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**Review of *Science and Social Work: A Critical Appraisal*. Stuart A. Kirk and William J. Reid. Reviewed by Tony Tripodi.**

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use as a result of privatization and its increasing use in private practice.

Dill concludes that it may not be possible to keep case management programs from reflecting the broader class system. However, she argues that case management has an under realized potential for advocacy to “empower clients and class advocacy to regress problems and deficiencies in service programs and systems.”

This book reads well, has an exceptional logical integrity, is full of delightful insights, and is grounded in a theoretical and historical framework. Dill is a master at weaving together history, culture, organizational theory (particularly bureaucratization), the role of professions, and the analysis of multiple objectives and paradoxes, with a value system that is committed to “a fabric of care that could sustain us all” (vii).

Charles D. Cowger  
University of Missouri, Columbia

Stuart A. Kirk and William J. Reid, *Science and Social Work: A Critical Appraisal*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. \$49.50 hardcover, \$22.50 papercover.

This is a landmark book in the history of the relationship of social work research, as science, and social work practice. The authors, highly respected social work scholars who have made many contributions to debates about and practices in social work research, succinctly describe and analyze major movements in the past half century to integrate social work research and practice: scientifically based practice; computer assisted social work practice; classification systems of client problems; research-based practice (evidence-based practice); models for the design, development and testing of social work interventions; and research dissemination and utilization. Rather than examining major scientific influences from a broad interdisciplinary perspective such as principles of uncertainty, information theories, non-linear models or quantum mechanics, the authors focus on the social work literature with respect to scientific models for conducting practice and the use of scientific knowledge to inform practice.

Their historical overviews, descriptions, and analyses are accurate, insightful, and thought provoking. This, in my view, is the best book available on the topic of the incorporation of research perspectives, methods, and knowledge in social work practice. This should be required reading for social work scholars, educators and researchers, and for doctoral students. There is a wealth of ideas and references that can stimulate further study.

These are examples of some of the many suggestions and observations that are made by Professors Kirk and Reid: scientifically based practice should be seen as a perspective rather than simply as a group of methods; the conception of practice accountability should be extended to include ideas of appropriate practice; research utilization is typically a mixture of conceptual, persuasive and instrumental utilization; social work has produced knowledge, but it is difficult to describe and cumulate; to survive as a profession, social work must develop theories of practice and effective interventions.

An excellent chapter on computer-assisted social work practice by Stuart Kirk, William Reid, and Carrie Petrucci is included. The authors present succinct but descriptive analyses of the uses, promises, and failures of various innovations such as management information systems and expert systems. Their analyses are sobering and insightful.

Throughout the book Kirk and Reid present balanced and thoughtful analyses of major movements. For example, they show how research and development models have the potential to produce effective intervention, but have not been too productive to date due to many obstacles: expense, time, lack of adequate funding, and the academic pressures on young scholars to engage in time-limited research. Moreover, they present relevant issues regarding the uses of evidence-based (research-based) practice: biases of the investigator, lack of accepted criteria for determining the generalizability of interventions, the rigor of research, and the issue of the dissemination and utilization of practice guidelines.

Major issues in social work research not systematically covered are the extent to which social work researchers are involved in interdisciplinary research, the relationship between social science methodologies and social work research, and the contributions that social work researchers make to other disciplines. Does

the interdisciplinary nature of research teams blur some of the distinctions made about social work researchers? Are the methodologies of social work research derivative of methodologies from other fields: qualitative research, survey design and analysis, time-series analyses and mathematical modeling? Do social work researchers contribute to other fields of knowledge? Schools of social work such as those at the University of Michigan promote combined doctoral work in social science and social work, and it is not surprising to note that three of the five highest rated schools of social work in terms of publication in peer-reviewed journals publish more of their scholarly activities in non-social work journals than in social work journals (Green, Baskind & Bellin, 2002). Hence, one might ask whether or not it is too insular to look primarily at the relationship of social work research to social work practice within social work literature, or should the inquiry be expanded to systematically look at the relationship of other scientific fields to social work practice as well as social work research? Notwithstanding these questions, this book with its primary focus on social work literature provides an enormous contribution to social work history and future debates about the relationship between social work research and social work practice. And, I highly recommend it to students of the social sciences and the philosophy of science, as well as to social work students and scholars.

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### Reference

Green, R. G., Baskind, F. R. & Bellin, M. H. (2002). Results of the doctoral faculty publication project: Journal article productivity and its correlates in the 1990s. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38 (1) 35–152.

Arthur Gould, *Developments in Swedish Social Policy: Resisting Dionysus*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. \$62.00 hardcover; Michel Peillon, *Welfare in Ireland: Actors, Resources and Strategies*. Westport, CT: Praegar, 2001. \$62.50 hardcover.

Scholarly inquiry into the social welfare systems of different countries has become increasingly sophisticated in recent