what ways does the theory help to understand the situation?
- How did I apply the theory?

These questions can help you in that process of deliberation identified above in which the social worker truly engages with a process of thinking through the implications of theory for practice. Taleb draws together the importance of the theoretical and the practical and how they weave together:

Half the time I am intellectual, the other half I am a no nonsense practitioner. I am no nonsense and practical in academic matters, and intellectual when it comes to practice. Taleb (2007: 296)

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the importance of theory for social work practice. It has shown how theory consciously applied can help social workers understand the lives of service users and the social context in which social work operates. Theory was compared to ideology and discourse and it was concluded that an understanding of both ideology and discourse are important in showing how ideas about social work and wider society can influence the way that social work is understood and practised.

## RECOMMENDED READING

- Garrett, P. (2013) *Social Work and Social Theory*. Bristol: Policy Press.  
Healey, K. (2014) *Social Work Theories in Context: Creating Frameworks for Practice*, 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.