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SOCIAL WORK BETWEEN SENTIMENTALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS – WARMING THE HEART IN A COLD POLITICAL CLIMATE WITH TRUST, EMPATHY AND KINDNESS?

In the course of professionalisation and academisation social work prided itself in having overcome the vestiges of sentimental moralism and having turned to scientific reliability. This heritage makes it liable to be enticed by neoliberalism's agenda of efficiency and effectiveness. For fear of appearing unscientific social work discourses have neglected to examine critically the scientific basis of anthropological and societal attributes which could provide an effective challenge to the abstraction of homo economicus which dominates current welfare ideologies. While critical caution is indicated, recent publications on seemingly sentimental human principles can kindle a long overdue revision of social work's narrow epistemology.