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*Social Workers Count: Numbers and Social Issues*, by Michael  
**Anthony Lewis**

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and economic relations, Latino/a studies, sociology, immigration, ethnography, undocumented- and mixed-status experience, and citizenship studies.

Kimberly Hogan  
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Michael Anthony Lewis, *Social Workers Count: Numbers and Social Issues*. Oxford University Press (2018). 207 pages, \$34.95 (paperback).

Lewis here provides an introduction to quantitative problems facing professional social workers that departs from the tedious statistics textbooks traditionally utilized in social science courses. In this text, Lewis presents mathematical concepts in a conversational style intended to provide baseline mathematical knowledge for both social work students and professionals. The book connects math to relevant social issues and policies, including measurements of poverty, the relationship between math and politics, and how to assess objectivity in the allocation of resources. This novel text is a critical primer of the mathematical aspects of social issues for social scientists who do not consider themselves, as the author states, “numbers” people.

The book begins by tackling policy debates; that is, how arguments play an important role in the discussions of social issues. This is an excellent introduction to the role numbers play within social policy development. Generally left to economists, the author illustrates how and why social workers must understand mathematical concepts to prove the merits of social policies supported by the field. The book then offers a review of basic mathematical concepts through a brief explanation of *set theory*. Ratios, proportions, and percentages are a welcome review, given their frequent use in the field when allocating resources as well as during policy development.

A multitude of examples from current policies allow readers to connect measurement concepts to broader societal issues and demography discussed in the classroom, the field, and the media. For instance, Lewis details how inflation and social program benefits such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

(TANF) are calculated. These calculations can assist social workers in understanding which social programs are and are not adjusted for inflation, thus providing a greater awareness of how much purchasing power financial assistance programs may have for their clients. Measurement of poverty is discussed in detail, with a thorough review of poverty thresholds and how to calculate ratios of income to poverty. The size, distribution, composition, and growth of human populations and how these calculations are connected to policy development is described in rich detail. Given the nature of social workers' role working with marginalized groups, these chapters should be mandatory reading for students in statistics and policy classes.

After a thorough discussion of macro level mathematics, the book shifts focus to the more micro level financial issues social work clients typically face. Finally, the text reviews how math is used in research with a focus on statistics and data. The author acknowledges that there is a general dislike of statistics in the social work field but argues that a greater understanding of social life through data can greatly improve the effectiveness of practice. The author argues that social workers must also have a thorough understanding of personal finance to empower clients to secure economic security. This knowledge will allow social workers to help clients navigate increasingly complex financial systems, such as how to plan for retirement or choosing life insurance options. An important concept I found missing, however, is discussion of how marginalized groups are disproportionately in low-income brackets, which inevitably impacts the disposable income needed for economic security.

Though the book is reader friendly, some readers may be initially intimidated by the presentation of mathematical equations studied long ago. If part of the aversion to math and statistics in social work is the traditional presentation of concepts with equations, instructors utilizing this text as a supplement to their curriculum will still need to create visual representations for students who are math phobic. Though lacking visual representations, the conversational tone and application of concepts to social issues will help intimidated readers connect to the importance of math in their practice.

A final chapter introduces how mathematics influence political and social decisions in the United States. A lively discussion within the context of The National Association of Social

Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics underlines the point that math is a valuable tool in the pursuit of social justice. The author here concedes that an entire book could be written connecting these ideas. Despite such limitations, the text is highly readable and an excellent supplement for inclusion in social policy and statistics courses.

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Lacey M. Sloan, Mildred C. Joyner, Catherine J. Stakeman, and Cathryne L. Schmitz, *Critical Multiculturalism and Intersectionality in a Complex World*. Oxford University Press. (2018). 171 pages, \$23.97 (paperback).

This book explores beliefs not typically discussed in open, that is, various levels of privilege around the world, specifically in relation to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and ableism in relation to marginalized populations. The discussion is coupled with real life experiences from individuals. The subject of privilege is often difficult to discuss, especially when dealing with race and ethnicity. There have been books on issues related to multiculturalism, but these authors provide here an encompassing discourse of multiculturalism easily accessible within one book.

Coming from backgrounds in social work and academia, the authors approach the subject of privilege and marginalization head on. The writing style is clear and understandable, allowing for sensitive subjects to be easily processed. Each chapter begins with a profound quote which frames the information discussed. Individualized experiences written in the first person provide a real life understanding of the topics and help readers to connect on a personal level. Summaries put each chapter in context, as readers are encouraged to explore their own personal beliefs, social norms and practices with their communities through a series of provocative questions. This approach is critically important to students pursuing a profession of service to others.

This book starts out taking the reader down a path to understanding multiculturalism, oppression, and action, and then