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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2015.1069027>

Nuovo dizionario di servizio sociale, edited by Annamaria Campanini, Rome, Carocci editore, 2013, 831 pp., €94 (hardback), ISBN 978-88-7466-652-2

This is an impressive and important work, a manual for social work. Only few have been published until now in Europe (for example, Hans-Uwe Otto and Hans Thiersch (Eds.) in Germany, Martin Thomas and John Pierson (Eds.) and Martin Davies (Ed.) in Great Britain or Marcel Jaeger (Ed.) in France), although these kinds of books seem to be particularly essential for the study, research and professional practice of a scientific discipline.

Already in 2005 a first manual (*Dizionario di Servizio Sociale*) was published in Italy, edited by Maria Dal Pra Ponticelli, who put together this book in cooperation with other teachers and professionals during the long years of the gradual academisation of social work. This manual was sponsored by AIDOSS, the Italian association of social work lecturers. The now published *Nuovo Dizionario di Servizio Sociale*, available since January 2013 and edited by Annamaria Campanini from the Bicocca University in Milan, is not merely a revision of the first book eight years on, although Maria Dal Pra Ponticelli and two other members of the scientific committee of that time are also members of the current committee. More than 60 new references and themes are added and the existing entries are revised to account for recent developments and contexts. The editor responsible, Annamaria Campanini, has ensured—also by virtue of her diverse international experience as for example as president of the European Association of Schools of Social Work and vice president of the International Association—that international aspects and developments are covered thoroughly and that the different articles refer again and again to these themes. What this means is that now 152 authors treat 192 different themes on 831 pages, from ‘abbandono’ (loneliness) to ‘welfare state’.

This *Dizionario* treats as well all the different fields of social work as important phenomena, with which social work must be occupied. Contributing to this are fundamental articles about theories and methods of social work, professional ethics, national and international social policy, and the organisation of the social work system; covered too are national and international education for these areas, and comparison between them, all with critical analysis and with references to the historical background. This great panorama or, as Annamaria Campanini calls it in her preface, this ‘polifonia disciplinare’—disciplinary polyphony (p. 9)—is caught, classified and coordinated so that readers get an extensive overview that marks the interface between the theory and the professional practice of social work and portrays also the everyday professional and social reality; this is a magnificent achievement of the scientific committee and especially of the editor. To assist this coherence, a

binding structure for the different entries was developed and used by the authors, containing the definition, historical development, theoretical basis, critical aspects, current discussion and possible perspectives on each topic, and finally bibliographical references.

Particularly interesting for readers not coming from Italy are surely the articles about the developments of social policy and social work in Italy and about education for these sectors. The latter not only show in part a quite typical development, which we recognise also from other European countries, but also, until the present, different peculiarities. After the Second World War a lot of different local or private schools for 'assistenti sociali' were founded, although there had existed already since 1928 a school for female social workers for industrial work, carried by the fascist party in collaboration with the national association for industry. In the 1960s and 1970s a lot of these small schools were dissolved or combined. In 1956, the first education for social work as 'scuola diretta a fini speciali', which means school with special certificates, was created in the Faculty of Law of the University of Siena. The certificates of this school were professional certificates, but did not correspond to university certificates. At other Italian universities similar schools were created, but in very different faculties like medicine, psychology and often sociology. At the end of the 1990s these schools became integrated fully within the universities and the position today is complete acadernisation, with bachelor, master and (research) doctorate levels. Nevertheless, we cannot speak about the full recognition of an independent, autonomous scientific discipline that has at its disposal its own teaching and research institutions. Only very few professors of social work exist even today and most of the taught curriculum comes from other disciplines. Thus, it is all the more astonishing that 91 of the 152 authors of this book are social workers. Besides I must add, in virtue of my experiences as a member of the Italian national commission for habilitation for general, political and juridical sociology, that in Italian sociology research themes relating to social work are strongly represented.

As you must expect in the case of a manual of 831 pages, I can only give a small overview, but I will also second the opinion of Suzy Braye in her welcome preface to the volume, that this book is more than a manual; she rightly names it to be more an instrument of conceptual reference (p. 6). I want to point out one peculiarity of this book, which I could not find in similar books: at the end are listed on eight pages 'riferimenti normativi', what means juridical references in the shape of laws and ministerial decrees. This is for me an indication of the extensive statutory and bureaucratic regulation of Italian social work in comparison with many other European countries.

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2015.1030927>