

Political democracy is necessary, but not sufficient¹

The contribution of Jane Addams' Theory of „Integral Democracy“ for the Analysis and Change of Power-Relations – in and for Social Work

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Abstract

According to David Gil (1998, p. 167–172) social workers have in their code of ethics a mandate to combat social injustice and oppression, but they are very helpless, when they are challenged to put this mandate into practice. The cause, according to him, is that they don't have a differential theory of power-structures and their influence on individuals which could guide their goals and action lines. To develop knowledge about power means to give up the „happiness of ignorance“ not being bothered by knowledge – and I would add, they would have to give up the „happiness to rely happily on the concept of empowerment“ which has – in western social work – turned out to be a placebo and solution for just every problem, as Cox & Pawar showed (2006, p. 78–83). Yet, if social work practitioners would know their theoretical history they would detect that social work has a very sophisticated theory of power abuse and democratic power-sharing. It has been developed by Jane Addams in her book „Democracy and Social Ethics“, published in 1902.² So, let me show, how current it is concerning its analysis and also its vision which is till to-day waiting for its realisation. Before introducing her basic ideas, I start with two thesis about the necessity of democracy and the causes why it isn't sufficient and therefore has to be extended in the horizontal and vertical social dimension.

1 For this formulation I am indebted to Mario Bunge in his book „Political Philosophy“, 2009, p. 353

2 Some chapters have been published in The Atlantic Monthly, the International Journal of Ethics, The American Journal of Sociology and The Commons (p. vii). The main reference for democratic social pedagogy is till to-day John Dewey with his book „Democracy and Education“ published 14 years later in 1916! (See Kersten Reich: „Demokratie und Erziehung nach John Dewey aus praktisch-philosophischer und pädagogischer Sicht“ for a poignant critique of the lack of democracy in the actual German school system and its educational practice).

Part of

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First Thesis

„Democracy‘ as a central idea of a specific political culture and political democracy as institutionalised social rules and practice of power-sharing, -distribution and corresponding procedures is necessary, in order to overcome an organismic concept of society defined as a „social whole“, „totality“ or „social body“ which is still present as an implicit or openly declared culture in many institutional settings – be they familial, educational, economic, political or religious. According to these concepts of society the individual has no value of his or her own. She or he is subordinated to a whole or totality and has the duty to stabilise it by adequate role-functioning – which means obeying to the goals, interests and norms of the power-holders. It also means to accept their double morality which consists of rights with almost no duties for the members of the upper stratas of social systems and many duties with (almost) no rights in the lower stratas. Furthermore, there is almost no trespassing of feudal caste, property or class structures which function as barriers. This cultural and structural model of society can only be overcome when it gets replaced by a model which assumes cooperative as well conflictive relations between individuals and social groups. This means with individuals who have their own human worth, dignity, goals, who are capable of critical reflection and deliberation, who are free to organize themselves – and thus are competent to develop their own laws to whom they want to obey.

To the *slow historical deconstruction* of the organic, partially mystic-religious views of society – think of the huge trace of blood of the religious and other wars, the inquisition, the numberless dictatorships all over the world etc. – the following ideas and social developments have made their contribution (Bobbio, 2009, p. 68):

- first, the rising image of human beings as capable of reflection and reasonable judgement who doesn't have to follow divine laws interpreted and administrated by the church and aristocracy;
- second, the theories about the social contract (Locke, Rousseau, Kant);
- third, the birth of political economy with its view of the individual as *atomistic homo oeconomicus* which replaced the *zoon politicon* defined

according to his membership to the whole of society, but very important also

- the utilitarian philosophy from Bentham to Mill which replaced and thus reduced the differentiation between the Good and the Bad to the subjective states of pleasure and harm of individuals; and thus it dissolved the problem of the common good into the sum of individual goods, preferences and the happiness or luck of the greatest number.

But who believes that the holistic old view of the „social body“, which doesn't conceive of „individual“ and „society“ as separate, but related entities, is a matter of the past, closes the eyes in the face of much contrary evidence:

- it is the implicit or explicit legitimation base of patriarchally structured families which protect the honor of the family with all means. You don't find it – this is the cliché – only in migrant but also in indigenous families: in Switzerland we had the case of a church representative who killed the lover of his wife with the motive to restore the destroyed honor of the family.
- The same holds for large sections of economic organisations: What is systematically overlooked by the endless bashing of neoliberalism focused on market-fundamentalistic individualism is that many, especially transnational corporations are structured as „total wholes“ which means that the employees have to accept unconditionally the decisions of the management about the profit rate, the salaries of managers and board members, about fusions, investment goals, transfer of jobs into countries with masses of low paid jobs including child labor not securing the barest needs for a decent living and having no labor rights etc. Whole firms are sold and resold with all their employees. It remembers the times where slaves, soldiers, believers of a specific religion were sold or were the price for the winners and losers of wars. (There was a time where Swiss banks made advertisements with the slogan that „if the banks are going well, the whole population of Switzerland would be well and happy!“) – In short, what we have to-day is not pure individualism, which critics of neoliberalism want

us to believe, but a very sophisticated combination of individualism with holism which is obviously very difficult to detect.

- Holistic models of social systems have also survived in religious organisations: A professor of catholic theology, Marianne Heimbach-Steins, catholic theologian, analyses this taking the example of sexual violence against children. She writes: "The long practice of acceptance and keeping secret this delict is a relict or survivor of a theologically outdated conception of church as *'societas perfecta'*, as *'perfect community'* which thinks and acts along its own theologically legitimated laws and rules. [...] Theologically speaking we have the view of a *'holy church'* which *as a whole* can't commit sins." This „clerical absolutistic dominance-structure leads to take the protection of the purity of the church as holy institution more serious than the protection of children dependent from their religious mentors and leaders (Heimbach-Steins, In: ICEPT Argumente, 6. Jg, 2. Ausgabe, Mai 2010).

But we find the concept of the „social body“ also in theories of social work, f.e. in the central notion of „totality“ in Marxist theory of the 60ies (following Hegel), where clients are seen as supporters of a social revolution defined by their leaders (Hollstein, 1973). Then we have – in the same line of thinking – the concept of functionally differentiated totalities, structured by binary codes in Luhmanns theoretical conception of in- and exclusion (Bommes & Scherr, 2000; Pantucek, 2012). In this conception there is no way to find out who and why and to what end actors define and are responsible for exclusion, be it the many forms of discrimination, repression, violence, legitimated by sexism, racism, nationalism, or any other form of superiority. And at the same time there is no way to find out who is responsible for social inclusion, crossing social barriers and the sharing of power.

And on a practical level we find in many manuals of psychiatric and social diagnosis almost only questions about the good role-functioning, the coping of individuals according to the norms of social role expectations which are only reflecting societal common-sense without asking, if they are legitimate. And as a last example, social workers are – according to the actual dominating

„code“ of „employability“ – again compelled to select between usable and unusable clients for the labor market and thus society.

In short, one can say, that political liberalism and democracy are absolutely necessary to free people from repressive holistic systems and their exploiting, colonising and repressive power-structures, but it is, as we shall argue, not sufficient.

Second Thesis

Democracy is necessary, but not sufficient as long as it stays mostly reduced to guarantee and protect institutionalised political and economic liberalism layed down by constitutions and legislations. Human beings don't have only needs of freedom, of participation in affairs which are concerning them. They also have needs of physical protection, social and psychic security, and of having a perspective for their life. Many democracies are unbalanced concerning the constitutional and legislation level in giving priority to liberty rights over social security rights.

Thus, democracy is insufficient because and when

- in many democracies, as I just showed, holistic codes and more or less autocratic social systems have survived, so that in these social contexts not even freedom and participation are guaranteed;
- the strongly cherished and politically supported, unquestioned values are limited/restricted to liberty, especially economic liberty and democratic participation;
- democracy is insufficient, because it is often reduced to communication and voting procedures – one man/one woman one vote, the majority rule – which gets the theoretical support of Habermas and Luhmann. These procedures are often disadvantageous for minorities (see the three initiatives in Switzerland which have been accepted democratically: the anti-

minarett initiative, the initiative to send back most asylum seekers to their home country; the initiative to put sexual delinquents lifelong in jail without possibility to get a prognostic reappraisal of their situation);

- it is also insufficient, because its codes of social justice and social legislation are ethnocentrically restricted to the citizens of a national society, while the laws protecting economic freedom – as *lex mercatoria* of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation, the OECD – cover the whole world society (Fischer-Lescano & Möller, 2012) – and, most important,
- because the priority of the value of freedom and the corresponding legislation, also f.e. the right to private property for corporations, freedom of trade, tax legislation – are all constitutionally supported and thus democratically decided. But practically implemented they produce worldwide poverty, working poor and at the same time support the growing of enormous income and fortune disparities. (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010; Pogge, 2011).

In relation to the last point, it is important to realise that the laws about taxation, banking accountability, mental property, taxation of heritages and fortunes etc. – established by national, political representatives in the Bretton Woods institutions – have made possible the accumulation of huge corporate and familial capital not bound to any meritocratic performance and duty, but to familial-biological and thus feudal criterias (Kissling, 2008). Pogge would add: they made possible that the profiteurs of these laws don't have to have a bad conscience, if they hide about 18 billions dollars in offshore regions as a study showed recently. They can still believe in a just world ruled by democratically produced laws (Ross & Miller, 2002). On the other side we have a social legislation for the lower and lowest classes of society which binds minimal subsidies to the fulfillment of specific duties; and these subsidies can be cut till zero, when the performance of the recipients doesn't conform to the requirements of the social welfare legislation. Thus, it isn't just an idea out-

way of reality to speak of a refeudalisation of society, accompanied and stabilised by a double moral, one for the upper and one for the lower classes.

In other words: An empirical analysis of the long-term societal effects of democracy on the social micro and macro level shows that it produces political decisions and legislations which are legal, but not legitimate, which means socially unjust, generating and supporting neofeudal social structures, unemployment and poverty – and on an international dimension kills millions of people (Pogge, 2002). So, what could be an answer to these problematic fallacies of democracy?

Third Thesis

On the base of the problems described in relation to the first two thesis, one has to formulate a third one: Political democracy must be extended by a horizontal social dimension which means – according to Jane Addams – to all social systems: the family, education, economy, and social work. It becomes then first an opportunity to learn about negative and positive power-structures, to change their social rules and to practice democratic participation in all relevant contexts. Second, democracy has to be supplemented by a social dimension of distributive social justice, which is equivalent to the value of freedom. Addams calls this „integral democracy“.

Christopher Lasch (1981 & 1965) in his anthology about „The Social Thought of Jane Addams“ writes: „Hull House, as she conceived it, [...] was not [...] principally a form of good works. It aims not so much at helping the poor as at understanding them by understanding the chasm that industrialism had opened between social classes. [...] the middle class, which had cut itself off from the proletariat, would never begin to understand the degree to which its own culture (of egocentric individualism, StB) has been impoverished thereby. It was also imperative that the social worker not only helps people but also study the conditions under which they lived. [...] Her greatness, as Emily Balch called it, lay precisely in her capacity to ask the kind of questions most people prefer to ignore. (p. xiii–xiv) [...] She was an activist, to be sure,

[...] and I have admittedly minimized that aspect of her career, on the grounds that it is already sufficiently familiar. This anthology tries to rescue the less familiar, but to my mind more important, side of Jane Addams' life. It shows her as theorist and intellectual – a thinker of originality and daring.“ (p. xv)³

For Addams „[...] the identification with the common lot which is the essential idea of Democracy becomes the source and expression of social ethics.“ (p. 11). Thus, democracy is also „a rule of living and a test of faith in the essential dignity and equality of all men“ (p. 11). It means „including all men in our hopes“ and to realise that „all men are hoping and are part of the same movement of which we are a part“ (In: Knight, 2005, p. 5). With other words: democracy is the victory over and end of feudal, caste-like structural patterns and double morality. It makes empathy and cognitive learning processes between people of different classes, societal positions and roles possible. But social change will only occur by a change of the existing social rules to new ones promoting „integral, social democracy“.

So, let me make a mental „parcours“ through the social systems she analyses in order to show what she means with her „core concept“. For this purpose I present her central ideas starting with identifying the basic problem of power distribution, followed by asking about the causes for it. This leads her to an ethical judgement, followed by some actions guidelines. Yet, she writes: „No attempt is made to reach a conclusion, not to offer advice beyond the assumption that the cure for the ills of Democracy is more Democracy“. (p. 11 f.)

1. Democracy in Social Work and Social Welfare (p. 13–70)

Amazingly, Addams starts her analysis not with the political system, but with the welfare system. Choosing the title „Charitable Effort“ she writes: „Probably there is no relation in life which our democracy is changing

3 From here on all quotes are from Addams, J. (1902). *Democracy and Social Ethics*. New York: Macmillan. For extensive quotes along her biography see Knight (2005).

more rapidly than the charitable relation – that relation which obtains between benefactor and beneficiary; at the same time there is no point of contact in our modern experiences which reveals so clearly the lack of that equality which democracy implies. [...] (And) why talk about fraternity and equality if one hasn't the right, to apply these values in the helping relationship?" (p. 13). So she asks on the base of her daily observations:

- Who is the „social parasite“: Is it the washerwomen who repairs her clothes, her poor house which gets inundated by the rain and thus saves money for the taxpayer? Who is always friendly to her children and neighbors? Or is perhaps the friendly female visitor the parasite, who lives from the income and capital of her husband and has a housemaid, who takes care of her household? With what legitimation does the friendly visitor push, even coerce this women to go to work under miserable conditions and a wage which doesn't cover even the minimal requirements for satisfying the most basic survival needs?
- Who is economically inefficient and thus irrational: Is it the young women working in industry who is blamed by friendly visitors for not saving money because she wants to buy nice clothes and glittering jewelry – knowing very well that to get married to a well situated man is her only chance for upward social mobility, which means getting rid of miserable work and life conditions? Or is it the daughter from a well-to-do-family with good education, an overcrowded dress closet, buying an additional dress in a poverty look as the newest fashion and other useless gags and trash? Then Addams asks: Have we developed our democracy any further than in regard to clothes? (p. 36)
- Why the moral indignation, even consternation about the vices of the saloons? This condemnation is only possible if one doesn't have any idea how much spontaneous help people get in these saloons, f.e. free meals, little loans, advocacy in case of being evicted from their living place or losing their job, addresses for shelter on rainy or cold winter days etc. Compared with communities of rich people where people without money

are treated with disrespect, people in this immigration context know the rules of reciprocity and those without money and shelter are treated with respect and dignity. This is also the case, when they can't pay their meal. Friendly visitors in their fancy neighborhoods are so far away from this everyday reality that they should be grateful about the saloons instead of condemning them.

In sum, she asks: With what legitimation do welfare workers – in the name of an apparent societal consensus between equals – coerce poor people to follow norms, while they behave absolute contrarily? Help under these premisses gets perverse: it means employability at any cost and without any social security. It means, that caring for dependent others has no worth at all, it only impedes being fit for the market. Being a girl of a lower class working in a factory means not being able to behave according to the economic rationality which would paradoxically mean to save money from a salary which isn't enough to satisfy one's needs; and the moral judgement about the saloons means that poor people are always under the suspicion of being without ethics and basically corrupt.

What Addams analyses and criticizes is not the *paternalistic attitude* broadly questioned in the critical social work literature which means that helping relationships are defined by showing the only „right way“ to good behavior and happiness and telling the clients either in religious or secular, also political terms: Be like me or us, because we know what is good for you! The assumption underlying the criticism of paternalism is the persuasion, that the helping person *isthe* model of good and decent behavior one has to strive for. But Addams' critique aims at another „mission“: Don't dare to compare yourself with us, our words with our deeds and factual behavior! Don't dare to use criterias of democracy, of the common good or social justice as standards to judge our behavior! If we live from the money of our husbands, this is our choice. And don't dare to seduce wealthy men with erotic clothing! For you very different norms – and men – are appropriate! Her crucial point is that the imposed „right way“ to the clients should not be compared with the values, norms and behaviors of the helping person as a member of the middle or upper class. This is a classic topos of a ruling class and power-holders in general: they

try to eliminate all comparisons of subordinates with them in order to prevent – in their eyes – inappropriate claims for equality, social reform, followed by social protest and upheavals. The message is: What is good and right for the under-class has no ethical relevance at all for the upper-class. On the contrary, the latter one is free and entitled to break all the rules of a democracy which is based on the equality, social justice and societal participation of all individuals. And they are free to construct new values, norms and laws at their own gusto.

In short, in her words: The ethic of the benevolent philanthropist is *first* „self-righteous“ and „egotic“ and *second* „old-fashioned, a feudal virtue, too archaic [...] to accomplish anything new. [...] too many good deeds reinforce the message that they are superior.“ Benevolence is failing because „it does not lead to success in forming egalitarian (democratic) social relations“ (Addams, 1902, in Knight, 2005, p. 355).

2. Democracy in the Family – Filial Relations (p. 71–101)

The central *problem* in families, as Addams defines it, is the claim of daughters as young women to take part in public and political life, without giving up their loyalty to their family. But this claim is interpreted by the parents as „stupid, childish enthusiasm“ or as restless search for a career, while the daughter in fact doesn't know what she really wants.

To find an *explanation* to this problem, Addams refers to the tragedy between King Lear and his most beloved daughter Cordelia. Cordelia refuses what he expects: to be first in her adult affections. She wants to tell him the truth, namely that she owes half of her love to her fiancé and half to him. King Lear, hurt and outraged, disavows and banishes her from his kingdom. He cannot fathom why his best beloved child, on whom he has shown every kindness, should thus betray him.“ (Knight, 2005, p. 353). According to Addams Cordelia is an „untrained soul“ who has „a notion of justice“ and wishes to become „a citizen of the world“. But King Lear doesn't believe that his daughter could have a worthy life apart from him. She is his possession and

thus he has the right to control her life. He isn't even able to imagine that she might have individual motives, desires, goals which differ from his motives. Addams characterises the relationship between the two as a combination of „domination and indulgence“ and calls the „dictatorial relation“ as a typical example of a family tragedy.

This tragedy is even greater, she adds, when families obey more to the claims of the Gods as to the claims of the secular state. In the first case one interprets the claims of young women as quarrelsome, illegitimate and not as democratic impulse for freedom and public participation.

According to *democratic values and ethics*, there is a serious ethical inconsistency: The same parents who don't allow their daughters to take part in public life, give their husbands, sons, father of little children during the times of war to the state without any hesitation, doubt and critique. This double moral is unacceptable from a democratic point of view.

Addams solution on the action and thus practice level is, that democracy makes a *compromise* unavoidable between the claims of the family, the daughter and the claims of the public upon the daughter – which in fact means: the distribution of power between the different parties!

3. Democracy in the Household – Ladies and their Household Employees (p. 102–136)

The main *problems* of household employees are complete social isolation, cut off from their family, without any chances for education and thus upward social mobility. Furthermore, when they make a mistake at work, there is no independent person to judge about the incident; they are at the mercy of their mistress. If girls in industry make a mistake and are unfairly treated, at least the other girls know about it. They can sympathise with them and can even take collective action on the issue. For Addams it is a form of modern slavery characterised by the absence of any rights.

The *explanation*, why young women agree to such submissive, exploitative work, is industrialisation which impoverishes so many families which earn their living with farming or craftsmanship and replace much of household work by industrial production (spinning clothes, cooking, washing etc.).

Democratic values and ethics have to question *first* the diffuse relationship between mistress and servant. Its consequence is that the female employer of household labor fails to see the power aspects of this servant relationship which knows only duties without any rights. *Second*, serving a normal, healthy adult who consumes the energy and time of another person who has to accept an exploitative arrangement because of poverty and lack of education, is not compatible with democracy. Any craftsman who works in households to repair things would never accept such working conditions, and being additionally cut off from his family. This means, *third*, that the family life of men are more valuable than that of women, another aspect of double morality which is unacceptable under democratic premisses.

That the recruitment of young women for this submissive, exploitative work in bourgeois households gets more and more difficult, because they prefer to work in the industry, can – according to Addams – be seen as a positive sign of revolt.

Democratic action guidelines should – as a first step – end the social isolation, allowing the young women to go home or to gather together and thus also being exposed to learning experiences. But more important: the ladies in bourgeois households should give up their narrow egocentric familism and define household-labor not in terms of a feudal servant-mistress-relation, but as a labor relationship of an employee and employer with a decent salary and formal rights and duties on both sides.

4. Democracy in industrial relations between capital owners and workers (p. 137–177)

Pullmann was known as a „good capitalist“ offering relatively good working conditions. But, completely unexpectedly, a strike started just on his plant and expanded over the whole country, so that the national guard had to intervene. At its beginning there were different claims, not only for a higher salary, but also for less control outside of work and for the possibility to buy their houses, built benevolently by Pullmann. The claim to become owners put the implicit „rules of the game“ between capital and work offside: It was trespassing the absolute dividing line marking the hierarchic resource- and powergap between the two sides. There should – as in feudal societies – be no bridge and thus crossover. Jane Addams was called for mediation but the strike ended in a disaster. Every day Pullmann announced in the newspapers autocratically that there is nothing to mediate and compromise about. Instead, he blamed and attacked the illoyalty and lack of thankfulness of „his“ workers to whom he was such a good patron.

Addams *explanation* was – again referring to King Lear: the cause of the strike were the destructive effects of benevolence and philanthropy which asks for loyalty and thankfulness and absolute submission without rights of freedom. Her thesis was: If the capital-owner sees himself as philanthropist, he will initiate good works, f.e. decent and affordable housing; but with this he legitimates the control also of the private life, consumption (alcohol), dresses, even bedtime, i.e. the behavior of „his“ workers which he defines as amoral. So she states: „Too many good deeds can lead to the fact, that one doesn't see anymore the good sides of the others“ (p. 146). In sum, not only the plant was his possession, but also the workers.

Under *democratic premises* this is not tolerable. A big plant is – as Addams points out – not a „private or family enterprise“, but a socially organised unit between co-productive members; each member of the plant contributes, although differently, to the success and profit of the business. But in fact the enterprises are exclusively managed and controlled by the authority and

power of one single capital owner and his family. Even if a part of the profit and wealth would be distributed to the workers, the latter don't have any influence about the *key* of distribution in relation to them and other social categories, especially the family members of the capitalist. These members benefit from the labor of others without any special accomplishments, just because of their biological birth and descent. Under democratic premises one can't accept, too, the offer of Pullmann and other plant-owners after the end of the strike, namely: to give a certain amount of money for the sponsoring of education and social issues. They argued that this act of benevolence would compensate the expenses by a higher productivity of the workers and thus a return to the share holders. Addams refused this deal; for her this was just a sort of appeasement to avoid new strikes instead of changing the social rules of the power-relationship.

A concept of integral democracy would require a new social contract between unions and capital-owners oriented at democratic participation, also in industry, instead of perpetuating charitable sponsoring relationships. As an exception, sponsorship would only be acceptable, if it is discussed democratically and coordinated with representatives of a government and the population.⁴

5. Democracy in Education and Educational Methods (p. 178–220)

The *problems*: According to the knowledge about educational processes, learning should start with the experiences of children in their context and with respect to their spontaneous social activities. She calls this „education by the current event“! The problem is that the life on the streets fulfills these requirements much more than the school. But this street-life leads – for example for children of farmers of southern Italy – often straight to the court

⁴ As a positive example of what she means she refers to the Federal Technical University in Zurich.

and jail, when they are sent by their fathers to gather olives, potatoes, wood or coal fallen from trains, where they get arrested by the police.

Her *explanation* for the inadequate school education is the big influence, almost dictatorship, of the industrial leaders upon the school curricula – and this against the knowledge of the teachers and the recommendations of university professors. Yet, the industrial chief doesn't say: I want that the school trains subaltern workers, so that they become obedient and cheap labor. He says: „I want them to learn to write decently, compute quickly, are always punctual (in time) and well-behaved and – above all – obedient; then, the children will be fit for the world, in which I myself was successful as ‚self-made-man‘“ (p. 191)⁵. For Addams it is the excessive admiration of successful industrial managers and economic leaders, which opens the door of the schools for their notion of industrial education. It is obviously much simpler to conceive a curriculum which starts with the aspirations of a successful „self-made-man“, than to develop democratic, participative methods for and with children of poor migrants trying to evade poverty, but realise that the school won't be of help for this goal (p. 204).

Under *democratic premises*, a curriculum should refer to the ideas of enlightenment which were at the beginning of general education. Among others, it should also promote insights into the economy as a complex system, its historical roots and development, the worth and dignity of labor, and, last but not least, the worth of democratic participation within and outside the educational system. But all the claims for a democratic curriculum and education landed in nirwana because the economy decided, clandestinely and openly against it.

5 Adapted to the actual education for social work in the German speaking countries: The European Union with its Bolognareform, dominated by a neoliberal policy, doesn't say: We want subaltern, cheap social workers, not asking critical questions or even using scientific knowledge; therefore a Bachelor of six semesters is enough for doing social work! They say: „We want them to be employable, knowing how to put the social legislation into practice, having management knowledge and being able to use forms, manuals and a pre-defined accountability-system as main practice tools!“

The hope that the unions should care about these kids being unhappy in school and landing in jails for highly criminal adults – being condemned for almost „nothing“ – is in vain. So Hull House initiated a large range of cultural activities (music, painting, theater, free discussion clubs as well as summer universities, a labor-museum as learning opportunity about the development of economic production and labor instruments etc.). In addition one decided to found a juvenile court and a treatment center for children to avoid to put children in jail with heavy criminals.

6. Democracy and the Political System (p. 221–277)

Only in the very last chapter Addams writes about the political system. One of the main *problems* she describes as follows: There are *social reformers* who are right to criticize and be in opposition to the government; but their abstract, sweeping ideas, theories and visions for a better future don't reach the troubles, griefs and sorrows of the population. As a counterpart there is a group of politicians which many members of the middle and upper class define as deeply *corrupt cheaters and mean swindlers*. Yet, these swindlers have paradoxically a much more realistic, empirically sound political theory, although they wouldn't be able to formulate it, namely: that citizens want to see concrete social outcomes and effects of political interventions; politicians are elected and get power, because they articulate existential human needs and nourish individual hopes. (p. 224) Thus Altgeld, one of these corrupt cheaters in the election district of Hull House, got his votes by donating turkeys for Christmas and multiple small and friendly services to help people out of trouble, f.e. to help a father to bring his son out of jail. Now, these experiences are highly compatible with the thinking and ethics of immigrants: One helps each other not because of the abstract notion of social reformers about social justice, but just because somebody is in need and thus needs help. As immigrants know and live the norm of give-and-take – that is the „golden rule“ of reciprocity – they have no problem to be loyal to and vote for their donors at the election day.

According to *democratic values and ethics* this is – in the eyes of Addams – of course problematic. But then she argues, that corrupt politicians „at least avoid the mistake of a certain type of business men who are frightened by democracy, and have lost their faith in the (judgements of) people“ (p. 225). Her assumption is that successful politicians „minister directly to life and to social needs [...] and so giving a social expression to democracy“ (p. 224).

What are some of her consequences on the *practice* level: *Migrants* have to learn that their loyalty has to be extended beyond the family, which doesn't mean to give up the family reference. It should even transcend the members of their ethnic or religious community in the direction of a broader civil loyalty with civil virtues. The base of this is the discovery that individual needs are universal *human* needs of *all* human beings.

To summarize:

Addams' most general theoretical idea referring to all societal subsystems is the transformation of illegitimate, „negative“ or just inhuman power into legitimate „positive“ (democratic) power and the extension of liberal democracy by an equivalent social dimension of social justice. And remembering the criticism of David Gil of social workers having no diagnostic categories for the analysis of power-relations, she writes: „[...] there is often a honest lack of perception as to what the situation demands. Nowhere is this more obvious than in our political life as it manifests itself in certain quarters of every great city“ (p. 221 f.). Yet, we know „that we can only discover truth by a rational and democratic interest in life [...]“ (p. 11) which is a precondition of social and political change.

Looking through about fifteen introductions to political philosophy, I didn't find the name of Jane Addams and neither the concept of „integral democracy“ – with one exception – an actual essay of Norbert Bobbio (2009)⁶.

6 Another exception is Matio Bunge's „Political Philosophy – Fact, Fiction und Vision“, 2009, p. 351 – especially p. 393–401.

He writes: „As long as in modern [...] societies the two most powerful blocks – corporations and state bureaucracy – haven't been transformed into democracies, the process of democratisation hasn't come to an end. [...] So, if one wants to know if there has been a development towards democracy in a country, one should not just look if the number of participants in the political election and decision processes has increased, but also if the social contexts have increased where democratic rights can be practiced“ as a religious believer, worker, student, soldier, consumer, patient etc.“

Furthermore, Addams is – to my knowledge – the first theoretician of social work who claims the integration of Human Rights into social work (see above). And this leads to my fourth thesis:

Fourth Thesis

Even the horizontal extension of democracy to all social systems according to an „integral social democracy“ is no guarantee against a return to discriminatory and repressive rules and legislation, violence or even neofeudal structures as I tried to show. This always present possibility requires a universal yardstick which allows judgements about these developments. And it requires a place of democratic deliberation where one can discuss about them according to this yardstick. This place is since 1945 the United Nations and the yardstick is human dignity as the philosophical value-base of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This „vertical dimension“ offers the opportunity for discussions about the discrepancy between *Legality* defined as conformity to existing social rules and laws and *Legitimacy* defined as consensus about a value or ethical norm which one accepts as right and just. This holds for world society, national societies, but also for social work. Just some examples from social work to illustrate this gap:

- First, let's remember the examples of Switzerland above which are democratically decided human rights violations;

- Then, there is often a considerable gap between national legislations and the rights of the child of the UN-convention (f.e. the KJHG, Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz of Germany) which has established the rights of the child to be heard and respected in decisions which concern her or his life. The problem is a very dominant power-position of the parents, which is implemented mostly unquestioned by the youth protection agencies;
- Comparable problems can be identified in relation to the rights of disabled persons, f.e. those in psychiatric clinics or home for old persons (forced medication, no possibility to leave the bed, room or hospital, no consideration of their needs and wishes etc.;
- Inhuman conditions in detention centers for asylum seekers;
- Then, we have considerable intolerable discrepancies between social rights and the social legislation, f.e. about the amount of welfare provision and sanctions reducing the amount under the existential minimum;
- And we have to mention the discrepancies between religions and their denominations proclaiming human rights outside their walls, but violating them according to discriminatory working rights; sexual, religious, partner-choice rights in relation to marital relationships etc. referring to their own church laws which can't be discussed and criticised democratically (for a comprehensive treatment of these problems see Krefß, 2012).

Claiming this vertical dimension, it doesn't mean something superior, transcending human beings as a kind of absolute argumentative position („Letztbegründung“). It is still the human being with his vulnerability in the centre of the discussion and the knowledge about what sufferances and terrible tortures human beings were and are capable to do to other human beings, be it in the name of a king, of God or religion, of history or tradition, of an empire or a nationalist idea, but also in the name of the inhuman ideology of market-liberalism. In our multicultural world-society no philosophy or religion can claim interpretative hegemony which is a lesson hard to learn (Bielefeldt, 2007).

What follows from this for social work to-day?

I would like to draw your attention to a recent initiative of the three world-wide associations – the IASSW, the IFSW and the ICSW⁷ – which can be combined with the theoretical thoughts, hopes and visionst of Addams: It is the „Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development“ which was presented in March this year at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. The goals of this agenda are extremely ambitious, yet they are in the line of what Jane Addams was analysing, blaming and claiming, when she developed her concept of „integral social democracy“. The „Global Agenda“ starts in recognising that:

- „the full range of human rights are available to only a minority of the world’s population“. Addams woul add: foremost not to the clients of social work who are nearly identical with the vulnerable individuals and groups addressed by the different conventions of the United Nations;
- it recognises that „unjust and poorly regulated economic systems, driven by unaccountable market forces, together with non-compliance with international standards for labour conditions and a lack of corporate social resonsibility, have damaged the health and wellbeing of peoples and communities, causing poverty and growing inequality“. Here Addams would add: causing social injustice and going back to feudal structures of society legitimated and thus produced by legislations and decision-procedures of one-sided political liberal democracy;
- then: we recognise that „people live in communities and thrive in the context of supportive relationships, which are being eroded by the dominant economic, political and social forces“. The addition here is that the erosion of supportive relationships makes out of every individual a self-managed, egoistic entrepreneur, and finally:
- „people’s health and wellbeing suffer as a result of inequalities and unsustainable environments related to climate change, pollutants, wars, natural

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disasters and violence to which there are inadequate international responses“.

„Consequently, we (the three worldwide associations) feel compelled to advocate for a new world order which makes a reality of respect to human rights and dignity, and a different structure of human relationships“. Therefore: „We commit ourselves to supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of oppression and inequality.“

Addams might have said: Be a little less ambitious; you are not a profession of impeccable do-gooders, always on the right side of history! Start first with trying to change the discriminative, undemocratic power-structures and human rights violations in indigenous and migrant families, local communities, social welfare and educational organisations – including religious, health organisations, universities etc. – in the light of Human Rights wherever you work in the world. But don't stop at the national level, neither in thinking, theorizing nor in action! This means that you can work for the globalisation of democracy and global distributive social justice in joining local and worldwide social movements, alliances, NGOs who have for example the goal to change the social rules of the Bretton Woods organisations forcing them to change their *lex mercatoria*. (see Stiglitz, 2006; Archibughi et al., 2012; Pogge, 2011; Armstrong, 2012). But first of all: Give up the „happiness of ignorance“ about power! – I hope to have been able to show that we can rely on our own theoretical tradition to widen our notions about power and democracy, but also that the contribution of Jane Addams could – should – be a good starting point for further reflection and critical social action.

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