

December 2002

Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 29, No. 4 (December 2002)

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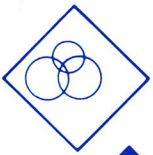
(2002) "Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare Vol. 29, No. 4 (December 2002)," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 29: Iss. 4, Article 1.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.2844>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol29/iss4/1>

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Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

VOLUME XXIX
NUMBER 4
December, 2002

The JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE is edited and published by the SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008.

JSSW is sponsored jointly by Western Michigan University, the College of Health and Human Services, and School of Social Work.

The substantial support of Arizona State University in the publication of the journal is gratefully acknowledged.

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JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

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Different Types of Welfare States? A Methodological Deconstruction of Comparative Research

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Research on modern welfare states has been strongly influenced by the theory that they develop according to patterns, which form distinct regimes—liberal, corporatist, and social democratic. These regimes are characterized by several key variables, among which the decommodification of labor is heavily weighted. This article examines the operational assumptions, measures, and calculations used in the most widely cited empirical study around which distinct regime theory has developed over the last decade. The findings reveal critical methodological weaknesses in the conceptualization and quantification of decommodification measures, which form the empirical cornerstone of distinct regime theory.

Theory and research on the development of the modern welfare states tend to be concentrated around two lines of analysis which emphasize either impersonal forces of structural-functional change or the socio-political forces of contending group interests. The structural-functional approach is associated with convergence theory, which posits that over time the programs and policies of welfare states in the advanced industrial countries develop a considerable resemblance to one another. The socio-political approach is associated with distinct regime theory, which holds that there are systematic variations in programs and policies reflected in particular types of welfare states that emerge from different socio-political adaptations (Van Voorhis, 1998).

Among the numerous studies that have advanced distinct regime theory, the most influential contribution to date is Esping-Andersen's (1990) *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. The signifi-

cance of this work is three-fold. First, this impressive quantitative comparative study of 18 countries greatly extended the boundaries of empirical socio-political welfare state analysis—providing a strong quantitative socio-political response to Wilensky's (1975) landmark functionalist study of convergence. Second, the work builds upon the theoretical contributions of Titmuss (1974) and other earlier theorists, and refined the differences between welfare states by identifying three distinct regimes. Third, in focusing on separate welfare state regimes, this study offers an explanation for the causes of welfare state differences.

The distinct regime model identifies a liberal, corporatist, and social democratic paradigm by formulating a systematic comparison of how policies and programs reflect: a) the degree to which labor is decommodified; b) the relationship of entitlements to need, contributions, or citizenship; and c) the type of the public-private mix in social provisions, particularly pensions. The three regimes and their distinguishing characteristics are represented in Table 1 below. In addition to the characteristics in Table 1, the three regimes are seen as creating different systems of social stratification that help to determine and maintain class and status differentiations. In this schema, the Liberal regime is associated with poor relief that maintains class distinctions based on income; the Corporatist regime is identified with contributory social insurance that sustains differentiation based on occupational status; and the Social Democratic regime is linked to middle-class universalism and social equality. Over the last decade this classification of distinct regimes has had a substantial impact on the conceptualization of comparative welfare state research. One of the most recent examples is Goodin, Headey, Muffels and Dirven's 1999 analysis of *The Real Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*—a rigorous study of three countries in the Esping-Andersen sample identified as liberal (U.S.), social democratic (the Netherlands) and corporatist (Germany) regimes.

The empirical claim to the identification of distinct regimes is supported by quantitative measurement of several key characteristics, among which the most elaborate and systematic analysis is devoted to the decommodification of labor—a widely-cited analysis that provides the clearest case for the clustering of three regimes. An entire chapter is addressed to the discussion and quantification of decommodification, which is operationally

Table 1
The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism

<i>Type of Regime</i>	<i>Proto-typical Countries</i>	<i>Philosophical Basis</i>	<i>Degree to Which Labor is Decommodified</i>	<i>Entitlement Based On</i>	<i>Type of Public/Private Mix</i>
Liberal	Australia Canada United States	Classical Liberalism	Low	Need	Market dominated/ residualist
Corporatist	Austria France Germany	Conservative Social Policy	Moderate	Contribution	State Dominated/ Occupational Related
Social Democratic	Denmark Sweden Holland	Socialism/ Marxism	High	Citizenship	State Dominated/ Universal

defined by an index that measures the relative degrees of de-commodification offered by three separate social insurance programs—old age pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits. The concept of decommodification represents the idea that social policies of modern welfare state provide a level of income maintenance, which allows individuals to “opt-out of work”, thereby reducing the necessity to sell their labor at any price in order to survive. Hence, social welfare benefits create a buffer against human labor being treated merely as a commodity that can be bought for the lowest price. The distinct regime thesis suggests that different welfare states foster varying degrees of decommodification, which can be measured by examining rules for eligibility, disincentives and benefit levels.

The division of welfare capitalism into three worlds of Liberal, Corporatist and Social Democratic regimes is an ambitious formulation, and as such has drawn various criticisms. The critiques leveled against this formulation usually involve conceptual and theoretical assessments of the broad conclusions from this study, rather than an in-depth review of the empirical analysis (Orloff, 1993; Sainsbury, et. al, 1994; Baldwin, 1996; Sorenson, 1996, Overbye, 1996). It has also been argued that the division of three worlds is based on a relatively small number of subjects ($N=18$) and that the data which are utilized may not accurately portray the unique ideological and class compositions of the countries involved (Kvist & Torfing, 1996). This article provides a detailed analysis of the operational assumptions, measures, and calculations used to create the decommodification index, which represents not only the cornerstone concept in the theoretical foundation of distinct regimes, but offers the empirical glue for clustering of these regimes. This analysis is conducted on three levels: 1) the selection and definition of the decommodification indicators within programs 2) the selection and definition of programs scored on these indicators and 3) the calculation of the overall decommodification score—assumptions and alternatives.

Operational Definition: What's Included and What's Left Out?

In constructing the decommodification index several different indicators were employed to operationally define the degree to

which old age pensions, sickness, and unemployment programs permitted individuals to maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market. For example in the case of pensions, an index was constructed using the following variables: 1) the replacement rate of the minimum pension benefit for an average production worker 2) the standard replacement rate of a pension benefit for a normal worker 3) the required period of contribution to become fully vested (inversely counted) and 4) the individual contribution rate. The two measures of replacement rates (variables 1 and 2) were then given a double weight in the final pension score. Presumably, the reason for including both the minimum and average pension benefit is to determine the minimum income regardless of what one contributed to the system. A higher level minimum benefit (higher replacement rate) acts as a greater decommodifier of labor than a lower level benefit, or put another way, the less the benefit is tied to employment more it decommodifies labor.

All 18 countries in Esping-Andersen's sample were ranked on each of these four indicators according to a three point scale—1—low decommodification 2—for medium or 3—for high decommodification—in which the designations of high and low are based on scores of plus or minus one standard deviation from the mean. The cumulative value of these scores was then weighted by the percent of the relevant population covered by the pension program, which produced the pension decommodification score. A similar procedure was performed for both sickness and unemployment benefits, using replacement rates and other slightly different indicators appropriate to each benefit.

A critical examination the individual variables included in this operational definition reveals serious flaws. Two of the variables in the pension decommodification index—1) the minimum pension replacement rate ("minimum pension as a percent of normal worker earnings net of taxes") and 2) "the standard pension replacement rate (net)for a single person" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 49)—are such similar measures that the replacement rate variable is essentially counted twice, with each count multiplied by a factor of two. As a result of this procedure, replacement rates effectively account for 66% of the pension score in the decommodification in index and 40% of the two other scores (sickness and employment) in the index. But to what extent does a comparison

of replacement rates specify how well social welfare benefits permit workers "to uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation?" (Esping-Andersen, p. 37) There are two basic problems with the way this index is operationalized.

First, international comparisons are plagued by problems related to standardization and differences in the real value of the benefit relative to the cost-of-living. The best way to assess the comparative value of pension benefits relative to the cost of living in each country is to operationalize these benefits on the basis of parity adjusted replacement rates (Amzallag, 1995). Offering greater standardization for comparative purposes, these rates are usually calculated using a simple formula of Average Production Worker-wage / Average Pension benefit * Purchasing Power Parities (Whiteford, 1996). By factoring in the purchasing power parities, this measure of replacement rates can be used as a proxy for comparing levels of benefits in different countries and the degree of social protection afforded by different welfare states. In using pension replacement rates that are not adjusted for purchasing power parities, the decommodification index provides a crude measure for comparative purposes.

If the use of soft measures is a critical observation on what is included in the index, the second problem concerns what is not included, which raises a more fundamental issue that challenges the basic validity of this index. The measurement of pensions, for example, does not account for policy variations in the normal retirement age (NRA). All countries base eligibility for pensions on criteria that include the attainment of a minimum age. If country A has a 10% higher wage replacement rate than country B, but requires a worker to be 3 or 4 years older in order to retire—3 or 4 years is more than 10% of the life expectancy when the normal age of retirement is 65—which country's pension policies offer a higher degree of decommodification?

Even if variables such as the normal retirement age were included, a larger issue remains. That is, the replacement incomes furnished through the three public programs—pensions, sickness, and unemployment—ignore a wide range of financial supports related to pensions, sickness, and unemployment benefits that welfare states are increasingly providing through social policies which do not show up as direct public expenditures.

As Adema (1999) points out, international comparisons of social welfare that measure only direct cash transfers convey an incomplete view of public social efforts. He suggests it is hazardous to draw serious conclusions about comparative benefits on the basis of gross spending indicators. A full understanding of the scope and value of social benefits provided by modern welfare states requires calculations based on a comprehensive ledger that includes both publicly mandated private benefits as well as voluntary private social benefits.

Publicly mandated private benefits, which usually involve employer payments for absence from work due to sickness and pension contributions to employer-based pension plans, have been legislated in many countries including Denmark, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United States, Norway, and the United Kingdom. Replacement rates that are calculated on public old age pensions create a misleading picture of the real standard of living that retired workers can sustain when publicly mandated private pension benefits are also counted.

In the same vein an accurate accounting of the extent to which social welfare provisions promote the decommodification of labor must include the cash value of voluntary private benefits, such as employer-provided pensions, health insurance, unemployment compensation, severance pay, and sickness compensation. Although these voluntary provisions are not publicly mandated, they are publicly subsidized to varying degrees through tax concessions. Indeed, as shown by Adema's (1999) rigorous calculations, when international comparisons of social welfare transfers involve a comprehensive accounting of direct cash benefits as well as the value of other public measures and subsidizes, there is a remarkable leveling of differences between the traditionally high public Social Democratic countries and Liberal regimes such as the United Kingdom and the United States. Based on the conventional measures, for example, Denmark ranks 1st and the U.S. ranks 12th in gross public social expenditure. But when social spending is adjusted for taxation of benefits, tax expenditures, publicly mandated private benefits and voluntary private benefits, the U.S. moves to 6th place and Denmark falls to 7th place.

Looking closely at how programs in the United States were

scored on the decommodification index reveals some of the difficulties of comparative research that attempts to cover a wide and complex range of policies. According to the operational definitions employed in this index, the United States does not provide a cash benefit for Sickness—receiving a score of zero for that category. Esping-Andersen does not elaborate on the definition of “Sickness Benefits”. If this program refers to “sick leave” with benefits provided when short-term illness prevents work, arguably many U.S. employers offer the functional equivalent as a part of an employees’ tax subsidized fringe benefits. However, the decommodification power of sickness programs is measured empirically by ranking the 1) replacement rates for the first 26 weeks of illness 2) number of weeks of employment required prior to illness to qualify 3) number of days before benefit is paid and 4) length of receipt. Although the exact definition is unclear, these criteria suggest that sickness benefits under consideration involve something more than fringe benefit sick days provided by an employer in the U.S., or payments from European employers for short-term illness (Prins, 1990). In many countries when short-term sickness benefits are exhausted, the employee is then paid a disability benefit (SSA, 1996). Since the duration and level of benefits vary between countries, an argument can be made that three separate U.S. programs, 1) the disability portion of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) 2), the Disability Insurance part of Old Age Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and 3) Worker’s Compensation would accommodate the definition of sickness benefits.

Supplemental Security Income is a social assistance program which provides a cash grant to persons unable to engage in any gainful activity by reason of a disability expected to last for a year or more. There is no stipulation that a program must be social insurance-based in order to qualify for inclusion in the decommodification index. (Australia’s means-tested pension program is included, but received a reduced score.) If classification as social insurance were a prerequisite, a second program could have been counted in the index, namely, Disability Insurance, part of Old Age Survivor’s and Disability Insurance (OASDI), the United State’s largest social welfare program. While the American program of Disability Insurance may be less generous than its

European counterparts, the system is similar enough to merit inclusion. Disability benefits are payable to persons who are unable to engage in substantial gainful activity due to a physical or mental impairment, expected to last for 12 months or more (SSA, 1996).

A third program "Workers' Compensation" (WC) also provides sickness benefits for workers who are hurt or injured on the job, or who develop job related diseases. While all but three states in the U.S. have instituted a form of Workers' Compensation, it is not a federal program and the lack of standardization between state programs could be a significant obstacle to developing a measure for an index. Moreover, WC may be more narrow than many sickness benefits furnished by other countries since it is linked to job related injury. However, most states provide relatively high replacement rates—usually two-thirds of the worker's salary, plus coverage for incurred medical expenses. While it may have been difficult to incorporate any or all of these programs into the decommodification index, failure to acknowledge the widespread benefits of short-term sick leave or existence of three separate programs which provide long-term support for people with disabling illnesses imprecisely categorizes the US as a country without a sickness benefit.

Quantification: Inadvertent Weighting

In an effort to quantify the levels of decommodification, Esping-Andersen adds the specific decommodification scores for each of the three programs—pensions, sickness, and unemployment—to arrive at an overall decommodification index score, shown in column three, Table 2. The 18 countries are ranked from low (18) to high (1) levels of decommodification, based on their cumulative index scores. As illustrated in Table 2, these countries divide evenly into three clusters characterized by high (Social Democratic), moderate (Corporatist), and low (Liberal) levels of decommodification, lending empirical support to the distinct regime classification.

An analysis of variance was conducted to assess the distinctiveness of the three groups from a statistical perspective. As noted in Table 3, the Tukey's B procedure supports the distinct

Table 2

Overall Decommodification Index and Regime Clusters

<i>Country</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Decommodification Index Score</i>
Australia	(18)	13.0
United States*	(17)	13.8
New Zealand	(16)	17.1
Canada	(15)	22.0
Ireland	(14)	23.3
United Kingdom	(13)	23.4
Italy	(12)	24.1
Japan	(11)	27.1
France	(10)	27.5
Germany	(9)	27.7
Finland	(8)	29.2
Switzerland	(7)	29.7
Austria	(6)	31.1
Belgium	(4/5)	32.4
Netherlands	(4/5)	32.4
Denmark	(3)	38.1
Norway	(2)	38.3
Sweden	(1)	39.1
		Mean = 27.2

Source: Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 52.

*According to the additive approach described by Esping-Andersen the U.S. score should be 14.2

regime interpretation in the sense that the mean decommodification scores for each group are significantly different from one another.

However, before drawing too firm a conclusion about how well the results of the decommodification index support the distinct regime thesis, it is worth taking a closer look at the additive method by which the overall index score was quantified. The data in Table 4 show that pension benefits had the highest decommodification scores, averaging 10.7, followed by sickness benefits,

Table 3

Analysis of Variance: Decommodification Index Groupings

	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Significance
Tukey HSD	1.00	2.00	-8.8000*	2.102	.002
		3.00	-16.4667*	2.102	.000
	2.00	3.00	-7.6667*	2.102	.006

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

which averaged 9.2 and unemployment benefits, which averaged 7.1. If the objective is to compare countries relative to each other on all three program areas, then adding the decommodification scores inadvertently weights pensions (with a mean of 10.7) almost 50% more than unemployment (with a mean of 7.10). Since, as noted earlier, the way pension scores were originally calculated lent decisive value to wage replacement rates, the disproportionate weight allotted to pension scores in the overall index makes the "decommodification index" almost a proxy for wage replacement rates of old age pensions. The problem here is not simply that the pension scores are weighted 50% more than unemployment scores, but that country rankings differ considerably on these two program areas. As illustrated in Table 4, Sweden, for example, ranks 1st on the degree of decommodification in the area of pensions and 10th on unemployment programs.

The logic of using different programs to operationally define decommodification suggests that if the countries being studied actually fell into three distinct clusters (high, medium, and low levels of decommodification) the pattern would be internally consistent across different program areas. According to this logic, the development of an overall index should give equal weight to how the countries cluster on each program. Rather than adding the raw decommodification scores for each program, a more precise approach to weighting the programs equally would be to standardize the raw scores by calculating z-scores for each program (shown in Table 4). Then, by adding the z-scores to compute the overall decommodification index, each of the three component

Table 4

Raw and Standardized Decommodification Scores for Old-Age Pensions, Sickness Benefits and Unemployment Insurance

	<i>Pensions</i>			<i>Sickness</i>			<i>Unemployment</i>		
	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Raw DS*</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Raw DS*</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Raw DS*</i>	<i>Z</i>
Australia	(16)	5.0	-6.7	(15)	4.0	-1.29	(16)	4.0	-1.62
Austria	(6)	11.9	0.36	(3)	12.5	0.84	(11)	6.7	-0.21
Belgium	(2)	15.0	1.27	(10)	8.8	-0.09	(4)	8.6	0.78
Canada	(13)	7.7	-0.88	(14)	6.3	-0.79	(7)	8.0	0.46
Denmark	(2)	15.0	1.27	(1)	15.0	1.46	(6)	8.1	0.52
Finland	(4)	14.0	0.98	(7)	10.0	0.21	(13)	5.2	-1.00
France	(5)	12.0	0.39	(9)	9.2	0.01	(12)	6.3	-0.42
Germany	(12)	8.5	-0.64	(5)	11.3	0.54	(8)	7.9	0.41
Ireland	(15)	6.7	-1.17	(11)	8.3	-0.21	(5)	8.3	0.62
Italy	(9)	9.6	-0.32	(8)	9.4	0.06	(14)	5.1	-1.05
Japan	(8)	10.5	-0.05	(13)	6.8	-0.59	(15)	5.0	-1.10
Netherlands	(7)	10.8	0.04	(6)	10.5	0.34	(1)	11.1	2.08
New Zealand	(10)	9.1	-0.46	(15)	4.0	-1.29	(6)	4.0	-1.62
Norway	(3)	14.9	1.24	(2)	14.0	1.21	(2)	9.4	1.19
Sweden	(1)	17.0	1.86	(1)	15.0	1.46	(10)	7.1	-0.01
Switzerland	(11)	9.0	-0.49	(4)	12.0	0.71	(3)	8.8	0.88
UK	(12)	8.5	-0.64	(12)	7.7	-0.36	(9)	7.2	0.05
United States	(14)	7.0	-1.08	(16)	0.0	-2.29	(9)	7.2	0.05
Mean		10.7			9.2			7.1	
S.D.		3.4			4.0			1.9	

* Decommodification Score

Calculations based on data from: Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 50. For scoring procedure see *Three worlds*, pp. 77-78.

programs (sickness, pensions, and unemployment) contributes equally to each country's position on the final ranking. When the overall index is computed based on standardized scores for each component program, the findings show that the 18 countries no longer divide so neatly into the three groupings of distinct

Table 5

Rank-Order of Welfare States Based on Alternative Computation of The Decommodification Index

	Rank	Decommodification Score	Rank Based on Z	Z Score
Australia	(18)	13.0	(18)	-4.59
United States	(17)	13.8	(16)	-3.33
New Zealand	(16)	17.1	(17)	-3.38
Canada	(15)	22.0	(13)	-1.13
Ireland	(14)	23.3	(11)*	-0.77
United Kingdom	(13)	23.4	(12)*	-0.96
Italy	(12)	24.1	(14)*	-1.31
Japan	(11)	27.1	(15)*	-1.74
France	(10)	27.5	(10)	-0.02
Germany	(9)	27.7	(8)	0.31
Finland	(8)	29.2	(9)	0.19
Switzerland	(7)	29.7	(6)*	1.10
Austria	(6)	31.1	(7)*	0.98
Belgium	(4/5)	32.4	(5)	1.96
Netherlands	(4/5)	32.4	(4)	2.45
Denmark	(3)	38.1	(3)	3.25
Norway	(2)	38.3	(1)	3.65
Sweden	(1)	39.1	(2)	3.32
Mean = 27.2				
S.D. = 7.7				

*Countries which change grouping when rank based on Z score

Source: Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 52.

regimes, which was produced by the index based on the raw scores for each program. Indeed, as illustrated in Table 5, while the rank-order changes are not large, these changes are such that exactly one-third of the countries change their group position, shifting either up or down between the Social Democratic the Corporatist regime categories and between the Corporatist and the Liberal regime categories.

Distinct Regimes: Empirical Validation or Heuristic Value?

In conclusion, while Esping-Andersen's ground breaking study offered the first vigorous effort to verify distinct regime theory, there are serious methodological weaknesses in both the conceptualization and quantification of the decommodification index, which represented the empirical cornerstone of this study. In examining how this variable was constructed we find that the decommodification index appears to be more a proxy for replacement rates of old age pensions than a broad measure of several dimensions of unemployment, old age and sickness benefits. When the index is adjusted so that unemployment and sickness benefits are weighted the same as old age pensions, a large proportion of the sample countries shift their rank-order position from one regime to another. An appraisal of what is included and what is left out of the operational definition of decommodification, suggests that this measure fails to standardize the real value of benefits (via purchasing power parities) and that the selection of programs from different countries does not represent a comprehensive account of the benefits provided in these areas, which diminishes the ability to make a valid systematic comparison. Thus, despite an elaborate effort to quantify the distinct liberal, corporatist, and social democratic regimes, the empirical analysis falls far short of robust validation.

The inadequate empirical validation of distinct regime theory, however, does not negate its heuristic value as way of thinking about and trying to categorize modern welfare state. Indeed, the analysis of the *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* has fueled considerable research into welfare state typologies—northern versus southern Europe (Leibfried, 1993, Ferrera, 1996), protestant versus catholic (Castles, 1993) and differences between the Anglo-American welfare states. Responding to Esping-Andersen's categories Leibfried (1992) distinguishes among Germanic, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon and Levantine (Latin rim countries) regimes. In *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism—or Four* (1991) Castles and Mitchell suggest a fourth type of welfare state—dubbed radical liberal—can be identified which is more redistributive in nature than the liberal welfare state identified in the three worlds typology.

It is important to recognize that the distinct regimes rest on an empirically fuzzy foundation upon which to build other empirical analysis. As noted earlier, Goodin et. al. (1999) apply Esping-Andersen's typology in their study of three countries representing Social Democratic, Liberal, and Corporatist regimes. Selecting the Netherlands as the country representative of Social Democratic regimes, they conclude that the "social democratic regime is the best of all possible worlds," based on a highly detailed (over 40 pages of tables) comparative analysis of outcome criteria for the three countries (Goodin, et. al. 1999, p. 260.). At the same time, however, after reexamining the original typology of *Three Worlds* Esping Andersen (1999, p 87) concluded that based on a more comprehensive analysis the Netherlands shifts from the Social Democratic regime to "squarely a member of the conservative Continental European fold"—or a Corporatist regime.

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From Social Work to Human Services

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Social work has forfeited its professional mandate and should be replaced by "human services." In three traditional areas of responsibility—child welfare, public welfare, and mental health—social work has failed to meet its societal obligation. Meanwhile the profession has used postmodern thought to justify a focus on internal constituency groups. A template for professional education in human services is proposed.

Social work is failing to prepare professionals for the expanding service sector of the post-industrial economy and should be replaced with a more competitive education in "human services." For a variety of reasons, social work has been unable to complete its institutional assignments during the industrial era. The profession is, of course, a product of American culture. Social work's mission, aiding the disadvantaged, often conflicts with a market economy that generates poverty and inequality. The American polity fairly consistently opposes policies that protect people from insecurity, to say nothing of cultural impediments, such as discrimination against minorities, women, and the disabled. Yet, such adversity does not fully account for the profession's desultory performance. Other disciplines have flourished in the same environment, and they are increasingly usurping social work's turf, in the process raising fundamental questions about the profession's long-term viability.

Harry Specht and Mark Courtney's (1994) *Unfaithful Angels* reflects the superficiality of the conventional critique of American social work. Focusing on the split between the increasing number of students who enter professional programs to become clinicians and the dwindling numbers concerned about larger

questions of social justice and its consequences, social policy and social programs, the authors observe a paradox: "Social work has suffered from being poorly financed and unloved, and public support has been at a low ebb. But even so, the public remained willing to provide resources to prevent economic dependency" (p. 101). Note that the authors concede general sympathy for one of social work's missions, abating poverty, yet admit the public's ambivalence about the profession. If only those narcissistic clinicians could see the larger picture and change their ways!

Yet, anyone remotely familiar with the travesties of public service would do exactly what legions of younger social workers have done: jump ship. In the mid-1980s, a veteran practitioner observed that "To work in a public agency today is to work in a bureaucratic hell" (Chaiklin, 1985: 7). A decade later, a former welfare client spoke of public welfare in Orwellian terms,

As long as poor people are prohibited from having a choice—a say in deciding which services they need and which providers are most capable of satisfying them—the competitive element, if there is one, is entirely in the hands of Big Brother. Most of the people in every form of this business know this: *there is no accountability in the social service field*. None demanded, none supplied (Funicello, 1993: 252)(original emphasis).

The tragedy is that altruistic young people are vilified for electing private practice, sacrificed on the cross of industrial era social programs and professional education when what is called for is an alternative more consonant with a post-industrial environment. Paralleling its tendency to absolve the individual of responsibility in a hostile environment, social work has attributed its impotence to adverse circumstances, therewith consigning itself to the status of professional victim.

Thesis

Fundamentally, social work is a creature of the industrial era, a complement to the welfare state (Reisch, 2000). Because of this, structural problems plague the profession. Reflecting a bureaucratic milieu that has suffused social work practice, social work education is similarly regimented, characterized by generic components—human behavior and social environment, research,

social policy, and practice—that have been standardized in programs across the nation. Mimicking an industrial model of professional preparation, social work education is over-organized, under-whelming in its expectations, and inferior in product. The educational template forged by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) assures that the production of social workers is virtually identical across schools of social work. In this manner the educational bureaucracy assures the credentialing of professional widgets, a mode of professional preparation that is a vestige of industrial production. With rare exception, distinctive schools have failed to emerge; indeed, even though CSWE offered schools freedom from the industrial mode by introducing a new standard on innovation, as of 2001 no schools had exploited this opportunity. For these reasons, social work is conceding traditional areas of the human services to more competitive disciplines, including new fields of human resources, personnel management, even human ecology [formerly home economics] to say nothing of established disciplines, such as business, psychology, public administration, and nursing.

Social work's association with public programs results in internal dualism: more ambitious practitioners strive for clinical work in the private sector, while less capable practitioners drift to the public sector. "Public social services are being abandoned by MSW social workers," noted the then-executive director of the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, "It seems to be employment of last resort" (Dunbar, 1987: 3). Over the decades this has resulted in scandalously inferior service in the public sector, particularly child welfare, public welfare, and mental health.

The inferior quality of the public social services is facilitated by the practices of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) which has indiscriminately accredited programs with little concern about the quality of social work graduates. In a critical assessment of social workers' performance, Noble and Stretch (2000) document that the self-esteem of BSWs is well above their actual competence. Graduate social work education is compromised by the chronically low Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores that typify incoming students. Between 1996 and 1999, the mean GRE scores for social work fell significantly behind *all* other

major disciplinary categories—life sciences, physical sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities and arts, education, and business—in *all* three test components: verbal, quantitative, and analytical (Graduate Record Examinations, 2001). Post graduation, social work is distinguished by the highest rate of first-time passing of state licensing exams (93 percent for social workers) compared to other professions (82.3 percent for nurses, 75 percent for law and medicine, and 72.6 percent for psychology), indicative of an absence of rigor (Noble & Stretch, 2000).

Further diminishing the likelihood that it will realize its objectives, social work has retreated to postmodernist relativism, a philosophical nether-world that contains sufficient academic respectability to pass muster in the marginalized humanities, but fails to provide the theoretical and methodological substance necessary for success in an increasingly competitive human service environment. As a result, the theory and practice of European social workers has eclipsed that of Americans (Reisch, 2000). Conveniently, postmodernism serves to absolve the profession of any responsibility for its failures in social service.

The status quo is perverse in several respects. During a period of significant expansion of the service sector, social work struggles for relevance. During the New Deal, prominent social workers, such as Frances Perkins and Harry Hopkins, moved the seminal work of Jane Addams in new directions and achieved national recognition; by the War on Poverty the list narrowed to Wilbur Cohen and Whitney Young, Jr.; today it is difficult to identify *any* social worker of comparable stature. The expectation, of course, is that, with the unfolding of the welfare state, the number of nationally recognized social workers would have *increased*, not diminished. A comparable omission is evident with respect to the organization of social services. With the elaboration of the service sector, human services is increasingly defined by innovations in the private sector, including nonprofit as well as commercial organizations. Yet, social work innovators have become a rarity in the nonprofit world; in the corporate world they are virtually unknown. A structural feature of post-industrialism is the experimentation with service delivery forms that are alternatives to industrial era bureaucracies. Industry has experimented with Employee Stock Ownership Plans for the same reason that charter

and magnet schools have emerged in public education; yet, the social work literature is largely devoid of similar discussions about structural alternatives to private corporations or public bureaucracy. Apparently disillusioned by the deinstitutionalization debacle that accompanied the community mental health movement, social work has failed to disseminate those few true innovations, such as the Savannah Youth Futures Authority, which remain a regional phenomenon.

The ultimate perversion, however, is a result of the profession's dependence on industrial-mode production: by failing to promote innovative methods of education and practice, social work effectively reaffirms its allegiance to bureaucratic organizations that have been shown to be indifferent to the demands of consumers, staff, taxpayers, and decision-makers. Over time, the maintenance of archaic programs and practices has not only proven counterproductive, it has become convoluted: social work is associated with the maintenance of child welfare agencies that harm children, public welfare departments that populate the underclass, and mental health facilities that exacerbate mental disorders. Social work, much to its detriment, has become associated with providing second-class services to second-class citizens.

The Legacy

Like its sister occupations—nursing and education—social work blossomed as a semi-profession during the Progressive era. In the century following, social work would assume responsibility for three areas of social welfare: child welfare, public welfare, and mental health.

Child welfare—Arguably its original social assignment, social workers advocated for labor laws that protected children, lobbied for “pensions” for the mothers of children who were destitute, and contended that social services could protect children from maltreatment. These were ensconced in Title IV of the 1935 Social Security Act. Subsequently, the welfare of children was to be enhanced by the 1974 Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (emphasizing child abuse detection), the 1980 Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act (focusing on permanency planning), and the 1993 Family Support and Preservation Program

and 1997 Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act (introducing family preservation). Despite these policies, child welfare is profoundly inadequate, the degree of child maltreatment a jarring contradiction with the nation's prosperity. The UN Human Development Index (1996, 1997, 1998) has ranked the U.S. among the most developed nations of the world: second in 1995 and 1996, and fourth in 1997. Yet, the response to child maltreatment is decidedly retrograde. Reviewing data from the 1970s and 1980s, British researcher Colin Pritchard (1993) reported that the U.S. child homicide rate was twice that of the second most lethal nation for children: Australia. Using data from the early 1990s, American researcher Jane Waldfogel (1998) calculated that the *reported* as well as *founded* cases of child maltreatment in the U.S. are double the rates of Canada or the United Kingdom.

Of the 2,000 children who die of abuse or neglect annually, almost half are known to child protection agencies (Costin, Karger & Stoesz, 1996). The calamity of child welfare has been portrayed by William Epstein:

The field does not know the rudiments of its operations or its outcomes and it lacks the self-discipline or largeness of character to find out. It spends its scarce resources to create a series of factional studies to its own ideological and political advantage, furthering both the fiction that it knows what to do and that its preferences are in the interests of maltreated children. In the most fundamental way, the field has not bothered to find out what maltreated children need and how those needs can be met (1999:122).

More recently, Alvin Schorr (2000) reflected on child welfare, lamenting that "the debasement of services, the decline of staff, and the absence of sustained citizen engagement are so advanced that it is difficult to see how these may be reversed" (p. 131).

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that scandals involving the deaths of children under the protection of child welfare have appeared prominently in the media in San Diego, New York, and Washington, D.C. A recent series in the *Washington Post* is especially alarming since it is the seat of federal decision-making about child welfare: between 1993 and 2001, journalists reported that 229 children had died "after their families had come to the attention of the District's child protection system" (Horwitz,

Higham and Cohen, 2001: A1). The fact that the District agency was staffed completely by MSWs raises profound questions about the integrity of graduate social work education.

Social work typically attributes the decline of child welfare to family poverty, institutional racism, public indifference, societal violence, and the under-funding of programs. These constraints, so the argument goes, make the construction of theory problematic and the accumulation of empirical evidence impossible; but, this position is no longer tenable. While the standard of research—randomized controlled trials—is a rarity in child welfare, field experiments have been used successfully to assess welfare waivers for two decades (Stoesz, 2000), and the research method is being introduced in housing policy as well (Goldstein, 2000). Among the nation's schools of social work, few are fully established research institutions. The Chapin Hall Center for Children of the University of Chicago is an exemplar because it mounted a rigorous experiment in family preservation; yet, one program cannot compensate for the otherwise inferior performance of American social work education. As a result of social work's abnegation of child welfare, other disciplines have moved into the field, notably psychology, child development, and family studies.

Public welfare—A signal achievement of the heroines of the Progressive era was the establishment of “mothers pensions,” cash grants to help destitute mothers raise their children. At a time when women did not have the vote, “maternalists” leveraged public opinion so that family welfare was realized in state legislation and later incorporated in the Social Security Act of 1935 (Gordon, 1994). Yet, state-governed family welfare was often meager, mean-spirited, and capricious, so class-action litigation undertaken by the Legal Services Corporation beginning in the mid-1960s opened eligibility, particularly to minority mothers. Coupled with new “War on Poverty” programs, such as Medicaid and Food Stamps, the expanding welfare caseload meant skyrocketing expenditures for public assistance.

Yet, social work soon turned its back on poor, disproportionately minority mothers (Lowe & Reid, 1999). The clearest evidence of this dereliction is chronicled in *Social Work Research and Abstracts* which began abstracting and cross-referencing articles about social welfare in 1965. In 1965, the inaugural year of the

War on Poverty, twelve articles were published on poverty; the following year the number leapt to 22. In 1973, "the poor" was added as an entry, and 11 articles appeared under both entries. For the next two decades, social work's interest in poverty flat-lined. Between 1974 and 1988 (the year of the Family Support Act, the first conservative stab at welfare reform), the number of articles appearing in the social work literature averaged fewer than four per year.

Social work's disinterest in public assistance is remarkable in two respects. *Fiscally*, welfare was an expanding industry. Between 1970 and 1985, federal expenditures for public assistance jumped from \$16 billion to \$98 billion in current dollars, a doubling of expenditures in constant dollars. In an astonishing rejection of the progress wrought by its maternalist forebears, social work inexplicably ignored one of the most important expansions of benefits in the history of the American welfare state. *Politically*, the correct approach to poverty studies became the "feminization of poverty," through which social work speculated about destitution among the welfare poor, but conducted little or no original research on the matter. Indeed, it was not until the early-1990s, when the ideological shocks of the Reagan presidency registered that social work would demonstrate renewed interest in family poverty. Even then, it was not until 1993 that the number of articles about poverty, 25, eclipsed the previous high of 1965.

For decades much of the poverty research conducted by social workers was undertaken by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin. After passage of the 1988 Family Support Act, other schools of social work—the University of California at Los Angeles, Rutgers University, the University of Georgia, the University of Michigan, and Columbia University—demonstrated an interest in research on welfare, but this proved ineffective vis-a-vis right-wing policy institutes that had already created the momentum for conservative welfare reform. Social work's renewed interest in poverty research would prove too little, too late. Having probed problems associated with the poor for two decades, conservative think tanks comprehended the vulnerable aspects of cash assistance to poor families and cobbled together regressive welfare reform legislation. Eventually, the welfare entitlement for poor families would fall to the knife of the

1996 welfare reform act, a casualty of social work's negligence as much a contrivance of right-wing policy institutes (Stoesz, 2000).

The real implications of social work's retreat from poverty reside not in public displays of legislative influence, however, but in the more prosaic applications of evaluation research. Since the states were encouraged to mount alternatives to family welfare in 1981, the Department of Health and Human Services granted dozens of waivers, in exchange for which states were obliged to conduct state-of-the-art research, usually random assignment of welfare recipients to "program" versus "control" groups. Such evaluations are notoriously expensive to conduct so the Feds in collaboration with state welfare departments budgeted tens of millions of dollars for evaluations of welfare reform demonstrations. Where did the money go? Having made family poverty an issue for decades, the nation's schools of social work could have received welfare research funds, had they been competitive with respect to program evaluation. But, until recently, they were not, and, with the exception of the Institute for Research on Poverty, virtually all of the funding went instead to private research firms: the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, Mathematica, and Abt Associates (Noble, 2000).

Mental health—Social work activity in mental health was fashioned largely by American response to Freudian analytic theory. In an attempt to replicate the financial success and the status of psychoanalysts, social workers became therapists in such numbers that they soon dominated the profession. State licensing of clinical social work and reimbursement through private and public insurance further enhanced private practice during the 1970s, even if managed care began to subvert its viability during the 1990s. Clinical social work has been largely defined by psychiatry; indeed, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) published by the American Psychiatric Association is so central to social workers in private practice that it is often taught in graduate social work programs, despite persistent challenges to its diagnostic validity (Kutchins & Kirk, 1997). Inexplicably, an alternative system predicated on psycho-social interaction, the "person-in-environment system," has not achieved wide usage by social workers in mental health practice, despite its having

been promoted by the National Association of Social Workers (Karls & Wandrei, 1994).

Social workers concerned about more troubled clients tended to practice in public institutions until deinstitutionalization which, abetted by the advent of psychoactive medication and the community mental health movement of the mid-1960s, emptied state hospitals. Following deinstitutionalization, social work with the seriously mentally disturbed has diversified, with services provided in community clinics as well as shelters for the homeless. The failure to identify effective interventions with the seriously mentally disturbed has meant that practice has verged on social control through use of psychotropic medications, which can induce tardive dyskinesia when not carefully monitored, or quasi-coercive treatment, such as preventive commitment.

Despite more than a half-century of mental health work, then, social work has been unable to demonstrate its efficacy. In a withering critique of research on social work interventions, Epstein concludes a "near-uniform failure of the field's intellectual life to credibly identify the benefits of services or to acknowledge their weakness. After decades of insubstantial research, the failure of advocates to defend the value of their programs endorses the skeptic's prudent surmise that social work is ineffective" (1997: 205). An oblique comment of social work's failure in this respect is offered by Laura Myers and Bruce Thyer (1997), who, in contending that empirically-validated treatment is an ethical obligation of social work practitioners, proceed to illustrate a series of effective clinical interventions, *all* of which are products of, not social work, but clinical psychology.

Social work's contribution to knowledge about mental health was so lackluster that during the late-1980s, the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Lewis Judd, called on the profession to contribute more substantively to research on mental disorders (Austin, 1992; 1998). Subsequently, social work programs were encouraged to become Social Work Research Development Centers (SWRDCs). Those so designated would be eligible for funding of up to \$500,000 per year for a maximum of five years which could be renewed for another five years. By 2000, eight programs had been so anointed by NIMH, of which one was defunct; only one had been reauthorized for a second

cycle. The SWRDC experience is telling with respect to social work education. Funding for the initiative is open-ended, meaning that any number of social work programs *could* be funded so long as they were competitive with other disciplines competing for research designation status from NIMH. Yet, almost a decade into the project fewer than ten schools of social work would qualify as SWRDCs; in the most recent round, of five schools applying, only one received funding and that was a program seeking renewal for a second cycle (Juliano, 2000). Considering that there are 62 doctoral programs and 137 masters programs in social work in the U.S. (Lennon, 2000; Randolph, 2000), that only a handful of them would be competitive in mental health research does not reflect well on the profession, particularly given its infatuation with clinical practice.

Professional Involution

As disciplines as diverse as economics, psychology, public health, and nursing have demonstrated, the route to influence in the modern world is the construction and application of theory that is *apropos* of a given milieu and is empirically testable, optimally through experimental methods. Empirically testable theory is a rigorous and expensive process; nonetheless, it is the *sine qua non* of the modern professions. Yet, social work has disregarded this prescription. Not only has social work tended to borrow its theory from other disciplines, it rarely mounts its own experimental studies. Worse, much of the profession has embarked on a postmodernist “futulism,” a venture that is nothing less than the defenestration of the Enlightenment. It is worth remembering that social work originated contemporaneously with other social sciences—indeed, it was integral with sociology and survey research during the Progressive era—but the profession’s theory and methods are, by comparison, anemic today.

While social work skirted the rigors of the empirical project, it became immersed in cultural politics, in the process pushing aside traditional areas of inquiry. During the 1970s and with increasing urgency in the 1980s, social work focused on the grievances of “special populations”: minorities of color, women, and people of alternative sexual orientation, in roughly that chronol-

ogy. Special sections of professional associations were designated to assure their representation in organizational activities. Curricula in professional schools were required to include content on the attributes and needs of these groups. Special journals were established to publish works focusing on their circumstances. Positions within the welfare bureaucracy and academic institutions were effectively reserved for representatives of these groups so as to provide role models to students and assure that programming reflected their social reality. Two decades of such preferential selection would prove consequential; social work celebrated its diversity, but in the process crowded out traditional concerns. Social work courses were required to address the needs of African Americans, Latinos, gays, lesbians, and women, but the status of classic issues such as poverty had become optional. By the late 1990s, social work suffered from "professional involution"—*preoccupied with the requirements of special populations, social work neglected traditional concerns, such as child welfare, public welfare, and chronic mental disorders, in a self-perpetuating process of social fusion* (Stoesz, 2000).

The apotheosis of professional involution took the form of postmodernism, a critical analysis which denigrated the social sciences as manifestations of a patriarchal and exploitive worldview. The Western canon, alleged postmodernists, maintained educated elites in institutions of power all at the expense of indigenous populations. The hegemony of academicians was justified by an empirical understanding of "truth," evident not only in the esoteric journals that chronicled their work, but the very offices, classrooms, and laboratories through which they conducted their work. The postmodern critique held that Enlightenment philosophy and its sequel, the social sciences, generated theory and methods that were oppressive of the populations that were the subject of academic study. "To postmodernists there is no objectivity and to believe in science means you support an oppressive existing social order that seeks to deny equality to oppressed citizens," observed Chaiklin (2000: 6). Accordingly, the way to liberation was the abandonment of the entire repertoire of the social sciences: knowledge became multi-faceted; theory was deconstructed; methods were devalued; ethics became relative; standards were degraded.

The postmodernist high-jacking of American social work reached its apogee with Stanley Witkin's editorship of the profession's lead journal, *Social Work*. Dichotomizing between literary versus scientific depictions of reality, Witkin stated a preference for the former. The consequences may well be an American version of the "cultural revolution." Invoking "alternative forms of writing or nonpositivist forms of knowledge," Witkin employed postmodernism to challenge "Western enlightenment thinking. Previously unassailable notions such as progress, objectivity, and rationality have all been subject to critique—'unpacked' and re-assembled as historical expressions" (Witkin, 2000: 390).

An alternative view, informed by developments in literary theory and cultural studies, is that what is taken as the true meaning of a text depends on whose interpretation is privileged. For example, in universities, instructors' interpretations are privileged; in practice settings privileged interpretations are associated with various experts—for example, social workers, supervisors, judges, psychiatrists. True meaning becomes synonymous with authoritative interpretations, and authoritative interpretations are based on conferred power within particularly contexts. Uniformity, associated with efficiency and the reproduction of relations of authority, rather than multiplicity becomes rewarded. Thus, teaching social work students "correct" interpretations is a way to socialize them into the social work community while retaining the relationship between teacher and student. They learn to read in a manner that accepts certain literary conventions and beliefs—for example, the relationship between authority and citations or the privileging of experts' opinions about others over others opinions of themselves (Witkin, 2001: 6).

Having established social workers in higher education as well as direct practice as "privileged," Witkin advocated literary theory for political ends: "dislodging" authority (Witkin, 2001: 6).

The practical implications of postmodernism were explored by Ann Weick who championed a female, "first voice" as authentic for a social work that had largely succumbed to a dominant culture typified by a rational, male "second voice." Late in her career, Weick discovered that "I perfected, as most women do, my second voice—the voice of dominant culture—framed in logic, rationality, and rules, where right and might are more important

than care and comfort and where winning eclipses warmth and worry" (2000: 398). Weick located her experience within the larger social work project, embracing a pre-scientific *practice wisdom* as superior to scientific sources of knowledge that the profession had since embraced.

In the ensuing years the profession has moved more vigorously to authenticate its approach to practice by aligning with the dominant voice epitomized by the scientific enterprise. In contrast to the ordinary concerns of human relationships, social improvement and community well-being, the methodology of scientific research requires parsing and dissecting discrete elements. Emotions are replaced with studied disinterest; complexity is resolved by narrowing the point of study; mystery evaporates in the face of calibrated instruments and precise numbers. No where to be found are the living tissues of human drama and human triumph. In choosing this dominant voice as the official voice of the profession, social work has let slip through its fingers the language that fills its veins with the fullest expression of human experience and that most essentially give social work its distinctive character as a profession (Weick, 2000: 400).

In rejecting science, the postmodern agenda in social work is not only irrational, it furthers the profession's irrelevance. Weick's "first voice," for example, "will require us to move away from our naive enchantment with theories that emanate from the more distant voice of the scientific and social scientific disciplines" (Weick, 2001: 401). In a society that is increasingly data-driven, such a position is decidedly retrograde. Not only are the diligent analyses of social workers, such as LaDonna Pavetti and Jan Hagen, subverted; but research on populations of traditional concern to social work are increasingly undertaken by non-social workers. The most poignant research on welfare families has been conducted by Kathryn Edin and Laura Lein, neither of whom are social workers. While social work muses about its "voices," researchers at the Institute for Women's Policy Research are generating data on issues of compelling concern for social work, ranging from welfare reform, to older women and Social Security, and the glass ceiling.

Postmodernism is a dead-end for social work because it generates no identifiable public benefit. While professional involution

may entertain university faculties, the half-life of such indulgence is likely to be short for a profession as dependent on public support as has been social work. As valid as diverse representation *is* for social work internally, it is inherently circumscribed unless the profession can demonstrate a corresponding external value to the public. The substitution of conventional terminology (class, income, etc.) with postmodern vernacular (the center, the other, etc.) invites ambiguity. A sympathetic observer opined that the disconnect between social welfare and postmodernism will hamstring the movement until its concepts "appear as *operational* and *utilizable*" (Carter, 1998: 104). Quite beyond that the postmodern flaunting of authority, evident in eschewing of established investigatory methods and rules for decision-making, invites organizational chaos. A philosophy of social welfare that equates mutually-affirming commonsense with professional knowledge may prove popular in the short-run; but, in the long-run, any school of thought that encourages clients to challenge staff, case-workers to defy administrators, and students to lecture professors invites disaster.

Human Services

That social work had slipped its epistemological moorings has not gone unnoticed. The NIMH SWRDC project, while of enormous prospective benefit, has not been fully exploited by schools of social work; for that matter it has no corollary with respect to child welfare and public welfare. After more than a century of institutionalized activity, social work education fails to present a confident public image when only a dozen or so of its schools of social work are fully competitive with other disciplines in the social sciences or health and human services. The degradation of social work education provoked Alvin Schorr (2000) to indict schools of social work for "hav[ing] been studiously blind to endemic violations of good practice" (p. 133). Under these circumstances, the merit of recent efforts to establish a national center for social work research is open to question: it is doubtful that Congress will long tolerate, at public expense, a research agenda that furthers professional involution, let alone a postmodernist agenda.

A post-industrial society requires high-quality professional education for its expanding service sector, but social work has not responded. In search of a postmodernist future, American social work has diverged from a trajectory that would have enhanced its relevance and authority. Instead of exploiting the instruments that are central to the continued expansion of a dynamic service sector, the profession has turned inward, preferring to placate its internal constituent groups. In an accelerating information age, it is ironic that those institutions best situated to assert a corrective course, the nation's university-based schools of social work, have failed to provide leadership to a profession that is struggling for purchase.

In the interest of promoting the well-being of residents of the United States, social work should collaborate with other disciplines—gerontology, human resources, child development, family studies—and establish a new discipline: human services. The focus as well as the content of this new discipline must be consonant with the requirements of the post-industrial environment of which it is a part. Toward that end the following generic changes are warranted:

(1) The Council of Social Work Education should be replaced by an Academy of Human Services, incorporating the disciplines of child development, family studies, human resources, personnel management, human ecology, rehabilitation, and gerontology. The Academy would be governed by a board representing leading theorists, researchers, administrators, and practitioners from these fields.

(2) Until the Academy is fully operational, a moratorium should be placed on the accreditation of new social work programs.

(3) The degrees authorized by accredited programs should be the Bachelor of Human Services (BHS) at the undergraduate level, and the Master of Human Services (MHS) at the graduate level.

(4) Undergraduate programs should consist of 30 credits in human behavior, research, policy, practice, ethics, and incorporate an internship; the balance of 30 credits should be electives. In order to respond directly to an increasingly diverse consumer

population, proficiency in a language other than the dominant language (usually English) should be required.

(5) Graduate programs should consist of 30 credits in human behavior, research, policy, practice, ethics, and incorporate an internship; the balance of 30 credits should be electives. Students should be required to complete a research thesis for graduation.

Beyond these generic changes, specific alterations in educational policy are indicated:

(6) Educational programs receiving child welfare training funds should be required to generate state-of-the-art research on services to maltreated children in exchange for such monies.

(7) Programs offering a specialization in nonprofit management and social administration should require basic courses in budgeting and finance as well as information systems.

Finally, strategic innovation should be encouraged for purposes of integrating human services at the local, state, and international levels.

(8) Students should be encouraged to intern with governmental institutions at the state, national, and international levels.

(9) Internships with community-based, advocacy organizations serving marginal populations should be developed.

(10) Reciprocity agreements among educational institutions should be required as a condition of accreditation, and an aggressive effort should be made to link institutions internationally in response to globalization.

* * * * *

Social work has largely squandered the legacy that it inherited from the heroines and heroes of the Progressive era, the New Deal, and the War on Poverty. Social work education no longer serves the public interest *if* that means generating state-of-the-art knowledge that enhances the general welfare. Instead, social work has deteriorated not only with respect to the generation of its own theory, but also the development of methods that meet contemporary standards of scientific research. As a result of this degradation of its societal assignment, the profession has forfeited much of its traditional, institutional responsibilities, substantially so with respect to child welfare, public welfare, and mental health. Rather than shore up these deficiencies, social work has chosen

instead to focus on its own constituent groups, a narcissistic indulgence that has been encouraged by postmodernist thought. That this should continue at public expense is untenable. Rather than continue to drift, social work should merge with other disciplines and establish a new discipline: human services.

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“For Their Own Good?”: Sex work, social control and social workers, a historical perspective

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This article provides an overview of the social responses to prostitution since the mid 1800s and how the responses of social workers have been shaped by shifting social contexts. Understanding the complex interplay of these forces is key to mapping out the divergent social work practice approaches with sex workers and their influence over time. The article presents three main constructs which have influenced social work responses to sex work; 1) the notion that women needed to be protected for their own good, 2) competing class values and, 3) social control.

Introduction

Social work practice with women who exchange sex for material goods dates back to the beginnings of the social work profession in the settlements, benevolent societies and charity organizations. This article provides an overview of the social responses to prostitution since the mid 1800s and how the responses of social workers have been shaped by shifting social contexts. Understanding the complex interplay of these forces is key to mapping out the divergent social work practice approaches with sex workers and their influence over time. As social workers are increasingly called upon to ‘intervene’ in sex work related issues via public health, social welfare and policy, an understanding of past motivations and forces informing service creation and delivery holds the potential to facilitate increasingly sensitive and responsive programs for female sex workers.

The grounding premise of this paper is that social work involvement with prostitution demonstrates the extent to which social work practice reflects larger social beliefs and values. It will be argued that social work responses to sex work have been located within a constant effort to negotiate the influence of social reins on women and sex workers, and those forces which have helped shape our profession. This article identifies three main constructs that have influenced social work response to sex work: 1) the notion that women needed to be protected for their own good; 2) social control and competing class values and; 3) the fear of sex, specifically female sexuality. The third construct concerning female sexuality is interconnected and infused with the first and second constructs in the discussion that follows.

Protecting Women For Their Own Good

Evangelical Reformers

In every period, from the early social workers in the Evangelical movement, the Charity Organization Societies (COS) and the settlements, to present day interventions with women struggling with substance use, women on AFDC, or street youth, social work practice in this domain is threaded through with beliefs about what constitutes reasonable, and indeed moral conduct, particularly for women. The idea that women need to be protected for their own good is grounded in a sexist view of women that perceives women as "less capable" than their male counterparts. The more a woman deviated from what was considered acceptable female conduct, the more she was seen as lacking in moral character and the weaker she was perceived to be. Many of both early and more contemporary social workers considered prostitutes the weakest of the weak. Rarely have sex workers been regarded as the experts on their own lives. Rather, they have historically been perceived by the social work profession as incapable of taking care of themselves and therefore in need of protection.

Much of the early social work practice with prostitutes took the form of evangelical work during the mid 1800s. Evangelical female moral reformers tended to be from the middle and upper classes. Although they focused their efforts on the "dangerous" lower classes, they were also concerned with the upper class women, whom they believed had no one to chaperone them.

Because society did not have a place for women who had lost their virtue, evangelical reformers took it upon themselves to attempt to control male sexual aggression in order to protect women. Overall, their efforts included: 1) advocacy for legal remedies to punish men who violated chastity codes; 2) coercion of men to marry the women they had seduced and; 3) the urging of women to form alliances that they hoped would eventually compel men to adopt similar norms of behavior and accountability that were applied to women. Reform societies such as the New England Female Moral Reform Society were created to:

. . . guard our daughters, sisters, and female acquaintances from the delusive arts of corrupt and unprincipled men and to bring back to the paths of virtue those who have been drawn aside through the wiles of the destroyer (Hobson, 1987 p. 55).

The Society's interventions included a moral reform journal named the *Friend of Virtue* that warned women of male aggressiveness. Steeped in the moral earnestness of evangelical Christianity, the *Friend of Virtue* admonished women to watch out for libertine men cloaked in respectability.

Concerned with the urban moral order, female reformers endeavored to assert society's right to influence every aspect of personal behavior (Pivar, 1973). Consequently, moral reformers found themselves seduced by illicit sexuality. Reformers of this period regarded non-marital sexual relationships as always being a result of the exploitation of women, never an issue of freedom of sexual expression as has been argued in more contemporary times. They viewed the sexual double standard as an extension of the imbalance of power between the sexes (Hobson, 1987; Rosen, 1982). In fact, they linked prostitution to male dominance in economic, political, and social life. Prostitutes, according to the reformers, were victims of male aggression and prostitution was analyzed in terms of women's lack of protection rather than their lack of equal rights.

The approach of the religious reformers to prostitution excluded the voices and perspectives of prostitutes and thus obscured the possibility that women were not victims and that perhaps women exercised agency in their choice to engage in sex work. Interestingly enough, an 1858 study of two thousand prostitutes in New York's House of Correction on Blackwell's

Island, did not support the evangelical's claim that seduction and male sexual aggression pulled women into prostitution. Sanger (1858) found that only 15 percent of the prostitutes in his study listed seduction as the cause of prostitution. Indeed, more than one third of the study participants reported having a "personal inclination" to prostitution, "wanting an easy life", or ironically, "being too lazy to work" as reasons for entering prostitution.

Despite an awareness of a broader theoretical framework for understanding prostitution, one that considered the impact of political and economic forces on women's lives, evangelicals chose to adopt an individualized "treatment" approach that essentially held *fallen women* accountable by focusing on their individual weaknesses and targeting them for interventive strategies. This practice fit with the wider belief of the time that held individuals responsible for their own problems and poverty. The practice of saving women from their destructive (and perhaps dangerous) selves exercised by the evangelical workers laid the groundwork for future legal reforms and social work practice around sex work in the charity organizations, settlements and contemporary social service programs.

White Slavery Laws

Organized movements against "White Slavery" were prominent during the Progressive Era. The specter of White Slavery became an image used to depict commercial sex as a form of slavery where women were "trafficked" against their will into the trade by third parties, typically foreign men, such as pimps, madams and proprietors who were increasingly organizing the business. One of the first publicized exposes on sexual trafficking appeared in 1885, when a British journalist, W. T. Stead, described his purchase of a young woman in London from her mother, supposedly for use in prostitution in Paris (Chapkis, 1997; Connelly, 1980). This story, among others, created the impression that all prostitution involved the sexual enslavement of young girls.¹ Consequently, the fear of White Slavery was based not on a large number of documented cases, but rather, was fueled by fears of cultural contamination (due to immigration), moral pollution, social anxieties about changing gender roles, sex, class and race relations at the turn of the century. Some have argued that the

recent emancipation of African American slaves added to racial anxieties in the US where freed slaves were perceived as threats to sexual and racial purity (Chapkis, 1997). Studies suggest that very few prostitutes, when asked, reported being trapped or coerced into bondage (Connelly, 1980; Rosen, 1982).

The perceived threat of White Slavery was one of the forces that led to the development of laws regulating prostitution in 1874, 1881, 1907 and 1910. The earliest of these laws prohibited the trafficking of immigrant women into the US for prostitution while the White Slave Traffic Act otherwise known as the Mann Act, of 1910, prohibited the importation of any girl or woman for immoral purposes or prostitution between countries or across state lines. By 1920, almost every city in the U.S. had outlawed soliciting and had enacted abatement laws to close down brothels. It was in the name of protecting women, white women, that the Mann Act placed restrictions on women's bodies, to safeguard them from sexual slavery. Ironically, vice commission statistics on prostitutes demonstrated that with the exception of the traffic in Asian women, the majority of prostitutes were native-born daughters of immigrants (Hobson, 1987; Rosen, 1982). This note is significant because there is anecdotal data that suggests that contemporary prostitution regulations disproportionately target immigrant women and women of color (Bell, 1987; Delacoste & Alexander, 1987; McClintock, 1993).

Unwed Mothers

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, women who engaged in non-marital sexual relations and thus stepped outside of acceptable roles of female sexual behavior were believed to have fallen from "virtuous womanhood" (Rothman, 1978). Social deviants such as prostitutes and women who engaged in non-marital sexual relations were regarded by reformers to be in desperate need of rescue and reform. One result of increasing concern over the rates of illegitimacy was the development of rescue homes for fallen women and maternity homes around the country. Kunzel (1993) notes however, that before turning their attention to unwed mothers, rescue homes worked almost entirely with prostitutes. Rescue homes, which were first opened in the 1880s in the United States, represented one of the first organized responses to the plight of

fallen women. The homes were meant to be temporary sanctuaries for women who had gone astray and lost their chastity. Radical evangelism, hospitality and 'salvation' were offered by the homes for women/victims who were believed to have been led astray and exploited by libertine men. While Bullough (1987) argues that the argument of protection for women has been the Achilles heel of women's movements, as it has justified punitive action against women for their own good, this author contends that 'the argument' has been misleading. For, it was women's sex, specifically their virginal, pure, chaste sex that lay at the core of society's call for protection, not the whole woman.

Social Control and Competing Class Values

Although (heterosexual) prostitution encounters typically involve a female worker and a male client, historical and contemporary social and legal reform efforts have almost exclusively targeted the women. Women's bodies, not men's, have been regulated and controlled as a result of social concerns around prostitution. Social workers have contributed to and perpetuated the social control of women's bodies by exclusively targeting women through reform and rescue efforts, and therefore contributing to the belief that women are at the heart of the "prostitution problem".

While the legislature created laws such as the Mann Act to protect women from exploitation and dangerous male desire, it simultaneously created laws to protect men from the "disease carrying prostitute". The vigorous attention to social hygiene moved the prostitution debates out of the religious realm and into the realm of science and politics (Connelly, 1980; Cree, 1985; Pivar, 1973; Rosen, 1982). The Progressive crusaders' attempts to "cleanse the nation" helped support the discovery of the impact of sexually transmitted diseases on the physical conditions of the armed forces prior to and during W.W.I. With an insatiable focus on sex, and an overall objective to have love conquer lust, purity reformers played a hand in bridging professional and moral divides between physical and spiritual salvation. Because the purity reformers viewed sexual morality (and behavior) as the underpinnings of social morality, they spent a considerable

amount of energy influencing the medical profession and social hygienists to join their anti-prostitution crusades. Consequently, purity reformers infused religious values into health movements by attempting to control citizens' sexual behaviors (Pivar, 1983).

In 1910, the New York legislature passed the Page Bill requiring women convicted of prostitution offenses to be examined for sexually transmitted diseases. American feminists who had rallied behind Josephine Butler for her crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts² (CDA) in England, organized an opposition to such laws in the States. Like Butler, American feminists, in tandem with some purity reformers, argued that mandatory medical exams on prostitutes perpetuated a sexual double standard that held prostitutes, not their clients, responsible for the transmission of disease. Many of the purity reformers argued, like Josephine Butler, that the mandatory medical exams were a form of sexual assault. Opponents of legislation like the Page Bill regarded the matter as one of individual liberty versus state control, rather than an issue of patriarchal exploitation of vulnerable women.

Charity Organization Society (COS) and Friendly Visitors

Charity organizations had their beginnings in 1877, in Buffalo, New York. By the 1890's over 100 cities in the US had charity organization societies (COS) designed to more systematically provide relief to the poor. Issues of morality and a belief that the poor were morally responsible for their own circumstances and flaws were the guiding forces behind charity organizations (Boyer, 1978; Kemp, 1994). Consequently, they saw their main objective as the eradication of the "immoral taint" simmering at the core of every slum (Boyer, 1978).

COS used middle and upper class volunteers, mostly female, known as friendly visitors to attempt to transform the social and moral characters of their 'slum' neighbors through the assumed power of friendship and human interaction. A leader in the COS movement, Mary Richmond's 1899 manual, *Friendly Visiting Among the Poor* reaffirmed the long-standing charity organization hope that the poor would unconsciously imitate the middle-class visitor and gradually adopt her values (Boyer, 1978).

Although the friendly visitors labeled their work as guidance and neighborliness, social control was often at the root of

their efforts. Unlike the Evangelical workers who saw women as victims of male aggression, COS workers regarded women as incapable of "making good decisions" consequently making themselves susceptible to sexual advances (Stadum, 1992). To protect the feeble women, COS workers and friendly visitors toiled to solicit information about unknown men who called on young women. Did the neighbors know him? Did it appear that he was welcome? Some friendly visitors even went as far as to enlist neighborhood women as lookouts to check for men's union suits on the clotheslines of single or *deserted* women (Stadum, 1992). Like their evangelical predecessors, friendly visitors were greatly disturbed and/or intrigued by sexuality and rumors of female immorality.

The Settlement Houses

While the concept of the settlement house originated in London, the first American settlement house was founded in New York City in 1886. Jane Addams founded Hull House three years later in Chicago. The young social work profession saw settlement houses as innovative and fortuitous in helping immigrants adapt to life in the US, useful in helping meet the needs of the low-income neighborhoods and beneficial in bringing about reform (Trolander, 1987). Like the COS, settlement houses were concerned with helping the poor and restoring social order. However, settlement houses paid more attention to the impact of external conditions on individuals' lives than did the COS. Settlement houses also differed from charity organizations in their perceptions of the urban moral situation and the responsibilities of the middle class toward the poor. Settlement leaders, for instance, tended to be less outwardly judgmental of the urban poor than their COS counterparts. While the COS worked to collect data about individuals and their families, settlement workers, equally interested with data, labored to collect information about neighborhoods, the political world and industry.

While Jane Addams and other notable female Hull House reformers worked to abolish prostitution, they also engaged in data collection on the demographics of prostitutes.

Reformers believed that scientific investigations of prostitution would yield a solution, as laboratory experiments isolated bacteria

and produced cures for disease. However, hidden agendas, unconscious motivations, and assumptions about sexual and social relationships permeated the social laboratory in prostitution studies. (Hobson, 1987, p. 155)

While the move towards data collection among settlement workers reflects social work's turn to science as a means to professionalize and establish jurisdiction over given social problems, it also reflected a broader belief held by reformers that scientific knowledge was evidence of the evolution of *man*. There was hope that this evolution would provide answers to the mastery of the mind, body and soul relationships. Hidden agendas and social values embedded in research were visible through 'scientific questionnaires' and coding of the data. Categories for answers to, "reasons for entering the business" included; mental deficiency, degeneracy and, weakness of character (Hobson, 1987).

Although early social workers shared a belief that society could be perfected (Addams, 1912) they often differed on the means through which to achieve such social change. For instance, while evangelical workers believed that society could change for the best by relying on spiritual 'armor' and conversion tactics, settlement workers and case workers adopted the Progressive belief of social change similar to Enlightenment thinking, that valued statistical analysis and scientific theories. Despite their apparent openness to the way of life in their local communities, settlement workers were part of the second anti-prostitution crusade (Bullough & Bullough, 1987) in the early 1900s. Influenced by the notion of prostitution as sexual slavery, in her book *A New Conscience and an Ancient Evil* (1912), Addams referred to prostitutes as "victims of White slavery" who needed to be rescued from immoral people and forces. American feminists agreed with Addams that prostitution was "the social evil" (Vice Commission of Chicago, 1911, cited in Addams, 1912, p. 4) that rendered women powerless to save themselves. Jane Addams believed that prostitution would eventually go away once society moved to the next level of moral development (Addams, 1912).

Many of the settlement leaders, not just at Hull House, were feminists who believed, like many of the early 20th century feminists, that a prostitution-free society was essential for the emancipation of women (Abrams, 2000; Rosen, 1982). As women gained

a foothold in the public arena through such venues as social work and the settlement houses, competing feminist groups banded together to launch public debates over prostitution policy. Although different women's groups analyzed prostitution differently, there seemed to be a consensus among the female social reformers that prostitution was both a symbol of moral corruption that sanctioned sexual and financial exploitation of women's bodies, and a threat to women's homes (via venereal diseases). This perspective deviated from the construction of the individual predatory man of the earlier era.

World War I

With the onset of W.W.I, the prostitute was no longer seen as a victim of White Slavery, rather she became the number one enemy on the home front where her sex and sexuality were considered dangerous. War propaganda constructed the prostitute as diseased and predatory, a woman who "could do more harm than any German fleet of airplanes" (Hobson, 1987, p. 165). The portrayal of prostitutes as disease carriers was heightened by a national concern with venereal diseases at the time (Pivar, 1973; Rosen, 1982). The fear of prostitutes as vectors of disease created even more work for women engaged in rescue and reform work. Women engaged in settlement work and other types of community service were called upon to help fight the war of disease on the home front. For instance volunteer hostess clubs that offered *wholesome* entertainment near training camps were established and chaperoned for servicemen and single women at public dances (Hobson, 1987). Federal legislation, much like that proposed to deal with TB and HIV in more contemporary times, was also developed that mandated the quarantine of civilian venereal disease carriers. Because women were perceived as the infectors of men, women were disproportionately targeted for legislation. These forms of legislation represent some of the most blatant examples of sex discrimination in the history of American justice. Some of the quarantined women eventually found themselves in long term custodial care in homes for the "feeble-minded" run by rescue workers. Feeble-mindedness in women was believed to be related to early sexual maturation and sexual promiscuity. The theory behind feeble-mindedness held

that "an overdeveloped body signaled an underdeveloped mind" (Hobson, 1987, p. 191). Women sent to the special institutions for the feeble-minded were labeled as "imbeciles" who did not have the backbone to say no to vicious men and therefore needed protection. Consequently, their sexuality was simultaneously viewed as dangerous and in need of protection.

1920s–1950s: Shifting Social Work Roles and Identities

During the 1920s social workers continued the struggle to construct their identities as social work professionals and to distance themselves from the image of the benevolent and moralistic female worker. Social workers, especially women, challenged the notion that care taking and nurturing were natural female roles. An increased use of science, the refinement of social work curricula (Kemp, 1994; Trolander, 1987) and a close relationship with the fields of psychiatry and medicine served as tools to gain professional status (Abbott, 1988; Abrams & Curran, 2000; Kemp, 1994).

[s]ocial workers were finding individual approaches to personal problems far more congenial than the social-diagnosis paradigm bequeathed to them by Mary Richmond. The individual approaches, which they borrowed directly from psychiatry, offered therapeutic answers that casework did not . . . Psychiatric social work flourished during the nineteen twenties, becoming the most prestigious of the social work specialties (Abbot, 1982, p.302).

Class Informs Professional Responses

As social workers began to professionalize they attempted to set themselves apart from those doing Christian and church-based work, namely the evangelical and charity workers. Consequently, class tensions associated with social and occupational status developed between the "professionals" and the "non-professionals." Despite the tensions, moral reform workers and social workers essentially performed the same kind of familiar rehabilitative and rescue work they had always engaged in with fallen women. Social workers tried to rehabilitate fallen women by changing their personalities through case work and therapy, while evangelicals used religion. Both groups of reformers thus used interventions that focused almost entirely on the individual.

Psychoanalytic Theory

As professional social workers attempted to set themselves apart from their Christian counterparts, interventions grounded in medical models of treatment became more prominent among the professional social workers. Consequently, for 40 years after W.W.I the discourse on prostitution was largely shaped by psychiatrists who considered that the causes of prostitution could be traced back to the individual "neurotic," "frigid" and/or "masochistic" female (Hobson, 1987). Edward Glover's research on prostitutes provides an example of one of the more influential contributions to this school of thought. In 1945, Glover, a psychiatrist, published a paper, *The Psycho-pathology of Prostitution* in which he interpreted prostitution as evidence of an unresolved Oedipus conflict. Prostitutes, according to Glover, had unresolved hostilities towards their mothers, acute disappointments with their fathers, were sexually frigid, hostile to men, and had homosexual tendencies. Frank Caprio (also a psychiatrist who conducted interviews with prostitutes in brothels across the country) similarly argued in 1953, that prostitution was a behavior deviation that primarily appealed to women who had homosexual tendencies. Consistent with social attitudes that blamed individuals for social problems, Caprio reported that prostitutes were emotionally "sick people" who tried to hide their lesbian tendencies by openly engaging in sexual activities with men for money. In his 1958 study "The Call Girl", Harold Greenwald, concluded that call girls suffer from anxiety, have a poor self-image, have an inability to form lasting relationships, are lonely and suffer from depression.

Like most delinquents the girls could not accept the values of our society and make them part of their own value system, but while there was little evidence of a consistent value system, all of the girls interviewed showed varying degrees of guilt feelings. They seemed unable to restrain themselves from impulsively acting out in a manner that made them social outcasts. Becoming social outcasts only added to their feelings of guilt. This guilt, when internalized was frequently the cause of intense depression (Greenwald, 1970, p. 186).

Greenwald, a social psychologist, urged social workers, parents and teachers to be very aware of these tendencies and take

appropriate steps to prevent their "flowering into full-scale professionalism" (p. 242), especially since they tended to appear early in youth. Appropriate interventions included referral to mental hygiene clinics. Unlike the evangelical workers who believed that women "fell" into prostitution as victims, Greenwald repeatedly referred to "the personality which makes it possible for a girl to choose the prostitutes' profession" (p. 242). Ironically, his pathologizing of prostitutes acknowledged a girl's agency to choose the profession, a controversial recognition that is still highly debated within the social work profession in the 1990s.

Sex Workers Speak Out:

Reactions to Social Control and the Case for Protection

Prostitution re-emerged as a spotlight issue within feminist arenas in the 1960s. The interest in prostitution reform during the 1960s came about in much the same way it had in the past, that is, it rode on the coattails of other social movements (Hobson, 1987). As the civil rights movement led a heightened awareness of all human rights, individuals began to protest governmental interference in private sexual acts. Civil libertarian lawyers and feminist activists again contested prostitution laws and social injustices against sex workers.

The relationship between feminism and sex work has been rocky at best. In fact, the contemporary feminist debates on sex work, which began in the 1960s over pornography, have often been referred to as the "feminist sex wars". Contemporary debates on sex work largely revolve around a polarized argument that constructs sex work as either exploitive or liberating and, sex workers as coerced victims or empowered whores (Sloan & Wahab, 2000). Proponents of sex work as exploitive and victimizing are often labeled as abolitionists while members of the other camp, those who challenge such a construction, are frequently labeled sex positive. Abolitionists such as Kathleen Barry, Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon, reject the notion that women freely choose sex work. Rather, they contend that in the United States, with its high rates of child abuse, wife battering, rape, poor female-headed households and inequitable wages, women live with civil inequity that does not allow free choices (Sloan & Wahab, 2000).

Sex positive voices can be heard through the sex workers' rights movement. In 1973, Margo St. James founded the first American sex workers' rights organization, COYOTE (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics). By the mid 1970s other sex workers' rights organizations sprang up across the country and the world.³ In 1985, several groups came together in Amsterdam to form The International Committee on Prostitutes' Rights (ICPR). The prostitutes' rights movement's membership, international in structure, is open to all, but leadership has been mostly in the hands of sex workers. The sex workers' rights movement was founded on three general tenets. First, members of the movement do not believe that all sex work is forced and/or coerced. On the contrary, activists argue that many sex workers freely choose the occupation (Jenness, 1993; Pheterson, 1989). Second, members argue that sex work should be recognized as legitimate work (Jenness, 1993; Pheterson, 1989). Third, members argue that it is a violation of a woman's civil rights to be denied the opportunity to engage in sex work (Jenness, 1993; Pheterson, 1989). Consequently, the presence of sex workers' rights groups has provided a space for sex workers to speak for themselves and educate others including social workers about their varied experiences, desires and needs.

Social work services have been most greatly influenced by the anti-prostitution voices, perhaps because the arguments and agenda of these camps have proved more consistent with historical social work perspectives that regarded prostitutes as victims and/or deviants in need of rescue and/or reform. Although few social service programs in the US provide services specifically to sex workers, social workers provide services to some sex workers through correctional, AFDC, domestic violence, rape relief, public health and HIV/AIDS related programs. However, because sex workers rarely disclose their occupation to social service providers for fear of stigma and arrest (Boyer, Chapman, & Marshall, 1993; Weiner, 1996), social workers don't always know when a client is involved in the sex industry, limiting the social worker's ability to meet the needs of clients that are specific to sex work. Women who are unable to hide their sex worker status are frequently the most vulnerable because they are either homeless, addicted to drugs or perhaps have serious health conditions (Weiner, 1996). Consequently, many women who reveal their status are

turned away from social service programs (like domestic violence shelters or long term alcohol and drug treatment) out of fear that they will compromise the programs by continuing to trade sex for drugs or money (Weiner, 1996). Besides past and present sex worker-run organizations like COYOTE, California Prostitutes' Education Network (Cal-Pep), Black Stockings, Hooking is Real Employment (HIRE) and, Prostitutes of New York (PONY), there remain limited programs that provide services directly to sex workers.

HIV/AIDS

Despite the fact that there is no evidence that female sex workers have a higher rate of HIV infection than do non-sex working women, sex workers have again been scapegoated for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (Sacks, 1996). The stigmatization of sex workers as vectors of HIV has provided an avenue for tenuous legitimization for some sex workers. As sex workers' groups and other organizations have created HIV / AIDS education outreach programs to those in the industry, governments have provided financial support for some of these programs. The onset of the AIDS epidemic and the emergence of "John's Schools"⁴ (Moto; 2000) across the country have created opportunities for social workers, once again, to play a hand in the profession's historic battle against vice through needle exchange programs, HIV / AIDS outreach programs, safer sex education and public health programs for people with HIV.

Conclusion

The Evangelicals believed that women needed to be protected from aggressive male desire, COS workers believed that women needed to be protected from lower class values, and settlement workers like Jane Addams, believed that women needed to be protected from White Slavery. Contemporary social workers, like the Evangelical workers, argue that female sex workers need to be protected from the patriarchal exploitation of women.

Ultimately, competing class values and fears about sex helped shape the strategies used by social workers to protect women for their own good. As discussed in this article, from the mid 1800s to

the early 1900s immorality was largely perceived to be a characteristic of the lower classes. Sexual deviancy, such as prostitution and unmarried motherhood attracted much attention from middle and upper class men and women engaged in reform, rescue and early social work efforts, who believed that their class positions exempted them from any implications of immorality.

Despite different perspectives on prostitution adopted by moral, religious, and social workers since the mid 1800s, virtually all of the organized efforts to reform prostitution have targeted individual women and their character. The COS workers believed for example, that poverty related problems (such as immorality) were rooted in individual weaknesses, and their efforts focused on reforming moral character, especially that of low-income women. The settlement workers moved beyond a strictly individualized analysis of prostitution by acknowledging social forces that led women into prostitution, but continued to stress the individual components of prostitution by portraying prostitutes as victims of sexual slavery, and by calling for the protection of the "weak", as did evangelical workers, rather than holding the perceived perpetrators accountable. Likewise, the view of prostitutes as pathological deviants and victims of feeble-mindedness held by social workers in the 1950s continues to influence much of contemporary social work efforts with this population today. Finally, many of the beliefs and values that shaped early social work practice with fallen women continue to inform contemporary social work practice with women in the sex industry. One might argue that the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Notes

1. Chapkis (1997) reports that historical records suggest that most British prostitutes were not sold into the trade, rather they were young women who consciously engaged in prostitution for economic reasons.
2. In order to control the spread of venereal diseases to the armed forces, the British government established the Contagious Diseases Acts (CD). The CD acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 legislated for the examination, regulation and isolation of women who were believed to be prostitutes (Cree, 1995). Under the CD acts, prostitutes were subject to mandatory medical exams (Bullough & Bullough, 1987; Roberts, 1992). Foucault (1978) argued that the CD acts represented a contest over who had the authority to speak about prostitution and sexual behavior and about how prostitution was to be constructed.

3. The United States Prostitutes Collective (US PROS) began as an extension of the New York Prostitutes Collective (NYP) that began in 1979. The English Collective of Prostitutes came together in 1975 as an independent organization within the International Wages for Housework Campaign. The Red Thread in the Netherlands began as a support group for past and present sex workers in January of 1984, initiated by Jan Viseer of the A de Graff Foundation. SIN was previously known as the Prostitutes Association of South Australia (PASA) formed in 1989 by a sex worker/madam who was fed up with police harassment. Prostitutes Of New York (PONY) has had three incarnations; it was first founded in the late 1970s by Jean Powell, the second phase was organized by Iris de la Cruz in the 1980s, as of 1989 PONY is led by a steering committee. Other prostitutes rights groups include, Canadian Organization for Prostitutes' Rights (CORP) and Hooking Is Real Employment (HIRE).
4. Most Johns Schools are diversion programs that are offered to first time offenders of prostitution. The Johns School is usually a full day activity comprised of several workshops addressing issues of sexual health, ethics, morality etc. Although each John School is different, many of the "Schools" employ ex-sex workers to speak to offenders about their horrible experiences as sex workers. The objective is often to use guilt as a means to deter clients from purchasing the services of sex workers in the future. Members of prostitutes' rights organizations argue that John Schools simply perpetuate the myth that all sex workers regard themselves as victims of exploitation, and that they are incapable of speaking on their own behalf.

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Exploratory Research in Public Social Service Agencies: An Assessment of Dissemination and Utilization

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The purpose of this study was to investigate how nine exploratory research studies were disseminated and utilized by social services agencies in four California counties. It is based on in-depth interviews with sixteen key social service agency staff members in four counties who were involved in the planning and implementation of the research projects. While reports were disseminated internally to agency management staff, the results revealed that fewer were shared with supervisory and line staff. All of the studies influenced agency thinking and, in some cases, specific agency decision-making processes. The key factors influencing the utilization of research included: (a) characteristics of the findings and recommendations, (b) specific project situations, (c) practitioner and researcher characteristics, and (d) communication. Implications for future research and practice are identified in relationship to improving the scope of work, strengthening the agency-researcher partnership, developing a research networking program, and increasing media strategies for bringing research to the marketplace.

While the primary purpose of research dissemination is to get new knowledge into the hands of those who could use it for the good of society (Cronenwett, 1995), studies of research utilization in public social services reveal limited use of findings

by practitioners (DeMartini & Whitebeck, 1986; Gingerich, 1982; Millman et al., 1990; Mutschler, 1984). The picture is only slightly more favorable when assessing research dissemination and utilization among agency administrators and policy makers (Beyer & Trice, 1982). While Rothman (1980) reported considerable use of research in planning, achieving objectives and correcting false assumptions among social service administrators, McNeece, Dinito, and Jonson (1983) found that only 25% of mental health directors who used research indicated that it influenced decisions regarding program changes. Weiss (1980) reached similar conclusions in a study on the utilization of social science research by 150 mental health directors.

Not only is the extent of research utilization low within social services agencies, dissemination efforts by academicians are also quite limited (Feldman, 1986; Mizrahi, 1992). For many years, research dissemination and utilization were viewed by researchers as simply reporting findings/recommendations through reports and articles based on the assumption that they would be applied to programs and practice. Over the past few decades, researchers found this approach to be inadequate and have identified an array of research dissemination and utilization strategies (Pelz, 1978; Rich, 1977; Beyer & Trice, 1982).

The dissemination and utilization of research by agency practitioners is a topic of considerable complexity (Anderson, 2001; Reid & Fortune, 1992). As Staller and Kirk (1998) have noted, the complexity of the practice environment along with the characteristics of the knowledge or research being disseminated are structural factors that can impede effective research utilization. To add to this complexity, the challenges faced by researchers in assessing dissemination and utilization are also substantial. As Larsen (1981) noted, the methods for evaluation are complicated by: a) differing definitions of utilization (e.g. is reading a study the same as implementing one of the recommendations?), b) differing research methods impacted by a seemingly endless array of variables which interact with one another to influence the ways in which practitioners utilize information, let alone interpret and utilize specific research findings, c) the lack of a systematic catalogue of contextual factors and situational variables that can impact dissemination and utilization (e.g. knowing how to insert

research findings/recommendations into an agency environment of continuous change and demanding caseloads), and d) the impact of temporal factors on research utilization (e.g. "timing is everything" especially when it comes to assessing practitioner readiness discuss findings and utilize recommendations).

With these caveats in mind, Bullock et al (1998) in their pioneering research on social service practice noted that the primary forms of dissemination are through in-service training, on-going supervision, and word of mouth where the process of sharing is more important than the conference presentation or the published report. They found that practitioners were most receptive to research when the team of practitioners was stable (no major changes), staff morale was high, staff shared a common outlook on their work, and agency resources were reasonably good. Given the unusual occurrence when all of these factors are present, it is not surprising that research dissemination and utilization are such complex processes, especially when practitioners often regard research as a threat, an irrelevance, or both. Bullock et al (1998) found that there appears to be "no structural basis for the relationship between research and practice . . . (where practitioners tend) to dismiss criticism from without as a failure on the part of the critic to understand the social work task (and yet) in research, such scrutiny is the engine of progress" (p. 85, 86). To address this situation, they suggest several important steps: 1) considerable restructuring of research findings will be needed to make them user friendly, 2) a new breed of translator is needed because neither the researchers nor the practitioners may have the time or skills, and 3) new forms of practitioner-researcher collaboration will need to be found to effectively promote dissemination and utilization. This paper focuses on this third dimension.

Given the current state of the art of research dissemination and utilization in the human services, this study is an assessment of the dissemination and utilization of nine exploratory research projects conducted in four county social services agencies in the San Francisco Bay Area. The topics of all nine projects were proposed and funded by each of the four agencies. The scope of each research project was negotiated between the university research team director and agency representatives. The impetus

behind this follow-up study of nine projects is the shared interest in outcomes by the agency representatives and the university research team.

This follow-up study was sponsored by the Bay Area Social Services Consortium (Austin et al., 1999), funded by the Zellerbach Family Fund, and conducted by the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Social Welfare. The overriding goal of the study was to learn about how research reports were disseminated and utilized in the four social service agencies. The specific objectives of the study were to (a) gain feedback from research consumers about the dissemination of the studies as well as their utilization, (b) use the feedback to modify the research program, and (c) contribute to the body of knowledge related to research dissemination and utilization in the field of public social services. It is important to note that the term social services "practitioner" is defined in this study as middle and senior program managers who were the primary audience for the nine exploratory research studies. A much broader practitioner audience could have been defined but that would have been beyond the scope of this study.

Overview of Literature on Research Dissemination and Utilization

This brief review focuses on literature related to: 1) factors that influence research dissemination, 2) organizational factors that influence research utilization, and 3) theoretical types of research utilization.

Factors that Influence Research Dissemination: Applied research is considered valuable to the extent that it contributes to the development and implementation of policies and programs, as well as the extent to which it addresses strategies to deal with social problems. Social services practitioners face many challenges when they are on the receiving end of research dissemination (Stricker & Keisner, 1985). Often, practitioners are not familiar with research language and methods (Cronenwett, 1995), and therefore, it is important for researchers to present research in a clear manner (e.g., avoiding technical jargon and advanced statistics). Even when practitioners are capable research consumers, the time pressures

of service delivery pose a serious challenge to keeping abreast of new, relevant information (Funk, Tornquist, & Champagne, 1989; Pettengill, M, Gillies, D., & Clark, C., 1994). While practitioners may lack a mastery of research methodologies, researchers may lack the practice experience/expertise needed to report information in an accessible manner (Holland, 1998).

Depending on whether the research is "decision-driven" (i.e., it leads to a new practice or intervention) or "conceptual" (i.e., it is intended to influence thinking rather than action), different methods can be used for effective research dissemination. The key aspects of "decision-driven" research include accessibility of the research to practitioners, the practitioners' ability to interpret the literature, and the utilization of conferences and integrative research findings (Cronenwett et al., 1995; Wicox, Hadley, & Bacon, 1998). Conferences and print materials (e.g., workplace newsletters) have been found to be most effective when disseminating "conceptual" research (Cronenwett et al., Ingram, D., 1998). The new information technologies, such as websites, also offer many opportunities to disseminate decision-driven and/or conceptual research (Ingram et al., Holland, 1998.)

Green and Johnson (1996) identify three possible roles that researchers might play in the process of disseminating research. One role is to continue replicating and re-testing past research to assess the generalizability of findings. Another role is to put more time and effort into presenting research findings and implications in a format relevant to their consumers. A third approach is to conduct more meta-analyses where findings and applications from numerous studies are analyzed and presented in a format that builds a common knowledge base relevant to practitioners and researchers. In summary, the literature suggests that the way research is presented to practitioners can be one of the most significant factors that can influence the dissemination of research.

Types of Research Utilization: In contrast to dissemination, research utilization by practitioners, according to Reid and Fortune (1992), has at least five dimensions:

- "Instrumental utilization" occurs when practitioners alter their practice methods after reading research findings, thereby impacting specific decisions or problem-solving processes (Rich, 1977).

- "Conceptual utilization" occurs when research provides agency staff with greater insight about social problems without necessarily directly influencing specific decisions. These insights are applied at a later time when practitioners combine their own experiences and beliefs with research findings and apply them in specific situations (Rich, 1977).
- "Persuasive utilization" occurs when practitioners use research findings to support a position, as reflected in the work of lobbyists, advocates, policy makers, and administrators (Leviton & Hughes, 1981).
- "Methodological utilization" occurs when practitioners adopt specific research tools which can be used as either standardized tests for service evaluation or diagnostic tools for client assessment (Tripodi, Fellin, & Meyer, 1983).
- "Indirect utilization" occurs when practitioners employ theories, practice models, or procedures that are based on research but do not require any contact with research findings (Reid & Fortune, 1992). Reid and Fortune (1992) suggest that practitioners are probably informed by research indirectly more often than they would think (e.g., knowledge gained during graduate school, reading books and articles that draw on research, working with program directors who are influenced by research literature).

Because methodological and indirect utilization were not a focus of the current study, only the concepts of instrumental, conceptual, and persuasive utilization were used.

Organizational Factors that Influence Research Utilization: Rosen (1983) identifies four organizational factors that influence research use: (a) characteristics of the knowledge to be utilized; (b) practice situations; (c) practitioner and researcher characteristics; and (d) communication channels as follows:

- For research to be utilized, the knowledge generated by research must be relevant to critical dilemmas and decisions facing practitioners (Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980).
- Practice situations calling for immediate action may not be easily reconciled with the gradual and cumulative pace of research.
- The education and predisposition of practitioners (more humanistic and interpersonal interests with less experience or

interest in conducting or utilizing research) usually differs significantly from those of researchers who pride themselves on distance and objectivity and have less interest in client involvement. These two perspectives intersect when the reputation and credibility of the researcher can influence the use of research findings, especially if practitioners perceive the researcher as having an inadequate understanding of the service sector. Even with a high level of research credibility, research findings are more likely to be used if they are consistent with the beliefs and expectations of practitioners and minimally conflict with other available information (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986).

- The nature of communication channels between researchers and practitioners will influence the likelihood of research utilization (e.g., oral and non-technical written presentations of results and broadly-framed recommendations). In addition, ongoing and/or prior communication, as well as geographic proximity between the researcher and the users, are related to increased research utilization (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986). Finally, the extent to which users participate in the planning and implementation of the research can influence utilization and future research (Casey, 1983).

In summary, other studies confirm the relevance of the four organizational factors in a variety of settings such as politics, mental health, and education (Apfel & Worthley, 1979; Cohen, 1977; Huberman, 1994; Nilsson & Sunesson, 1993).

Method

This study assesses the degree to which nine exploratory research projects (noted in Figure 1) were disseminated and utilized by four county social services agencies. These nine studies constitute the first phase of research collaboration between local social service agencies and a university school of social welfare (the second phase is devoted to multi-county studies, not reported here). The nine studies were conducted in four agencies (two urban and two suburban) that were self-selected based on their ability to fund research studies of up to \$25,000 per year. It is important to reiterate that the topics of all nine exploratory research studies were selected by agency staff and structured in the

form of a research scope of work in collaboration with university researchers.

The interviews for the assessment of the nine studies were conducted in-person and by telephone with key social service agency staff involved in the planning, dissemination, and utilization of the nine research projects. The interviews with staff focused on three areas of inquiry: (1) the ways the agencies disseminated project reports; (2) the impact of the projects; and (3) factors influencing the dissemination and utilization of project reports. The goal of the study was to learn more about how to foster the utilization of research findings and improve dissemination strategies.

Study participants were selected in consultation with the social service agency directors who were the first people to be interviewed regarding the research projects conducted in their respective counties. The convenience sample consisted of a total of 16 respondents (12 in-person and 4 telephone interviews) who are middle and senior managers in the four counties. These respondents were involved in the design of the study, the data collection, and/or the data interpretation process leading to articulating clearly understandable and relevant recommendations. These respondents were also the primary consumers of the exploratory studies and therefore in the best position to assess dissemination and utilization.

The senior author of this paper conducted all the interviews and recorded all the data. The data from the interviews were categorized and content analyzed for major cross-cutting themes using key concepts from the literature. For example, questions about dissemination were analyzed in terms of their "decision-making" or "conceptual" orientation. Similarly, the utilization concepts of "instrumental," "conceptual," and "persuasive" were used to categorize intervention question responses. And finally, the organizational factors impacting research utilization were utilized in the data analysis process.

The design limitations of this follow-up study are important to note. A more rigorous design would have replaced a convenience sample with a more randomized sampling plan. Second, given the limited resources to carry out the study, there were several threats to both external validity (multiple factors impacting the frenetic

Figure 1

BASSC Research Projects & Objectives

1. *Homeless Needs Assessment*. Initiated by the county to better understand the service needs of homeless adult individuals and their families to plan for county-wide homeless services.
 2. *General Assistance Client Demographics Study*. Initiated by the county to better understand the demographic characteristics and service needs of GA applicants and recipients in order to develop program plans and policies.
 3. *Assessing Quality of Care in Kinship and Family Foster Care*. Initiated by the county to examine various dimensions of quality of care in kinship foster care and family foster care in order to develop guidelines for child welfare workers to use when making initial placements for children.
 4. *Considerations Relating to the Placement of Children in Gay/Lesbian Foster and Adoptive Homes*. Initiated by the county at the request of Superior Court judges to assess the existing literature relating to gay and lesbian parenting in order to more thoroughly consider issues pertaining to the placement of children in gay and lesbian foster and adoptive homes.
 5. *Developing a Public Information and Community Relations Strategy*. Initiated by the County to examine how public relations is currently carried out in the public and private sectors in order to assist the Social Service Department in developing a formal public information function.
 6. *Factors Associated with Family Reunification Outcomes: Understanding Reentry to Care for Infants*. Initiated by the County to identify various characteristics (child, family, service, environmental, court, and caseworker) associated with success or failure in family reunification in order to further inform the planning of child welfare services.
 7. *Foster Care Recruitment, Retention and Rate Setting*. Initiated by the county to compare and assess the various approaches used by states to recruit and retain foster parents and to understand how state and county governments determine payment rates for foster parents.
 8. *Service Use and Unmet Needs Among Long-Term AFDC Recipients*. Initiated by the County to better understand the service needs of long-term AFDC clients in order to develop programs to help promote their financial self-sufficiency.
 9. *A Review of Managed Care as a Tool for Child Welfare Reform*. Initiated by the County to investigate approaches for reforming the delivery, management and financing of child welfare services, by critically assessing current managed care principles and practices.
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pace of agency life) and internal validity (self-interests of respondents or the complexity of cross-site, cross-study comparisons). As a result, this follow-up study focuses more on identifying and understanding research process improvements than on easily generalizable findings.

Results

This section provides general findings on dissemination and utilization of the research reports. The concepts of instrumental utilization, conceptual utilization, and persuasive utilization were used to organize the findings. The section concludes with an examination of the three organizational factors that influence research utilization: (1) research relevance, (2) practice implications, and (3) communication patterns.

Agency Dissemination

Research dissemination is a set of activities designed to make research findings and recommendations available to relevant audiences. Agency personnel identified 12 types of stakeholders (organizations and individuals) who were affected directly or indirectly by the recommendations of the research projects. The most commonly cited categories of stakeholders to receive research reports were internal agency staff, external service networks and providers, community groups and government and legislative representatives.

All of the reports were disseminated internally to agency management staff, including executive team members and/or senior managers. Three reports also were shared with supervisory and line level staff because of their relevance to service delivery and/or participation in the study (Family Reunification Outcomes, General Assistance Demographics, and Gay/Lesbian Foster & Adoptive Parent Policy Analysis). The majority of the studies were primarily of interest to management staff since they provided basic data about service delivery or administrative processes.

The majority of agencies reported no specific or formal plan for internal dissemination and no specific staff meeting to present the report other than listing it on a regular staff meeting agenda.

Without a dissemination plan, agency staff reported some confusion about whose role it was to distribute reports beyond those members closely involved with the study. As a result, dissemination varied widely across the nine studies from senior staff only to staff inside and outside the agency. Only limited senior staff attention had been given in each study to the possible array of stakeholders who might have an interest in the study. Similarly, none of the scope-of-work statements included any reference to a dissemination plan other than preparing copies of the report for dissemination by agency senior staff.

When asked about what they would do differently to disseminate the results of their study today, staff closely allied with the study identified additional stakeholders, including the statewide Child Welfare Directors Association, community groups, and agency supervisors who might have benefitted from the information included in the report or whose relationships would be strengthened through the sharing of information. In general, study respondents recommended the implementation of a more deliberate and systematic dissemination process in the agency as well as regional discussions of findings and recommendations.

Research Utilization

In contrast to research dissemination, research utilization is reflected in the different ways the studies were designed and implemented. The major categories for organizing the utilization findings include (a) instrumental utilization, (b) conceptual utilization, and (c) persuasive utilization.

Based on an analysis of the interview data on utilization, the findings were categorized using the following criteria:

1. Each study met the definition of "conceptual utilization" if one or more of the following responses were noted: a) "the research project helped us think more clearly about the issues (goals, process, outcomes, etc.)," b) "it helped us see the issues in a new light", c) "it encouraged us to dig deeper with a follow-up investigation," and/or d) "it generated new questions and ideas to be pursued."
2. Each study met the definition of "persuasive utilization" if one or more of the following responses were noted: a) "we used the

findings/recommendations with legislative bodies (county or state) or judicial bodies (Superior Court)," b) "used findings to educate staff inside and outside the agency," and/or c) "used findings to strengthen the work of local planning groups."

3. Each study met the definition of "instrumental utilization" if one or more of the following responses were noted: a) "used the study to expand/modify services," b) "used the study to increase local community collaboration," c) "used study to establish a new agency function," and/or d) "used the data collection instrument for on-going use in service monitoring."

While some of the studies reflected all three types of utilization (instrumental, conceptual, and persuasive), that was not the case for all of them. While there were no working hypotheses about types of utilization, it appears that the degree to which the findings matched or complemented the agency's current plans, the more likely it was for the utilization to reflect all three types (conceptual, persuasive, and instrumental). As noted in Figure 2, this was the case for the first four studies. However, studies numbered 8 and 9 had either controversial or complex findings and therefore were utilized more conceptually than instrumentally or persuasively. Over half of the studies (5 out of 9) had one or more of the research report recommendations implemented as noted in the "instrumental" column in Figure 2.

Instrumental Utilization. Instrumental utilization involves the extent to which the recommendations of each study were implemented. For example, study #1 (assessing the needs of the homeless) illustrates instrumental utilization with respect to the impact of the study on decision-making. The agency made considerable progress in implementing the recommendations as a result of hiring a new Homeless Coordinator who collaborated with the community and built a coalition of agencies to develop: (a) a year-round shelter, (b) an extended rent-broker service providing four month rent credit to employed homeless persons (funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), (c) expanded housing for homeless families leaving a violent situation or those recovering from substance abuse, (d) increased employment and health screening services tailored to the special needs of homeless people, and e) a successful HUD grant that involved different stakeholders in building continuum-of-care programs.

Figure 2

Types of Research Project Utilization

Research Projects	Conceptual "Insights for later application"	Persuasive "Used to advocate"	Instrumental "Altered practices"
1. Homeless Needs Assessment	X	X	X
2. General Assistance Client Demographic Study	X	X	X
3. Gay/Lesbian Foster and Adoptive Homes	X	X	X
4. Developing a Public Information Strategy	X	X	X
5. Assessing Quality of Care in Kinship Foster Care	X		X
6. Family Reunification Outcomes	X	X	
7. Foster Care Rates	X	X	
8. Long-Term AFDC Recipients	X		
9. Managed Care as a Tool for Child Welfare Reform	X		
Total	9	6	5

Conceptual Utilization. Conceptual utilization refers to the use of research to influence thinking about issues related to future program and policy development (Freeman & Rossi, 1993). While all nine studies had a conceptual impact on the agencies, the managed care in child welfare policy study best illustrates conceptual utilization.

The managed care study was initiated to gather information regarding restructuring the delivery, management, and financing of child welfare services with respect to the applicability of managed care principles and tools. The sponsoring agency is now using the concepts to explore the feasibility of increased contracting of child welfare services. Other departments within the agency

also are interested in exploring the application of managed care practices, such as contracting out welfare-to-work employment services based on specified incentives and outcomes.

Persuasive Utilization. Persuasive utilization refers to using research results to support or refute policy positions. Six of the nine research studies were used in this manner as illustrated by the studies on foster care rate setting and building a public information capacity. The foster care rate setting study was designed to assess various state-wide approaches to developing payment rates for foster care. The sponsoring agency and its foster family association (independent providers of foster care services) had been concerned about the loss of foster and adoptive families due to low payment rates and wanted to pursue a legislative remedy. When the research report was finished, it was distributed to legislative staff advocates at the state and county levels where it successfully contributed to the Agency's legislative agenda to increase the rate of foster care reimbursement by six percent.

Another study that focused on public information examined how public relations are currently carried out in the public and private sectors in order to assist the sponsoring agency in exploring the feasibility of establishing its own formal public information function. As a result of this study, a new public information office was established. The new public information officer was able to convince staff (traditionally reluctant to use the media) that it was in the best interest of clients and the agency to share information about agency services with the community. The report served as an educational document to help orient and train staff on the public information functions of a social service agency.

As a result of implementing the study recommendations, more staff members understood the importance of the public information function and were involved in public information roles such as distributing flyers in the community (e.g., PTA, churches, and chamber of commerce). In addition, the agency developed a Speakers Bureau with 34 agency staff members making presentations on topics such as implementing welfare reform. As a result of these activities, the agency director has received positive feedback from the Board of Supervisors, business people, and other community members who have taken time to notice the good work of the agency.

Organizational Factors Affecting Utilization

In this section the findings on utilization reflect the following organizational factors: (a) relevance of the research to agency operations, (b) situational factors (timeliness and potential conflicts), and (c) communication patterns (scope of work and written/oral communications).

Relevance of the Research

As noted in the review of the literature, research utilization is related to the relevance of the study's findings and recommendations to decision-makers. Administrators are generally interested in concrete recommendations that can be implemented and evaluated within existing agency operations. One respondent summarized some of the reasons why research is viewed suspiciously by management staff: (1) the inability of research findings to address external policy and funding constraints, (2) most research reports do not translate findings and recommendations into specific action steps, and (3) insufficient time and/or interest to either analyze the findings or utilize the research recommendations. These concerns may relate to unrealistic expectations about the direct relevance of research for current practice. However, these concerns are very important for those framing research recommendations and promoting utilization by embedding outcomes of the study within the current flow of agency operations.

Despite these concerns, two studies were especially relevant to the interests program managers involved with the placement of children: (a) *Quality of Kinship Care* and (b) *Gay/Lesbian Foster and Adoptive Homes*. The *Kinship Care* study was distributed to key managerial staff (executive team, program managers, director of foster parent recruiting, children's shelter director and members of the foster parents committee). In contrast, the *Gay/Lesbian* study was shared with all levels of agency staff as part of a campaign to educate them about gay and lesbian families.

It is important to note that a few of the research studies reflected some level of controversy, such as managed care (are such cost-saving strategies relevant to child welfare?), homelessness (how large is the population and have we done enough?), and placement of children in gay and lesbian homes (will these

families corrupt the morals of innocent children?). In many instances the research reports led to policy and program changes that helped to lower the level of controversy and increase informed decision-making.

And finally, the relevance of the studies was greatly enhanced by the involvement of an operational manager in the research design and implementation of the results. Of the four most utilized studies, all had an operational staff member involved in the research and/or the implementation of the recommendations. Staff expertise related to the research study was a critical element in the successful utilization of the study recommendations. Similarly, the involvement of a community group or staff committee increased research study ownership and the potential for increased dissemination and utilization. The studies that involved only the agency directors and research staff were utilized less.

Situational Factors

Several situational factors were identified by agency personnel and research staff such as limited financial resources (all projects were budgeted for \$25,000 and some included two components for a total of \$50,000), time constraints (all studies needed to be completed in 6–12 months), and agency or university delays in processing the scope of work or gaining access to data sources. This section expands on these findings by examining the issues of timeliness and potential conflicts.

While only one agency reported significant time delays involving the University's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (potential client vulnerability to the misuse of data), most of the delays were caused by difficulties experienced by agency managers and university researchers in specifying the primary research question of interest to the agency (delays in receiving follow-up information, rescheduling meetings, etc.). In addition, the cumbersome approval procedures within agency and university bureaucracies made it difficult to undertake studies in a timely manner.

Since exploratory research can surface conflicting needs and interests, it is important to identify and address potential conflicts. For example, one agency wanted their research project to

support their lobbying of the state legislature. Instead of conducting a piece of advocacy research which is not in the purview of university-based research, the researchers framed the scope of work to include a concluding section on "Policy Considerations" rather than specific recommendations. In another example, the study findings and recommendations conflicted with the agency's new service directions. The data from the study called for increased training and support services for clients prior to employment while the agency had recently adopted a "work first" welfare reform strategy whereby training and support services would follow the securing of employment. Since the agency had become more interested in identifying the factors that lead to successful transition from welfare to work, the study was not widely disseminated.

Communication

A third organizational factor that was found to influence utilization was communication. Most agency staff described communications with the research staff as open and effective. If there was any perception of communication problems, agency staff were quick to point out their own responsibilities in this area. For example, sometimes agency staff were slow in reviewing draft reports or were rushed and did not review them critically. Other busy staff needed oral presentations prior to reading the report to determine how they could use the findings. While agency directors actively sought input from senior management on their ideas for research projects, some noted that it was difficult for many key managers to think through how to use research data for policy and program development. Specific communication issues described in this section relate to the scope of work and the presentation of the final report.

Sharing information during the development of the scope of work was seen as essential for both researchers and agency staff in order to ensure that all sources of expertise, not just the literature, were consulted. While the research staff had a clear understanding of the issues to be addressed, the research methods to be used and the product to be delivered, there was a need in many of the studies for a clearer specification of the roles to be played by

agency staff. This proved to be critical when staff assignments changed and new staff members were given responsibility for working with the research team. Similarly, the involvement of multiple departments within an agency can significantly delay the research process. So it is important to determine which staff, departments, agencies and stakeholders should be involved in clarifying the research objective, interpreting the findings, and assessing the recommendations.

With respect to presenting the final report, most agencies found the reports to be well written, informative, easy to read, and reflected a high level of analysis and clarity. Most of the respondents were especially impressed with the literature reviews. However, it was often noted that the final reports could have provided more connections between the recommendations and the necessary action steps for implementation. In only one study (Homeless Needs Assessment) did the agency staff invest considerable time in framing the recommendations within an overall action plan that helped to foster successful dissemination and utilization.

Understanding the audience for a report, as well as its external or internal use, are important factors for improving both the dissemination and utilization processes. The agencies often used their reports as parts of presentations to government and community bodies. Some developed Power Point presentations of the research findings and recommendations. Others developed brief, two page abstracts with bullets, articles for agency newsletters, and oral presentations using visuals and handouts at staff meetings and/or "brown bag" lunches. In general, most agency staff members who were not directly involved in the research project read only the Executive Summary that included recommendations. Several agencies suggested that oral presentations become a part of the scope of work in future studies.

Summary of Organizational Factors

After reviewing the organizational factors related to research relevance, the situational aspects of timeliness and conflict, and communication related to the scope of work and the presentation of findings and recommendations, the following highlights of major findings emerged:

Positive Results

1. Staff participation, especially the involvement of a senior manager, in the planning and implementation of research projects positively influenced research dissemination and utilization.
2. The research studies helped to increase the level of informed decision-making and lower the level of controversy within the agencies as well as the community.

Areas for improvement

3. Shared responsibilities across a number of different departments or stakeholders can significantly delay the research process, calling for increased efforts to coordinate by agency staff as well as the researchers
4. Successful dissemination of reports requires that the researchers invest more time and energy in identifying and understanding the interests of internal and external audiences.
5. Successful utilization of research reports is based on the realization that agency managers have different levels of understanding when it comes to using research findings and recommendations for policy and program development.
6. Oral presentations, beyond the distribution of the written research reports, were seen by busy staff as the most valuable way to present research results and explore the feasibility of implementing the recommendations.
7. Increased investments in communications are necessary to: (a) clarify the nature of the study and expectations for the outcome, (b) specify types of research and dissemination methods to be used, and (c) identify methods for addressing key issues (cooperation, shared accountability, conflict, and the translation of findings and recommendations into action steps).

Implications

The findings indicate that research dissemination and utilization varied across studies due to several organizational factors. The two most important are: (a) establishing clarity in the early stages of defining the scope of work, and (b) strengthening communication in the agency-researcher partnership before, during, and after the research project.

With regard to developing the scope of work, several activities could strengthen the research collaboration:

- 1) Include a plan for dissemination and utilization that involves staff in translating findings and recommendations into action steps.
- 2) Include opportunities for regularly scheduled review meetings to facilitate communications and promote increased understanding of agency issues by the researchers.
- 3) Expand the literature review process to include consultation with experts inside and outside the agency as a way to promote an increased understanding of the research topic and the organizational issues by the researchers.
- 4) Assist researchers in acquiring a first-hand familiarity with agency service programs and the array of relevant stakeholders.
- 5) Discuss the scope of work with all relevant parties within the agency.

The second major implication of this study relates to strengthening communication in the agency-researcher partnership. In this regard, the following suggestions emerged from the data:

- 1) Involve an agency staff member from the program area under study in all aspects of the research project coordination.
- 2) Identify areas of potential conflict between agency staff and research staff as early as possible in order to avoid compromising the study or its dissemination and utilization.
- 3) Identify opportunities to share the research results widely within the agency as well as with other interested parties in the community and region.

The implications of this follow-up assessment of nine exploratory studies suggest an agenda for future research in the following four areas: (a) scope of work, (b) the agency-researcher partnership, (c) the research dissemination process, and (d) media strategies.

Conclusion

This follow-up study identified some of the organizational factors that influence the ways in which social services agencies

disseminate and utilize exploratory research findings. The three most salient organizational factors were: (a) establishing clarity in the early stages of defining the scope of work, (b) strengthening communication in the agency-researcher partnership during the entire research process, and (c) finding multiple methods for disseminating findings and increasing utilization. Future research is needed to assess the process of developing a scope of work while strengthening agency-researcher partnerships, as well as strengthening the research dissemination process.

University facilitated agency-based research is a team process that requires careful planning and communications. Given the time and resource constraints on completing these research projects, additional resources may be needed to assist agencies and/or researchers in disseminating and utilizing their research reports. It is clear that both researchers and agency stakeholders share responsibility for maximizing the use of the results and recommendations of exploratory research.

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Health Services Social Workers' Activities with People with Disabilities: Predictors of Community Practice

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The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which hospital based social workers were actively involved in community practice on behalf of disabled people. The study attempted to identify what variables influence social workers in health settings to engage in community practice. A sample of 286 social workers employed in 57 different hospital and rehabilitation settings participated in a survey that focused on advocacy and related topics. A questionnaire explored participants' perspectives and the levels and kinds of practice activities they engaged in relation to the needs of people with disabilities. Most respondents indicated that community practice was part of their professional responsibility and that disabled clients needed such assistance. Regression analyses showed that self-reports of community practice activities were nevertheless highly related to self-reported advocacy activities. However, their reports of their actual advocacy activities consistently fell below their recognition of need.

A major tenet of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) is that people with disabilities frequently encounter institutional, social and physical barriers as they try to establish and maintain lives in mainstream communities. This view is held by a great many disability rights advocates and authors who suggest that many of the problems encountered by disabled people are neither psychological nor medical (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999; Tower, 1994). Rather, they contend that disabled people encounter problems in their contacts and interactions with communities, organizations and mainstream health and rehabilitation

organizations that for one reason or another limit full participation by people with disabilities (Beaulaurier & Taylor, 2001b; Hahn, 1984; Kailes, 1988; Roberts, 1989).

Although people with disabilities are becoming more militant about demanding new types of services, there is reason to believe that the health organizations that serve them may actually be working to limit their options. As managed care becomes more prevalent in health services, administrators can be expected to seek to limit the discretion and flexibility of practitioners, particularly when it comes to prescribing more costly services and options whose costs are unknown or not supported by third-party payers (Herbert & Levin, 1996; Sunley, 1997, pp. 88–89). Grass roots advocates in the disability rights movement, however, increasingly favor programs and services that support “independent living” approaches that maximize the clients’ ability to live and work in mainstream communities (Crewe & Zola, 1983; Herbert & Levin, 1996; Kailes, 1988; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1996; Sunley, 1997; Tower, 1994). This may create a situation in which administrative pressures may conflict with increasingly articulate and well-organized disability rights groups, not to mention other consumer and patient movements. What people with disabilities increasingly say they need are alternatives to the services provided by mainstream rehabilitation and health organizations (Beaulaurier & Taylor, 2001a; Tower, 1994).

The notion that people with disabilities need assistance and services that lie outside the traditional framework of mainstream health and rehabilitation organizations is well established in the disability rights community (Kailes & Weil, 1985; Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1996; Renz-Beaulaurier, 1998; Tower, 1994). For a substantial number of disabled people, however, there is also a need for services and other forms of assistance, in order to facilitate community-based living (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1999; Mathews, 1990; McAweeney, Forchheimer, & Tate, 1996). In order to obtain both rights and services, many disability activists have had to organize and mobilize their constituencies (Varela, 1983).

In an environment where organizational and environmental priorities appear to be at odds, social workers in health care settings increasingly feel the need for better community practice

skills in addition to more familiar direct-practice skills. However questions arise as to whether social workers in health and rehabilitation settings believe community practice is part of their function at a time when modern health organizations may not consider these activities to be "billable services." Are social workers making corresponding adjustments in their practice? Do social workers in health settings perceive the needs of clients with disabilities as legitimate, deliverable services? If so, do social workers perceive that community practice is the method for adjusting existing conditions to better satisfy these needs? To what extent do they indicate that they are engaged in community practice? This study investigated the self-reports of social workers in health organizations (primarily hospitals) about their engagement in community practice activities.

It has not been established empirically whether social workers agree with the need for community practice activities, particularly those social workers in traditional health service organizations. By their nature, community practice activities would involve a departure from more traditional clinical activities. Since the inception of health social work, practitioner activities have primarily focused on direct service activities with families and clients (Bartlett, 1957, p. 87; Cannon, 1930, pp. 90–96; 1952, p. 205; Pfouts & McDaniel, 1990). Some authors have also speculated that managed care policies imposed by health care organizations may be restricting what social workers in such settings are able to do with clients (Cornelius, 1994; Tower, 1994, p. 191). At times, however, direct practice social workers have also been active in forming linkages and collaborative arrangements with community groups (Taylor, 1985, pp. 204–207). A central question is whether social workers in health settings see the importance of community practice, and of creating linkages with the disability community as one of *their* responsibilities? If so, are there any restrictions on their autonomy, particularly at the organizational level, that would prevent them from engaging in such practices?

Weil and Gamble (1995, p. 577) have noted that there are five objectives of community practice:

- develop organizing skills and abilities of citizens and citizen groups

- make social planning more accessible and inclusive in a community
- connect social and economic investments to grassroots community groups
- advocate for broad coalitions in solving community problems
- infuse the social planning process with a concern for social justice

The *sine qua non* of these activities for health social workers is *contact* with individuals and groups within the disability community. In fact, many of the services available to help people with disabilities live independently in their communities of choice are operated by other people with disabilities (Racino, 1999, chaps. 8 and 9; Tower, 1994). "Independent living centers," for example, stress the importance of self-help and peer support from other people with disabilities who can serve as role models. Such centers and related services are themselves part of networks and associations of people with disabilities and can be found in most major metropolitan areas, as well as many rural areas (the most comprehensive list available is at <http://www.ilru.org/jump1.htm>).

This article reports on exploratory-descriptive findings related to health social workers' self reports of community practice in their professional activities with people with disabilities. The principal research questions related to (a) whether social workers in health settings felt committed to community practice with and on behalf of people with disabilities, (b) to what extent were they in contact with the disability community and (c) the degree to which other factors influenced their ability to engage in community practice with this population.

Methods

Sample

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 286 social workers employed in 57 different hospitals and rehabilitation settings. Convenience and snowball sampling were used to obtain participants. A list of all members was obtained from the Southern California Chapter of the Society for Social Work Administrators in Health Care. Directors of social service departments in the Los

Angeles area were asked if they would allow their part or full-time MSW social workers to participate in the study. The directors were also asked to recommend other social work directors who might be willing to allow their staffs to participate. To broaden the sample, a private and a government hospital in a medium sized-city were also included, as were two private and one government hospitals in a rural community.

Six hundred and eighty-nine social workers received a copy of the questionnaire, with a return rate of 43% ($N = 286$). This is consistent with the norm for a study of this type (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 380). At least some surveys were returned from 89% of the departments that were asked to participate. Eighty percent of respondents were women. Seventy-six percent were white; 9% of respondents reported being African American, and an equal number reported being Latino. The remainder reported being of Asian, Pacific Islander or Native American decent. Most respondents were either licensed clinicians (64%) or "clinical associates" in the process of earning their clinical license (5%), although 20% reported that they had at least some administrative responsibilities. Most respondents indicated that they had regular professional contact with people with disabilities. Two thirds of respondents reported that they were professionally involved with at least three disabled people per month. Half saw at least 10 (the median). The average number of disabled people seen by respondents was 20 per month.

Measures

The questionnaire used in this study was developed by the author as part of a larger study of health social workers' practice with people with disabilities. A series of questions focused on whether respondents felt that community practice activities were (a) important and (b) one of *their* practice responsibilities. These items were used to develop two short measures, one to measure the degree of their philosophical commitment to community practice on behalf of people with disabilities ("Community Practice Philosophy"), and the other to measure whether respondents were in regular contact with members of the disability community ("Community Contact"). These measures were created by combining several individual items on the questionnaire using

the summing procedure suggested by Spector (1992) in order to create a summated rating scale. Since these measures have not been used in prior studies no validity statistics are currently available. Cronbach alpha scores were calculated for both measures as a partial indication of reliability.

Alpha scores and summary information were also calculated for the Advocacy Activities Index, a summated rating scale that was developed in conjunction with the questionnaire for this study. This index included items about activities including lobbying, advocating for change within their organization, seeking to change laws and policies, seeking reasonable accommodations, etc. Findings related to this scale, as well as more extensive information on its development, were previously reported in Beaulaurier and Taylor (2000)

In addition to these scales, several individual items from the questionnaire were also analyzed and reported on below. These items related to (a) administrative restrictions placed on practitioners and (b) clinical activities. Since the questionnaire was developed *de novo* for this study, measurement characteristics for the instrument as a whole or for these individual items are not known. However, a pilot study was conducted using the entire questionnaire. Several changes and clarifications based on the pilot were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

Analysis

Responses to individual items have been summarized in Table 1. Bivariate statistics were calculated using a combination of t-tests, Spearman *r*, and Pearson *r* statistics. Hierarchical multiple regression (Pedhazur, 1982, pp. 164–167) was used to develop a statistical model of variables that might influence health services social workers' motivation and ability to engage in contact with the disability community, although a simple regression procedure ultimately appeared almost as effective. All analyses were conducted using version 10 of SPSS for Windows.

Results

Administrative Restrictions

Most respondents believed that they had considerable autonomy in their work with people with disabilities. The responses in

Table 1, (administrative restrictions section), indicated that they did not feel there were many administrative restrictions placed by the organization on their practice. Most felt rather free to innovate in their practice with people with disabilities.

Community Practice Philosophy

Most respondents also indicated that they recognized the need for organizing and taking action. Moreover, they indicated that they believed social workers had a role in this process (see Table 1, Section 2). Interestingly, respondents tended to believe that helping the client to achieve independence in the community was a primary function of the social worker (Questions 2a and 2b). There was almost unanimous recognition that community practice activities were important (Question 2a) and that such skills help social workers accomplish one of their major practice functions, namely: assisting people with disabilities to achieve independence (Question 2b).

Questions 2c and 2d (Table 1) suggest that respondents believed their co-workers were involved in organizing activities on behalf of people with disabilities and their families. Eighty-four percent of respondents believed that social workers helped families organize on behalf of disabled family members, and an even greater percentage (96%) indicated that social workers helped families to organize on behalf of themselves.

A scale was created by summing the responses to questions in Table 1, Section 2. This procedure is outlined and discussed separately by Kerlinger (1986, pp. 453–455) and Spector (1992). The sum obtained for each respondent was then multiplied by a constant to render a scale with values between 1 and 4 and a midpoint of 2.5. Low scores indicate a high orientation toward a community practice perspective or “philosophy”; High scores indicate a lack of interest in community practice. An alpha score of .61 indicated an acceptable level of internal consistency in the scale. The obtained mean was 1.4 indicating that respondents tended to be highly committed in their attitudes toward community practice.

Community Contact

The four questions in Table 1, Section 2, were focused on the general orientation and perspectives of respondents with regard

Table 1

Questionnaire Items

	<i>Mostly True</i>	<i>Somewhat True</i>	<i>Somewhat False</i>	<i>Mostly False</i>
Section 1. Administrative Restrictions				
1a. I am limited in terms of what I can do with/for people with disabilities because of administrative practices in my organization. ^a	4.6%	26.4%	35.4%	33.2%
1b. I would be reprimanded by administration for using non-standard treatment options with disabled people.	6.2%	20.1%	40.1%	33.6%
1c. I regularly develop new/innovative treatment options for disabled patients.	5.6%	32.5%	33.6%	28.3%
Section 2. Community Practice Philosophy				
2a. Apart from other skills social workers should have good community, networking and organizational skills in order to be of help to the families of people with disabilities.	81%	19%	0% ^b	0%
2b. A primary function of the social worker who works with disabled people is to assist them in obtaining the services and assistance they need to live independently in the community.	77%	23%	1%	0%
2c. Social workers often help families organize in order to obtain support services for themselves (i.e. respite care, etc.).	68%	28%	3%	1%
2d. Social workers often help families organize to take action in support of people with disabilities.	40%	44%	12%	5%
Section 3. Community Contact				
3a. I am frequently in contact with people with disabilities who are not currently patients.	15%	21%	27%	37%

	Mostly True	Somewhat True	Somewhat False	Mostly False
3b. I am frequently in contact with local organizations and associations of disabled people.	11%	29%	26%	34%
3c. I initiate follow-up contacts with people with disabilities who have been discharged.	18%	33%	22%	28%
3d. Social workers introduce people with disabilities to successful role models in the community in my organization.	11%	33%	29%	27%

Section 4. Clinical Activities

4a. Most of my practice with newly disabled persons is devoted to therapy and grief work.	20%	48%	21% ^c	11%
4b. Much of my practice with the families of newly disabled persons is devoted to therapy and grief work.	26%	51%	19%	4%

^a One respondent marked a point in between "somewhat true" and "somewhat false."

^b There was actually one response in this category, (0.3%) which rounded to 0.

^c This includes one case in which the respondent circled both "mostly false" and "somewhat false."

to community practice; their *philosophy* of community practice. However, of primary importance to people with disabilities are practitioners' activities. Another series of items (see Table 1, Section 3) addressed more specific questions about the extent to which respondents and their social work colleagues were engaging in community practice activities in the form of actual community contacts. While it would be impossible to capture all of these activities in a short instrument, the questions in Table 1, Section 3, gave an indication of whether social workers in the study were in regular contact with people with disabilities in something other than their clinical roles.

Only about half of the respondents indicated that they initiated follow-up contacts with disabled people who had been

clients (Question 3c, Table 1). Even fewer indicated that they had *any* other contact with people with disabilities (36%, Question 3a, Table 1), with local organizations or associations composed of disabled people (40%, Question 3b, Table 1).

Exactly the same method was used to create a community contact scale from the questions in Table 1, (community contact section), as was used to create the community practice philosophy scale. The obtained mean obtained was 2.76, with a Cronbach alpha score of .71.

Most responses on the "philosophy" scale indicated a highly favorable orientation toward the concept and value of community practice. In fact, 56% of all respondents obtained scores of 1.25 (the median) or lower. By contrast, frequencies in the "contact" index clustered toward the high end of the scale indicating a rather low rate of actually engaging in concrete, specific community practice tasks. Over half of the respondents (51%) obtained a score significantly above the midpoint of the scale (2.5), as indicated by a t-test ($t = 30.26, p \leq .001$). This indicates that overall most respondents claimed that they were not in regular contact with members of the disability community.

Accounting for Differences

Non-significant findings

Bivariate analyses showed that demographic differences between respondents tended to be non-significant with regard to community contact. Moreover, several variables that seemed like good candidates for predicting an inclination toward community practice were also found to be non-significant predictors of contact with the disability community. For example, macro practice education—one aspect of which is community practice—did not seem to be a factor. A reported engagement in another aspect of macro-practice, namely administration, did not make a significant difference in the amount of reported community contact activities. Neither the social workers indicating that they had macro-practice majors ($n = 25$) nor those indicating that they were using macro-practice skills in administrative positions ($n = 53$) were significantly more likely to report regular community contacts.

It has been suggested that managed care practices may create a somewhat more restrictive environment for social worker

autonomy (Cornelius, 1994). Thus, social workers employed by Health Management Organizations, the settings with the longest and deepest commitment to managed care processes, might be expected to experience more restrictions on their practice imposed by their employers. Whether or not this proves to be the case for their autonomy in general, social workers in HMOs ($n = 39$) were determined to be no less likely to engage in community practice than other respondents.

Competing activities

It seemed possible that social workers who were somewhat more engaged in other activities, such as clinical work with disabled people or their families, might be less likely to have much contact with people with disabilities who were not patients.

Two variables in the study seemed particularly closely related to clinical work with disabled people and their families (clinical activities' section). Direct practice with families had a weak, negative correlation with clinical practice activities ($r = -.14$, $p \leq .01$), however the same activities performed directly with people with disabilities was not significantly related.

Advocacy practice with people with disabilities

The variable found to be most closely related to community contact was *advocacy*, as indicated by self-reports on the Advocacy Activities Index (AAI). Cronbach alpha scores were acceptable (.67). Scores on the AAI were distributed, between the scale's high point (1) and its low point (4), with most responses clustering around the mean 2.65 ($sd = 0.56$) which was near the midpoint of the scale (2.5).

There was a relatively high degree of correlation between self-reported advocacy and community practice activities ($r = .60$, $p \leq .001$). In some ways this is not surprising since both are forms of macro-practice activities that have a primarily extra-organizational focus.

Exploring multivariate relationships

While only two variables correlated with community contact (a weak negative correlation with family therapy and a strong positive correlation with advocacy), it seemed possible that there might be a more complex multivariate relationship. These

relationships were explored in the hierarchical regression procedure in the SPSS statistical package.

Variables were entered in three blocks. Block 1 controlled for the effects of theoretically interesting, but non-significantly correlated variables (education, macro-practice major in M.S.W., HMO setting). The two variables related to clinical practice were entered in a second block. AAI scores were added to the model in the final block. The resulting model was highly significant ($p \leq 0.001$) and accounted for 39% of the variance. Although this was the arguably the best model, it represents only a slight improvement over a simple regression model, since AAI alone accounted for 36% of the variance.

Discussion

Findings in this study should be regarded tentatively, in particular because they are not based on probability sampling, and because of the untested psychometric properties of the instrumentation. Generalizations based on these findings are, therefore, limited.

What seems clearest is that health services social workers in this study have attitudes that are highly favorable toward community practice. Responses to questions in Table 1, (community practice philosophy section), suggest that they actually see community practice as one of their primary roles. However their attitudes about community practice, as reflected by scores on the community practice philosophy index did not seem to translate into a correspondingly high degree of contact with the community. It is therefore likely that their actual community practice activities are somewhat less than would be expected given their very favorable attitudes.

Most social workers in the study stated that they were not in regular contact with any people with disabilities unless they were current patients, nor did respondents maintain contact with disability organizations or successfully integrated people with disabilities who could serve as "role models" for their patients. While it is possible that these social workers were engaged in some form of community practice that did not involve much contact with the disability community, it is unclear what those activities might be. However, these findings seem to preclude the

possibility that these social workers were involved with disability rights and other grass roots style organizations that are staffed primarily by people with disabilities.

A small but important minority of respondents, however, indicated rather high levels of community contact. This raised questions about what variables might predict such contacts. Interestingly, this study's findings give a clearer indication of what variables were *not* significant predictors. The community practice philosophy of these social workers was quite similar to those who did not have much contact with people in the disability rights community. Social workers who stated that they had majored in macro practice were no more likely to engage in community practice related activities than their more clinically educated colleagues, nor were social workers who indicated having administrative roles. Respondents in HMOs appeared to be no more restricted in their community practice roles than other health services social workers, and, in fact, most respondents in all settings indicated that they had a relatively high degree of autonomy in their practice (Table 1, administrative restrictions section).

It seemed reasonable, in that case, to speculate that social workers who were highly engaged in clinical activities with patients or their families might be less likely to engage in extramural activity. In fact, respondents who indicated a high degree of therapeutic involvement with families were significantly less likely to engage in community practice activities. However, overall, social workers who indicated high levels of clinical involvement, were only slightly more likely to have low levels of community practice than other social workers in the study.

Advocacy was the only variable identified that seemed to correspond to high levels of community practice. Although considerable research needs to be undertaken before definitive conclusions can be drawn, it stands to reason that social workers with a strong activism orientation may be more highly involved with disability groups and organizations in the community. On its face, it is not surprising that social workers who were highly involved in advocating on behalf of people with disabilities would also be more inclined to have such contacts.

It is surprising that those social workers with macro practice backgrounds were not more inclined to engage in such activities.

While at this stage it is only possible to speculate, it seems reasonable to question whether even social work practitioners with a background in administration or macro-practice coursework end up actually using their community practice skills. Organizational work and general macro-practice education may not be sufficient for establishing community practice roles. It may also be important to expose students to actual activism and community practice roles in their field practicum experiences for such roles to appear in subsequent professional practice.

Alternatively, a history of advocacy may also suggest a complementary proclivity for taking on community practice roles. Social work programs and employers valuing community practice may want to consider recruiting social workers with a background in advocacy, since this may be an important predictor of subsequent engagement in community practice.

Future Research

Further research will be necessary in order to understand both factors leading to, and barriers to, community practice with people with disabilities. Moreover, while this study focused on community practice and attitudes related to the disability community, more research will be necessary to understand health services social workers' community practice activities more generally. If responses are to be taken at face value, respondents seemed to be indicating that they were inclined to engage in community practice, but for some reason were not establishing contacts within the disability community. This raises questions about whether, and with whom, they may be in more regular contact outside their host organizations. A more open-ended interview approach might yield interesting information about the meaning of this somewhat puzzling finding. Such a study might yield important insight into how *some* social workers in these settings are able to maintain solid community contacts as well as their community practice activities with this population. Even more importantly, such a study might shed light on the barriers experienced by other social workers who appear to see community practice as part of their role, report having few administrative restrictions to their practice, and yet do not maintain correspondingly high levels of contact with the disability community.

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Open for Business: Exploring the Life Stages of Two Canadian Street Youth Shelters

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Youth shelters have emerged as significant resources for homeless and runaway adolescents. Through participant observations of shelter culture, review of agency archival materials, and in-depth interviews with 21 shelter workers (front line staff, middle managers, and upper-level executives), this analysis explores the life stages of two Canadian street youth shelters, highlighting the dramatic transformations in their internal operations and external environments. This paper also offers an understanding of organizational evolutionary processes.

Introduction

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, street youth shelters were established as safe houses for homeless and runaway youth. These organizations provided basic needs services (i.e., shelter, food, clothing) and short-term counseling supports. Soon after its inception, the youth shelter evolved into surrogate parents for this abandoned and/or nomadic population. Homeless and runaway youth regularly characterize youth shelters as helpful and needed services (Alleva, 1988; Janus, McCormack, Burgess and Hartman, 1987; Karabanow, 1994; 1999; Karabanow and Rains, 1997). Accordingly, youth shelters achieved credibility from their client base, and at present, they are a significant resource for troubled adolescents throughout North America.

This paper documents the life stages of two prominent Canadian street youth shelters, Covenant House (CH) and Youth Without Shelter (YWS), in order to highlight their significant transformations throughout the years. The stories of YWS and CH are a

striking portrait of conflict begetting change and change begetting innovation. The external network of youth shelters consists of other organizations, clients, and the community. Each of these constituents places expectations upon youth shelters, some of which may not necessarily be compatible with the shelter's mandate. This paper examines the major trends in the local histories of CH and YWS, highlighting the Shelters' interactions with clients, other organizations, and the public. The analysis also explores organizational change behavior.

A study of youth shelter evolution is useful for several reasons. First, the number of people living on the streets grows each year. Some experts in the field suggest that the present homeless situation is approaching "national disaster" status. However, there is little research regarding the types of organizations that exist to help this population. There is even less known about their interactions with one another. By shedding light upon how specific agencies work (and work together), we can discover whether a given population is actually being helped within that system. As noted by Hall and Clark (1975:113), "In the delivery of human services, for example, the recipient of those services is clearly influenced by the nature of the system which delivers them. Is he passed from one organization to another? Is he fought over or avoided by organizations in the system? Is he overserved or underserved?" My analysis uncovers such queries.

Second, we are now in the midst of a political environment that espouses neo-conservative values and neo-liberal economics that advocates for less government in the market place and a replacement of state care with community care. As argued by Henry (1987:152) in his analysis of two voluntary shelters in the United States: "Today, with cutbacks in the public welfare system, especially general assistance, the problem of homelessness requires an even heavier commitment from the shelter organizational population." In this sense, it is not only timely but necessary to investigate and understand the actors who are increasingly assuming the role of caring for our society's disadvantaged.

Methodology

The methods of investigation within this study are naturalistic—employing participant observations of shelter culture, re-

view of agency archival materials, and in-depth interviews with 21 shelter workers (front line staff, middle managers, and upper-level executives). With these methodological tools, I constructed each shelter's local history, highlighting its life story and evolutionary process. Fieldwork spanned ten months (between November 1998 and August 1999) and incorporated both ethnographic (immersion into the field) and grounded theory (allowing theory to fit the data) approaches. Data analysis involved chronologically organizing historical material in order to build each shelter's life story, comparing cases (to each other, to other youth shelters and to the literature), and linking and categorizing common themes that emerged from the data.

I selected two cases which varied in terms of age, size, and location. Moreover, these shelters were chosen to represent diverse operations, varied statuses within the youth shelter system, and disparate relationships with the youth-in-trouble network (i.e., formal and informal agencies which are generally involved in the lives of disadvantaged and disturbed adolescents).

Established in 1982, CH is the oldest street kid shelter in Canada and maintains a legitimate and reputable status among street kid agencies and the Toronto public, due to its large funding base, experience, media savvy, and professional style. It approximates a formalized and professionalized organization with well developed technologies, procedures and resources. Funded primarily by the Catholic Church (through the ShareLife organization) and private donations, CH is often described as a conservative agency which views itself as rescuing kids from the horrors of street life. Its conservative style is reflected in the shelter philosophy, rules and structure (for example, early curfews, dress code, structured plans and assessments, and anti-abortion position).

While CH may appear as the model shelter (the largest, most experienced, and best equipped), YWS is more representative of existing youth shelters. Established in 1986, YWS is primarily funded by the government and has experienced a myriad of financial crises. Situated in a Toronto suburb, the small shelter provides a cozy and family-like environment for its residents. Rather than trying to pull them away from the streets and change them into model citizens, YWS acknowledges the positive elements of street life (for example, protection, friendship and honor) and provides both time and space for the youth to decide what he or she needs.

Throughout its existence, YWS has sought legitimacy from the formal child welfare system, the shelter network, and the Toronto public. Despite distinct internal structures, philosophies and outlooks, these two cases follow similar evolutionary processes.

Organic Systems Within an Institutional Framework

Organizations are most often understood as organic creatures—composed of internal apparatuses and external environments. All organizations are dependent upon their environments and embedded within larger systems of relations. As illuminated by their respective local histories, CH and YWS did not remain isolated entities, rather, each functioned within various networks consisting of child welfare organizations, other youth shelters, adult shelters, Police, courts, hospitals, Probation and Parole, neighborhoods, and business sectors.

The life stories of CH and YWS reflect how organizations' internal operations shift and adapt in order to fit with external environment requirements. Both shelters survived tumultuous external (political and economic) landscapes as a result of smart management, that involved being flexible, adaptive and innovative. By acknowledging important evolutionary trends in the lives of CH and YWS, this analysis highlights the organic and flexible style of youth shelters - transforming the way in which they look and act in order to meet external realities.

As organic systems, organizations depend on their environment for two resource types—legitimacy and power; and productive resources (Handler, 1996). Legitimacy is gained by conforming to the dominant value system in the environment. Power refers to authority and influence within an organization. Productive resources include staff, clients and money (Hasenfeld, 1992). All organizations desire autonomy and a steady flow of resources; however, most environments are characterized by resource dependency. As such, organizations adopt strategies (e.g., cooperation or competition) to manage their environments (Hasenfeld, 1992). As will be discussed, the way in which CH and YWS have managed their environments is by accepting formal system clients. Recognition of legitimacy commands productive resources from the environment (money, legal authority, and

desirable clients) (Handler, 1996). Conformity to dominant cultural norms and belief systems becomes an essential characteristic of organizational behavior. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977, p. 340): "Organizations are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work . . . Organizations that do so increase their legitimacy and their survival prospects . . ." Since social service agencies are engaged in moral work - conveying a judgment as to the moral worth of the client in terms of how he or she is treated, selected, processed and changed - they are consistently searching out moral legitimacy by adopting the dominant moral, cultural and belief symbols (Handler, 1996; Hasenfeld, 1992). The institutional perspective, which has been particularly salient in the study of human service organizations, argues that organizations mimic successful organizations in their sector through the adoption of rules, values, beliefs and cultural symbols. Strong forces of institutionalization work to reduce organizational diversity (Romanelli, 1991).

Within the culture of contracting, institutionalization explains the way by which organizations accrue legitimacy and thus obtain resources. Institutional mimicry is clearly evident in the world of youth shelters (and the youth-in-trouble network in general) in terms of bureaucratization (e.g., adopting standard accounting procedures) and professionalization (e.g., hiring fund-raisers, social workers and, executive directors who are management-focused). Organizations also develop institutional mindsets—commonly held assumptions as to how an organization should look and how its work should be performed (Handler, 1996, p. 98). For example, both shelters framed their work in professional terms such as counseling and case management which resembled formal child welfare practices. The shelters adopted technologies that are sanctioned by the institutional environment. For instance, during CH's middle years, numerous counseling programs (individual, group, psychiatric, and legal) emerged as well as distinct collaborative ventures with the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the Police.

Institutional theorists argue that organizational behavior cannot be explained solely by market pressures, but also by institutional pressures (e.g., state regulations and social expectations)

(Greenwood and Hinings, 1996, p. 1025). Over time, institutional pressures lead to new organizations imitating dominant structures in a particular environment. Youth shelters were once specialized apparatuses which provided unique support to a particular population—CH was primarily a street kid agency and YWS acted as a refuge for youth with family or school problems. As my data indicate, both shelters are presently housing a different variety of youth—mirroring the various formal systems within their environments. Rather than being focused upon the short-term needs of clients, YWS and CH are now faced with residents' more in-depth biographies (Lefton and Rosengren, 1966), again reflecting the *modus operandus* of formal systems like the CAS, group homes, and psychiatric institutions. According to the institutional school, existing and dominant modes of thought and organization are consistently reproduced and reinforced (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996).

At the same time, organizations are by no means passive actors, rather, they help shape their environments. Blau and Scott (1962, p. 195) referred to organizations acting and reacting to their environments as "feedback processes." Organizations generally have the opportunity to choose various symbolic and cultural systems. According to Hasenfeld (1992, p. 11), organizations are "moral entrepreneurs"—seeking to influence the moral conception of their environments. Organizations are propelled by symbols—rituals, ceremonies, myths, stories and heroes. CH and YWS constructed the way in which they were perceived by other agencies, clients, and community members. Both shelters defined themselves as unique services. For example, CH made sure that YWS characterized itself as suburban in order to present a somewhat different appeal. Since youth shelters maintain elusive goals and achieve questionable effectiveness, the appearance of legitimacy and professionalism needs to be framed and exported. Both CH and YWS shed their alternative images and adopted professional characteristics in order to fit into their external environments. From its inception, the youth shelter has struggled to portray itself as a legitimate service provider rather than a flophouse. In doing so, the youth shelter has attempted to search out clients who meet this need for legitimacy. As evidenced in this analysis, youth shelters have moved away from serving hard-core

street kids in order to accommodate system-kids from the CAS, the Police, immigration centers and hospitals.

My analysis draws a distinction between street kids and system kids insofar as their past experiences are concerned. Street kids are characterized by their street experiences (for example, living on the street, squeegeeing, living in a squat, being involved in prostitution and drug use/sales, etc.). System kids are identified by their formal institutional involvement (for example, group homes, jail, immigration centers, mental health clinics, etc.). However, these categories are not mutually exclusive, since many street kids experience the formal child welfare system, and many system kids experience street life. Nonetheless, participants often made the distinction between these groups, noting that the youth shelter originally attracted adolescents directly from the street, rather than from other institutions. The fact that youth shelters now attract system kids can be viewed as a success story (i.e., this population is prevented from falling onto the streets [and thus becoming street kids]). Nevertheless, many shelter workers believed that their primary role should be to work with adolescents who lived on the street rather than adolescents who were being passed on from other organizations.

Youth shelters have shaped and have been shaped into an organizational form similar to a formal child welfare organization. The following sections provide an overview of the stages in CH's and YWS' evolution, and present an explanation regarding both shelters' transformations.

Major Evolutionary Trends

The Early Years

In her exploration of an American Mid-West women's shelter, Hopkins (1983) identified several characteristics of alternative organizations including: limited resources, lack of social legitimacy, and hostile external environments. These characteristics are evident in YWS' and CH's evolution. In the early years, both YWS and CH struggled with securing external acceptance. For YWS, approximately four years were spent searching for a community to house its operation, political backing and financial support. CH had little difficulty developing its physical operation and gaining

political and financial commitments. However, the shelter was enmeshed in confrontations with the CAS, the Police and other social service agencies. For example, CH initially posed a threat to the CAS by accepting minors, and was quickly reprimanded (i.e., boycotted) by established organizations (the CAS and the Police). In turn, CH emphasized its unique focus upon street kids between the ages of 16 and 21.

Building relations with external institutions was viewed by both Agencies as a crucial tenet to successful implementation. YWS credits its existence to prominent allies in the local government and community. Each shelter engaged in active promotion of their operations to the public—emphasizing the urgent need for such a project; highlighting the scarcity of youth services in the neighborhood; and, quelling fears that such a house would attract “lazy bums” and criminal elements. YWS and CH described their residents as upstanding citizens who were experiencing difficult adolescent pains. Each shelter also promoted its respective operation as a highly structured and rule-oriented setting in which residents would have little time to relax, “goof-off,” or take advantage of the system. Both shelters clearly defended themselves from common perceptions of such organizations as being “crash pads.”

A defining characteristic of both YWS and CH during their respective early years was the claim of being a short-term, band-aid service. Residents of both establishments stayed an average of six to seven days; sufficient time for shelter workers to assess, counsel and refer. Throughout the 1980's, YWS and CH functioned at approximately 80% to 90% capacity, a comfortable zone in order for shelters to do their job with respect to staff-resident interaction, while maintaining bed availability for those who would need such services.

During the early years, both shelters' clientele were composed of hard-core street kids who were fleeing abusive families and/or street life. CH's and YWS' operational focus involved the provision of support and counseling for residents to procure employment, housing, and social services. The youth shelter of earlier days did not provide day programs (involving skills training, group therapy, and recreational activities). Instead, the early day environment of both YWS and CH was characterized by strict

adherence to a youth's plan of action (job and/or housing search) in order to quickly leave the emergency shelter. Youth shelters were initially devised of and operated as crisis centers—using such metaphors as “port-in-the-storm” and “emergency stop-over” for “cooling out” and “bandaging.” CH and YWS were not settings for long-term therapy—they were neither professionally nor organizationally equipped for such practices.

The Middle Years

Hopkins (1983, p. 489) suggested that the survival of alternative organizations “. . . involves consistent growth and stability of the organization with the objective to become part of the established social service delivery network.” The local histories of CH and YWS support this claim. As both shelters evolved, the public's acceptance and support grew. CH emerged as an international social service leader in the field of youth homelessness, gaining much media attention and fundraising dollars. The community's perception of street kids also shifted in the late 1980's with the discovery that a majority of this population faced overwhelming experiences of sexual and/or physical abuse within the family, within state institutions, and on the street. CH was instrumental in educating the public regarding street youth characteristics (where they come from, what they look like, and what they do on the street). A more sympathetic and compassionate view of the street kid's plight grew from CH's active advertising campaigns.

During the late 1980's, YWS and CH experienced varying degrees of internal turmoil, including, a change of management teams, instability of front-line staff morale, shelter operation woes, financial hardships, and legal troubles with specific personnel. While YWS struggled primarily with funding issues (joining the Youth Shelter Network in order to advocate for increased government support), CH's greatest enemy appeared to be its own internal scandal (allegations that the executive director of its New York site had sexually abused several residents). Furthermore, CH experienced a reduction in the number of youth served (an average of 50 to 60 residents as opposed to its earlier average of 80). It explained the decrease in clientele as a result of two external occurrences—the advent of several new downtown youth shelters and increased welfare availability. CH became

concerned with its low census, so much so that it formed an internal sub-committee to investigate measures to attract more clients. The sub-committee recommended "reaching out to new clients" and "engaging youth to stay longer." Toronto Hostel Services suggested similar strategies to the debt-ridden YWS.

The middle years were critical in the youth shelters' evolutionary processes. While CH and YWS initially envisioned a somewhat different population than they actually served, each shelter soon filled up with a new type of hard-core problem youth. This population was made up primarily of CAS wards and graduates, the mentally ill, drug and alcohol abusers, and youth involved with the criminal justice system. The street kid as envisioned by CH and the youngster experiencing family/school problems as envisioned by YWS, now made up only a minority of each shelters' respective populations. Both shelters learned that their clientele were products of various other organizations working with troubled youth. In other words, youth shelters were not isolated entities with their own particular client base. Although servicing their new residents proved difficult, each shelter continued to maintain an external community to which it could refer. As such, up to the mid 1990's, CH and YWS remained short-term emergency crisis centers.

Present Day

In the mid 1990's, YWS and CH experienced the fiscal constraints brought on by a tough-minded Ontario Conservative Government. During this period, welfare rates were slashed by over 20%; youth unemployment increased to 22%; and, eligibility to programs of assistance, benefits and/or shelter allowance was reduced (Yalnizyan, 1998). The cuts to social services directly impacted the youth shelter system in terms of a decrease in shelter *per diem* rates and the closure of many community agencies (job training projects, counseling services, group homes, and co-operative housing) that served as shelter referrals. Within the context of severe cutbacks, CH and YWS experienced crowded facilities as well as new types of residents. The demand on youth shelters rose by approximately 50% between 1993 and 1995, from an average daily occupancy of 200 from 1992 to 1994, to over 300 by 1995 (Metro Toronto Community Services, 1997). In order to

combat these hardships, both shelters turned inwards—focusing upon ways to survive and accommodate an emerging clientele. The results were almost synonymous: house rules and structures were reinvented; innovative programs developed; and, new relationships with residents forged. As such, both shelters underwent a metamorphosis—assuming new identities to accommodate a pressing resident population within a depressed social service sector environment.

Since the mid 1990's, CH and YWS were required to restructure internal shelter procedures—most significant, the short-term emergency focus shifted to a longer-term group home style setting: "So the emergency shelter has turned into, for some kids, an interim transitional housing base . . . We [CH] have obviously a more residential group home relationship with a lot of these kids . . ." (CH staff). According to workers, a short-term emergency crisis approach can only exist when there are external outlets to place clients who have been temporarily supported by the shelter. As both YWS and CH discovered, the mid 1990's resulted in shelters beginning to implode, since referral points were either full (with extensive waiting lists—up to ten months for a group home) or closed due to financial troubles. CH workers aptly defined the situation as a "bottle neck," implying a system that had become clogged. Rather than serving as an entry-point into the youth-in-crisis system, a role it had courageously played since inception, the youth shelter became, and continues to be, a final stop on the continuum.

Youth shelters also discovered that their in-house populations had radically changed. Rather than the tough, hard-core street kid/runaway/throwaway with whom shelters had been accustomed, the new shelter client is likely to be characterized by mental health issues, behavioral problems (aggressive and violent), drug and alcohol dependency, previous CAS involvement, and/or refugee/immigrant status. According to workers, the new population is a direct result of the dissipation of community mental health centers, CAS group homes and after-care support, detoxification centers and immigrant/refugee safe houses.

Over one-half of both shelters' populations had previous experience with the formal child welfare system, leading a CH middle level manager to note that youth shelters have become

"Children's Aid Societies for 16 year olds and up." A recent investigation of CAS graduates found that a majority of this population are experiencing poverty, unemployment, lack of housing, ill health, confusion and desperation (Martin, 1996). Characteristics of CAS-turned-shelter residents are as disquieting: "Kids coming out of any kind of system generally have no place to live, they don't have an education, they don't have any type of training, they can't get a job and they never had a job, and most can't read and all these things . . ." (CH staff). Accounts from both shelters' front-line staff suggest that this population, while being less street-entrenched, present disturbing behavioral and emotional problems as well as a lack of employment and life skills. Many workers believe that the new shelter population presents more intense and complex case management scenarios: ". . . So they're staying longer and they need higher support . . . more than just a bed, food, and a shower and some time to chill out . . ." (CH staff).

The shelter itself has had to alter some of its traditional procedures and structures in order to accommodate a population who inevitably is staying longer: "I think the program [YWS] has changed a bit, structures have changed. We're a little more lenient, more lenient on behavior type things, we're more flexible for kids who have been here for a long time" (YWS staff). CH, known for its strict and structured living arrangements (Karabanow, 1994) has recently extended its curfew and become less rigid with regards to traditional rules such as dress code, swearing, physical contact and alcohol/drug use. As noted by a CH middle level manager: "We've [CH] gone through an attempt at loosening up . . ." Traditional shelter plans involving strict job and housing searches have given way to more relaxed and "therapeutic" approaches to shelter life—group therapy, life skills, computer and employment training, and educational programs (such as English classes for immigrants and refugees). According to many youth workers, YWS was similarly perceived as a highly structured and rule-oriented setting where residents were expected to devote their energies towards their future plans. This short-term program philosophy has given way to the shelter's present perspective of long-term programming, involving day-long workshops that attempt to focus upon various needs. Rather than forcing residents

to be out of the shelter for the entire day (under the assumption that these adolescents were searching for jobs and/or housing), YWS' day program allows residents and ex-residents the opportunity to stay at the shelter during the day and learn about "... employment skills, housing options ... how do you cook spaghetti, how do you do laundry, those are our basic life skills, then we go into anger management, conflict resolution ... then we incorporate things like art day, sexual education issues ... " (YWS staff).

Due to the present difficulties in obtaining outside services, front-line workers believe they have become more lenient and less quick to discharge residents for policy violations. As one front-line worker from CH noted: "I think we are a bit more understanding that there is a lack of services out there, so I think we can't have a kid go out after three months if there's nothing for them out there." As a result of the more relaxed and less pressured shelter environment, front-line workers also observe an emerging intimacy with residents. Previously perceived as policing youth, shelter workers now enjoy a more familiar and close relationship with clients—another characteristic found in the group home: "Kids are here [CH] so long, you can't not build a really deep relationship with them" (CH staff). Front-line workers define their work as "engaging" rather than "supervising" residents: "The issue became not how many applications did you put in for a job today, the issue became what can I teach you about finding a job or maintaining a job ... " (CH staff). However, several workers have voiced the concern that youth shelters are now creating more dependent populations: "Separation is harder now and I think they [residents] grow a bit more dependent the more they are here, it's like their home away from home ... " (CH staff). Most front-line workers agree that the longer the youth stay within the shelter setting, the greater the probability of becoming street-entrenched. An accepted yet unwritten dictum within shelter work is to move residents out of the shelter system as soon as possible—a feat becoming increasingly difficult.

Understanding Organizational Change

Organizations, if viewed as natural systems, are governed by one overarching concern—survival (Tucker, House, Singh,

and Meinhard, 1984, p. 4). This section focuses upon CH's and YWS' survival within the youth-in-trouble network. Moreover, it attempts to answer the following questions raised in exploring these shelters' life stories: Why has CH and YWS strayed so drastically from their original mandates? Why are they not serving street youth anymore? If system-kids present such troubles, why have CH and YWS been so accommodating?

Both shelters commenced as novel services within environments lacking support for street youth. Initially, each shelter concentrated upon a broad range of clients (defined as "street youth" or "youth having difficulties") and multiple aspects of the client's biography (such as employment, housing, past history, education, etc.). One can understand this behavior as CH and YWS attempting to be recognized within their environments—by being everything to everyone. At the same time, neither shelter was interested in clients staying long-term. In the language of Lefton and Rosengren (1966), young organizations are characterized as having "lateral" (broad range) and "non-longitudinal" (short-term biographies) interests in their clients. These elements help organizations survive throughout the "liabilities of newness" (Rosengren, 1970, p. 121). CH and YWS employed a strategy to contend with their status as neophytes—make contacts and build social relations with numerous organizations (such as the CAS, the Police, Probation, and other youth shelters) in order to gain legitimacy and resources.

As both shelters evolved, their place within the youth-in-trouble network became more stable. With an increasing flow of clients, CH's and YWS' prediction of being needed came to fruition—both shelters had invested much effort to forge acceptance within their environments. In order to reduce uncertainties, CH and YWS increasingly adopted a more specific client focus (such as CAS-involved youth, refugees and immigrants) and more limited yet intense connections with various organizations (such as the CAS and Probation). Focusing upon a specific type of client (such as CAS graduates) or a specific aspect of the client (such as citizenship) allowed these young but evolving organizations to sell themselves as important and legitimate. CH and YWS were active beings interested in carving a niche for themselves within the youth-in-trouble network. In other words, as organi-

zations age, they inevitably become more specialized in order to survive within an environment characterized by increased organizational density (Rosengren, 1970). CH and YWS chose system kids rather than street kids because the former group provided more legitimacy as well as a stable flow of clients.

With a more specific client orientation, both shelters became more involved in their clients' biographical space. Their focus upon short-term emergency crisis care was reinvented along the lines of intermediary or long-term support. As CH and YWS evolved, they shifted towards an interest in the "non-lateral" (specific-focus) and "longitudinal" (long-term biography) client dimensions. From the organization's point of view, having specific types of residents staying longer creates a more stable internal environment (less intakes and discharges; more homogeneous populations) and a more legitimate external image ("we are important" and "we are needed") within its environment.

The drift from broad-focused and short-term interest in clients to more specific-focused and longer-term interest in clients, makes perfect sense. As young organizations, CH and YWS remained broadly-focused in order to gain clients and thus survive. They were testing a new technology—emergency crisis care for young people in a caring and supportive setting. Rather than remaining vulnerable to external contingencies (i.e., whether a runaway needed shelter), CH and YWS opened their doors to clients from various formal organizations (and allowed them to stay longer) in order to achieve what Rosengren (1970, p. 124) suggests as "predictability of future benefits or outcome." By forging relations with the formal system, both shelters gained a stable and long-term clientele.

An organization also benefits in terms of interventions with clients when they adopt a "non-lateral" and "longitudinal" arrangement. More stable populations (such as immigrant and refugee residents) provide calmer and easier work environments for staff as well as the chance to create more intimate staff-client attachments. While a number of front line workers described a more intense shelter environment at present, this situation could be explained as growing pains for both YWS and CH as they learn to cope with such changes (and retrain staff to deal with system kids). A focus upon specific clients and/or specific aspects of

the client requires less staff energies and shelter resources than a focus upon anyone who presents him/herself with any type of problem. It is more difficult, more demanding, and more costly for organizations to work on the "whole person" (i.e., converting the street kid to respectable citizen) rather than "technical" changes (i.e., gaining citizenship or providing educational services) (Rosengren, 1970, p. 125).

For the most part, front line workers noted that newer shelter populations were easier to handle on a hands-on basis (daily living), even though they present more complex case management issues (plan of action). For example, immigrants and refugees are generally highly motivated and rarely break house rules, despite nuisances for front line staff with respect to diverse languages and customs. On the other hand, shelter staff responsible for case management (primarily social workers at CH and case managers at YWS) are facing more intense episodes, dealing with areas such as immigration, mental illness, abuse, torture, violence and isolation/alienation. Nevertheless, more intimate client-worker relationships have formed at both shelters. Most workers described a less strict environment, with relaxed rules and structures. One could argue that these internal changes result from clients now being seen as more legitimate (and deserving), as well as a way in which these organizations can keep residents longer. Another way to look at this situation is to describe CH and YWS as becoming stricter towards traditional street youth, who are encountering less welcoming shelter practices (such as exceptionally long waiting lists).

Age leads organizations to develop a specific and long-term orientation towards clients. While neither YWS nor CH set out in this manner, the transformation (or drift) towards "non-laterality" and "longitudinality" can be justified as laying claims to a specific niche which insures clients, resources, and legitimacy. CH's and YWS' role as organizational settings for the interests of formal system players has ensured their survival within a turbulent youth-in-trouble network.

Conclusion

CH and YWS are indeed products of their changing environments, shifting and transforming their internal and external

operations in order to adapt to their settings and provide the best services to those most in need. From an organizational point of view, CH and YWS made a conscious decision to provide long-term shelter to formal system youth rather than supporting their initial commitments (street kids). This shift in focus has everything to do with organizational survival.

Social work practice consists of both the passion of its front-line army and the rationality of the structures which house such work. In order to understand the mechanisms of social work practice, the ambiguity and complexity of these elements need to be explored. The case studies of CH and YWS act as microcosms for the struggles of human service organizations in general. It is important for those entering the field to be aware of such dynamics—perhaps then mitigating the ever-increasing levels of frustration, burnout, and value dissonance amongst social work practitioners.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Eli Teram, Cheryl Regehr, Anne Westhues and Prue Rains for their invaluable insights regarding this study.

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Assets and Neighboring: An Exploration into Household Assets and Efforts to be a Good Neighbor

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A non-random, cross-sectional sampling procedure was utilized in this study to explore the relationship between the level of household assets and their corresponding level of neighboring. Surveys from 111 households were collected from September 1997, to April 1999, in seven Ohio counties to elucidate the relationship between the level of assets in working poor households and selected household demographic variables, and their propensity to provide various forms of community assistance over the previous month from the time of survey. Findings revealed that households 1) with more than one adult and 2) with lower levels of monthly earned income were more likely to provide community assistance to their neighbors. The implications of an asset-based social welfare policy strategy will be discussed.

Introduction

The theoretical model utilized in this study is Sherraden's (1991) asset-based theory of economic and social development. Sherraden is the current director of the Center for Social Development (CSD) at Washington University, and the survey tool (obtained by permission from CSD) used for data collection is similar to the one the CSD developed for their current national evaluation of asset-based programs or Individual Development Accounts, referred to as IDAs throughout this paper. Sherraden promotes a synthesis of economic development and social welfare via long-term asset accounts aimed at accumulating savings for life goals via the establishment of matched savings accounts or IDAs for working poor individuals and households. Accumulated savings can then be converted into long-term assets in the

form of home ownership, continuing education, and/or a small business. While postulating a long list of potential benefits due to asset accumulation via IDA's, this paper will focus primarily on Sherraden's hypothesis that increased levels of material and human assets are associated with higher levels of community assistance/neighborhood.

Numerous researchers have elucidated the relationship between the economic survival strategies of working poor households and their reliance on neighborhood, support networks, and the informal economy (Edin and Lein, 1997; Parcel and Menaghan, 1997; Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Wilson, 1996; Mingione, 1991). The plight of the working poor is of tremendous importance to our society due to the fact that nearly one in five children in America today lives in poverty and the working poor population is rapidly expanding (U.S. Census, 2000; Children's Defense Fund, 2000; Zaslow and Emig, 1997; Caputo, 1991). Social welfare researchers have challenged the efficacy of a laissez-faire capitalistic economic model which results in even greater social and economic disparity between social classes, communities, and geographic regions, even when the poor are working (Midgley, 1995; Kondrat, 1994; Estes, 1993; Smith and Wallerstein, 1992).

What Sherraden (1991) proposes is a theory of asset-based welfare policy in which the poor are provided the opportunities/life chances (Darendorf, 1979), just like middle and upper-class Americans, to establish a financial stake in the American economic system via the holding of actual material/human capital assets. Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) are the primary social welfare policy tool advocated by Sherraden to provide a financial stakehold for the working poor. However, little research has been completed to date as to the effectiveness of IDAs as an anti-poverty strategy for working poor households. The primary research question concerning IDA implementation addressed in this paper is whether or not higher levels of asset accumulation by working poor households are associated with higher levels of community assistance/neighborhood? Or, as some social researchers have observed, will IDAs (asset accumulation) actually lead to less neighborhood and sense of community (Lasch, 1995; Putnam, 1994; Rohe and Stegman, 1994), leaving behind those

households with the lowest levels of material capital and human assets?

Specifically, the research question addressed in this paper is: what is the relationship between the level of assets in working poor households at the time of this study, including key household demographic characteristics, and their corresponding level of neighboring?

Methodology

This study is a secondary analysis of data collected for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of various forms of Resident Development Fund (RDF) Projects financed by Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH). OCCH is a not-for-profit housing corporation providing more than 4,000 units of subsidized housing in 68 project locations across Ohio. OCCH's Resident Development Fund is \$300,000 set aside for the "purpose of supporting initiatives to create opportunities for residents of affordable housing to improve their economic situation and achieve greater self-sufficiency" (OCCH Annual Report, p. 6, 1996). Of the numerous OCCH Resident Development Fund projects funded during the study, seven were structured around the implementation of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) as conceptualized by Sherraden (1991). Monthly savings by IDA participants were matched by OCCH funds by a ratio of 2-to-1. That is, for each dollar a participant saved, OCCH deposited two dollars in their savings account. Matching funds could only be utilized by participants for three "legitimate" uses: 1) to purchase a home, 2) to continue education, or 3) to start a small business.

Surveys from 111 OCCH households are used in this study to contribute to our understanding of the relationship between the level of household assets at the time of survey and the resultant level of neighboring/community assistance given by the household over the last month. Table one is a compilation of the descriptive statistics measured in the 111 households. Gender was dropped from the analysis due to 86% of the households surveyed being female-headed, resulting in an insufficient sample size for a statistically valid analysis.

Sampling

A non-random, cross-sectional sampling procedure was utilized in which all potential IDA program participants (heads of households) were asked to fill out the IDA program evaluation survey before entry into the IDA program. The study period began with the implementation of OCCH's Resident Development Fund in September 1997. The last data was collected in April 1999. Only those households with income from labor market participation were eligible to participate in an IDA. Steps were taken to insure the participant confidentiality of both groups by only using the first and last initial of the head of household's name along with the last four digits of their Social Security number to identify their survey responses. A verbal informed consent was also obtained from each participant who completed the questionnaire, informing them of the research purposes of the study and insuring each participant of their confidentiality. Persons were not required to complete the questionnaire to receive services.

Sample Demographics

From table one, we see that 60 percent of households surveyed reported African American as their race, with 95 percent of the sample population ranging in age from 21 to 44, indicating that variation in age among the majority of respondents was fairly narrow. For the total number of adults (18 years of age or older) in each household, values reported ranged from one to six with 61 percent of all households reporting only one adult. Two-adult households represented an additional 34 percent of all households reporting, with a cumulative percent between these two categories of 95 percent. Concerning the total number of children (17 and younger) reported in each household, values ranged from a low of zero (16 households) to a high of seven (one household). The mean number of children reported is 1.7. Based on these findings, the "typical" respondent is a female, African-American single-parent, 33 years old, with two children. Forty-seven percent of respondents reported an education level of four (attended some college) with 26 percent reporting a high school education as their highest level of education completed. Therefore, to the above "typical" 33 year-old, female, African-American single-parent survey respondent could be added an

Table 1

Descriptive characteristics of households surveyed (N = 111)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Race of Head of H.H. (n = 109)			
African American	59.6		
Caucasian	38.5		
Hispanic	.9		
Age of Head of H.H. (n = 110)			
		33.74	7.75
21-25	14.5		
26-30	21.0		
31-35	23.6		
36-40	25.4		
41+	15.5		
Number of Adults in H.H. (n = 111)			
		1.47	7.75
1	61.3		
2	34.2		
Number of Children in H.H. (n = 111)			
		1.75	1.31
0	14.4		
1	30.6		
2	35.1		
3	13.5		
Level of Education Completed by Head of H.H. (n = 110)			
Grade, middle or jr. high	.9		
Attended high school	7.3		
H.S. graduate or GED	25.5		
Attended some college	47.3		
Graduated from college	12.7		
Attended graduate school	6.3		
Total H.H. Earned Monthly Income (n = 109)			
		1200.50	669.01
0	6.4		
1-500	7.3		
501-1000	22.9		
1001-1500	35.8		
1501-2000	17.4		
2001+	10.1		

continued

Table 1 *Continued*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>
Total H.H. Debt (n = 110)		12514.02	16631.29
0	8.2		
1-5K	31.8		
5K-10K	23.6		
10K-15K	10.0		
15K-20K	5.5		
20K-30K	10.9		
30K+	14.5		
Total H.H. Material Capital Assets (n = 101)		13725.37	27870.62
0	9.9		
1-5K	47.5		
5K-10K	21.8		
10K-15K	3.0		
15K-20K	3.0		
20K-160K	14.8		

educational level of having attended some college. Finally, the average monthly earned income (before taxes) for the "typical" household surveyed was \$1200.

Data Analyses

The independent variables entered in the multiple regression analysis are: age and race of head of household, number of adults, and number of children in household, total household monthly earned income, total household material capital assets, total household debt, and the education level of head of household. Material capital assets are considered to be "long-term", providing households with financial stability and a "stakehold" in their lives and communities (Sherraden, 1991). Examples of material capital assets in this study include automobile ownership, as well as savings account balances. Because more than half of the households surveyed had a zero balance in their savings accounts and the remainder had negligible balances, a decision was made to include checking account balances as material capital assets.

The dependent variable entered in the multiple regression analysis is community assistance given (or level of neighboring). This concept refers to a participant's giving of community supports/services during the last month. This dependent variable was indicated by the literature review in the form of the level of "neighboring" that occurs in a community and its hypothesized relationship to a household's level of assets. As stated earlier, Sherraden (1991) hypothesizes that increases in assets will result in increases in community assistance/neighboring. However, the empirical evidence is mixed, with one study noting that levels of neighboring actually declined when comparing home owners to tenants, but that women who perceived positive changes occurring in the neighborhood were also more apt to be a good neighbor (Rohe and Stegman, 1994).

In this study, the level of survey participants' community assistance given over the last month is measured by their responses to the following nine survey questions regarding various forms of help: 1) helped with baby-sitting or child care, 2) cared for or stayed with an older or disabled adult, 3) given someone a ride, 4) helped with repairs to someone's home or car, 5) made phone calls or written/interpreted letters, 6) given someone food or loaned someone a tool, 7) helped with other kinds of work around the house, 8) watched someone's home or helped care for a pet, 9) given advice, encouragement, or emotional support? The range of possible scores for a study participant's level of community assistance given over the last month varies from a possible low score of 0 to a high score of 9. A Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the community assistance given scale, yielding a value of .6350, indicating a moderate degree of internal reliability. All study participants responded to this measure, with an overall sample score of 5.65 and a median score of 6.00, indicating a slightly negatively skewed sample. The standard deviation for the sample is 2.03.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

A multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis with hierarchical—stepwise entry was utilized to test the following hypothesis, while controlling for race and age of head of household, and the number of adults and the number of children in house-

hold under age 17. Independent variables are entered into the regression equation in two hierarchical steps. In step one, four independent variables (age and race of head of household, number of adults and number of children in household) are entered simultaneously as control variables. Therefore, the variance in each respective dependent variable explained by the above four control variables can be partialled out (controlled). Then in step two, the remaining independent variables (education level of head of household, total household monthly earned income, total household debt, and total household capital assets) are entered in a stepwise fashion into the regression. In this way, the additional variance (after controlling for age and race of head of household, and number of adults and children in household) explained by the education level of head of household (human capital), total household monthly earned income, total household debt, and total household material capital assets can be determined. For the multiple linear regression equation constructed, the full model is reported.

Hypothesis Testing Utilizing a Multiple Linear Regression Model

Hypothesis: The level of participant material/human assets is not significantly correlated with the level of participant community assistance given. The full model is statistically significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level, with the calculated test statistic $F = 2.283$, $p = .053$ (see table 2; while the p value is slightly greater than α in this case, the results are reported at the $\alpha .05$ level). The test hypothesis is therefore rejected and we conclude that the level of participant material/human assets at the time of survey is statistically significant in predicting their level of community assistance given. The total variance in the level of participant community assistance given (dependent variable) explained by the regression equation is .113 (R-square).

While holding all the other independent variables constant, the partial regression coefficients for number of adults in household ($b = .841$, $t = 2.902$, $p = .005$) and total household monthly earned income ($b = -.001$, $t = -2.182$, $p = .032$) were found to be statistically significant ($\alpha < .05$) in predicting the head of household's level of community assistance given at the time of survey. Note that the relationship between total household

Table 2

Multiple regression analysis of IDA survey participant level of community assistance given and preselected independent variables (n = 111)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	-.015	-.057	-.543	.589
Race	-.531	-.129	-1.222	.225
No. of Adults	.841	.312	2.902	.005**
No. of Children	.091	.060	.580	.563
Total Earned Income	-.001	-.233	-2.182	.032*
<i>Excluded Variables:</i>				
H.H. Debt	.098	.097	.924	.358
H.H. Capital	.013	.012	.120	.905
Education	.148	.159	1.414	.161

R = .336; R-square = .113; F = 2.283; p = .053*; R-square change = .047; p = .032*; Tolerance Statistic (.854-.920); VIF Statistic (1.087-1.171); Durbin-Watson (1.597)
Mean of Residuals (.007)

*Significant at .05 level

**Significant at .01 level

monthly earned income and level of participant community assistance given is a negative one, indicating the higher the level of household earned income the lower their level of community assistance given. The regression equation for the full model is:

$$\text{Com. Assistance Given} = 5.925 - .015 (\text{Age}) - .531 (\text{Race}) + .841 (\text{\#Adults**}) + .091 (\text{\#Children}) - .001 (\text{Income*})$$

The number of adults in household is the most important independent variable in predicting level of community assistance given, with a standardized regression coefficient (Beta) of .312. Total household monthly earned income is the next relatively important independent variable with a Beta = -.233. The additional variance in participant level of community assistance given at the time of survey explained by the linear combination of education level of head of household, total household monthly earned income, total household debt and total household capital assets (step two of the regression) is .047 (R-square change). R-square

change is also statistically significant at the $\alpha = .05$ level ($p = .032$). Both the Tolerance and VIF statistics indicate that multicollinearity is not a problem in this regression analysis. Finally, to test for the assumption that the residuals are independent, the Durbin-Watson statistic was calculated, yielding a value of 1.597, indicating the independence of residuals in this regression analysis. Also, the assumption that residuals for the full model have a mean of zero is also supported by the calculated value of the residual mean = $-.007$.

Study Findings

The level of household monthly earned income was found to be significant in predicting the level of the head of household's giving community assistance/neighborly, with higher levels of household earned income being associated with lower levels of giving assistance (an inverse relationship). This finding is not congruent with Sherraden's hypothesis of higher income leading to greater community assistance. However, upon closer examination of the community assistance given scale, one might interpret the findings as higher income households not requiring the kinds of assistance measured in the study. Perhaps these households could simply afford to pay for these "neighborly" services rather than rely on the reciprocity of their neighbors?

Another interpretation of this finding is supported by Rohe and Stegman's research (1994) with a similar study population (125 low-income, predominately African American homeowners and 101 Section 8 renters with similar demographic characteristics) which found that homeowners were less likely to provide neighborly services than the control group of renters. In their study, Rohe and Stegman (1994, p. 170) measured a concept they referred to as "neighborly," with an index consisting of five questions: 1) how many people on your block do you know by name, 2) how many people on your block would you recognize if you saw them outside your neighborhood, 3) how many people on your block do you have a neighborly relationship with, 4) how many people on your block do you see socially at least three times a year, and 5) how many people on your block do you consider as close friends? Utilizing Sherraden's survey, the concept of a

participant's level of community assistance is measured by their giving of assistance in their neighborhood over the last month. While focused on the giving of neighborhood assistance, parallels to Rohe and Stegman's "neighboring" measure can be seen, providing some degree of face and content validity to Sherraden's measure of community assistance. Therefore, according to Rohe and Stegman's findings, and this study's findings, higher asset levels do not necessarily lead to higher levels of neighboring/community assistance.

This rationale is also supported by historian Christopher Lasch's (1995) research and that of communitarian Amitai Etzioni (1988) who both challenge the capitalistic market place paradigm with a call to civility and social responsibility. While there can be no doubt that profits have risen dramatically in many capitalistic economies (including the U.S.), the disparity between haves and have nots has also risen (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), findings congruent with Sherraden's analysis of wealth/assets in American society. However, the above finding in this study, while preliminary, should provide a caution in the implementation of IDAs as an anti-poverty strategy. Unless efforts are made to extend the benefits of asset ownership to the "poorest of the poor," a poverty program which is dependent upon participant savings from earned income may only "cream" those households who already are financially better off, leaving communities and neighborhoods even more divided along socio-economic lines. Households with more income may be less likely to provide community assistance, potentially weakening the survival strategies of lower socio-economic communities. Or perhaps worse yet, these "successful" households could actually move out of poor neighborhoods, leading to an even greater concentration of poverty and limited economic resources in these areas as they pursue opportunity elsewhere. Sherraden's asset-based theory accepts the neo-classical economic concept of the social mobility of capital, buying into the pursuit of wealth and "happiness" via following economic opportunity wherever it may lead. While this financial/economic strategy has proven successful for many middle and upper-class Americans, working poor households and communities may resist leaving the neighborhoods and communities where their trusted financial and economic survival

strategies are established, findings consistent with other studies (Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty, 1993; Mingione, 1991; McGranahan, 1988). Inversely, closer interpretation of the community assistance given scale utilized in the study could lead one to associate greater need with those who have higher levels of community assistance given. Since wealthier households are less likely to give community assistance, it would appear as though poorer families, who are more likely to give community assistance, might be less likely to have the savings required to benefit from IDA participation. Additional research is needed to illuminate this relationship between higher levels of community assistance given (especially in the forms measured in this study), such as providing childcare, elderly care, transportation, home/auto repair etc. in one's community and the survival strategies of working poor households.

Finally, the number of adults in a household was also found to be significant in predicting the level of community assistance given, at the time of this survey. An additional paired samples (2-tailed) t-test was performed between household income and the number of adults in household to explore their relationship. No significant correlation was found between these two independent variables ($t = -18.715$). Perhaps those households with more than one adult have the "opportunity" to provide community assistance at a greater frequency than those with only one parent? Also, this researcher observed that in numerous study households with more than one adult, the additional adult was found to be elderly and/or disabled, making minimal contributions to monthly earned income via formal labor market participation. Additional research is also needed to elucidate this relationship between community assistance given and family form.

Summary

Unfortunately, the current economic and political consensus in the United States continues to stigmatize the poor and blame them for their poverty rather than the social, economic, and political structures which promote "production for profit" rather than investment in human potential. The same economic environment has pervaded the global economy, placing vulnerable

populations, especially poor women and children, at risk. How to manage this paradox of the responsibility of society, on the one hand, and the responsibility of the individual on the other, in bringing about a "common vision" of economic and social justice is, in this researcher's mind, the synthesis of knowledge building in social work which now calls the profession to task.

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Not in My Social World: A Cultural Analysis of Media Representations, Contested Spaces, and Sympathy for the Homeless

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The social constructionist approach offers conceptual tools that may augment social workers' persuasive powers and problem solving capacities. In this case study, I examine a newspaper campaign to cast the homeless in negative terms and justify the closing of a shelter. Findings are presented as seven themes used by competing claims-makers. Each constructs a different depiction of the homeless, of homelessness, and of preferred solutions. Linkages between community memberships and favored problem definitions are identified. I conclude with suggestions for how "intelligent social reconstruction" might help social workers function as sympathy brokers for the vulnerable. (Key words: homelessness, NIMBY, mass media, constructionist approaches to social problems).

Some pairings work well: the Chicago School *and* the Hull House Settlement, theory *and* practice, basic *and* applied interactionism, word *and* deed, sociologist *and* social worker, men *and* women, subjectivity *and* objectivity, and George Herbert Mead *and* Jane Addams. The early pragmatist philosophers and interactionist sociologists recognized this and preferred a both / and logic to the more common one-or-the-other logic. These scholarly practitioners valued their partnerships with social workers and other civic reformers and they made pragmatic use of ideas to improve community conditions (Deegan, 1988; Denzin, 1998; Maines, 1997). Unfortunately, their example was rejected by influential interactionists like Robert Park (Bulmer, 1984) and Erving Goffman (Marx, 1984) who each embraced a different notion of scientific sociology. Since then, symbolic interactionists have

been divided. Some are quite content doing basic and academic research while others try to contribute to amelioration and social reconstruction.

This tension is evident in social constructionist approaches to social problems theory. In their classic text, Spector and Kitsuse (1987 / 1977) commented that "social workers who try to relieve social problems contribute to them; humanitarian reformers profit from, and therefore, propagate the very conditions they crusade to remove" (p. 51). Commenting on counselors, probation officers, government officials, and other sociological interventionists, Gusfield (1984, p. 47) advised each adherent to the constructionist perspective to become "the critic of the social problems professionals and their constituencies" and to undercut the "normative thrust" of these professions. While updating constructionist social problems theory, Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993) made a firm distinction between a "sociologists' theoretical project" and the "members' practical project" (p. 29). Woe to the sociologist who privileges any version of the troublesome condition in question. Even Blumer (1971), a scholar who engaged in extensive service, attacked the practice-oriented approach to the sociology of social problems. He was against theory builders who encouraged sociologists to gather and add knowledge to "the store of scholarly knowledge" and to place their findings "at the disposal of policy makers and the general citizenry" (p. 299). Spector, Kitsuse, Gusfield, Ibarra, and Blumer argued for a role that leaves sociologists "on the side" (Gusfield, 1984, p. 31): silent about the value of competing definitions of social problems; uninterested in the objective products of contests between rival claims-makers; and withholding their expertise from social work professionals determined to advance the public good.

A few interactionists and their theoretical allies have differed. They want to expand the constructionist approach so practitioners can avail themselves of its concepts, propositions, and case studies. Summarizing this position, Loseke (1999) argued that social problems theorists have an ethical obligation to develop a social change agenda, attend to the faintly voiced claims of powerless people, and argue that sociologists can't be value-neutral. In an early statement, Howard Becker (1966) acknowledged, without any disdain, that professions like social work and

education have a responsibility for dealing with aspects of social life defined as problematic. Echoing the pragmatist parents of symbolic interactionism, Holstein and Miller (1997) commented that "social problems work has a very practical side" (p. xvii) and added that the way problems and people are constructed has a direct bearing on the kinds of social services offered. Loseke (1999) expanded on this idea. She suggested that claims-making activities influence the resources available to practitioners, the methods of service delivery, workers' understanding of clients, and service organization rules. Best (1989) recommended the use of constructionist case studies as a source of guidelines for deciding what claims-making strategies work under what circumstances. Agger (1993) added that without renewed attention to the theory-practice linkage, social problems analysts will not develop the discipline's potential for policy relevance and social transformation. Mead, Weber, Durkheim and other great figures of classical sociology would applaud these efforts to fortify reformist impulses.

Investigating Media Characterizations of the NIMSW Controversy

Knowledge when tested against pragmatist-interactionist standards must prove useful. In this paper, I join with those "applied symbolic interactionists" (Dunn & Cardwell, 1986; Forte, 2001) devoted to both scholarship and praxis. I take the side of the whole community but open my ears especially to the claims of the homeless members and their spokespersons, and I attempt to show that the constructionist approach to social problems discourse (as amended by practice-minded theorists) provides a valuable framework for understanding and mediating a definitional dispute about the location of services to the homeless.

My social problems work takes the examination of homelessness in a new direction. Previous researchers have not accounted for a person's proximity to publicly visible homeless persons. Many researchers have invited participants to report hypothetical views about imaginary homeless persons in relation to artificial issues. Media studies have not examined battles over the construction of homeless service centers in the press. This study

will analyze newspaper documents representing the views of motivated stakeholders in deliberations about locating homeless services near their homes or businesses. The resolution of the controversy is seen to have a direct impact on the income, safety, daily interaction, sense of citizenship, and neighborhood of these claims-makers. Specifically, I expect that claims-makers with expressed orientations associated with Christian religious organizations, the social work profession, and other advocacy groups are likely to be sympathetic and pro-homeless. In contrast, I anticipate that those with an economic outlook emphasizing business investment and profit maximization would have little sympathy. Members of neighborhood associations will see the center as a threat to their residences and voice anti-homeless sentiments. Additionally, I identify the rhetorical devices—cultural themes, symbols, and images—used by varied claims-makers in this community's definitional contest. The paper concludes by articulating a practitioner role suggested by early interactionists, one that recognizes the concerns of constructionists about the misuse of expertise but avoids the extremes of indifference and detachment.

The Case Study

After building a headquarters in Richmond, Virginia in 1992, a large corporation requested that the nearby multipurpose service center vacate its shelter/drop-in building. Claims-makers, those "people who say and do things to convince audiences that a social problem is at hand" (Loseke, 1999, p. 19) differed in their reactions. For almost seven years, advocates for the homeless, leaders of neighborhood associations, downtown businessmen, local politicians, and representatives of area churches argued about the problem. The best location for the agency was the central issue. The "Not in My Back Yard" (NIMBY) (Takahashi, 1997) chorus yelled loudly, but calls for Christian compassion and for community responsibility were also heard. Advocates of the homeless wanted the Daily Planet to stay where it was. This location provides the homeless with access to the agency's varied services and to nearby health and social services. Opponents, including those associated with the large corporation, challenged the legality of the current siting. They wanted the agency moved

to the poor south side neighborhood, moved to a desolate spot near the city jail, moved to the African American north side, or closed.

Social problems work, the interpretive activity that community members undertake to "call attention to some aspect of our everyday affairs as an instance of a social problem" (Holstein and Miller, 1997, p. ix) occurs through various communication vehicles (Ibarra & Kitsuse, 1993). Much of the society-wide argument about the housing problem, for example, has been influenced by the "image-making industries" (Gusfield, 1989). Films such as *Down and Out in Beverly Hills* or *The Fisher King* and television series like *Seinfeld* offer unflattering images of the homeless. Newspapers have been influential too. In the late 1980s, major newspapers printed about one story per day on the homeless (Lee, Link & Toro, 1991). Extensive local newspaper coverage continued into the 1990s. Local daily newspapers reported between 1985 and 1992, for example, on over 500 protest actions by homeless advocates in 17 different cities (Cress & Snow, 2000). Television news also shapes perceptions of homelessness. Network news coverage has risen and fallen with presidential administrations (Media Research Center, 2001). During the Bush presidency (1989 through 1992) for example, there were 212 national news stories, an average of 52 per year. Yet, there were only 132 stories, 16 per year, during the eight Clinton administration years (1993 to 2000). Bozell (2001), a media expert, reports that the decision makers in the mass media have rediscovered the problem.

The Social Constructionist Approach to Homelessness

Social constructionism is a contemporary elaboration of ideas formulated by early American pragmatists and interactionists like John Dewey and George Herbert Mead (Pearce, 1995). The foremost proponents of the approach, Berger and Luckman (1966, p. 18), assert that this approach asks, "How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities?" Social constructionists examine "the social processes by which people come to describe, explain, and account for their world" (Franklin, 1995, p. 397). Humans are not passive recipients of knowledge about a preexisting and concrete reality but active participants in social

life who use symbolizing capacities to construct “stocks of knowledge” and practical ways to act despite fluid and uncertain circumstances. The meanings that community members attach to important elements of social reality—selves, others, places, and physical objects—are collective creations, and meaning assignment varies by culture, historical period, and location in the social structure. Human understandings of troublesome conditions and public problems, Franklin adds, are also social constructions, “products of claims making, labeling, and other constitutive definitional processes” (p. 397).

The social constructionist theory of social problems offers four insights that can help social workers conceptualize the problem of homelessness. First, this approach shifts practitioners’ attention from interminable quarrels about the “facts” of homelessness (How many homeless are there? Does mental illness lead to homelessness or does homelessness cause mental disorder?) to the collective, interpretive processes by which “real” housing problems become defined as social problems (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Best, 1989). Assessment questions address problem construction. Which people and groups have made claims that brought homelessness to the community’s attention? How do these claims typify or stereotype the homeless? How are members of the public, lay persons and policy makers alike, responding to these claims? Which claims from a set of claims will be objectified and thus, made to stick?

Second, constructionists advise practitioners to consider the conflictual nature of social life. Blumer (1971), for example, contended that “a social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions, and objectives” (p. 301). Contending groups struggle not only for material advantage but also for victory in contests to define social reality. Claims-makers differ in the power that they can muster to influence the problem definition process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Miller, 1993; Miller & Holstein, 1989). Groups like the homeless are less visible, less audible and less powerful than the developers, business leaders, and politicians arguing with them over city spaces. The material and psychic circumstances of the homeless handicap them in these contests.

Third, social constructionists remind practitioners that perceptions of the housing problem reflect differences in “symbolic

universes" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) or "communities of orientation" (Miller & Holstein, 1989). Think of culture as the accumulated totality of "organized systems of significant symbols" (Geertz, 1973, p. 46) and think of modern society as including many subsystems of meaning. Practitioners should appreciate, therefore, that people may live in the same metropolitan region yet inhabit vastly different social worlds. Members of each social world construct and reconstruct their own systems of meaning, communication networks, interests, motivations, and perspectives on the plight of the homeless (Miller & Holstein, 1989). *Not in My Social World* (NIMSW), my title, refers to the constructionist translation of the phrase, "Not in My Backyard."

Last, social constructionists with pragmatic inclinations emphasize that social problems work has observable outcomes in the objective world (Loseke, 1999). The winners transform their subjective meanings into "objectivations" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), enduring and publicly available signs of their distinctive conceptions of social reality. The losers of the definitional contest, the homeless, for instance, are likely to experience more than a setback in the "social problems language game" described by Ibarra and Kitsuse (1993, p. 29). A three-mile walk to a shelter, intensive hunger, frequent arrests for loitering, scorn from the public, and possible death will be the social products of a failure to make homelessness salient. Sympathetic constructionist social workers must try mightily to cast the plight of the homeless as "matters about which something must be done" (Miller, 1992, p. 4).

The Construction of Homelessness: A Review of the Literature

With few exceptions (Andreasen, 1995; Brawley, 1995, 1997), social workers have made limited use of media studies and social constructionism. A major review of the social work literature on homelessness (Johnson & Cnaan, 1995), for instance, failed to discuss the task of changing media depictions. And Cnaan and Bergman (1990) are the only social workers that I located who used the social construction of problems framework in a research study. Survey data from the social science literature, however, indicate that social memberships influence the social construc-

tion of "homelessness," especially claims about and responses to housing problems (Bunis, Yancik, & Snow, 1996; Link, Schwartz, Moore, Phelan, Struening & Stueve, 1995; Phelan, Link, Stueve, & Moore, 1995; Toro & McDonnell, 1992). For instance, political party affiliation (Democrats, Republican, or Independent) influenced judgments about the seriousness of homelessness and support for aid to the homeless (Toro & McDonnell, 1992). Expressed religiosity was also strongly associated with intentions to help (Morgan, Goddard & Givens, 1997).

A few social scientists have directly studied the construction of homelessness. Snow and Anderson (1987) participated in the daily routines of the homeless to learn how the undomiciled construct personal identities. Rowe (1999) examined the building of helping relationships by outreach workers and the homeless. However, these studies focused on face-to-face negotiations about identity and conduct not community-wide deliberations about housing problems. Demerath and Williams (1992) studied a struggle between various groups over the creation of an emergency shelter. They reported on the political competition of social workers, religious activists, and community leaders to define the homelessness problem. Demerath and Williams did not focus, however, on the media as a forum for this social problems work.

Research on topics other than homelessness exemplifies the study of media-influenced social problems work. Sociologists have investigated media-influenced changes in judicial sentencing practices (Altheide, 1992); media images of nuclear power (Gamson, 1988; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989); and the media depiction of the missing children crisis (Fritz & Altheide, 1987). Loseke (1997) decoded the changing social construction of notions of public welfare as revealed in eighty years of *New York Times* commentary on "Neediest Cases." Her identification of four moralities of charity—each differing in the way the problem, the people, and the interventions were symbolized—demonstrates the utility of the constructionist approach.

Recently researchers from professions other than social work have shown some interest in studying homelessness by examining data derived from the news media. One pioneering team (Penner & Penner, 1989) examined cartoon images from two San Francisco newspapers. They found that these visual depictions

generally stereotyped the homeless as middle-aged male alcoholics. Bunis, Yancik and Snow (1996) studied newspaper coverage of the homeless in the *New York Times* from 1975 to 1993 and in the *London Times* from 1980 to 1993. These researchers demonstrated that sympathy for the homeless increases during the holidays, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas. Cress and Snow (2000) collected newspaper reports on collective action by 15 homeless social movement organizations in eight major U. S. cities. They were interested in "framing activities," the acts of signifying work by which meanings about the homeless are produced and maintained. Clear "diagnostic frames" (characterizations of homelessness, its causes, and the targets for change), and articulate "prognostic frames" (characterizations of the goals and tactics for remedying problems associated with homelessness) were causally related to successful outcomes. Snow and Mulcahy (2001) reviewed newspaper articles and editorials from two local papers in Tucson, Arizona. Analysis of coverage between 1992 to 1997 identified the varied strategies community groups used to control movement in public spaces. Symbolic processes related to the conceptualization and valuation of spatial areas were employed to hide, dislodge, or exclude those without permanent homes. Torck (2001) compared European and U.S. newspapers sold by homeless persons and the different ways that these papers represented homelessness issues. European papers were dominated by personal narratives and poetry with little framing of the problems of homelessness in words used by the homeless. San Francisco's street paper devoted the most space to written efforts to influence the symbolic constructions of sociopolitical conflicts and to characterize homeless persons positively, and thus, promote their dignity and self-respect.

Altheide's Media Analysis Approach and Homelessness

Altheide's method of media analysis (1987, 1996) provides a systematic approach for practitioners interested in studying the use of media documents by contestants in a public controversy. Step one identifies the public problem to be investigated. Step two identifies the major sources of and forums for claims. Step three familiarizes the researcher with examples of the claims being made. Steps four, five, and six involve the development, pilot

testing, and refinement of the data collection sheet, a tool for examining media documents. Step seven samples the range of meanings (claims) found in media coverage and the different purveyors (claims-makers) of those meanings in a particular reality-definition contest. Step eight appraises problem typification in terms of media themes, frames, and summary symbols. Steps nine through eleven entail data analysis, coding, and summarization. These elucidate the details of the claims-making processes and of problem construction. In dealing with the NIMSW battle, I used Altheide's step-by-step method to understand the diverse, media-transmitted claims about and perspectives on shelter site location.

Sources of Claims about Homelessness

All disputes about the representation of homelessness, about the homeless, and about ideal services were selected from four local newspapers: *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, the city's daily paper; *Style* and *The Richmond State* (both are weekly publications); and a monthly street paper, *Hard Times*, published by the homeless and their advocates. Newspaper data have biases (the tendency to cover mostly spectacular or violent events related to homelessness, for example) but Snow and Mulcahy (2001) summarized evidence showing that such biases are less operative in local papers, like those used here, than in data from national news organizations. Newspaper coverage was monitored from 1993 to 1996, a period when the fate of the service center gained regional attention. I collected more than 150 news stories, editorials, photographs, and letters to the editor related to the controversy. Sampling followed Altheide's "progressive theoretical" logic (p. 33): newspaper materials were collected until the sample size allowed a thorough understanding of the topic (Altheide, 1996). Of the 150 news documents, I conducted a detailed analysis of 79 documents.

Each newspaper operates according to a distinctive mission, but together the newspapers capture the diversity of the region's public culture. *Hard Times* is a publication of the Virginia Coalition for the Homeless, founded in 1995 and published six times a year. Its circulation is 15,000 copies. Papers are distributed for donations of \$1 per copy and profits are used to benefit area

homeless people. Each edition includes the statement: "Our goals are to provide a public voice to people who are homeless; to provide job training; to provide survival income to those who distribute papers; and to provide readers with a unique perspective on homelessness." The *Richmond State* was an independent Virginia paper, founded in 1994, distributed weekly, and for free. The paper went out of business in 1996. Circulation was about 10,000. Each edition stated, "We hope that each week we can continue to try to uncover the Virginia we know and love. For it is this blessed state, and her people, that sustain us." The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* is the leading provider of news and information in Central Virginia. It was established in 1850, is published mornings from a downtown Richmond, Virginia location by Richmond Newspapers Inc. The weekday paper costs 50 cents. Daily circulation is about 210,000. The paper does not offer an official mission statement. *Style Weekly* publishes on Tuesday and is free. Its circulation is 40,000. The paper is directed to the concerns of residents in neighborhoods near the city center. *Style's* mission is "to pursue opportunities to be an innovative alternative source of news, information and entertainment that customers want and need." *Style's* written mission statement, available at their main office, further asserts that "We will build partnerships with our customers that help them be more successful and achieve superior business results."

Measuring the Claims Makers, Claims Package, and Claims Themes

The major membership categories for claims-makers included religious affiliation (Christian affiliation or none); political orientation (Conservative, Moderate, Liberal); economic stance (Pro-business or antibusiness); identified residence (homeowner or neighborhood association member versus no residential stake); and association with the social work profession. The public problem of homelessness was viewed as multidimensional. Loseke (1999) included four components in her "package of claims" (p. 213). These were constructed moralities; constructed types of people responsible for and affected by the conditions; constructed conditions promoted as the social problem; and constructed solutions. A version of Loseke's scheme, one tailored to the particulars of this shelter location debate, was developed and used to code the

media accounts. Components of the claims package were coded as: overall stance toward the homeless (sympathetic or not sympathetic); characterization of the moral features of the actors in the controversy (homeless to blame or not to blame); attribution of blame for the problem (bad luck, deficits of the homeless, societal conditions); and recommended policy toward the agency serving the homeless (leave the Planet in the city center, move the Planet from the center, close it).

Data analysis also incorporated qualitative methods. The inquiry followed the inductive logic of grounded theory, and I attempted to produce a portrait of the different claims-makers and their diverse claims. My goals were to identify the multiple systems of symbols, the alternative depictions of homelessness, and their divergent implications for corrective action.

The Homelessness Controversy: Document Entry and Analysis

During the spring of 1998, each article dealing with homelessness was typed in its entirety into the qualitative data analysis software, QSR NUD*IST (Qualitative Solutions and Research Non numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing). The NUD*IST system facilitates the entry of newspaper documents into a computer data base, the search of text, the coding of data by word patterns, and the creation of researcher memos (Richards & Richard, 1991). A subset of 79 of the 150 documents addressed directly the issue of location of services. For each of these 79 articles, statements indicating a stakeholder's position on the NIMSW controversy were identified. Many articles included more than one position statement. A total of 138 position statements were identified in the 79 articles obtained from the four newspapers. The text of each position statement was translated into a researcher memo summarizing the features of various rhetorical packages. Using manifest coding and latent coding procedures, each statement was searched and images, symbols, themes, metaphors, phrases, and quotes related to the controversy were recorded. Two hundred and sixty-six different rhetorical constructions were identified in the set of 138 position statements. The following illustrates the coding process. One woman identified herself as "owner of Very Richmond in the Jefferson Hotel" and worried that the agency's feeding program in the nearby park would "attract the homeless" and "make this

place worse." This excerpt was coded as "pro business orientation," "not sympathetic," and a "financial considerations theme."

Results: Divergent Claims about Homelessness

Newspapers varied in their coverage of homelessness. The largest number of statements was carried by the *Richmond Times Dispatch* (70 percent, $N = 97$) followed by the *Style Weekly* (20 percent, $N = 28$). The *Richmond State* had 9 position statements (6.5 percent) and *Hard Times* only 4 (3 percent). Regarding the type of coverage most frequently used in the debate, feature stories (66 percent, $N = 90$) were most common, with editorials and letters to the editor sharing the remaining categories with 12 percent ($N = 17$) and 18 percent ($N = 25$). Six of the position statements (4 percent) were in other formats such as photo stories with minimal text. As a total collection of views on the NIMSW controversy, sympathetic views prevailed: 85 statements (62 percent) compared to 24 statements (38 percent) that were not sympathetic. The remaining 29 statements were judged as mixed or neutral in their stance towards the controversy.

Cultural Perspectives and Sympathy for the Homeless

The relationship of membership in various "communities of orientation" to views of the homeless service center was examined. I considered first the influence of business interests, business affiliation, and pro-business organization statements on sympathy. Only 42 position statements provided adequate information to allow coding. Of claims-holders with orientations coded as antibusiness, 94 percent ($N = 15$) stated that they would leave the Planet where it is. One antibusiness person recommended moving the Planet. Those with pro-business affiliations were evenly divided: 50 percent ($N = 13$) recommended leaving the Planet at the current location (perhaps, this site on edge of downtown seemed less threatening than relocation closer to the business center) and 50 percent ($N = 13$) suggested that it be moved out of the city center or closed.

An identification with a neighborhood association or home ownership was linked to writers' stances in 74 published positions. While 27 percent ($N = 15$) of non-homeowners were judged as recommending the agency's move or closure, only 11 percent ($N = 2$) of the residents and those expressing a neighborhood

association orientation advocated closure. Almost 90 percent ($N = 17$) of the residential stake-holders preferred to leave the Daily Planet at its current location, but only 73 percent ($N = 40$) of nonresidential stakeholders were supportive of this policy. It may seem odd that residents did not all join in calls to move the agency. However, the current location is not residential and, therefore, might be preferred to relocation in the Far North side, West End, or North of Downtown neighborhoods.

Data analysis show that the 76 statements indicating a Christian orientation (affiliation with Christian Church, reference to the Bible, use of Christian moral teachings) were strongly related to a sympathetic policy towards the service center. Christian-oriented respondents were uniformly designated as being pro-Planet. For instance, 100 percent ($N = 8$) supported leaving it near downtown. Of those without expressed Christian affiliation, 25 percent ($N = 17$) wanted to move or close the agency. However, 75 percent ($N = 51$) were willing to leave the agency at its current site.

Like those identified with the teachings of Christ; those expressing the perspectives of social workers and self-avowed advocates for the homeless were decidedly for services to the homeless. For the 74 position statements examined, 97 percent ($N = 30$) of those with social work orientations were sympathetic indicated by their recommendation to leave the Daily Planet at its current location. Only one advocate urged closure. For those not affiliated with the social work perspective, only 63 percent ($N = 27$) were sympathetic to the agency's desire not to relocate, and 37 percent ($N = 16$) recommended moving or closing the agency.

Indicators of political orientations included direct statements about political affiliation, about the preferred role of government (active or minimal), about preferred tax policy (few taxes or taxes to redistribute wealth), and about preferences regarding gender and family roles. Careful reconsideration of my coding efforts suggested that the newspaper documents lacked member information sufficiently precise and unambiguous to assess validly political orientation.

Discourse about Homelessness: Themes, Symbols and Images

Social problems workers make much use of rhetoric (Burns, 1999). The victors in social problems competitions are those who

can most persuasively use the available idiom, motifs, typifications, stereotypes, and images as vernacular and visual resources (Ibarra & Kitsuse, 1993; Loseke, 1999; Miller, 1992). Effective claims are added to the community's "stock of knowledge" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and treated as objective and taken-for-granted social facts. Effective claims become central to community prioritization schemes, and thus influence decision making about resource distribution. To increase the likelihood of widespread adoption, competitors attempt to summarize their arguments in simple forms that can be easily assimilated. These summary constructions have been called "motifs" by Ibarra and Kitsuse, "rhetorical packages" by Loseke, "summary symbols" by Burns, and "frames" by Snow and Mulcahy (2001). Altheide (1996) refers to them as "themes." In the homeless controversy examined in this paper, the rhetorical constructions of the competing groups can be organized as seven themes. The ranking is summarized in Table 1.

Theme 1: Financial considerations, "We are capitalists (but shouldn't be)." Critics of the homeless center reject the "waste of money" and charge the agency with fiscal irresponsibility. For homeless supporters moral issues are more relevant than economics. The anti-shelter people, according to the pro-homeless, are selfish, greedy money hoarders, committed to "crude materialism," to the "supremacy of economic values," or to "consumeristic hedonism" and, furthermore, "a little fiscal success . . . breeds in a person coldness and self-interest." A prominent critic of the Planet is chastised as a "hypocrite" and a slum landlord, who "owns dilapidated houses on Church Hill that have cost his neighbors their home insurance" and are "bringing down property values." To move the agency near the convention center "would undermine the nearby \$5 million Jackson Place development." To leave the agency where it is would put merchants "out of business." Advocates reverse the logic and fault the community for inadequate financial support. Comments include: "The services are still here to be provided but there is no money from the city from them"; "the city's \$61,000 contribution to the Daily Planet is paltry"; and there is "too little funding." Others cite financial disparities between the central city and the suburbs. They comment that "because of disinvestment in the Richmond

Table 1

*Rank Order of Rhetorical Constructions of Homelessness by
Claims-Makers During Sympathy Battle*

Rank	Theme	Uses of Theme	
		n	%
1	We are capitalists or anti-capitalists	94	35.3
2	We are soldiers at war	71	26.7
3	We are flesh and blood creatures of natural world	38	14.3
4	We are law followers / They are law breakers	26	9.8
5	We are strangers or brothers and sisters	20	7.5
6	We are lifters and carriers	12	4.5
7	We are competitors	5	1.9
Total		266	100%

community, the number of homeless increases" and "regional investments continue to pour into Henrico and Chesterfield" resulting in loss of jobs downtown.

Opponents of the service center offered no detailed financial suggestions for solving the problem other than to end agency funding. Advocates, in contrast, recommended a varied of remedial actions ranging from personal changes ("greater generosity of spirit," more thought of "religious values" rather than economic interests, "more donations") to community changes (more "support from the city"; "widespread financial support in the form of donations, gifts and grants"; regional support for "jobs and training"; and policies organized around "investing in people").

Theme 2: Conflict among stakeholders, "We are soldiers at war." Each worker at the service center, "defends the people they serve" and the agency is a "besieged counseling center" that has "survived another in a long line of public beatings." The language of war and battles, not of joint problem solving prevails. The agency faces an "uphill battle to secure approval from city officials." It must resist the "combined forces of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Carver Civic Association." "Volleys" are fired at enemies during city planning meetings. The opponents of the center, also use conflict terminology. One

commentator wrote, "I feel like I live in a war zone." Others regret that the taxpaying corporation is "beat up on" by many. They worry about the "few remaining merchants barricaded behind locked doors," about the "incoming homeless legions," about the "destruction" of city neighborhoods, and about the possibility that the city will "be taken down" by the Daily Planet. From this frame of reference, there are no solutions only victors and vanquished. Homeless advocates will prevail by "gearing up to fight the changes," by "fighting changes every step of the way," and by "vowing to continue the fight." Only one claims-maker called for peace. Opponents of the Planet add desperation to their pleas and urge "Fight hard, very hard to keep it away" and "fight the Planet plan."

Theme 3: Physicality and the environment, "We are flesh and blood creatures of the natural and built world." In many letters, editorials, and feature stories, symbols were drawn from nature, the animal kingdom, evolution, and technology. Homeless advocates suggested, while exchanging moral outrages, that opponents are like "monkeys," prone to frequent "howls of protest." Opponents, they complain, treat the homeless "as though they were some lower life form." "Uncaring merchants" are vultures "who prey upon homeless alcoholics." One fatigued homeless defender felt herself becoming "cynical about the altruistic propensities of the human species." For critics, the agency is like a "pigsty" and the surrounding natural area spoiled by "a dozen empty bottles of Colt 45 and Magnum 12 lying among the piles of crisp autumn leaves."

Naturalistic themes explain the problem. For advocates, local corporations are like a flood or a tidal wave that is "leaving victims and refugees in their paths." The Planet is like a tree in a heavy wind "bowing to pressure" and legal changes regarding city shelter rules "will trap the Planet like a rat" forcing staff to shuffle "here and there like sheep." Changing ecological conditions affects the vulnerability of the homeless. For example, "Heavy snow means its time to leave and seek a place that's relatively warm and watertight—where you won't freeze to death overnight." One analyst suggests that "poor people migrate to downtown and the Daily Planet because community-based service systems have been destroyed." Some claims-makers use metaphors from

physics and engineering. Critics worried that agencies for the homeless were "enabling magnets" and asserted that the "city doesn't want to become a magnet." Construction of downtown parks should be stopped because these attract the homeless. Pro-homeless writers compared homelessness to inefficient industrial processes and argued that "homelessness is a byproduct of modern life." Others worried about the "gaps in safety net" and the fact that the Planet is "caught in a vise . . . between powerful players." Ecological solutions were few. Advocacy groups should help the homeless "get a foothold" and initiate more outreach and coordinated services which will be like "planting seeds for the homeless." One cynical critic of the Planet simply recommended that opponents "throw a wrench in the works."

Theme 4: Legal aspects of the controversy, "We are law followers (or law breakers)." For those arguing against downtown services, "criminals" and "murderers" reside at the Planet. The agency encourages aggressive, illegal panhandling. The agency is a contract violator that "breaks faith and trust with the public" by illegal use of zoning. It is like an unruly child and continually defies "its neighbors' wishes." The pro-homeless reject these charges and assert that "the only people who stay at the Daily Planet are those with medical complications or a mental illness." They boast that "The Daily Planet is finally legal" and countercharge that "people of power and influence in Richmond hide behind laws as justifications." The problem wouldn't exist, according to critics but that "the scales of justice have been tipped in favor of the underclass" and there is "lax enforcement" of city ordinances. Critics assert that the agency's census tract "had the second highest number of robberies north of the river last year" and ask "Who in the name of right reason can deny at least a significant connection between the downtown location of the Planet and the disproportionate pace of downtown robberies?" Advocates of the shelter argue, in turn, that City Council members "were threatened with everything from hellfire to lawsuits, but still passed laws" in unfair "attempts to evict us."

Angry opponents recommend "fair zoning, fairly enforced" and urge the agency to "show respect for their neighbors" and "to better control its clients." Some opponents argue that "The Planet is poorly run," should be "declared a public nuisance"

"and closed." As one suggested, "Buy it, block it, take it to court, do whatever it takes to stop the Daily Planet from putting a shelter for the homeless downtown." Supporters differ in the ideal solution. Some recommend cooperation with authorities. The agency needs to be "properly zoned" or obtain a "special permit." Others recommend defiance. "I have no intention whatsoever of abiding by it" (unjust laws) says one influential leader, and "the reason we feed people has nothing to do with government permission but with a Biblical mandate." If the Planet is moved near the city jail, one encourages aggressive legal action because of "civil rights violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act."

Theme 5: Group comparisons, "We are strangers to each other." Those eager to move the Daily Planet make frequent ingroup-outgroup distinctions. The homeless are aliens, people of little moral or social worth. They are bums, dangerous criminals, incessant beggars, undesirable lepers vagrants, happy campers, drifters, drunks, thieves, them, they, and those people. Their supporters participate in "bizarre missions concocted by religious cults." The homeless are not "civilized people" but "bums on the sidewalk lounging" and "living in "drunken happy land," and likely to "break glass Mad Dog bottles on our sidewalks."

Opponents of services prefer distance from the "strange ones." One wrote, "Why do we want outsiders roaming our streets?" Another asserted "we don't want that element here in our community" and another, "we never know what to expect when we confront a street person by ourselves." Advocates for the homeless also cast their opponents as "other." Disparaging comments included "people of power are known for sheer ugliness and audacious elitism" and the "fear, prejudice, disgust, and guilt (of those opposed to the service center) are not noble traits but are instead signs of ignorance." The anti-homeless should acknowledge their shared humanity and accept that the homeless, "like us, are creatures of God." Many referred to the "ethnic and racial prejudices," "stereotypical ideas," "hate" "class bias or race bias" and "blatant discrimination" of agency opponents as "primary factors behind the effort to move the center out of downtown." For the pro-homeless, overcoming this sense of strangeness is the solution. One calls for more "workshops and other forums for interaction with the homeless" and for community-building jazz-

poetry events. Many use Christian phrases and assert common brotherhood. Such pleas include: the "call to love our neighbor, the call to reach out to those in need, the call to serve is God's call to each of us"; and the request that community members "make the decision based on what Christ himself would have done" and that "the Bible says help the poor and feed the needy."

Theme 6: The distribution of community burden, "We are lifters and carriers." A recurrent theme is the distribution of community burden. In defense of the Planet, someone commented that the agency is a "treasure" because it "relieves pressure for the provision of similar services in and by the counties." A critic complained that social workers failed to see the extent to which they burdened others; "liberal do-gooders" don't understand or "appreciate" other communities. For the pro-homeless, "Homelessness was a regional issue and the cost of aiding the homeless shouldn't fall solely on the city." Referring to the counties, some said that each is "failing to pull its weight" and the Daily Planet is unable "to shoulder the load by itself." Those against agency relocation worry about "fragile neighborhoods" with "more than their share of problems and believe that the agency can "drag down a neighborhood." Many recommended a more equitable distribution of burden by recognizing "the regional nature of homelessness and the need to develop a regional solution"; by illuminating "the role other local governments are playing"; and by replacing the slogan of "not in my neighborhood" with "let's share some of the responsibility" and "we're all going to have to take on the burden." Even critics of the center suggest that the region "needs a fair distribution of burdens" and that "the county ought to be sharing the city's load of assisting the homeless" and "take up the slack." The "city shouldn't be the only locality responsible for the plight of the homeless."

Theme 7: A contest for victory, "We are competitors." Claims makers employed the analogy of sports competition. For example, the "Planning Commission wrestled with what to do." The homeless are game losers because they "are least fortunate." If forced to move, the Planet will be in "second place." The corporations have made a "successful end run" around the poor and "For years, the Council and the city administration have played games with the Planet" and made the Planet's site "a political football."

Competitors in the controversy are time conscious because "the clock is ticking." Solutions are cast in sports terms. Advocates for the poor must "cry foul." Council members are jockeys on out-of-control race horses and need to "get a grip and do something." Social workers are boxing coaches who should "help the clients get back on their feet" and return to the ring. The Planet needs a "slam dunk" of a fund-raising auction.

Implications for Practice: The Social Reconstruction of Homelessness

As suggested by social constructionists, community group orientations did correspond with problem definitions, sympathy for the homeless, and agency site-location preferences. Those expressing business themes offered unfavorable depictions of the social problem while those adopting the perspectives of social workers, advocates, and those committed to Christianity were consistently favorable. Residents were less sympathetic than non-residents, but they recommended leaving the multipurpose center at its current location. This would keep the homeless out of their backyards and social worlds.

Claims-makers used seven themes to characterize the homeless, the multi purpose agency serving the homeless, and the problem of homelessness. The symbolism and imagery of these rhetorical constructions can be summarized by the extreme commentators. A proponent of the capitalistic position cast the controversy as "a matter of life and death for real businesses operated by real people" and argued that "they (the Daily Planet) will ruin more of the city." A citizen associated with the militaristic position suggested "It's your neighborhood. Fight. It's gonna be ruined if they come near you. Fight." "It cannot, no must not, be taken down by panhandlers, drunks, and drug addicts." One claims-maker used the flesh and blood position to warn of "the health hazard" associated with services to the homeless and of an "alarming surge of tuberculosis" because "one drop of sputum from a sneeze, or a cough, or a mere conversation can infect many people in proximity to the carrier" A complainant adopted the law and order theme and recommended that "we need a loitering law in the city," "the Supreme Court should recognize

a person's right to live in peace," and "the police need to keep the pressure on the Daily Planet." A neighborhood association representative exemplified the ingroup versus outgroup position that the homeless are strangers. Her comment was "we've been paying taxes for 35 years. Why do we want outsiders roaming our streets?" An advocate for a fairer distribution of burden asserted "To assist life on the street is to encourage people to move to Richmond for such benefits" and "We are not only taking care of our share of the problem; we are taking problems from all over the East Coast." Referring to the theme of sports competition, the participant in the controversy who complained that "the clock is ticking," also noted that "past councils have made this a political football" but now "someone should take this one and run with it and soon."

Social workers using the method of "intelligent social reconstruction" (Campbell, 1992; Mead, 1968/1899) can cultivate their ability to take the role of all claims makers, including those unsympathetic to the homeless, and lead efforts to construct societies characterized by social awareness, responsibility, and compassion. For the social worker concerned about aiding agencies for the homeless, constructionist assessment and reconstructionist intervention necessitate the enactment of multiple change-agent roles. As symbolic geographer, the worker needs to map both community locations and their meanings as these relate to the claims-making process and to specific service-siting recommendations. As media analyst, the worker needs to identify the media vehicles covering the homelessness controversy, learn how each structures communication, and trace the influence of the media on problem defining and resolving processes. As rhetorician, the social worker should interpret and classify the major claims about homelessness, identify routine and novel arguments, relate the use of rhetorical devices to social memberships, and monitor the assimilation of rhetorical constructions into shared stocks of knowledge. As political broker, the worker must mobilize symbolic resources on behalf of homeless clients and service-providers, often in opposition to the "rhetorical elite" (Burns, 1999). For instance, the worker might weigh the relative cultural power of favorable depictions of the homeless in terms of rhetorical effectiveness, resonance with existing community

opinions, and likelihood of being retained in social institutions. Counter-arguments to the critics of the homeless and their service providers can be fashioned, accordingly. In the Richmond community, for example, social workers should recognize that faith-based arguments about members' bonds with and obligations to the homeless seem to have special symbolic power. So, social workers would be wise to ally with leaders of spiritual organizations and to include religious imagery and language in the claims-making activities designed to reconstruct the problem of homelessness and to increase sympathy for the homeless.

Finally, the social worker needs to enact a mediator role. The method of "intelligent social reconstruction" mandates that practitioners mediate between groups with divergent interests. Tying this method to a cultural analysis will afford the worker the opportunity to use the three key perspective-taking abilities, identified by Schwalbe as accuracy, depth, and range (1988). Specifically, analysis of media documents sensitizes the worker: both to the community's subcultures (its varied systems of meanings), its different claims-makers, and to the way claims-makers tend to use their rhetorical toolkits (images, words, phrases, metaphors, and themes) to compete in reality definition contests. With such knowledge, the worker can accurately and deeply take the perspective of a wide range of participants in a community's life and death deliberations about housing the homeless. These perspective-taking capacities equip the worker also to identify the multiple stakeholders and their perspectives; to determine the group-relevance of each housing policy or program; to challenge all stakeholders to hold in sight the entire community (including the barely visible homeless members); to create new meanings and remedies that better reconcile the divergent interests (for example, the dispersion of multiple shelters as an alternative to the centralization of services in one agency); and to promote by consensus the provisional solutions most likely to further the social process for all.

Those who are indifferent to or oppose the development of humane and inclusive symbols of homelessness and of community programs for the homeless often have more money, power and tricks than practitioners. They also seem content with a sociopolitical reality that masks and ignores human suffering.

Yet, if the social worker can bring theory, skill, and determination to a constructionist analysis of "housing problems" and to reconstructionist advocacy for creative definitions and solution statements (and for making these subjective meanings real), then perhaps more of the potentials of all members of our communities, domiciled and those without homes alike, can be realized.

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Book Reviews

Maria P. Root, *Love's Revolution: Interracial Marriage*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2001. \$69.50 hardcover, \$22.95 papercover.

Love's Revolution provides a scholarly analysis of a very emotional issue, interracial marriage. At the beginning of the 20th century, W.E.B. Dubois observed that the color line would be a central problem in American society in the future. This book documents how the blurring of the color line presents social, political and systemic problems for all families of color in the United States. Although the last law against miscegenation was repealed in the 1960s, the fear of miscegenation remains a significant issue. Rates of intermarriage have doubled in recent decades, yet the issue of interracial marriage still challenges long-held assumptions and social conventions. According to the author, Maria Root, resistance to interracial marriage is present, in varying degrees, in all racial groups—white, black, Hispanic and Asian.

Root examines the social and legal discourse surrounding the American drama of interracial marriage. Scientific, religious, social and legal arguments that underscore the social construct of race and purported racial differences are explored in a comprehensive and lucid manner. Most importantly, she chooses to conduct a qualitative analysis at the level of the family unit. This analysis scrutinizes the impact of interracial marriage on the family of origin as well as the newly created family. The interviews describe the difficulties couples had integrating into each other's families. Root interviewed over 200 individuals, in focus groups and individual interviews. Three groups were identified: first, interracial couples, married and divorced; second, the families of interracial couples, and third, the bi-racial or multi-racial children of these unions. The focus of her analysis on the family as the unit of analysis sets this text apart from others that either examine the impact of interracial marriage on the individual couples or their children. In analyzing these interviews, Root talks about race in an inclusive way with black and white being the extreme ends of the spectrum. She does not ignore other interracial relationships as is the case in some others studies. She spends time talking about

all of the possible mixtures and provides statistics to support her discussion. She also discusses the reasons why certain marital and racial combinations are more prevalent than others.

Root's analysis is framed in terms of theories related to power, race and gender as explanatory factors. She discusses the issues of interracial marriage within a historical and socio-political rationale for what she sees as a caste system in America. As she defines it, this system serves to keep the powerful, primarily white males, in power and to preserve the sanctity of their position by ensuring that white females serve as the producers of white children. She ties this historically to anti-miscegenation laws. The blurring of the color line threatens the balance of power by undermining the caste system.

Root also provides a detailed history of interracial relationships and she discusses sex, race and love. She discusses the meaning of marriage to families and explores the body of sociological and psychological literature that has developed to explain the process of intermarriage. The concept of race as caste is strongly developed in this context. Incorporated into the text is a discussion of the false beliefs and prejudices that have motivated families to fear or reject interracial unions. Root introduces the issue of the desirability of the individual in the culture and associates it with power; power being correlated with race and gender. Being white and male in the hierarchy of the American caste system is considered the most desirable power position.

The strongest sections of the book are to be found in chapters 4 and 5. Root uses a systems theory model to define what happens to couples once they are married. She also uses the concept of open and closed families to describe the family of origin. An open family is one which can extend itself to a new family member who is as racially different, while a closed family is typically unable to do so. Root then talks about the business of families and their ultimate product, future generations. She equates the behavior of individuals in a family system to organizational rather than individual behavior. This behavior is predicated on the shared beliefs and values of the corporation or, in this case, the family. The family's mission statement is its overall goal and the style of leadership in the family. These issues are excellently covered and shed a new light on our view of the interracial marriage.

The book also examines the subject of bi-racial children and

their struggles to define themselves in a world that attempts to categorize them and finds it difficult to do so. An interesting aspect of this chapter is the children's comments on their parent's ability to help them address the issues of race, ethnicity and color. Many felt that their parents did their best, but that they were woefully unprepared to assist them to deal with these issues. It is in this context that the author introduces the interesting idea of enacting a Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People. A bill of rights of this kind would focus on the rights of the mixed race person to operate within the wider boundaries offered to those who are not anchored in one racial identity. It would allow people to choose or declare their race; to claim many; and to create a new vocabulary related to their multi-racial status.

The book concluded with a discussion of what the author describes as the 'truths' of interracial marriage. She defines these truths and attempts to use them to normalize the process of interracial marriage. She points out that desegregation created the opportunity and the means for people to intermarry, and that the increasing independence of women in recent times has permitted them to marry whom they choose. Love, a shared vision, and common values propel people to marry across racial lines. Interracial couples live normal lives and despite the challenges they face, they rarely marry to make a political statement or to rebel. Families reject interracial couples and their children when they value reproduction of race over love and commitment. Divorce rates and reasons for divorce for interracial married couples are much the same as those of same race married couples.

Maria Root's writing is clear and accessible. She presents an overview not available elsewhere, and she utilizes an effective systems-organizational theory model that is very helpful in presenting reasons why some families embrace interracial marriages while others reject it. Her book addresses many complex issues in a truly scholarly style and it is based on strong empirical research and careful documentation. At the same time, the book is particularly appropriate for social work, counseling and psychology practitioners, and for those who are involved in the interracial marriage process as spouses or children. This is an important book which deserves wide attention.

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Jewelle Taylor Gibbs and Teiahsha Bankhead, *Preserving Privilege: California Politics, Propositions, and People of Color*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001.

California is on the verge of becoming the first state in the continental United States to be comprised of a majority of people of color. In the 1990s, politicians, power brokers, and power seekers, who were threatened by this development and unwilling to accept its inevitability, launched a series of political initiatives designed to arrest the progress of people of color and immigrants in the state by undermining their civil rights, eroding their civil liberties, and restricting their access to employment and educational opportunities. Such is the landscape as skillfully and colorfully portrayed by Jewelle Taylor Gibbs and Teiahsha Bankhead in this new and important book.

A central premise of Gibbs and Bankhead's book is that the California mosaic of racially and ethnically diverse people, languages and cultures generates the energy that drives the economy, fosters innovation, and nurtures the creative arts. The authors propound that California is the benchmark for the rest of the country, the initiator of trends, the cradle of creativity, and the bellwether for change. Thus, the darker forces in the California landscape, including racism, xenophobia, classism, and punitive social forces, are particularly disconcerting and problematic for the rest of the country. Gibbs and Bankhead describe the factors that promote these forces against those deemed different and undeserving of sharing the 'California dream'—in other words, immigrants and people of color. These factors resulted in a series of initiatives passed in the 1990s—Propositions 184 (the "Three Strikes and You're Out" initiative), 187 (the "Save Our State" initiative), 209 (the "California Civil Rights" initiative) and 227 (the "English for the Children" initiative). The authors masterfully trace the major political, economic, social and historical events of the past fifty years that laid the foundation for these initiatives. They then analyze each initiative, as well as their pro and con arguments, major financial contributors, campaign strategies, ethnic voting patterns, and implications.

Gibbs and Bankhead convincingly argue that if considered collectively, a credible case can be made that the initiatives were

designed to deprive people of color of their civil rights, disempower them politically, deny them equal opportunities, and strip them of their linguistic and cultural identities. The impetus for this, they assert, was to preserve the political, economic, and social privileges held by the dominant majority group in the United States. *Preserving Privilege* also considers the consequences of these initiatives as well as trends in California and the nation in relation to other multiethnic western industrialized countries, including Canada and Great Britain. Gibbs and Bankhead close the book by outlining the challenges of multiculturalism and the millennium. As they point out, when examining international trends it is important to recognize the links between developments in the United States and other countries. They further point out that individuals live in an increasingly interdependent global world, linked by satellites that permit the flow of communications on a 24-hour basis, shaped profoundly by international economic forces and political exigencies, and filtered through the lens of an aggressive, intrusive and omnipresent media. Ironically, technology and the media, which have been used to promote division, fear and hatred among different racial and ethnic groups, also offers a source of hope for the future. Indeed, Gibbs and Bankhead anticipate that the challenge of the 21st century is to "transcend the racial and ethnic hostilities of the past by using the power of science and technology to alleviate poverty and to control disease." They also recognize the "power of information and mass communication to foster greater interracial and intercultural understanding among the world's diverse societies, and the power of education and the arts to eliminate prejudice and ethnocentrism and to elevate the human spirit so that ignorance, fear, and hatred will eventually be eradicated for human consciousness" (p. 168).

Preserving Privilege is a brilliantly researched and written book. It is intelligent, insightful, timely, and rich in detail. Gibbs and Bankhead are certifiable "Renaissance" scholars, proficient in conducting multicontextualized, critical analyses of public policy and the economic, social, cultural, historical and technological factors that shape public policy. The arguments put forth by the authors and their treatment of the multifaceted and complex issues are balanced and supported by statistical and empirical

data. Despite the scholarly nature of the book, it is accessible to the lay reader and has much to offer teachers and students in varied disciplines, including sociology, social welfare, political science, history, ethnic studies, education, cross cultural studies, and psychology. Most importantly, *Preserving Privilege* offers California and the rest of the nation a sense of vision and direction.

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Elaine Walton, Patricia Sandau-Beckler and Marc Mannes (Eds.), *Balancing Family-Centered Services and Child Well-Being: Exploring Issues in Policy, Practice, Theory, and Research*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. \$49.50 hardcover, \$29.50 papercover

The Adoptions and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) has three primary goals: child safety, permanence and well being. Currently, the Children's Bureau has requested ASFA outcome evaluations from the states which are focused primarily on the first two goals, safety and permanence, while for the most part deferring on child well-being. In fifteen essays by well respected authors in this field, this book deftly ties child well-being and strength-based, family-centered services together.

In the first essay, Peter Pecora presents a typology, brief history, overview of current program implementation, and evaluation challenges of family centered practice. He cautions evaluators to be rigorous in specifying the service model used, and in providing supervision and consultation in order to insure fidelity to the service model. He urges that evaluations based on experimental designs while the service model is still evolving, be avoided. Next John Ronnau notes how complex and challenging the issues of boundaries, confidentiality, and values are in family-centered services. He cautions against "vague principles that take on specific meaning and generate controversy only [emphasis added] as policies and programs flesh them out." Rowena Fong covers cultural competency in family-centered services including assessments using culturally competent, strength based practice.

Elaine Walton discusses several conceptual frameworks for family-centered services which are derived from family systems

theory. She tries to integrate the theories pointing out that there is not just one family-centered framework, but many. However, it would be helpful to know which ones work under which circumstances and with whom. Patricia Sandau-Beckler writes about family-centered assessment and goal setting. Her essay describes an array of family and risk assessment support tools. She brings to the readers attention the special challenges of in-home observation and treatment with the non-voluntary client, using the collaborative team approach.

In the next section of essays, one of four which describe a specific treatment approach to family centered services, Marc Mannes provides a piece on the integration of child well-being and family centered services. The research-based developmental assets framework is presented with ideas for its application to individual children and whole communities. The other essays are by Lisa Merkel-Holguin and Kimberly Ribich on family group conferencing and by Colleen Halliday-Boykins and Scott Henggler on multisystemic therapy. Elizabeth Tracy provides readers with a comparative analysis of several home-based family centered policies and interventions using excellent case examples.

Gary Anderson discusses formal and informal kinship care. In doing so he challenges current policy to develop "permanency options and related financial and social support" by separating kinship foster care supports from the foster care system. He also reports on an understudied phenomenon, siblings raising siblings. In her essay, Ramona Denby raises two key issues in the delivery and evaluation of family centered services. The first is whether imminent risk (for out of home placement) is the appropriate criterion for evaluation of the efficacy of family centered services. The second issue is that of the overrepresentation of children of color in out of home care and the implication that there is unequal access to family preservation services for families of color.

The essay by Apple, et al. is a collaboratively written essay about going beyond lip service to communities in developing natural helpers. In this chapter, the strengths of professionals are seen in training and mentoring neighborhood partners. The authors' stance is that society overrelies on professionals to do the helping when what they should be doing is teaching others how

to provide for and support each other. Berry, Bussey and Cash's essay addresses evaluation in a dynamic environment: assessing change when nothing is constant. The authors argue that since placement is a distal outcome (from the service provided) and a rare event, prevention may not be the best measure of efficacious family-centered services.

The final two essays offer refreshingly and pointedly one-sided critiques on current policy and research on family centered programs. Mannes' piece which is entitled, "Reclaiming a Family-centered Services Reform Agenda," argues that focusing the child welfare system on child saving/safety makes it a residual function, instead of one that supports families. Kristine Nelson's contribution is a cautionary essay on how policymakers use research. This puts a realistic and sobering conclusion to the book. She notes that what we do in the way of policy setting and research has unintended consequences which may be so bureaucratic that neither workers nor families feel empowered.

The book's strength is that it presents many voices, including consumers, but therein may also lie a weakness: the lack of section divisions and editorial commentary does not help the reader organize these many points of view. Although the editors note in the introduction that it was not their intent to comprehensively cover the "multiple conflicting perspectives on family-oriented efforts" it would have helped to group like essays together and provide some commentary at the beginning of each section in order to guide the reader. It would have also helped to specify for whom this book has been written.

The book challenges the usual notions of the choice and equity of provision of services, direction of research and evaluation, and implementation of policy. The authors present strong arguments for why home should be the primary setting of intervention. They also suggest that teaching clients how to be colleagues should be the primary role of social work. Experimental design may not reveal the truth about what works in family centered services. To paraphrase Amitai Etzioni, frequent measurement of some things, limits the service, research, and policy focus on things that are not measured. These essays present opportunities for students, practitioners, and policymakers to apply critical thinking

skills while learning about the connection between child well-being and family-centered services.

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Nigel Thomas, *Children, Family and the State: Decision-making and Child Participation*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001. \$65 hardcover.

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by all countries except Somalia and the USA, states:

State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

This right to participation is potentially the most radical and complicated element in the Convention. The other rights—to life, to a name and nationality, to protection from abuse and neglect, for instance—engender some cultural conflict and debate about their precise meaning, but there is a high level of agreement on their validity. The right to express an opinion, however, is both hotly contested and poses immense problems in how it is to be implemented. It challenges many cultures' beliefs about the role of children within a family and the authority of parents. United States' opposition to the Convention has been forcefully expressed by Senator Jesse Helms who takes particular exception to Article 12: 'Will the US be censured because a parent did not leave it to a child to choose which school to attend? Will the US be censured because a parent did not allow a child to decide whether to accompany the family to church?' (Congressional Record, 14 June, 1995).

This book, therefore, is very timely, the range of its material reflecting the enormity of the issue. At the heart of the book is an account of an empirical study of children in public care but it begins by reviewing children's place in society from a number of perspectives: sociological theories of childhood, psychological

theories of child development, the tension between the welfare and the rights approaches to meeting children's needs. Since these are all vast topics, the author can only offer an introductory overview of them but he sets out the scene of the debate very clearly. He argues that children's competence to form a valid opinion is often underestimated in practice. They should, he claims, be seen as people who can and should express their views of their situations but it takes considerable skill on the part of the professional to help them formulate and communicate their beliefs and wishes.

Chapters Seven to Eleven deal with two studies the author conducted with Claire O'Kane on children, aged 8–12, in the care of their local authority. The first, small-scale study helped to develop the methodology for the second which involved a large scale, quantitative survey of 225 cases, followed by open-ended interviews with 47 children and the social workers and carers involved in their care. The research was exploratory with the aim of generating theory. One thought-provoking finding was that children wanted to be included in a dialogue with adults, and did not want either themselves or the adults to determine the outcome. In contrast, social workers tended to think that children would just want to get their own way. In this respect, they seem to echo Senator Helm's fear that participation implies handing over power completely.

The qualitative analysis also brings out the conceptual distance between children's experience of their lives and the formal, fixed pattern of decision making processes used by professionals. The findings are used to create some interesting typologies that could be useful in future research, e.g. children's attitude to their involvement in decision making was grouped into five categories: assertive, dissatisfied, submissive, reasonable, and avoidant. Adults' attitude to child involvement was categorised as: clinical, bureaucratic, value-based, and cynical.

The account of the empirical studies is frustratingly brief, leaving me wanting more detail at several points. This is understandable given the amount of time devoted to wider issues, but it raises doubts about how selection of findings was carried out. The author has a clear and passionately-held view about children's right and competence so he faces a responsibility to show that he

is not just picking out those findings that support his view. The brevity of the presentation means that this is not done.

Another limitation, that the author discusses briefly, is the extent to which we can generalise from children in public care to children living with their birth parents. In many ways, children living away from their parents pose a simpler moral dilemma. Parents are generally seen as the first line of protection for children so, in their absence, children are more vulnerable to exploitation and need greater safeguards, including a right to be heard. Giving a greater voice to children in birth families has major repercussions for the power relationships between parents and children, echoing the equalising of power, being seen in many cultures, between husbands and wives. Such a radical change is bound to face strong opposition but the tide of history seems in its favour. In a traditional society, parenting entailed preparing children for a fixed pattern of living, so obedience to parents was a good preparation for later life. As custom and authority are reduced, individuals are increasingly responsible for shaping their own life styles. Helping children to form and express their opinions, and to make well-founded decisions, is becoming a crucial parental task.

The debate between the welfare-oriented and rights-oriented approaches to child welfare is still only warming up. This book is a very valuable contribution, firmly within the rights orientation, offering a sophisticated and far-ranging account of the myriad theories and values involved in the question of children's right to participation in decisions made about them.

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Donald T. Dickson, *HIV, AIDS, and the Law*, Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 2001. \$49.95 hardcover, \$24.95 papercover

Dickson attempts to integrate two fields of knowledge (law and social work) by choosing selectively those laws having particular relevance to social work practice in the area of HIV/AIDS. The book is divided into three parts. The first part presents foundation material on both the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS and on

the legal and social policy context. The second part discusses ethical and legal bases for practice in the HIV/AIDS area by covering privacy, confidentiality, civil rights, and discrimination. The third part discusses families and children issues such as criminal law; worker liability; workplace testing and discrimination; insurance; and corrections. The chapters describe variations in laws by drawing upon court cases and statutes from across the country.

The first part of this book dealing with foundations addresses the epidemiology and the legal and social policy context of HIV/AIDS. It addresses worldwide data on the pandemic and characteristics of the epidemic on special populations in the United States using recent federal data. The chapter looks at epidemiological changes over time, changes in case conversions to AIDS, and changes in medications. The critical Supreme Court decision that asymptomatic HIV infection is a disability is noted. The second foundations chapter addresses basic legal and social policy foundations which provides for unique treatment of HIV/AIDS under the laws—sometimes called “AIDS exceptionalism”. This policy distinction discusses how AIDS is viewed separately from other public health threats covered by laws. The chapter also covers a basic overview of the sources and types of laws and of methods for conducting legal research.

The second section of the book covers ethical and legal aspects of HIV/AIDS laws that impact social work practice. Policy issues are reflected in laws on privacy and confidentiality in the context of civil rights and discrimination. Two critical areas of disabilities law (Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) cover protections from discrimination for those with disabilities. This section also addresses how ethics and law come together to inform practice, and notes as well ways that ethics and laws diverge.

The third section of the book covers a panoply of HIV/AIDS issues where laws and social policies intersect with social work practice. Covered are children and family issues such as mandatory testing, mandatory treatments, school-based issues, and custody issues. Approaches to control and penalize transmission of HIV receive attention. Criminal offenses, enhanced sentencing, and involuntary testing laws are summarized. The practitioner's

legal liability is discussed. Privacy, confidentiality, and duty to warn have been persistent questions important to practitioners as the pandemic persists. AIDS in the workplace issues also impact practice, and legal issues such as hiring practices, workplace testing, and infected workers are discussed. Lastly, HIV/AIDS and health coverage and HIV/AIDS in correctional settings are briefly noted.

For social work practitioners who want a very general overview of how laws intersect with HIV/AIDS services, this excellent text provides just the kind of brief summary of laws that they will find useful. It encapsulates legal issues and gives guidance to trends in laws from a national perspective. The chapters are pithy and to the point and written in a language that gives clear focus on the laws without detailing the debates or controversies behind the laws. Even when court decisions are cited, the quotes clarify decisions and avoid general debates over legal and social policy controversies. This text is not meant for practitioners who want to examine philosophical controversies behind the laws impacting specific practice decisions. This text does not address practitioner questions on specific cases—it suggests general directions in HIV/AIDS law.

What this text does well is to summarize general laws relative to various topics where social policy and social work practice intersects in the HIV/AIDS arena. It suggests that broader social policy (such as AIDS exceptionalism or public health protections) may guide the philosophy of the laws. The critical reader will want to go beyond these legal summaries to examine how each piece of the puzzle provided in law contributes to the overall policy debate. These summaries tangentially bring the policy arena to the fore for critical analysis. As the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to mount, social policies, which coherently promote health and human rights, are essential to social development. A human rights analysis of laws is essential. This text's summaries do not analyze how the laws may contribute to well being or ways they may mire people in further suffering. Without critical analysis, laws can be instruments of coercion and power, not health and well being.

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Daniel T. Slesnick, *Consumption and Social Welfare: Living Standards and Their Distribution in the United States*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001. \$54.95 hardcover.

How should individual and family well-being be measured? This enduring question has taken on a new sense of urgency in recent years, as policy-makers and academics attempt to evaluate the effects of the 1996 welfare reform law. Working within and across disciplines, sociologists, social workers, psychologists, and others have begun to seek consensus on the dimensions of well-being and on appropriate measures of well-being. As Slesnick's research shows, our choices regarding measures of well-being can have a substantial effect on findings regarding relative well-being across groups and trends in well-being. Thus, these choices can affect conclusions about the effects of social and economic policy.

In *Consumption and Social Welfare*, Slesnick challenges widely-accepted "facts" regarding trends in economic well-being over the past three decades. Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau—which are based on family income—suggest that standard of living has changed little, that inequality has increased, and that poverty has remained high (at least through the mid-1990s). Slesnick argues that consumption is a better measure of economic well-being than income, largely because people can smooth consumption by saving when income exceeds consumption needs and wants and by dissaving or borrowing when income falls below consumption needs and wants.

In the first few chapters, Slesnick carefully explains and defends his measure of consumption. (The book is accessible to non-economists, although a basic understanding of consumer theory is helpful.) In short, consumption is defined as out-of-pocket expenditures by consumers (data come from the Consumer Expenditure Survey), with spending on owner-occupied housing and consumer durables replaced by rental equivalents. To examine changes over time, a cost-of-living index is needed, and Slesnick rejects the Consumer Price Index in favor of a social cost-of-living index (the ratio of the minimum expenditure needed to attain a given level of welfare at one set of prices to the minimum expenditure needed to attain the same level of welfare at a different set of prices). To adjust for differences in household need based

on household size, Slesnick uses three equivalence scales and considers the sensitivity of his conclusions to alternative scales.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, Slesnick uses consumption measures to assess trends in standard of living, inequality, and poverty. In each case, the evidence contradicts conclusions derived from Census Bureau estimates based on family income. Unlike median family income, per equivalent consumption increased steadily between 1947 and 1995. Inequality in the distribution of per equivalent consumption has remained fairly constant since the mid-1970s. And poverty rates based on consumption were consistently lower than income-poverty rates, particularly in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Slesnick also considers differences in economic well-being between groups. Findings related to older adults are particularly interesting. Slesnick finds that the elderly have a higher standard of living than the non-elderly when standard of living is based on consumption rather than income. This finding is relevant to recent debates among sociologists regarding economic hardship across the life course.

In several related articles, Slesnick and fellow-economist Dale Jorgenson have noted the relevance of this line of research to conclusions regarding the success of the War on Poverty. While not proclaiming victory over poverty, they do argue that the perception of the War on Poverty as an utter failure needs to be re-examined. It is appropriate to consider the implications of this type of research on assessments of anti-poverty programs because the ultimate goal of research on poverty should be to improve well-being.

Like Slesnick, I hesitate to use findings from *Consumption and Social Welfare* to proclaim victory in the war on poverty. First, a measurement concern: Data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey capture out-of-pocket expenditures on health care. For insured individuals, expenditures on health care may be a poor proxy for health care consumption. In addition, health care consumption (or expenditure) is a poor proxy for well-being because greater consumption often reflects a greater need for health care. These issues complicate conclusions regarding standard of living and inequality, especially if these outcomes are conceptualized somewhat broadly.

Second, recent research on material hardship suggests that many people—even those with above-poverty-level incomes—lack adequate food, housing, and health care. Finally, what if we chose to evaluate the War on Poverty (or welfare reform) with other standards of success, such as social inclusion and opportunities for development? A quick drive through many inner-city neighborhoods and some rural communities would remind us that all too many youth and adults are excluded from opportunities others take for granted and are oppressed by relative poverty, if not absolute poverty.

In the end, Slesnick achieves what he sets out to do. He carefully documents trends in one form of well-being—consumption. As Slesnick notes, this research is descriptive, and many of the most interesting and important questions remain to be answered: What explains the trends in standard of living, inequality, and poverty? How much of the decrease in consumption-poverty is attributable to economic growth and how much to public policy? To what extent can public policy reduce inequality and poverty? Still, rigorous descriptive research is a necessary step toward research that enables us to evaluate and improve social and economic policy. *Consumption and Social Welfare* reminds us to carefully choose measures of well-being and poverty and to supplement traditional income-based measures with a wide array of well-being measures.

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Book Notes

Michael Reisch and Janice Andrews, *The Road not Taken: A History of Radical Social Work in the United States*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2001. \$59.95 hardcover.

It is an indication of social work's maturity that numerous historical studies of the profession's development over the last century have now been published. While all of them provide a chronological narrative of the major events in social work's history, most frame this narrative by linking particular events to a wider theme or perspective. For example, some accounts of social work's historical development have been inspired by the belief that profession is the embodiment of humanitarian and altruistic forces in society. Other accounts have viewed social work's evolution as a struggle by middle class women to secure professional status for their charitable activities. Social work history has also been described as little more than an attempt to exert social control over the poor, or as a means of legitimating capitalism.

In this detailed and thoroughly researched book, Reisch and Andrews trace the history of social work from the perspective of social workers who were (and still are) committed to a radical approach. The authors point out that radical social work is as old as the profession itself, having been advocated by some of its most acclaimed founders including Jane Addams, Ellen Gates Starr and Florence Kelley. During the years following the First World War, radical social workers had to deal with a concerted attempt by the political right to discredit their efforts. Somewhat later, during the time of the New Deal, they formed the Rank and File Movement which linked social work with the labor movement and a wider campaign to promote the ideals of socialism. Many radical social workers were inspired by a Marxist analysis of society, and some believed that communism offered the best hope for the future. This engagement resulted in retaliatory action being taken against them during the McCarthy period. Many were ostracized and some even lost their jobs. During the 1960s and 1970s, radical social work experienced a revival as the War on Poverty encouraged community action and a welfare rights approach. It was also

a time when many more publications explicitly committed to radical social work were published. However, following the Reagan era of the 1980s, radical social work became less influential even though new organizations such as the Catalyst Collective and the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society were formed to encourage greater radical engagement among social workers.

Several themes emerge out of this important book. First, the authors conclude that the pursuit of professionalism by social work's leaders over the last hundred or so years amounted to a missed opportunity—a road not taken—to promote a critical perspective in the profession. A second theme concerns the definition of radical social work. Despite their efforts to define the term, the authors recognize that no satisfactory definition of radical social work has yet been formulated. This is partly a semantic question and partly a question of trying to include under the radical label the many social workers who have a sincere commitment to social change and social justice, but who do not proclaim themselves to be radical. Unfortunately, the result is a muddle! It is not only oxymoronic but indicative of the meaningless of the term when social workers of many different ideological persuasions and occupations (including some serving in the United States military) are described as 'radical'. If terms such as Marxist, democratic socialist and populist activist were used instead, the concept might have had some utility. A final theme, is one of failure. Time and time again, radical social workers are depicted as being on the losing end of a struggle not only within the profession but within the wider society. The fact that the United States today has one of the most radical right-wing federal administrations in history is indicative of the extent to which the struggle has indeed been lost. It is depressing that a century of radical social work has not been able to prevent the coming to office of a group of people who are as aggressively committed to their beliefs as are radical social workers.

Despite its limitations, this book should be essential reading for social workers everywhere. By tracing the history of activist and 'left' social work, the authors make an original and important contribution to the literature. Social work educators who teach the history of social work ought to prescribe this book and ensure that students understand that the Charity Organization Society

and the Settlements were not the only pioneers of the social work profession. The book's attempt to recognize the contribution of social work colleagues who, over the years, have thought of themselves as radical, is important and timely.

Alvin L. Schorr, *Welfare Reform: Failures and Remedies*. Westport, CT: Praegar Publishers, 2001, \$59.95 hardcover.

Ever since President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in August 1996, the term 'welfare reform' has become well-known among social welfare observers. The notion of government intervention within a market economy sparks controversy whenever the issue is raised, and the current welfare reform debate is no exception. While some would say that the replacement of the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was necessary to end welfare dependency, others argue that TANF is an overly coercive measure that will only exacerbate social problems such as child poverty and homelessness.

Schorr's nine chapter book begins with a brief explanation of the pervasive dissatisfaction that characterized the AFDC era. He shows that this distinction prompted the welfare reform movement and the introduction of TANF. Following an explication of TANF's substantive features, Schorr provides a historical context to the current welfare policy landscape by tracing the development of AFDC. He also enumerates a series of convincing rebuttals to many of the negative stereotypes which fueled public disenchantment toward AFDC recipients.

The middle chapters (four and five) discuss the current TANF program. They reveal that, despite the current decline in welfare caseloads throughout the country, the efficacy of welfare reform is severely compromised due to the many labor market barriers facing impoverished families, particularly single-parent families. These barriers include a lack of health care coverage and insufficient access to affordable and effective child care services.

Chapters six and seven give the reader further insight into the inadequacies surrounding welfare reform efforts by highlighting issues such as declining wages, the absence of affordable housing for low and moderate-income persons, and the growing disparity

between the rich and poor. The final two chapters outline a series of recommendations intended to offset the disempowering implications of TANF. These recommendations include tax and labor market reforms designed to decrease poverty and promote gainful employment.

The book ends with a vivid account of a romantic fable which urges the reader to seriously consider the implications of the current path taken by American public policymakers. Schorr's ability to capture and elaborate the most critical aspects of welfare policy (both past and present) makes this book a valuable read for any observer of American social policy. The book's recommendations are insightful and feasible, thus leaving readers, regardless of their position on welfare reform, with a much more comprehensive knowledge of the issue. However, since these recommendations are outside the purview of most social workers and other human service professionals, it would have been helpful if the book had contained suggestions that progressively-minded caseworkers and administrators could use. Nevertheless, the book's penetrating analysis, brevity, and sheer readability ensure its relevance for a variety of audiences.

Robert A. Moffitt and Michele Ver Ploeg (Eds.), *Evaluating Welfare Reform in an Era of Transition*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2001. \$42.95 hardcover.

All too often, policy makers and administrators decide the course of policy in advance or absence of supporting empirical evidence. The political will of the people, or the political power of corporate America, seems to weigh more heavily than the truth when deciding the future of social policy. Such was the case when the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), more informally known as 'welfare reform', was enacted in 1996. Responding to electoral campaigns and popular opinion, President Clinton delivered on his promise to "end welfare as we know it." Under welfare reform, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (or TANF program) replaced sixty years of entitlement welfare with a 'work-first' model of welfare.

In the five years since welfare reform began, a wealth of empirical knowledge has been gained from a plethora of studies on subjects ranging from the ability of welfare clients to work, to the

effects of time-limits on child well-being, to the lives people lead when they no longer receive welfare. Although the experience of the past is not hopeful, the information mined from these empirical studies needs to be intelligently used by social policy makers and elected officials as they decide on the re-authorization of the TANF program. The issue of what should be included in the re-authorization of TANF has been extensively debated in Washington, DC. This book provides a good deal of relevant information which can inform discussions currently taking place on the future of welfare. The book describes the historical roots of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, discusses its programmatic components, and examines the research completed to date on many different welfare reform issues. Gaps in the knowledge-base are identified, and the book provides a detailed analysis of what still needs to be studied. It also considers the reasons this research is needed.

Moffitt and Ver Ploeg have produced an important book. *Evaluating Welfare Reform in an Era of Transition* is a rich trove of information presented in a sensible, logical way that encapsulates many research topics undertaken to date on these issues. The book, with its thorough analysis of the PRWORA legislation, is a useful tool for academics teaching social policy. Students, too, will find the book useful in understanding how this legislation took shape from a contemporary-historical perspective and what the legislation means for the stakeholders of social policy at the federal, state, and local level and for the nation's citizenry, social service organizations, and the clients of welfare agencies. Policy makers and welfare administrators should also find the text informative. It brings together in one place, a discussion of the major empirical studies of welfare reform's issues and the implications of those studies for social policy. Finally, researchers themselves will benefit from reading this text, gaining insight into the direction that future research needs to take to address many important questions regarding welfare. It provides helpful advice on how empirical research can legitimately offer evidence for the efficacy of welfare interventions and should be widely consulted.

Robert F. Drake, *The Principles of Social Policy*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. \$65.00 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover. Tony Fitzpatrick, *Welfare Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Palgrave, \$69.95 hardcover, \$19.95 papercover.

Academic inquiry into social policy has made enormous progress over the last half century when the first systematic attempts to document and analyze the social policies and programs of governments in Europe and North America were initiated. These early attempts were primarily concerned with describing government provision and documenting their historical, legislative and administrative contexts. Theoretical ideas were not widely used to frame these activities, and when they were, they drew implicitly on ideological beliefs to assert preferences for particular approaches. However, by the 1980s, theory was being more systematically applied to social policy scholarship. Building on formative accounts of the implications for social policy of the ideas of major social theorists, and attempts to locate social policies within established ideological frameworks, social policy scholars have now transcended the subject's original descriptive preoccupations and have infused it with a substantive degree of theory.

These two books by British authors provide insights into just how sophisticated the use of theory in social policy has become. While most previous accounts of social policy or welfare theory, as it is also known, are organized around major theoretical schools of thought, and examine the implications of these schools of thought for social policy, these two book approach the subject from the perspective of key concepts. Drake's book, which is slim and concise, discusses concepts such as freedom, equality, justice, rights, needs, empowerment, diversity, change and citizenship. He explains these concepts and considers their relevance for social policy. Although Fitzpatrick's book is not substantially longer, it is noticeably more ambitious and covers a much larger territory. The material in his book is organized in terms of 10 chapters which cover both concepts and theories. These include the concepts of welfare, equality, liberty, citizenship, ideologies and new social divisions as well as recent theoretical developments such as post-industrialization, post-Fordism, globalization, post-

modernism and communitarianism among others. Although the two books share similarities, it seems that Drake's book is better suited for an undergraduate readership while Fitzpatrick's would be more appropriate for graduate students and others who already have an understanding of the issues.

The selection of the topics and their organization of the content in terms of chapters is somewhat arbitrary. For example, Fitzpatrick categorizes the concepts of poverty and human nature as 'key political concepts', and Drake's inclusion of a chapter on policy analysis seems out of place in a book focused primarily on conceptual principles. Nevertheless, the two books cover a large range of issues and will assist students to appreciate the importance of conceptual frameworks in the field. Fitzpatrick's book will be particularly helpful to those students who require a more nuanced analysis of the intricacies of particular concepts. For example, his discussion of globalization transcend the usual condemnatory rhetoric of the popular media and provides a detailed, multifaceted and insight account. The two books are a very helpful addition to the social policy literature. They reveal the extent to which students in Britain are being exposed to theoretical issues. They deserve to be widely used in social policy teaching the United States where theory is still not given as much emphasis as it deserves.

Judith Goode and Jeff Maskovsky (Eds.), *The New Poverty Studies: The Ethnography of Power, Politics and Impoverished People in the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. \$55.00 hardcover, \$19.50 papercover.

Images of the poor in intellectual and popular discourse have fluctuated over the years. At times, the poor have been viewed as victims who are deserving of government aid and public sympathy. At other times, they have been regarded as undeserving actors responsible for their own condition. The former approach was more common in the 1960s, when the United States rediscovered poverty, largely through Michael Harrington's writings. On the other hand, during the 1980s, scholars portrayed the poor as a socially isolated underclass and attributed the perpetuation of poverty to individual irresponsibility and a social welfare system that promoted and maintained a 'culture of poverty'. Most

recently, the poor have been largely invisible to those in the mainstream of the new high-tech economy. The editors of this volume argue that the poor are not invisible, but rather that they are only allowed to be visible on certain terms. They attempt to expand the notion of the limited visibility of the poor by including the perspective of the poor themselves in accounts of their condition. They also highlight the actions poor people take to change their situation.

This book offers a refreshingly different approach to the academic study of poverty which has been largely concerned with statistical analysis without providing an insightful account of what it means to live in conditions of poverty. These studies also tend to present the poor as helpless subjects without recognizing their ability to engage through deliberate agency with their social environment. The New Poverty Studies presented in this book seeks to overcome this limitation of conventional poverty research by providing an ethnographic account that seeks to understand poverty from the perspective of poor people themselves. It also seeks to understand the actions taken by poor people attempt to respond as best they can to negative social forces and conditions. However, this approach does not fail to focus on the economic and structural factors that contribute to poverty. For example, the chapter on single African American mothers in Harlem, argues that the growing number of women raising children by themselves is the result of political and economic factors such as war, genocide, labor migration and unemployment. The author diverges from conventional discussions of these issues by presenting the transformative work done by poor women in order to adapt to new realities in the political economy and to affect change in their environment. Other chapters address issues such as predatory lending practices, the role of public policy in increasing the vulnerability of poor people, the experience of low wage works in a large city, volunteerism, microenterprises, political action of the poor and structural adjustment.

The book presents an innovative approach to the analysis of poverty. By showing how people seek to address and even challenge the forces responsible for their circumstances, the authors offer useful insights that will inform future research. Hopefully future studies will pay more attention to the argument that poor

should define themselves and that their agency in addressing the challenges of their daily lives should be recognized. The combination of political economic discourse and ethnography makes this book conceptually compelling and understandable to a larger audience. It should be widely read.

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(Revised June, 2000)

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Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5354

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