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**Review of *Integrating Knowledge and Practice: The Case of Social Work and Social Science*. Westport, CT: Praegar Publishers, 1997. David J. Tucker, Charles Garvin and Rosemary Sari (Eds.). Reviewed by Bart Grossman, University of California, Berkeley.**

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## Book Reviews

David J. Tucker, Charles Garvin and Rosemary Sarri (Eds.), *Integrating Knowledge and practice: The Case of Social Work and Social Science*. Westport, CT: Praegar Publishers, 1997. \$65.00  
hardcover

This book is a status report on a movement. This movement, the attempt to define social work as a science-based field in which concepts derived from the social sciences are integrated with practice, helped energize the expansion of social work education in the Universities beginning in the 1950s. As social workers fifty years earlier migrated from the church seeking a "scientific charity," educators of the 50s and 60s sought to break the dominance of psychoanalysis and build a foundation in the emerging disciplines of sociology, psychology, social psychology and, to a lesser extent, political science, economics and anthropology.

The University of Michigan School of Social Work was, arguably, the Jerusalem of this movement. From this base a new breed of scientist social workers sought to place the profession on a sound empirical footing and, incidentally, secure their own foothold in a skeptical University. Nearly fifty years later we are offered, in this volume based on a conference held in Ann Arbor in 1992, a collection of papers that demonstrate the fruits and evaluates the progress of this effort. The papers are diverse and valuable on their own terms, but also collectively raise significant questions about the faith that underlies modern academic social work.

The book begins with a historical review of the relationship of social work and social science. While this piece acknowledges a period of "conflicted differentiation" from 1900 to 1950, it views the period since 1950 as one of "integration and development," an optimistic view that may better fit the academic context than it does the agency world.

The following chapter is the heart of the book, a group of papers debating core concepts of integration. Gambrill cogently asserts the basic tenet of the faith, that science is an essential corrective to professional prejudice, guesswork and muddled thinking, which we owe our clients. "We should care enough to

test." Price argues that the scientific method cannot bring about change in social policy which is made in the context of political conflict and cultural symbolism.

Laws and Rein attack from another direction, suggesting that disciplinary approaches to science lead to abandonment of the relevant practice questions. Looking for empirical grounding, Boettcher turns to a sample of social work doctoral dissertations and sadly concludes that the majority of the studies fail to address the knowledge base of the profession. If government funds research, Jamrozik asks, will not government's priorities determine what knowledge there is to integrate?

This debate is fascinating but illusive because there is no agreement on basic terms. What is to the knowledge to be integrated—theory, findings, methodology, ideology, all of the above? What level(s) of practice are to be informed—clinical, policy, education? Where is the integration to occur and who will formulate it—the practitioner in the field, the teacher in the classroom, the researcher in the journal?

The next two sections are exemplary pieces of integrative writing. Part II explores social science for concepts useful to practice. The papers include pieces by Brower and Nurius on social cognition, Fisher and Kling on new social movement theories, Sheinfeld-Gorin and Viswanathan on theories of organizational decision making, Lambert on employment policy, Bernstein, Goodman and Epstein on grounded theory, a research tool especially suited for practitioner-scholars, and Mace applying chaos and complexity ideas from the natural sciences.

Part III identifies concepts and issues from the world of practice that have implications for social science. The papers include Guterrez on an empowerment approach to macro practice, Mak and Nai-ming on collaboration between practitioners and researchers in Hong Kong social work education, Ramon on Mental Health practice in Europe, Vinokur-Kaplan on human services teamwork, Lauffer on linking organizational research and action, Abromovitz on a feminist critique of social science, Jamrozik on international human resource, and Longres on social stratification and psychological debilitation.

These chapters are each noteworthy as cutting edge summaries of significant intellectual material, yet few offer extensive implications for social work practice: The types of knowledge

span a broad territory including research findings, methods, theory, values and metaphor, although, in keeping with current usage, almost anything may be referred to as a theory.

Having offered so many trees the editors call upon Edwin Thomas to assess the state of the forest. Thomas meticulously delineates eight models of linkage between social science and social work. He notes that the majority of papers reflect substantive, methodological and organizational contributions of social science to social work. Only a few identify possible contributions of social work to social science. There is very little mention of social work practice methods whether familiar or unconventional. While there is strong emphasis on the impact of the social context on social work and social science, reference to any impact of social science or social work on the environment is scanty.

Finally, the reader is offered the story of the Social Work and Social Science doctoral program at the University of Michigan told by two of the programs guiding spirits, Robert Vinter and Rosemary Sarri. The program is celebrated as a unique model of the integration of social work and social science. The praise is not unmitigated, however, as the authors lament the current focus of research on, "measurement and assessment of social problems," rather than on prevention and intervention.

The book thus suggests a mixed assessment of the integration movement. It provides some excellent applications of critical knowledge from social science and social work, yet illustrates Law and Rein's view that within the academy, disciplinary research tends to crowd out practice concerns. While acquiring much that is of use in practice, research and education the reader may conclude that true integration of social work and social science remains an illusive commodity.

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M. C. Hokenstad and James Midgley (Eds.), *Issues in International Social Work*. Washington, DC: NASW Press, 1997. \$26.95 papercover.

The book, *Issues in International Social Work* is a timely, topical and innovative contribution to the international field of Human Services. While there are many renditions of country