



## **Social Work and Solidarity; two of a kind?**

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# Why supporting vulnerable populations? >

## Deservingness

**CARIN:** Five criteria of deservingness:

1. **Control**; the less control people have over their neediness, the more deserving they are of solidary actions;
2. **Attitude**; the more grateful or compliant, the more deserving people are;
3. **Reciprocity**; having earned support in earlier times, the more deserving people are of solidary support;
4. **Identity**; the closer to “us” (kinship, residence, ethnicity) people are, the more deserving they are;
5. **Need**; when needs are high, people are more deserving.

Control appears to be the most important although the weight of different criteria seems to differ per vulnerable group.

Oorschot, W. van, F. Roosma, B. Meuleman and T. Reeskens (eds.) (2017) *The Social Legitimacy of Targeted Welfare. Attitudes to Welfare Deservingness*. Edward Elgar: Cheltenham.



# Social work and solidarity initiatives; definitions

**Social work** is defined in 2014 by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW):

*Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversity are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, the humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being.*

**Solidarity initiatives** in the SOLIDUS program:

*Solidarity is a) an object or goal of politics, b) a set of socio-political practices realizing such politics, and c) a disposition towards practice.*

*Inclusive initiatives and activities performed by volunteers on behalf of vulnerable populations that can be identified as 'others' who do not belong to the volunteers' class, gender, religion or ethnicity. These initiatives go beyond the inner circle (not including informal and unpaid care for elderly parents, community care, volunteer work for the own sport club, gender based activism and all other initiatives that are based on 'sameness'.)*



# Cross-national varieties of social work

**Chelsea** (USA): social work as an empowering and activating activity to challenge the social structures and power relations in their neighbourhood (*activism > structural reforms*).

**Johannesburg** (South Africa): survival strategies to create some community harmony in order to avoid further risks (*awareness and maintenance*).

**Amsterdam** (The Netherlands): executors of the 'participation society', stimulating individuals and communities to cope with adverse effects of welfare reforms by helping themselves together; managerial regime

**Belgium**: human rights and social justice approach, focus on individual needs and structural barriers.

**UK**: executors of welfare reforms under a managerial regime.

Ferguson, I. (2004), Neo-liberalism, the Third Way and Social work, *Social Work & Society* 2 (1)

Gradener, J. (2016), *Keys to the Community*, PhD Thesis, Utrecht University

Robinson, K. (2013) Voices from the Front Line: Social Work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers, in Australia and the UK, *British Journal of Social Work* (2013) 1–19

Vandekinderen, C., R. Roose, P. Raeymaeckers and K. Hermans (2014), Sociaalwerkconferentie 2018, Sterk Sociaal Werk. Eindrapport



# Commonalities in legitimation (community development only?)

- 1) Being able to fuse professional intentions with the actual experiences at the local level into a shared community development effort,
- 2) Being diligently responsive to the needs of local people for education, and material and moral support,
- 3) Being able to settle local activities. This requires formulating new developmental challenges, structure ongoing activities and link these activities to local and regional networks as well as more long-term policy objectives, and
- 4) Using personal experiences and skills as either a model for community engagement or as a basis to connect to the experiences of the community.

Gradener, J. (2016) Keys to community. PhD thesis, Utrecht University



## Foodbank

- Food supply by
- 10,000 volunteers,
- For weekly 140,000 'clients'
- Funding by ESF and National Postcode Lottery



## Timon

- Christian support for families and young people who have to leave youth care >18
- 400 professionals/
- 300 volunteers



## Refugee support

- 40 to 150 volunteers per municipality, local funding, integration and social support refugees
- Aim: participation and integration





## Reading and writing

Language education by

- 4,000 volunteers, to
- 50,000 functional illiterates
- Funding by the Ministry of Education and private partners



## Debt support

- 1350 volunteers help
- 4800 individuals with
- their financial situation.



# We Help

- Media tool for mutual support.
- 25,000 people supported, by
- ?? Volunteers.
- Funded by pension funds, banks, municipalities and private parties

