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# Exchange Rules in the Mediation of Social Welfare Work

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*This article demonstrates the utility of the concept of exchange rules for understanding welfare worker agency in the mediation of workplace ideologies and behaviors. The exchange rules of complementarity, reciprocity, and beneficence are applied to the issues of service worker burnout, worker-client interactions, and labor issues to illustrate their conceptual and practical power. This analysis from an interactionist perspective complements the macro-level observations of the fundamental contradictions within the social welfare enterprise. It also suggests avenues for the mediation and alleviation of certain workplace dilemmas.*

Human service practitioners and social scientists have commented on certain fundamental contradictions within social welfare work since its formal organization in the latter half of the 1800s. Many writers have noted the occupation's competing ideologies of social control, social assistance, and social change (Galper, 1975; Rochefort, 1981; Trattner, 1979) and its contrasting practices of casework and group work on one hand and community organization and political action on the other (Galper, 1975; Trattner, 1979). Certain critics have described the dilemmas of practice in which nonstandardized human beings must interface with increasingly standardized bureaucracies informed by

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scientific philanthropy and economic criteria of efficiency and productivity (Bremner, 1956; Billingsley, 1964; Lubove, 1977; Miller, 1978; Finch, 1976; Wasserman, 1971). In short, the social welfare literature richly details competing occupational ideologies and practices within various historical contexts.

Perhaps less attention has been given to the active role that workers play, both individually and collectively, in the mediation of occupational ideologies and problematic work situations. To be sure, there are fine exceptions to this claim (Lipsky, 1980; Olmstead, 1983). Nevertheless, we feel that there is still much to gain by systematically bringing workers to the forefront of investigations in social welfare and viewing them as actors in, as well as reactors to, political and occupational dilemmas, overwhelming client needs, and often ambivalent public opinion (Wrong, 1961). When that is done, we will see that debates and resolutions about social welfare take place *within* as well as around these primary agents in the welfare enterprise in their cognitive structuring of everyday situations. The individual and collective resolutions of competing cognitions in turn have consequences for either the exacerbation or moderation of tensions in the welfare workplace. Furthermore, and understanding of workers' cognitive orientations can promote creative conflict resolution around welfare dilemmas and contradictions.

Prior to substantiating the utility of exchange rules for understanding welfare work ideologically and interactionally, it is first necessary to define key terms and concepts of the argument. We then describe selected exchange rules and illustrate their operation in social welfare work. Finally we demonstrate how exchange rules can shed new light onto longstanding issues in social welfare, including service worker burnout, worker-client interactions, and labor issues. We seek to demonstrate both the theoretical and practical utility of exchange rules as conceptual tools that can enrich our comprehension of the welfare enterprise.

### Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

In this article we employ a broad notion of the social welfare enterprise. We utilize the term *social welfare work* to encompass efforts toward community improvement as well as the provi-

sion of social services, financial and legal assistance, and interpersonal aid, regardless of auspices. Similarly, the term *welfare workers* refers to individuals who perform the aforementioned functions through direct contact with specified populations, regardless of the worker's occupational title, voluntary or paid status, or educational background. These parameters enable us to talk simultaneously about community activists and bureaucratic functionaries, ladies bountiful and indigenous paraprofessionals, intake workers and family counseling specialists, to name a few. Certain discussions mandate distinctions among these groups. However, we believe there is more to be gained herein by employing an inclusive definition. Furthermore, we use the terms "community worker," "welfare worker," "social worker," and "service provider" interchangeably to designate the actors on whom our comments focus.

*Exchange rules* refer to orientations individuals bring to interpersonal relationships that enable them to assess the appropriate distribution of rewards and costs in a social exchange (Emerson, 1976; Dowd, 1980). They represent the motivations from which welfare workers' behaviors come. In this paper we limit our discussion to the exchange rules of complementarity, beneficence, and reciprocity for the purpose of indicating this concept's utility for understanding social welfare interactions.

According to Gouldner (1973), the concept of *complementarity* refers to situations wherein "one's rights are another's obligations, and vice versa." (Meeker (1971) describes status consistency and rank equilibrium as similar principles.) Rights and obligations are embedded within the socially standardized roles and concrete status rights of role partners. Such roles "may require an almost unconditional compliance in the sense that they are incumbent on all those in a given status simply by virtue of its occupancy" (Gouldner, 1973). In other words, one's *status* implies certain behavioral expectations in the process of social exchange.

For example, with regard to the achieved status of age, Rhone (1973) describes the role of enslaved Black elders who offered "a ministry of human feeling" (Rhone, 1973, p. 7) to their people in the ante-bellum U.S. She writes that "it was clearly understood and accepted that the older slaves would

carry major duties in the area of human service" (Rhone, 1973, p. 8). An example of complementarity derived from ascribed status (in this case gender as it intersects in particular ways with achieved class status) comes from the 19th century constraints on the types of social work in which women of wealth should engage:

. . . women were not involved in the public welfare system, banned as they were from government and political activity. Woman's special sphere was the moral: by implication, she was not to be concerned with such crass material questions as wages, working conditions, and even the dispensation of relief. As in the family, the social charges of ladies bountiful were other women, children, the aged, and the sick; by implication, they were to avoid the idle, profligate, intemperate, and other immoral poor, particularly if they were men. Women's special province was the home; fitting service was therefore the creation of small institutions for children and the aged. By implication, women were not to go into prisons, insane asylums, or slums (Rauch, 1975, p. 254).

In contrast to complementary, *reciprocity* assumes that "each party has rights and duties" (Gouldner, 1973). Interpersonal exchanges are based on an evaluation of past and present actions of role partners rather than expectations built into their social status. Relationships are maintained because they are viewed as more rewarding than they are costly (Gouldner, 1973; Meeker, 1971). (Meeker (1971) notes the similarities of the concepts of reciprocity and equity.) From this orientation, it is possible to talk about social workers as workers, as Tambor (1979) does, by delimiting appropriate rewards for social welfare work. Suggesting that broad social and economic conditions of the late 20th century have made it difficult for social workers to obtain reasonable returns for their work, he stresses the need for union organization: "The job market for social workers has tightened up, limiting job mobility. Severe budget cutbacks and reductions in social service are constant threats. Salaries for social workers have been unable to keep pace with inflation" (Tambor, 1979,

p. 293). In other words, these issues are addressed to the definition of a fair exchange between employers and employees in social welfare. They are grounded in assumptions of the rights and duties of both partners in the workplace.

Finally, *beneficence* describes interaction based on a role partner's need, with the expectation of nothing in return (Gouldner, 1973). (Meeker (1971) argues that beneficence is closely related to the concept of altruism.) Unlike complementarity, this exchange rule does not consider privileges and obligations deriving from statuses and roles; unlike reciprocity, it is not based on a cost-benefit analysis of the social exchange. Instead, an individual responds solely on the basis of recognizing another's need. Cherniss' (1981) study of "a residential setting for mentally retarded people operated by a Catholic religious order" is illustrative of this exchange rule:

When women join this order, they expect a lifetime of hard work and personal sacrifices with virtually no monetary reward or professional status. In fact, they explicitly take a vow of poverty, chastity, and humility. They expect to give up most of the comforts and rewards of the secular world and to work with the most needy. As one of them put it, "we don't clip toe nails and wipe runny noses for the salary or for the glory. There's no glory in it. The children are never going to thank you." (Cherniss, 1981, p. 7)

Cherniss (1981) continues, however, that the sisters' behavior is not totally selfless because they expect final reward in spiritual salvation. His notice of the ultimate reciprocity that they seek recognizes, as does Gouldner (1973) in his discussion of beneficence, that certain apparently beneficent acts may indeed contain elements of unstated reciprocity. Although the guiding exchange rule is one of beneficence, this scenario introduces the notion of nested motivations, to which we will return later.

Several additional points about exchange rules must be made at the outset. First, no single exchange rule can fully characterize an individual personality, an agency ideology, or an historical period in social welfare work. Rather, it is more

appropriate to talk about competing and shifting exchange rules over time, across settings and people, and within individual cognitions. Indeed, the recognition of shifts and competition enables us to understand changing welfare worker biographies at the same time that we better comprehend changing work contours within specific historical and political periods of social welfare in the United States. Indeed, shifts in exchange rule emphasis often serve as markers of historical periods, cueing us to changes in social work ideology and workplace arrangements, even as they reflect changing individual perceptions and orientations.

Now we turn to the application of exchange rules to selected historical and contemporary issues in social welfare work to demonstrate their utility for scholars and practitioners alike. The following data from our own research and archival materials are provided for the purpose of illustration rather than hypothesis-testing. As such, they are meant to be suggestive rather than conclusive.

### Service Worker Burnout

Both researchers and practitioners have frequently pondered why it is that some workers are more inclined to burn out from welfare work than others. (See Dressel (1984) for a review of the literature.) We suggest that the exchange rules workers bring, usually implicitly rather than explicitly, to their work contributes to one's relative vulnerability or immunity from occupational burnout.

It is useful to examine interviews with two workers in services to the aging to explore the implications of exchange rules in service worker burnout (1). The two workers selected have striking similar jobs on paper but highly differing orientations to their tasks. One is experiencing burnout; the other is not. At least part of the reason for the differential experience of burnout lies in their utilization of different exchange rules in their work.

Worker #1 worked in senior center where her responsibilities were rather open-ended. In effect, anything that could be funded through the Older Americans Act (OAA) was within her purview of responsibilities. The fundamental ambiguity of the OAA allows for a broad range of activities to be undertaken

by those who work within its policy guidelines (Dressel, 1982). This worker's orientation toward her job and the clients was to exploit the parameters of OAA to their fullest on behalf of the clients. Throughout the interview she repeatedly used phrases such as:

"(I'm) solely responsible for all their needs . . . ."

"You know you've got to take care of all (their) needs . . . (and) everything is needed right now."

"We got a hundred things that need to be done right now."

"I would just give my all."

It is clear that this worker devoted a great deal of effort to her job and attempted to address a wide range of client needs, usually by herself. Yet eventually, despite (or perhaps because of) her commitment, which extended even to performing work-related activities at home, she became exhausted and burned out.

Let us compare Worker #1 with Worker #2. The work responsibilities of the latter were similar to, and virtually as open-ended as those of #1. Yet she was not burned out. In fact, throughout the interview she described her job positively:

"I like the job tremendously."

"I am so pleased with what I'm doing."

"I am perfectly satisfied with my working conditions."

"I can't think of anything I don't like about the work, I like it so much."

"Every day is just a new adventure."

There is no indication in the interview with Worker #2 that she initiated new projects, and she herself reported that she did not accede to all of the demands made upon her:

"With the agency, (certain demands) are just water off a duck's back. I don't pay any attention to (them). When there are demands that I feel are horrendous or just silly, I don't



pay any attention or do it. But with the participants, if there are demands that they made, you just have to be diplomatic about it (but not indulge them).

The considerably different approaches to work illustrated in the foregoing vignettes can partially be described in terms of exchange rules. Worker #1 appears to have been moved primarily by beneficence, or the notion that she should respond whenever needs appear. No doubt she views the job of social worker (achieved status) as having certain, very expansive, obligations to one's clients (complementary). Worker #2, on the other hand, had a far more circumspect orientation to her job. Elsewhere in the interview she indicated that she had come out of retirement to take the job because she "was interested in staying busy at something." She preferred the present job to her former occupation as a school teacher. In addition, she received considerable support from her coworkers and supervisor. In effect, she seems to feel that she is getting a fair deal, a cognition grounded in the exchange rule of reciprocity. If the point is reached whereby she comes to perceive her work as an unfair exchange (nonreciprocal), then she too would be said to experience occupational burnout.

What the foregoing suggests is that workers may come to their jobs with different exchange rules operating, and each exchange rule sets the stage for different experiences regarding burnout. Elsewhere (author reference deleted for review process) we noted at least three paths to burnout based on the three exchange rules discussed above:

- (a) the juncture at which the more obligated role partner in a relationship based on complementarity no longer accepts that exchange rule;
- (b) the threshold of physical and/or emotional exhaustion of someone guided by beneficence;
- (c) the point of unsatisfactory returns from a relationship based on reciprocity.

This understanding of burnout offers a critical review of the recent claim by Goroff (1986, p. 198) that love is an antidote

to burnout in social welfare work. The author calls for a Love paradigm characterized by egalitarian client-worker relationships of "caring, respecting, responding and understanding one another" to replace an existing Power paradigm in social services, which relies on hierarchical organization and the assumption that service workers control clients. In effect, he is suggesting that the elimination of complementarity as an exchange rule can eliminate burnout as an occupational hazard. He is partially correct — indeed, it can eliminate burnout grounded in complementarity. However, it does not address the other two routes to burnout we have described that derive from beneficence and reciprocity. Consequently, Goroff's antidote may work in some cases but not in all situations harboring the potential for service worker burnout. Agencies seeking to frame policies and practices that will reduce burnout must be aware of the various avenues to that condition, avenues that are informed by different exchange rules.

Our multidimensional understanding of burnout also implies that clients as well as service workers can burn out, especially due to continual confrontation with their structured and imposed obligations to service workers (complementarity, and the felt lack of reciprocity). Street, Martin, and Gordon (1979, pp. 68–9) note that

The poor need . . . great amounts of patience (as when welfare officials refuse to make appointments and keep recipients waiting interminably), high tolerance for rudeness and insult (as when indigent users of hospital emergency rooms find that no one even notices they are trying to ask questions), and a rare readiness to make their private lives public (as when one is questioned about one's sex life by a stranger in an open cubicle of a welfare office).

In addition, Lipsky (1980, p. 60) writes about service bureaucrats' control over " . . . structuring the context of clients' interaction with them and their agencies; . . . teaching clients how to behave as clients; and . . . allocating psychological rewards and sanctions associated with clients entering into relationships with

them." Many others have commented on various dimensions of worker-client role relationships; yet surprisingly little attention has been given to these phenomena as issues of burnout. Nevertheless, the foregoing descriptions convey the potential for client burnout, or "the juncture at which the more obligated role partner . . . no longer accepts (the) exchange rule."

In the preceding section we demonstrated how an understanding of different exchange rules can alert practitioners to cognitive sources of worker burnout and policy and programmatic sources of client burnout. The following discussion applies exchange rules to another arena of welfare concerns, the worker-client relationship.

### Worker - Client Interactions

Another social welfare issue about which exchange rules provide new insights regards worker-client interactions. For illustrative purposes we limit the discussion to (a) misunderstanding about the exchange rule of complementarity and (b) distinctions in worker orientations between philanthropy and hospitality.

#### *Misunderstanding About Complementarity*

The nature of the worker-client relationship is a critical element in the quality of social welfare activities. Yet, all too often, it becomes a site for conflict and misunderstanding. Consider the following scenario that occurs between floor staff and residents in the dining hall of a nursing home, as described by Gubrium (1975, pp. 131- 132):

Residents expect the hostess and medication nurse to treat them as normal, adult patrons of the room. Floor staff is quite aware of this. To avoid trouble, it usually accommodates residents' wishes, but it resents doing so because it makes them feel subservient to the residents. . . . On those occasions when floor staff is not appropriately subservient, it is roundly castigated by residents. Sometimes this means a harsh complaint to the top staff about the transgression; sometimes it means an immediate, embarrassing insult.

One aide was quoted as saying, " 'Those people . . . are just too demanding. They think we're here to wait on them. They treat us like dirt.' " (Gubrium, 1975, p. 133).

The tension in the foregoing scenario derives from differing definitions of the situation grounded in different exchange rules held by staff and residents. Staff members are operating on the basis of professional assumptions about their achieved statuses and roles. They view their work as limited to a certain expertise or specialization. In turn, they expect the residents to treat them accordingly. Residents, on the other hand, do not accept the contours of the implicit exchange rule. Instead, they see their achieved statuses and roles as those of customers who should be accorded deference because they are paying for a service. From either vantage point complementarity is implied: one's rights are another's obligations. However, the actors do not agree about who has the rights and who has the obligations.

Another situation of potential tension between clients and welfare workers occurs when they have strikingly different backgrounds (e.g., Grosser, 1966; Olmstead, 1983). Whenever there are status differences in a relationship (by gender, ethnicity, age, social class, etc.), the relationship has the possibility of being motivated by some form of complementarity. For example, a middle class welfare worker may feel that s/he has certain rights such as respect and deference due from a lower-income client precisely because of the social class privilege the worker has. To be sure, complementarity by age, ethnicity, sex, and social class has structured relationships historically and continues to contemporarily, thereby establishing the potential for suspicion, misunderstanding, or mistrust in all cross-class, cross-gender, cross-ethnic, cross-age relationships.

Within class-gender-ethnic-age categories, however, complementarity as an exchange rule is virtually eliminated. In these relationships there is less opportunity for misconstruing (or understanding and disliking) the motives of one's role partner, be it the social worker or client. (Insofar as oppressed groups assimilate stereotypes, however, it is possible that status expectations will be maintained even in relationships between people with similar backgrounds.) Consequently, at selected times in the history of social welfare indigenous paraprofessionals have

been utilized as direct service providers or as mediators between clients and professional workers. The success of such efforts is uneven (Groser, 1966; Berman and Haug, 1973; Brager, 1965; Cudaback, 1968; Gartner, 1969; Adams and Freeman, 1979). Part of the reason for variable success derives from the paraprofessionals' emphasis regarding their new responsibilities. The employment of indigenous paraprofessionals was undertaken in part to preclude the likelihood of ascribed status complementarity being operative in worker-client relationships. Instead, paraprofessionals frequently gave greater salience to the exchange rule of complementarity based on the newly achieved role of worker and felt that employers had certain obligations to them as workers, including the provision of opportunity for career mobility. Some researchers report that, in order to enhance their chances for advancement, a number of paraprofessionals conscientiously adopted agency attitudes and professional reference groups, thereby obviating the initial reason for their employment. In effect, they shifted from exchange rules of complementarity based on ascribed status to ones based on achieved status. In doing so, they pursued their own goals, perhaps at the expense of the community from which they were hired.

Not all reports of community-based workers document this outcome, however, Gilkes' (1983) study of professional Black women details the complex ways in which they managed both race and class consciousness for the benefit of the Black community. In terms developed in this paper, they essentially refused to select between complementarity based on ascribed status and that based on achieved status. Rather, in obtaining their education they used "dominant culture educational institutions for black community interests" (Gilkes, 1983, p. 115); their upward career mobility was paired with increasing social and political criticism; and they employed specific strategies to maintain connections with the community on whose behalf they worked. Gilkes observes that "the goals of black communities for social change" inherently conflict with "dominant culture professionalism" (Gilkes, 1983, p. 115). In other words, the dominant culture's emphasis on individual career mobility works to coopt potential change agents by being organized around and insisting on the priority of one exchange rule over another (i.e.,

complementarity from achieved status over complementarity from ascribed status).

Recognition of the potential for conflicting exchange rules, in the case of the nursing home staff and clients, or shifting exchange rules, in the case of indigenous paraprofessional workers, alerts practitioners to issues around which workers could be educated. In the former case, workers' understanding and anticipation of residents' attitudes could at least dilute the impact of their complaints. More optimistically, workers and residents might actively come to agreement about mutually agreeable and respected orientations each group brought to the relationship. In the latter case, agencies should anticipate the work orientations indigenous paraprofessionals bring to their responsibilities even as they recognize the dilemmas with which paraprofessional work is fraught. Insofar as agency policy and programmatic considerations can reduce occasions wherein paraprofessionals feel the need to make choices between the agency and the client group, they will be adding to the quality of paraprofessionals' worklives. Indeed one might assume that they would also be more aligned with the agency's original purpose.

### *Philanthropy and Hospitality*

Another vantage point on worker orientations to clients is offered by Elliott (1984), who distinguishes between helping or giving based on philanthropy and that based on hospitality. With philanthropy, she argues, giving is an act flowing from the self-sufficient to the needy in gratuitous and asymmetrical fashion. In our terms, this can be thought of as complementarity lodged in the patronizing attitude of noblesse oblige or a professional mystique. On the other hand, she describes hospitality as giving based on mutuality, collectivity, and the recognition by the giver that at some point s/he also may need assistance. In our terms, the latter attitude can be thought of as generalized reciprocity.

Elliott alerts us to a broader point: acts may superficially appear the same (in this case, giving), but they are not always equivalent in important respects. Beyond Elliott's focus on giving, another example of this point lies in the history of the club movement of U.S. women around the turn of the 20th century.

As similar as the Black National Association for Colored Women (NACW) and the white General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) appeared in terms of organization, membership, and certain activities, the work of their members was at the very least differently motivated (Davis, 1981; Giddings, 1984). In effect, the work that the GFWC did with the poor was probably grounded in beneficence or noblesse oblige (complementarity) and undertaken as an opportunity to be active outside the home (reciprocity). The motto of NACW, "Lifting as we climb," suggests a wholly different orientation to the work performed by its members. There was a recognition of a common group destiny across social classes that was undergirded by operation of the exchange rule of complementarity based on ascribed racial status. One important difference, then, between the GFWC and NACW, is, to use Elliott's terms, that of philanthropy and hospitality, respectively.

The foregoing suggests that social scientists seeking to portray and analyze social welfare historically and contemporarily must look beyond behaviors to cognitive orientations and helper motivations. Only in doing so will we ascertain the important differences among welfare activities and possible reasons for differential client evaluations of seemingly comparable services and supports.

The previous section has revealed ways in which worker-client tensions may arise because of competing or shifting exchange rules. Yet, as we discussed with the situation of paraprofessionals, if exchange rules that initially appear to compete or conflict are recognized and addressed, their resolution can improve social welfare operations beyond the worker-client relationship. The final section provides historical support for this possibility.

### Labor Issues

The structural location of welfare workers as mediators between clients and agencies of the state generates a host of interaction tensions and labor disputes that can be described through the utilization of exchange rules. From a radical perspective, workers and their clients are viewed as fellow members of the working class, both of whom must insist upon equitable treat-

ment by the state and its agents. The Rank and File Movement of social workers in the 1930s manifested this ideology. In urban areas workers formed coalitions to protest eroding salaries and express other work concerns; in addition, they sought fundamental changes in worker-client relationships and common bonds with other laborers through the expression of a radical critique of the state. In effect, they were calling for a reordering of what constitutes a fair exchange (based on the exchange rule of reciprocity) between a state and its people. The Rank and File members thought of themselves as members of the proletariat. This analysis gave their movement identity and helped focus their attention on efforts to unionize. The impetus for unionization was fuelled by the failure of the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) and other social work groups to take effective action against salary reductions or to develop a program to improve the economic security of social workers (Fisher, 1936). The distinct identity forged by the Rank and File — the one that separated them from the liberal social work establishment — is most clearly formulated by the exchange rule of reciprocity. Using such a framework, the Rank and File Movement launched a political discourse that not only established the first union for social workers in the United States but also argued for a voice in the construction of the structure in which their work would take place — the modern welfare state (Leighninger, 1987). The Rank and File Movement in essence shepherded in another era in social welfare in its insistence upon an occupational shift from models of complementary (via a professional mystique) and beneficence (via ladies bountiful or altruists) to one of reciprocity. The posture of the Rank and File, however, created tensions both inside and outside the movement, tensions in fact built upon competing exchange rules.

Whenever workers express interest in reciprocity, conflict potentially emerges between the occupational ideology of beneficence (altruism) on the one hand, and worker interests in occupational returns, on the other. Worker activism may violate one of social work's codes of ethics, namely that one should always put clients' needs first. How should welfare workers manage competing exchange rules?



A contemporary comparison to the dilemmas of the Rank and File Movement will illuminate some striking points of convergence of the different exchange orientations, suggesting strategies wherein exchange rules become pivotal to conflict resolution. In a survey by Lightman (1983), social workers in Toronto indicated no objection to the use of a workers' strike to achieve certain goals. However, the only reason for a probable strike that was endorsed by a majority of respondents was to seek improvement in the quality of services to clients (beneficence). Less than one in three respondents endorsed strikes for employee self-interests of wages, fringe benefits, decision-making authority, and caseload size (reciprocity). Points of convergence between the exchange rules of beneficence and reciprocity are interesting to note in these data. One exchange rule is nested inside the other. Indeed, the quality of services to clients (the respondents' over-riding concern based on beneficence) is not likely to be improved without the changes that are packages under employee self-interest (based on reciprocity).

In Lightman's work, then, it appears that the issue of a social work strike can be informed by both exchange rules, beneficence and reciprocity, although under different circumstances these orientations may conflict. By taking such a stance toward a strike, the social workers in Toronto managed this potential conflict by linking the exchange rules under a particular arrangement that proved them compatible. The optimistic conclusion is that even as shifting and competing exchange rules illuminate fundamental conflict within the occupation of social welfare, they also serve as a conceptual filter through which to formulate options for conflict resolution.

### Conclusion

The foregoing discussion intends to complement some — and challenge other — analyses of competing ideologies and actions within social welfare. The perspective offered is interactionist rather than functionalist in perspective, focusing on service workers' agency as creators of social welfare practice and policy. The present explication and illustration of exchange rules were necessarily limited; ongoing work in the sociology of motivation promises further articulation of this perspective. In

addition, ongoing analyses of contemporary welfare activities as well as the retrieval of archival materials and reconstruction of historical issues promise ample opportunities for the creative application of social exchange rules to the social welfare enterprise. Finally, as we have demonstrated in the discussion of labor issues, knowledge of exchange rules can be functional in achieving conflict resolution around central debates in the welfare workplace.

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## Notes

1. The heretofore unpublished interviews comes from a larger study by Dressel (1984).