

If a methodology is an implementation of a specific theoretical change or developmental strategy, it is deemed 'applied scientific knowledge' that works in a *deductive* way, that is from general to specific. If a methodology is the outcome of systematic reflection on practice, it is expressed as 'a generalized experience' which means working in an *inductive* way by deriving general concepts from specific situations.

Besides deductive and inductive reasoning, there is also *adductive* reasoning (finding a suitable explanation for a series of events) and *analogue reasoning* (jumping from one specific situation to another and drawing plausible conclusions).

In the 20th century, social workers and social scientists developed, applied, and published methodologies that have become part of the international body of knowledge of social work (see Section 1.4). Methodologies can be categorized according to specialization (see Chapter 5) and the underlying vision and theory of man, society, development, and change.

Inspired by the three different types of change strategies formulated by Bennis *et al.* (discussed in Section 3.3), the Dutch social work theorist Gerard Donkers described three models (or strategies) of change which social work methodologies, techniques, and approaches are based on. These models of change in social work are:

- the social-technological model
- the person-oriented model
- the society-critical model.

The first two models correspond with two of the three strategies of planned change described by Bennis *et al.* (1985), namely, the rational-empirical strategy and the normative-re-educative strategy (see Section 3.3). The third strategy, power-coercive, is part of Donkers' society-critical model in the tradition of change theories related to Habermas, and is a reflection of the roaring 1960s and the following democratization period.

The following is a summary of the content of Donkers' models of change and their references to social work methodologies and methods (Donkers 2005).

In the *social-technological model*, humans are seen as basic rational beings who are able to regulate their behaviour and adapt to their environment. In a democratic country, upbringing, education, peer groups, and mass media influence people's behaviour toward each other

on the various scales of social life. In this model, professional action is based on rational-empirical evidence and scientific knowledge.

The social worker helps clients to change their behaviour and to influence their environment. Although the social worker is the expert, the relationship between worker and client is intended to be mutual; the people involved influence each other. Contact and empathy are crucial elements of the relationship and are important factors for achieving results. Worker and client have a contract and work according to an action plan.

Methods, approaches, and methodologies based on a social-technological model are numerous. For example, problem-oriented methods, behavioural-cognitive methods, social-technical system approach, communication approach, rational-decision methods, task-oriented help, planned-change methods, and group dynamics are some of these theories and models.

The *person-oriented model* is based on a positive view of humankind. Individuals are responsible for themselves and have freedom of choice. Structure and culture are created by people in continuous interaction with their environment. Science is bound to values and standards, fulfils tasks in society, and has co-responsibility for practices in everyday life. Scientists of the humanistic school in social sciences are representatives of this model.

The social worker works in dialogue with his clients. Mutual acceptance is an important condition. The interaction between worker and client is not only a means, but also the objective of the change process. The professional relationship is meant to stimulate personal growth and interpersonal relations. The social worker is expected to be authentic, with non-judgemental, balanced feelings, views, and behaviour.

Characteristic of this model are methods and approaches such as: psychosynthesis, Gestalt, the client-centred approach, modern forms of human relations management, experimental interpersonal therapy, encounter, meditation, Theme-Centred Interaction (TCI), biodynamics, the dialogical model of social activation work (Baart), the locality-approach in community work, and psycho-energetic therapy.

In a *society-critical model*, humans are seen as mutually connected social beings who form one entity with their environment. The economic processes of production, distribution, and consumption strongly influence people's needs, desires, and developments in society.

Facts and findings within the sciences presented as 'objective' are often the outcome of political choices, determined by existing interests

and power balances in society. Ideally, scientific work should be objective, but this is not always realistic in practice. From a social-critical point of view, association and connection with the less powerful people in society is needed to stimulate more social justice in society. Power is an important factor for functioning and success within society. Social awareness and dialectic thinking are key in the explanation of human behaviour. The relation between 'being' and 'awareness' is crucial in critical analysis of social developments.

A critical social worker is aware of power differences in his relation with clients. An effective professional relationship is one of mutual learning in which equality and a (power) free dialogue is the goal. The social worker encourages and supports self-regulation and independence of clients. Interventions of clients and social workers aim for personal development, adaptation, and change of cultural and social aspects of the environment.

The society-critical model of change includes the following methods and approaches: methods of critical psychology, critical empowerment approach, exemplary learning, politicizing learning, gender-specific approach, labour rehabilitation, left-radical approach of action and education, management of social inequality, awareness method of Freire, social-ecological approach, emancipating help (Donkers 2005).

Donkers' three models of change cover existing approaches, techniques, and methodologies in social work. Together, they take into account all aspects of social work as described in the international definition of social work: changing, solving problems, developing, strengthening, liberating, enhancing well-being, interaction, influencing, realizing human rights, and stimulating social justice (IFSW 2000; see Chapter 1).

From the viewpoint of professional practitioners, the common elements of the change models seem to be as relevant, or even more relevant, than the differences between them. Moreover, notwithstanding the similarities between the three models, the differences seem to have an added function.

Donkers was the first to recognize this, and he made note of six important similarities between the three change models in social work (Donkers 2005, Chapter 8):

1. The voluntary and dialogical relation between client and social worker.
2. The focus on democratization and humanization of society.

3. Recognition and stimulation of self-regulation and influencing the environment as important aims of professional action.
4. Openness toward a need for empirical research.
5. Recognizing and acknowledging that both harmony and conflict tactics can be part of professional interventions.
6. Awareness of the need for concrete, attainable goals in the short term, and preventive goals in the long term.

The differences between the three models are as notable and instructive as the similarities. From the social-technological model, one can learn that it is not necessary to translate everything in ideological terms, but rather remain open-minded as to the usefulness of social-technological aspects of social work and the appeal of attainable goals.

The person-oriented change model emphasizes the danger of the social-technological model: reducing the client to an object of behavioural change. This model offers an alternative by emphasizing the ability of the individual to choose, to act, and to construct.

The society-critical model demonstrates a broader view of a client's social problems by including the societal, political, and environmental dimensions in professional analysis and interventions.

I fully agree with Donkers. In my opinion, this is not simply a plea for an eclectic approach, but recognition of the need for a more extensive, integrative theory of social work that goes beyond the well laid out instrumental theory of planned change.

Donkers did what he promised in 2005 in the 11th edition (!) of his *Veranderkundige modellen (Models of Change)*: he performed an empirical and theoretical search for elements to construct a broad, integrative theory of change in social work.

3.4.5 Integrative approach: towards a new methodology of changing

Donkers unfolds his new Integrative Theory of Changing in his book *Grondslagen van veranderen (Foundations of changing)*, published in 2010. He defines changing as a form of action in which subjects realize certain goals which refer to values of behaviour. The action itself is performed within a process of becoming different, and various self-regulating activities are involved (p.14). Changing is a reflective process of self-steering and adapting, a form of self-regulation (p.99), because it is

dependent on person(s) and context, and it is continuously interacting with behaviour, person, and environment.

Donkers provides a 'Three Worlds Scheme of Changing' to illustrate this concept (Figure 3.24).

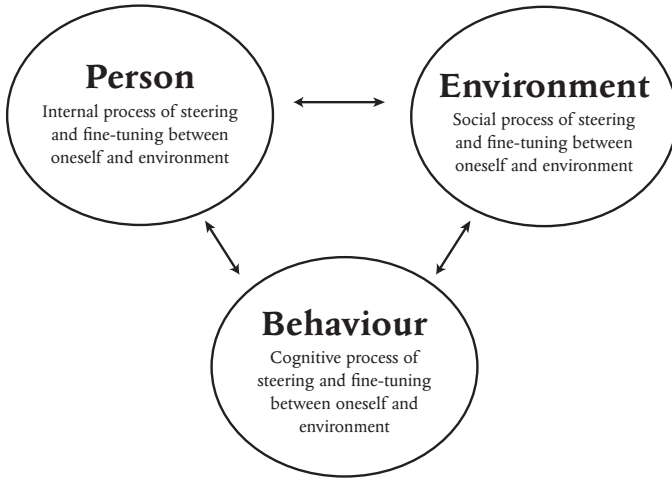


Figure 3.24 Three Worlds Scheme of Changing (Donkers 2010, p.99; approved translation)

The diagram shows the processes of interaction between behaviour, person, and environment. These three elements have mutual influence on each other in every action situation. They represent closely interwoven clusters of factors, but the relative influence of each factor can differ depending on the person and situation.

Each of the three worlds is connected with one of Donkers' three change models in social work discussed and explained in Section 3.4.4.

- The *World of Behaviour* is emphasized in the social-technological change model. Steering and fine-tuning are used to initiate and support particular behavioural reference values in a specific context.

It concerns the internal and external cognitive quality or adequateness of observations, interpretations, goal selections, expectations, strategic decisions and behaviour. These cognitive aspects of behaviour address a wide arsenal of themes, theories and methodical guidelines... It is essential to connect this cognitive knowledge with ethics. (Donkers 2010, pp.99–100)

- The *World of the Person* is the playground of the person-oriented change model. It concerns intrapersonal regulation of emotions and motivations or an individual's ability to base action on real needs, feelings, and desires. It concerns a multi-dimensional self-concept, based on individual's ability 'to create an inner balance between body, common sense, feelings, intuition, and behaviour in different social roles and situations' (p.100).

This approach is practised in a wide range of theories, methodologies, therapies, and methods. It is important to adapt and combine these approaches and methods with cognitive and society-critical strategies and methodologies.

- In the *World of the Environment*, steering and fine-tuning are aimed at regulating social relations between individuals, groups, organizations, and communities and their social and ecological environments. The critical social change model is a strategy that fits in this World. In the Environmental World, emphasis is placed on the social quality of life on a cultural, interpersonal, and structural level. To avoid bias, it is necessary to adopt and integrate cognitive, ethical, and person-oriented approaches (in Donkers 2010).

Integrated, change-oriented actions from any of these three Worlds require a certain level of knowledge, abilities, and skills, as well as the proper approach, in order to be successful.

For those reasons Donkers presents a reflection model, including a total of nine basic competencies for self-regulation, three for each 'World' theory, in Figure 3.25.

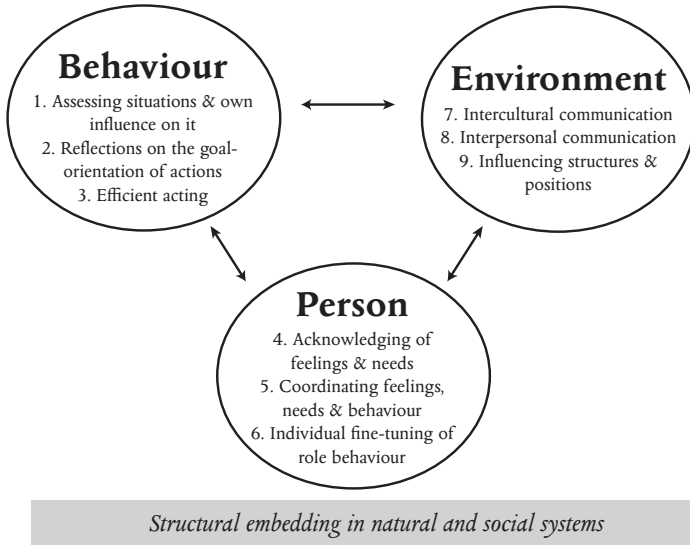


Figure 3.25 Nine basic competencies of changing (Donkers 2010, p.253; approved translation)

According to Donkers, the nine basic competencies are comprised of characteristics necessary to improve development processes and action abilities for individuals, groups, organizations, and communities, and therefore achieve change. ‘The competencies are not formulated in objective, static endings. Every basic competency is open to elaboration. Besides that: other existing competency profiles can be incorporated’ (pp.251–252, translation WB).

In Figure 3.25 outlining basic competencies of changing is intended as a framework for reflection. It ‘can be used to identify and/or compare actions of clients, professionals, groups, and organizations, or as a heuristic in finding what is wise and virtuous in a particular situation’ (p.252, translation WB).

The concept of self-regulation is a core element in Donkers’ theory of changing. It refers to a different view on change and changing from the social-technological one of the Planned Change Theory. Self-regulation is a reflective (not a mechanical) process of value-oriented, intentional action that always takes place in a specific context.

Donkers’ theory of changing is based on various ideals such as reflectivity, meaning, democratic attitude, inner balance, constancy in life, change of perspectives, thinking in terms of relation to others (instead of individualization or self), contributing to ‘the good life’,

and balancing self-care and care for others. According to Donkers, his approach ‘contains a personal and moral reflection that refers to a philosophical and principled justification for which he provides a conceptual framework’ (p.274, translation WB). Donkers connects his normative stand with an open position. ‘It is a moral approach, without moralization... It is true that it concerns value-oriented action, but values themselves are not creating desirable behaviour. In this sense, values have to be distinguished from standards’ (p.274, translation WB).

I agree with Donkers that the concept of self-regulation, aimed at realization of essential human values, fits a broad, integrative approach that includes existing strategies of change and (therefore) goes beyond them. His theory is related to the holistic interactionism of Magnusson (as summarized in Section 2.3.1). Like Donkers, Magnusson emphasizes

an approach to the individual and the person-environment system as organized wholes, functioning as integrated totalities. At each level, the totality derives its characteristic features and properties from the interaction among the elements involved, not from the effect of each isolated part on the totality. Each aspect of the structures and processes that are operating (perceptions, plans, values, goals, motives, biological factors, conduct, etc.), as well as each aspect of the environment, takes on meaning from the role it plays in the total functioning of the individual. (Magnusson 2000, pp.42–43)

Magnusson includes the role of the acting person in his concept of ‘self-organization’, while Donkers integrates it into the concept of ‘self-regulation’. While Magnusson stays with his ‘self-organization as guiding principle in developmental processes’ (p. 43) on a theoretical level, Donkers attempts to work it out and modify it for use in social interventions.

It seems to me that the action concepts of ‘self-organization’ and ‘self-regulation’ are connected on an operational level, as Donkers (2011) demonstrated. Perhaps this can also be done on a theoretical level. As far as I can see, Magnusson’s self-organization could be part of Donkers’ concept of self-regulation.

Donkers’ theory can be qualified as an open process theory, focused on essential values. Donkers describes his theory as ‘a social-constructive approach that is based on a dynamic and competent way of handling facts and situations’ (p.102, translation WB), combined with a systemic (i.e. complex theoretical) approach of changing.

It is suitable for social workers to utilize the Integrative Theory of Changing because of its social constructive approach and its

elements congruent with the international definition of social work. These elements include social change, interaction, problem solving, empowerment, liberty, well-being in society, values of human rights and social justice, and interventions in accordance with these principles. Donkers' theory encompasses all of these elements. It is also important to note that this holistic approach is characteristic of both Integrative Theory of Changing and of social work.

In terms of Donkers' Integrative Theory of Changing, the core task of social workers is to empower people, organizations, and communities by (creating conditions for) strengthening their self-regulating abilities.

Social workers help vulnerable people in distress to improve their quality of life, thereby helping them to become contributing members of society. Thus, the support provided by social workers is crucial to the betterment of society and its overall functioning.

Donkers discusses the following conditions for stimulating self-regulation in society (pp.262–263):

- facilitating dialogical forms of demand-oriented working
- support of self-organized, practice-oriented social learning situations
- increasing the influence of citizens on policy development
- more space and better facilities for professionals in social institutions
- support for self-organization and self-control initiatives rather than bureaucratic control
- focus on improving the quality of social services
- greater trust in citizens and professionals.

I agree with the conditions outlined by Donkers above. They should all be a subject of social policy. In my opinion, the social work profession should support and maintain structural conditions for improving self-regulating abilities of people in the framework of a democratic functioning society with a high standard of quality of life for all. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the relationship between social work, citizenship, and the social and democratic functioning of society.