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"SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL WELFARE, AND THE AMERICAN FAMILY"
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The following discussion proceeds from two basic premises: (1) that the family constitutes one of the most basic units of social structure in contemporary American society, and (2) that the social work profession represents a major, if not the primary, institutional mechanism for coping with the myriad of social problems encountered by American families. The former premise is readily substantiated in view of the observation that the vast majority (over 90%) of American men and women are married at least once in their lifetimes. However, since family units oftentimes experience severe difficulty in performing key functions and, indeed, in maintaining themselves over a period of years a variety of professions have evolved with an express orientation towards the sustenance or strengthening of family life. The following discussion will focus upon key interrelationships between the American family and one such profession, to wit, social work. Coincidently problematic aspects of those interrelationships will be noted and an effort will be made to specify relevant implications for the future development of the social work profession.

The Changing American Family

Prior to the formulation of effective professional strategies for dealing with family problems it is germane to assess the extent and sufficiency of conceptualization regarding family units. Similarly, it is essential to develop accurate predictions regarding the future course of family life and, more particularly, to identify key factors that determine projected family developments.

Family As a Conceptual Unit

Conceptual and theoretical limitations of the available family literature tend to be reflected in parallel deficiencies of family treatment formulations utilized by professional social workers. At best, current knowledge regarding family units is organized into varying theoretical frames of reference, some consonant with one another and others less so. Among the most prominent conceptual approaches toward the family are the structural-functional¹ and symbolic interaction² frames of reference. Both are important for the social work profession insofar as they influence world views of the family and subsequent professional efforts directed toward helping family units. The former perspective views the family as a basic system of social relationships which fulfills one or more social functions without which the society could not exist. The latter perspective, although not necessarily inconsistent with the former, focuses primarily upon the social interaction among family members and upon key antecedents and consequents of that interaction.

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Structural-functional perspective

The structural-functional perspective poses certain basic difficulties for those with practical interests in interpersonal helping. If, for instance, family units are viewed primarily as the handmaidens of society might not social units other than the family constitute effective foci for professional interventions directed toward the sustenance or enhancement of the larger society? Or, put another way, if professions such as social work are to help individuals what intellectually or empirically valid rationale exist for assuming that family units constitute the preferred locus of intervention for any particular type of helping activity? In large part, the answers to these ponderous questions rest in one's definition of key societal functions and in the available empirical data regarding the sufficiency and necessity of family units as contributors to effective performance of those functions. It is relevant to note that the notions of sufficiency and necessity ought to be conceptually distinguished from one another. Whereas the former primarily refers to the independent effectiveness of family units the latter depends largely upon the availability and performance effectiveness of social units external to the family, including intra-societal functional equivalents or functional substitutes for the family. In part, the social work profession itself may be considered as a functional substitute for the family, especially insofar as it performs, or facilitates the non-familial performance of, key functions previously enacted by family units.

A basic difficulty associated with the structural-functional perspective concerns the definition and delineation of necessary and sufficient functions for the family and/or society. Although such functions could be infinite in number most discussions tend to focus upon a few selected ones that are considered to be essential for the perpetuation of a viable society and, for the most part, performed by family units. Thus, for instance, Murdock has suggested that the family performs four essential functions which are found at all times and all places: socialization, economic cooperation, reproduction, and sexual relations. Goode, similarly, has suggested that all families must perform functions such as fertility (or reproduction), conferral of status, biological maintenance, emotional maintenance, socialization, and social control. And, likewise, Aberle, et al., have suggested that all societies must assure the following functional requisites which are typically mediated by family units: provision for adequate relationships to the environment and for sexual recruitment, role differentiation and role assignment, communication, shared cognitive orientations, a shared, articulated set of goals, the normative regulation of means, the regulation of affective expression, socialization, and the effective control of disruptive forms of behavior.
In recent years, however, much controversy has arisen as to (1) whether or not families do, indeed, perform all of the foregoing functions, and (2) whether or not families should, indeed, perform all of them. The former question is necessarily an empirical one that must be answered upon the basis of existing data. Responses to the latter question, although greatly dependent upon present and/or anticipated empirical data, tend to be shaped by varying social value considerations. Some investigators suggest that functions such as the above are not universal or that they need not necessarily be performed by family units. Reiss, for instance, has suggested that the functions of economic cooperation, reproduction, and sexual relations are increasingly handled by other social units and need not be performed by the family. Kephart has reported that certain utopian communities, such as the Oneido community, experimented more than a century ago with various institutional arrangements, other than the family unit, in order to assure continued performance of the sexual, reproductive, and socialization functions. Wolins, Spiro, and others have reported extensive data attesting to the effectiveness of alternative social arrangements, such as the kibbutz system, which appear to provide socialization for young children with no major shortcomings for the children and/or their parents. Indeed, contrary to popular belief it is sometimes suggested that communal childrearing arrangements serve to strengthen family life, rather than weaken it, by relieving the mother of social and physical stresses associated with childrearing, by strengthening the family's economic base through freeing the mother to earn income, and by exposing the child to a variety of eufunctional social influences. Similarly, recent data regarding day care centers in the United States indicate that there are few, if any, dysfunctional effects upon children or, indeed, upon the mother-child relationship, as a result of prolonged placement of youngsters in day care centers. Hauser, in a similar vein, has suggested that families previously performed functions such as production, consumption, religion, education, socialization, affection, and protection but that these functions are now attenuated or are being performed by other social units.

Other investigators suggest that the family has, in general, continued to perform the same basic functions over the years or, indeed, has added new essential functions. Thus, for instance, Pollak suggests that current bureaucratic life and the advances of medical and welfare services have produced new social needs and functions that can be met optimally by the family unit. New functions posited for the family unit include the following: orchestration with institutions such as health care services, school systems, and social security systems; management of available time around self-determined priorities; sexual synchronization over an extended life span; economic coordination of the earning power of two adult earners; outlet for, and rescue from, hostilities created and suppressed in bureaucratic existence, and; therapeutic cooperation with the health care services. In general, it is apparent that the structural-functional controversy is unresolved and, perhaps, unresolvable. Conceptual and methodological problems
associated with the definition, delimitation, and measurement of societal and familial functions seem to indicate little likelihood that social scientists will be able to sufficiently define key societal functions so as to enable social work practitioners to prescribe means for helping families to perform them. And, indeed, should this be possible it might not prove desirable within the context of future social values. Finally, inherent in the structural-functional perspective is a tendency to exaggerate the actual and/or desired degree of "harmony" or "self-consistency" in social systems, including families and societies.15 Both social scientists16 and social workers17 are increasingly cognizant of the fact that such a world view is not consonant with the circumstances of contemporary life and, therefore, that harmony need not necessarily be inevitable and/or desirable.

In summary, then, (1) the basic tenets of the structural-functional perspective remain unproven and, perhaps, unprovable, (2) it appears virtually impossible to define all crucial societal functions, (3) it is questionable whether key societal functions necessarily need be performed entirely or primarily by family units and, consequently, (4) in order to best serve society or its constituent individuals the more efficacious institutional mechanisms and loci for intervention tend to be ill-defined. A reasoned approach to societal or individual helping would suggest, then, that the optimum locus for institutional intervention is likely to vary with the particular constellation of problems or tasks at hand.

**Symbolic interaction perspective**

The symbolic interaction perspective is closely aligned with role theoretic formulations that evolved from social psychology and sociology18 and, moreover, that have gained increasing acceptance within social work during recent years.19 The main focus of this perspective is upon social interaction among members of the family unit, upon relevant antecedents which may be exogenous or endogenous to the family unit, and upon important consequents of that interaction. In brief, this perspective assumes that varying degrees of differentiation and integration occur in family units and, consequently, that adaptive behavior in any continuing marriage or family depends upon a relatively efficient division of labor and upon a reasonable extent of coordination or integration among the participants in that situation.20

The symbolic interaction perspective has been particularly useful to family social workers for a variety of reasons. It has facilitated the systematic description of family structures and processes, the delineation of particularly problematic structural or processual relationships, and the formulation of discrete and operational interventive strategies. Thus, for instance, by utilizing role theoretic concepts it has been possible to systematically describe basic problems in family functioning such as position discontinuity, position non-integration, position malintegration, position overload, expectation ambiguity, expectation dissensus, expectation asynchrony, expectation conflict, expectation overload, performance deficit, performance non-integration, and performance malintegration and, consequently, to formulate
appropriate interventive strategies. Similarly, from a role theoretic perspective it has been possible to assess typical or atypical power relationships within the family, to ascertain their functional or dysfunctional aspects for the family, and to formulate relevant social work interventions.

Moreover, the symbolic interaction approach toward family functioning is readily linked to other social psychological perspectives concerning human behavior. A particularly relevant example is Levinger's effort to analyze marital cohesiveness and dissolution from both a role theoretic and social exchange perspective. A major feature of this synthesis of theoretical formulations is its focus upon determinants of family functioning that are external to the family per se (such as sources of barrier strength and alternate attractions) and, accordingly, its suggestion of viable targets for social work interventions directed toward family functioning which may, themselves, be located external to family units. The symbolic interaction perspective also has been especially useful for family social work to the extent that it has helped to clarify the interaction between organizational variables and professional-client relationships. A multitude of recent studies have shown, for instance, that the role conceptions of public assistance social workers vary according to organizational size and community context, that levels of conflict among professional staff are likely to be predetermined by staff composition, that the organizational structures of varying types of correctional institutions are likely to influence clients' role conceptions and orientations toward rehabilitation, that the structures of mental hospitals affect client functioning, that the social position of welfare clients induces skewed perceptions of their rights and obligations and, indeed, that the therapeutic relationship between social worker and family member oftentimes is adversely affected by class-related determinants of the participants' role expectations. Similarly, broader social, economic, and affiliative determinants have been found to influence client and familial functioning and, therefore, to constitute viable foci for social work intervention.

The symbolic interaction perspective has not yet developed to full maturity. It would be invalid, for instance, to assert that a "grand" theory of social role can be found in the current literature. Rather, there exists a variety of theoretical frames of reference, or interrelated hypotheses, premised upon role concepts which have not yet coalesced into a mature theory. Nonetheless, such concepts thus far have lent themselves readily to empirical analysis and promise to provide an expanding, rigorous, and testable knowledge base for family social work. Moreover, they permit the elaboration of social conflict perspectives and the analysis of deviant, albeit synchronous, family relationships such as sado-masochistic unions. The symbolic interaction perspective also is especially important insofar as it points to the efficacy of extra-familial, as well as intra-familial, loci for social work intervention.
Implications of Family Development Trends For Social Welfare and Social Work

In order to create effective professional structures and intervention strategies to deal with family change it would seem advisable to assess future trends in family development and present or projected social work responses to such developments. However, efforts to describe the American family of the future tend to be fraught with hazard and, as noted by Hill, oftentimes are biased by the particular techniques utilized for prediction. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the limitations of current predictive devices and the vagaries of certain short-term determinants, such as economic conditions, it is possible to suggest a variety of changes likely to be associated with American families of the future.

Hill, in projecting the future from generational changes, has set forth one of the more exhaustive listings of familial changes expected in coming years: increased level of education, especially for husbands; decreased age at marriage; a curvilinear relationship in regard to the number and spacing of children born; a shift in value orientations towards less fatalism, moderate optimism, and a greater orientation to the future; a shift in authority patterns towards more equalitarianism and a greater division of tasks involving increased sharing and less specialization; a greater degree of effectiveness, professional competence, and economic well-being among the younger generation; greater courage in risk-tasking accompanied by more planning, flexibility, and communications; greater conflict between spouses among the generations; a search for information outside the family, taking into account both long-range and short-term consequences; higher proportions of persons married; higher rates of divorce, separation, and remarriage, and; higher rates of premarital intercourse and out-of-wedlock births.

Additionally, Hill has inferred a number of familial changes and projected social service orientations from a review of writings and research by family specialists. In particular, he suggests that family-field professionals will want to perpetuate or assure the following: organization of mate-selection techniques in order to encourage couples of reasonably similar backgrounds to meet and to be tested for compatibility through a prolonged courtship and engagement; premarital examinations, counseling, and education to help prepare the couple for marriage, postponing and returning to circulation those who are not ready; objectives of marriage to include the continued matching and stimulation of companionship, mutual understanding, common interests, and joint activities, as well as building a system of planning and problem-solving; increased attention to the conflicts between needs of dependents and the needs of marital spouses; major family objectives to include the mastery of basic tasks for each stage of family development, including family-size control, physical maintenance, socialization, gratification of emotional needs, and providing the motivation and morale necessary for the stimulation and development of personality potentials of all members, and; an effective family organization and a competent family leadership trained to assure integrated objectives, good internal communication, clarity of role definitions, and effective patterns of problem-solving and decision-making. Farber, also, has set forth a variety of predictions, most of which are consonant with the
conclusions and recommendations cited by Hill. Thus, for instance, Farber suggests the following trends; the incidence of cross-religious marriage will increase; the median age at first marriage will continue to decline or remain low; the rate of marriage of persons over thirty is likely to increase; the rate of remarriage of the United States population will continue to increase; the number of persons participating in premarital sexual intercourse is likely to increase; the percentage of families in the agricultural labor force will decline; an increase of family leisure time due to automation; increased social density of urban life with consequent effects upon family functioning; an increased employee-entrepreneur ratio, and; continued advances in medicine with consequent effects upon family life.\textsuperscript{37}

Based upon his projections Farber sets forth three major classes of explanatory schemes concerning change in family organization. The \underline{idealist} explanation posits changes in the organization of norms and values on the modification of men's ideas. The \underline{functionalist} explanation seeks the stimulus for change of family norms and values in the other institutions of society and indicates the direction of change in terms of familial adaptation. The \underline{interactionist} explanation views change in the organization of norms and values of the family as reflecting change in the other institutions of the society and, in turn, stimulating change in those institutions.\textsuperscript{38} Among relevant predictions from these three approaches are the following: (1) Idealistic approach: protection of the male as the primary breadwinner in the family; protection of family norms and values in mass media, commercial entertainment, and recreational facilities, and; increased responsibility for standards of physical and mental health; (2) Functionalist approach: continual increase of the proportion of women in the labor force and, concomitantly, more education for women, greater female decision-making power in the family, higher divorce rates and remarriage rates, lower birth rates, and decreased influence of parental norms and values; increase in the amount of leisure time and consequent familial adjustments; increased social density leading, on the one hand, to a greater diversity of family life styles (due to increased occupational specialization) and, on the other, to a standardization of family life (because of increased communication and visibility of family life); increase in health services by agencies outside the family and a further decline in the practice of family medicine and nursing services; increased life expectancy and greater emphasis upon companionate relations between husband and wife, and; severe adaptations in family life patterns for segments of the population at the lower socio-economic levels (due to increased automation and unemployment); (3) Interactionist approach; efforts to formulate one of three basic strategies in order to organize and maintain family life: (a) the welfare strategy: involves efforts to increase the personal welfare of one's own family members; concomitant evolution of norms and values focusing on assistance and emotional support, and; a bilateral kinship system; (b) the efficiency strategy: wherein the organization of family life adjusts itself to maintaining or improving the community position of the family with, accordingly, smaller families in urban areas and
arger families in rural areas, and; a non-kinship system, and; (c) the
conservative strategy: aimed at the development or retention of a stable
kinship system; commitment to traditional norms; a relatively large
number of children, and; a unilineal kinship system.

Among additional forecasts set forth by Farber, particularly
related to the welfare strategy, are the following: increases in
productivity, automation, and educational levels will produce a higher
standard of living which, in turn, will obviate the need for individuals'
concern over subsistence; the population will have more opportunities
for planning due to higher levels of general health, income, and longevity;
increased longevity and increased planning will themselves foster family
crises; as health, longevity, and economic status are increased, the
prospect is for greater parental participation in the family lives of
their married children; with continued high marriage rates and high
survival rates population growth is likely to be rapid; an increase of
bilateral familial characteristics will occur, and; there will be
increased development of professions geared towards sports, child-
rearing, household maintenance, theatricals and related activities.39

Following a review of recent trends in marriage and family
statistics Parke and Click, also, have forecast a strong likelihood of
certain future developments. These include a continued decline in the
rate of teen-age marriage and a rise in the average age of women at
first marriage; reductions in the relative frequency of widowhood due
to increased similarity in the age of husbands and wives, as well as to
improvements in survival rates; reductions in the relative frequency
of divorce and separation due to rising incomes, and; some continued
decline in the average size of households and families and major increases
in the proportions of unmarried individuals who maintain their own
households.40

Finally, Hauser has set forth a series of conclusions and projections
that are particularly germane for the social work profession.41 Modern
mankind, he concludes, has witnessed four major developments in recent
years: the population explosion, population implosion, population
diversification, and the accelerated tempo of technological and social
change. Following from these and other developments are a variety of
important effects upon family life: transformation of the family from
a multinuclear or extended family to a nuclear family and, similarly,
from a three-generation or four-generation family to a two-generation
family; continued existence of monogamy but, more accurately, a
chronological polygyny and polyandry due to high divorce and re-marriage
rates; movement of the family from a primary group toward a secondary
group; changing roles for married women, including wider participation
in social, economic, and political activities, and; a more egalitarian
relationship between spouses. Hauser also posits profound alterations in
the family life cycle due to a myriad of factors including increased
nuptiality, the decreasing age at which child-bearing begins, the increased
concentration of child-bearing in the years before the woman reaches thirty
years of age, and the almost universal employment of family planning methods irrespective of religious affiliation.

As a result of the foregoing changes the age of the parents when the last child leaves home for marriage has been lowered, the age at which the death of one spouse is experienced has risen markedly, and the number of years in which parents are freed from child-bearing and child-rearing activities has increased tremendously. In line with a variety of other investigators Hauser also suggests that the family has lost many of its functions or, at least, experienced attenuation or reorientation of them. The family is no longer a production unit and it is increasingly not a consumption unit. Similarly, it is less likely nowadays to be considered a religious unit, an educational unit, a socialization unit, an affecational unit, or a protective unit. With regard to the latter, for instance, Hauser points to the role of the Social Security system, Medicare, and family service associations and raises the trenchant observation that the social work profession is itself a product of the mass society. Its emergence is an indication of fundamental changes in the functions of the family and of the need for new institutions and devices to deal with the family in a mass society. Among Hauser's main predictions regarding future family life are the following: further attenuation of the socialization function, especially due to the establishment of formal education starting at an even earlier age than at present; an increased proportion of chronologically polygynous and polyandrous marriages; a decrease in the proportion of parents' lives spent in child-bearing and child-rearing, due primarily to increased longevity, and; increasing acceptance of premarital and extramarital sexual relationships.

The foregoing concentrated and, perhaps, unrepresentative review of the literature regarding projected family developments points to a variety of considerations relevant for future social work responses to the family. First, family life is destined to change during the coming years. Consequently, professions geared toward family assistance will have to change in order to respond effectively to new needs. Either new alternatives to traditional service structures will be required or it will be necessary to devise means for enabling existing structures to be increasingly innovative and responsive to changing needs. Second, it appears virtually impossible to predict all major trends with complete assuredness, especially if accurate time projections are considered a basic attribute of good prediction. Hence it is implausible to expect family assistance institutions to function with complete adequacy. Third, because of the increasing complexity of bio-social factors affecting family life there will be a drift toward the creation of broad scale programs directed towards all families or, at least, to broad categories of families. This trend will meet basic bio-social subsistence standards for families but will be unlikely to provide the flexibility necessary to meet all familial needs and, therefore, is unlikely to constitute an optimizing mechanism for family life. Fourth, optimizing programs will be abetted by the growth of a multitude of social service and leisure-oriented professions directed, by and large, to the psychosocial needs of individuals. The extent to which such programs will be directly
oriented to family units, as opposed to individual, community or other units is as yet rather unpredictable. Fifth, although past and present functions of the family are likely to diminish it is probable that the family will continue to perform most key functions at certain minimum levels. The small size of family units, as opposed to other social units, and the flexibility of the family as a social unit will enable it to meet idiosyncratic needs more readily than most other units. Moreover, it is possible that families will assume new functions, such as mediating or buffering functions, and will need the assistance of social service professionals in order to learn and/or to sustain such functions. Sixth, and of major importance for future relationships between families and social work, is the possibility that a vast proliferation of varying family services may, in total, produce rather countervailing effects upon family functioning. Some social services may serve to further the integration of family life whereas others may less wittingly produce tendencies towards the disintegration of family life. Seventh, and of more than passing interest, it seems probable that the proliferation of social service professions, as in past years, will itself constitute a main source for drawing women away from the home. And, eighth, it is indeed possible that the emergence and institutionalization of effective social service structures may make null and void many, if not most, of the foregoing projections regarding family development!

Implications of Social Welfare and Social Work Trends for Family Development

Effective social welfare and social work responses to family problems obviously cannot rest solely upon projections regarding the latter unit. It is important, for instance, to assess past and present developments within the social work profession to ascertain, first, the types and adequacy of previous professional responses to the family and, second, the likelihood of new professional developments directed toward family problems.

Social Welfare Responses to the Family

It is important, initially, to distinguish between social welfare and social work. The former constitutes a broader rubric within which the latter may be included. Many social welfare programs are conducted independently of the social work profession and without social work personnel. Among the most visible of such programs are broad-scale governmental programs oriented towards the economic well-being of family members.

Economic Programs

Schottland has pointed to a variety of factors that constitute economic threats to the family. Among the most important are the general level of economic activity in the society as a whole, national disasters, unemployment, underemployment, low wages, old age, inflation, disability, sickness, the absence of one or more wage earners from the home, unpredictable expenditures or income curtailment, and the economic liabilities associated with child-rearing.
In order to cope with such problems or their consequences federal, state, and local governments have created a multitude of social welfare programs. Thus, for instance, in order to assist the goal of full employment there have been programs to train the unemployed, specific efforts to match workers and jobs, vocational education and rehabilitation programs, minimum wage laws, and programs for working women, including day care centers. Broad scale programs such as unemployment insurance and social security programs have been established. Under the rubric of public assistance there are programs such as old age assistance, medical assistance for the aged, aid to families with dependent children, aid to the blind, aid to the permanently and totally disabled, medical assistance to the needy, and general assistance. Miscellaneous governmental programs include workmen’s compensation, job opportunity programs, financial assistance, national school lunch programs, special milk programs, government savings programs, housing and home finance programs, veterans’ programs, food stamp programs, and rent subsidy programs.

In addition, the activities of agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service have profound effects upon family life. Personal tax exemptions for children and dependent relatives, special exemptions (such as for students), income splitting, and child care allowances all have determinate effects upon the family. Governmental programs likely to arise in the future, such as guaranteed minimum income, family or child allowance programs, or demo-grant programs will also influence family structure and styles of living.

Health Programs

The government also has established a broad range of health programs that have a major impact upon the American family. As Roemer has noted, some of these, like mass preventive services, professional licensure, and health research activities directly or indirectly affect all families. Other programs assist specific families, like the welfare medical services, maternal and child health programs, or programs for the care of military dependents. Still other programs assist families struck with certain illnesses, such as tuberculosis, mental illness, or crippling disorders.

Of special interest is Roemer’s focus upon the reciprocal relationship between governmental health programs and family life. The latter, for instance, has affected the former in a variety of ways. The smaller average size of the American family in recent decades, due to birth control and other factors, has afforded more attention for the individual health needs of children and undoubtedly has contributed in part to the lowering of infant and child mortality rates. At the same time, however, smaller families mean smaller households and fewer persons at home to take care of sick members. This may well contribute to the much greater use of hospitals and nursing homes than in the past and to the rapid development of bio-social health professions. The higher proportion of working mothers than in past decades has similar dual effects. With greater economic independence of women there is less in-home care and less use of a single family
enhancement of social functioning wherever the need for such enhancement is either socially or individually perceived. 

Consonant with this objective the preponderance of social work services have been directed toward individual or small group units, including the family. More than 80% of personnel with graduate degrees in social work are employed in casework or group work positions. This datum alone suggests some institutional difficulties that might be encountered should changing societal and/or familial conditions make it advisable for social work interventions to be geared towards non-familial or non-individual loci. Among those family-related services with significant proportions of social work personnel, either at the supervisory or direct service levels, are the following: family service agencies (approximately 15% of all graduate social workers), child welfare, day care, adoption, foster care, homemaker services, protective service, public assistance, vocational rehabilitation, migrant laborer programs, unmarried parent programs, medical rehabilitation, and leisure-time services. A brief examination of several of these programs will permit clearer delineation of past and present social work responses to the family.

**Family service agencies:** In the governmental field, the responsibility for providing family services is carried chiefly by state, county, and municipal welfare departments, particularly the divisions responsible for administering public assistance programs. Rehabilitation agencies, the Veterans Administration, and branches of the military service also provide family services. In the voluntary field, the major responsibility is carried by family service agencies. Family-centered treatment is also provided by a number of agencies established to serve special groups, such as refugees, families of military personnel, disaster victims, families separated by national boundaries, and so on. Foremost among the services of such agencies are marital counseling, family life education, and treatment programs for disturbances in personal functioning and familial relationships. Some such agencies engage in related research, professional education, and public relations activities.

**Child welfare programs:** Child welfare services have been designed to support or reinforce the ability of parents to meet their child's needs (e.g., casework services to or in behalf of children in their own homes, protective services for the neglected child, and services to unmarried parents), to supplement the care that the child receives from his parents or to compensate for certain inadequacies in such care (e.g., homemaker service and family day care services), or to substitute for parental care either partially or wholly (e.g., foster family care, group care in institutions or homes, and adoption services). In 1961 the number of children receiving public and voluntary child welfare services amounted to more than one-half million (552,000). This figure represented about eight out of each 1,000 children in the population under the age of 21. In 1960, about 23,000 persons were engaged in child welfare. Of this number, about 16,000 were social workers, suggesting a rather high density of social work personnel in this field. However, only about half of these persons were employed full-time in public child welfare programs and only one-fourth of the social workers had completed graduate social work education.

**Day care programs:** Children in day care remain part of the family unit but their parents, for economic, social, or health reasons, delegate responsibility for their care outside the home to someone else when they are away. This service may be given through group care or family day care. Recent studies showing few of the feared dysfunctional consequences of day care service (such as impaired developmental rate or weakened mother-child relationships) have...
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**Day care programs:** Children in day care remain part of the family unit but their parents, for economic, social, or health reasons, delegate responsibility for their care outside the home to someone else when they are away. This service may be given through group care or family day care. Recent studies showing few of the feared dysfunctional consequences of day care service (such as impaired developmental rate or weakened mother-child relationships) have
provided an impetus for the expansion of such services. Moreover, the Children's Bureau, the Office of Education, the Child Welfare League of America, and the National Federation of Day Nurseries have attempted to formulate and enforce standards for day care programs, thus further serving to enhance and proliferate such services. Kadushin, in an extensive discussion of current day care programs, has noted the following problems associated with such services: relatively low priority in comparison to most child welfare programs; confined and negative attitudes toward the working mother; the association of day care services with a public welfare clientele; lack of certainty as to whether day care is a social, educational, or health responsibility; perceived undesirability of day care as a supplementary care arrangement, and; relatively limited concern with the day care needs of children of school age. Nonetheless, there appears to be a discernible trend toward growing acceptance of day care and towards diversification in the application of day care services.56

Homemaker services: The basic purpose of homemaker services is to help maintain families and individuals in their own homes by supplementing the services of a professional worker with those of a woman who goes to the family, gives care to those who need help, and assists with household tasks. Oftentimes this person serves as a tutor for housewives who have had undue difficulty in performing basic homekeeping or child care activities. The Social Security Act includes provisions under which the Department of Health, Education and Welfare can make federal funds available to help provide care to individuals and families in their own homes.58 Kadushin has identified a variety of factors contributing to the growth of homemaker services: the continuing trend toward smaller family sizes and, therefore, fewer intra-familial substitutes for incapacitated members; the reduced availability of foster homes, which requires that other resources be developed to meet children's needs when the mother is not available; increased cost of placement for large sibling groups; the growth of hospital insurance programs, which results in readier use of hospital resources by mothers and others; changing medical practices toward short hospital stays and longer post-hospital convalescence, and; the increasingly large proportion of children in our total population, which increases the population of risk of need for homemaker services. Despite certain problems (such as controversies regarding auspices, limited public knowledge of the program and low status of the program among both the public and the social work profession) it is probable that there will be a rapid expansion of such programs, increased interest of public welfare agencies in such programs, a greater diversification of financing sources for such service, and a greater diversification of situations wherein homemaker services will be considered appropriate.59
**Foster care services:** Of the estimated total of 583,100 children served by public and voluntary child welfare programs in the United States in 1962 only 34% were in their own homes and 5% in the homes of relatives; 58% were living away from their own families, with 10% in adoptive homes, 30% in foster family homes, 18% in institutions, and the remaining 3% in a miscellany of other living arrangements. These proportions indicate that foster care persists as the predominant form of service provided by child welfare agencies. Of all the child welfare services, foster care produces the most radical change in the structure of a child's experiences. Upon leaving his own family the child becomes part of a new group of persons, either in a family or in an institution. The school-age child usually enters a school new to him in a different neighborhood, attends a different church, and seeks his place with a new peer group. Furthermore, the likelihood of continuous replacement in new settings is a real one for children subjected to foster care. Although institutional and group home placement constitute accepted foster care arrangements it is generally agreed that the foster family represents the preferred mode of substitute care. Such care is viewed as noninstitutional substitute care for a planned period. This is unlike adoptive placement which implies a permanent substitution of one home for another. Among major problems associated with foster family care are the following: foster family care for large numbers of children tends to become permanent, rather than temporary, care; great difficulties in recruiting sufficiently large numbers of desirable foster homes; broad payments for foster care are inadequate; personnel shortages and personnel turnover adversely affect the recruitment of foster parents and the continuity of caseworker-child relationships, and; there is no clear-cut definition of foster parents' relationships to the agency, so that the parents are sometimes regarded as clients, sometimes as colleagues, and sometimes as paid employees. Kadushin suggests that there is likely to be a reduction in the proportion of children in substitute care, lessened use of child-caring institutions, and an increased use of foster family care. Similarly, there is likely to be a more explicit recognition of the potentialities of the foster family as a treatment resource in addition to its potentialities as a resource for child care, a greater tendency to explore the possibilities for family care among families not previously considered, such as the AFDC homes, and a greater diversification of foster family homes and groups of children for whom such a resource might be used.

**Adoption services:** In 1963 approximately 121,000 children in the United States were legally adopted. About 47 per cent were adopted by relatives and 53% by non-relatives. Although the absolute number of adopted children increased from 80,000 in 1950 to 121,000
in 1963, the annual adoption rate per 10,000 children under 21 years of age has remained quite constant at 14-15 for the period 1951 through 1961. Vault Two major factors account for the numerical increase: the high birth rates of recent years that have increased the total size of the child population and the high rate of illegitimate births that has even outpaced the increase in the total birth rate. According to the Children's Bureau, in 1962 about 80% of all children adopted by non-relatives were born out of wedlock. Although there are a variety of social-legal problems for both the adoptive parents and the child Kadushin suggests a number of relevant trends regarding adoption: an increased number of adoptions, particularly under agency auspices, although the adoption rate will remain steady; a decreasing ratio of applicants to children available; greater flexibility on the part of agencies in establishing criteria for adoptive parents; a more liberal definition of the adoptive child; development of more imaginative procedures in recruiting adoptive parents, particularly for the hard-to-place child; the development of adoption exchanges; the subsidization of adoptive parents who need help; earlier placement of adoptive children, and fee-charging for the processing of adoption applications.

Miscellaneous: Among other family-related social work services are: protective services for children; programs for migrant families; unmarried parent programs; vocational rehabilitation programs; services for the aged; juvenile court programs; leisure service programs, and countless others. In many instances these programs, such as protective and migrant family services, are incorporated within the service contexts noted above.

Examination of the foregoing considerations regarding selected family-related services permits a number of important conclusions. First, the proliferation of certain varieties of social problems attributable, for instance, to increased out-of-home employment for women and increased illegitimate birth rates, makes it highly probable that certain social work programs will continue and, even, will greatly expand in coming years (e.g., day care and adoptive programs). Second, it is difficult to conclude that all of the foregoing programs, should they continue, will lead to a strengthening of family life. Although social work programs such as homemaker, day care, and vocational rehabilitation services are likely to strengthen family bonds other programs such as foster care, adoption, and unmarried parent services may provide viable alternatives to the child's natural family. Obviously these alternatives are designed with the child's well-being as the primary objective and they tend to be considered suitable only when the
possibility for a healthy family life is deemed virtually nil. Moreover, they are designed with the implicit assumption that the requisite foster care arrangements will enable children to eventually prepare for mature and well-adjusted parental roles that otherwise might be unlikely were they to remain in their original environments. Nonetheless, it has been posited that the mere existence of viable alternatives to a given family relationship necessarily attenuates requirements to strive toward sustenance of that relationship and, therefore, may contribute toward marital dissolution.66

A third implication of the foregoing analysis concerns the institutionalization of social work services. Perhaps more than any other profession social work serves as the epitome of a bureaucratized profession. Relatively few private practitioners exist in the social work profession.67 Most services are offered within the context of bureaucratic organizations. The difficulty of achieving sufficient innovation in such agencies to meet the changing needs of American families are likely to be particularly severe. In part this difficulty is both perpetuated and palliated by the close relationship of social work agencies to social work educational institutions. Approximately 50% of most graduate social work education is spent in field work training in private or public agencies. Such training serves to transmit the conceptual and practice orientations of relatively staid agencies and to insulate the field from change. On the other hand, their linkage with educational institutions also exposes such agencies to a continuous input of relatively current and innovative ideas from academia. Such exchanges are fostered through extensive contacts with students and faculty liaison personnel. Additionally, however, there are a variety of important factors that are not especially related to family services per se but which nonetheless are likely to affect the capacity of the social work profession to respond to emerging family needs in a flexible and effective manner.

Factors Influencing the Social Work Response to the Family

As Wilensky and Lebeaux have noted, two conceptions of social welfare have been dominant in the United States: the residual and the institutional. The first holds that social welfare institutions should come into play only when the normal structures of supply—the family and the market—break down. The second, in contrast, sees social services as normal "first-line" functions of modern industrial society.
The residual formulation is based on the premise that there are two primary channels through which an individual's needs are met: the family and the market economy. These are the preferred structures of supply. However, sometimes these institutions do not function adequately: family life is disrupted and depressions occur. In such cases, according to this conception, a third mechanism of need fulfillment is brought into play, namely, the social welfare structure. This is conceived as a residual agency, attending primarily to emergency functions, and is expected to withdraw when the regular social structure—the family or the economic system—is again working properly.

The institutional formulation views social work as an organized system of social services and institutions designed to aid individuals and groups to attain satisfying standards of life and health. It aims at social relationships which permit individuals the fullest development of their capacities and the promotion of their well-being in harmony with needs of the community. This formulation implies no stigma, emergency, or abnormalcy. Social service efforts become accepted as a proper, legitimate function of modern industrial society in helping individuals to achieve self-fulfillment. The complexity of modern life is recognized and the inability of the individual to provide fully for himself is considered a "normal" condition. Consequently the helping agencies achieve regular institutional status.

While these two views may seem antithetical, Wilensky and Lebeaux assert that American social work has tried to combine them, and that current trends in social welfare represent a middle course. Those who lament the passing of the old order insist that the institutional ideology is undermining individual character and the national social structure. Those who bewail our failure to achieve utopia today argue that the residual conception is an obstacle which must be removed before we can produce the good life for all. By once again distinguishing between social welfare and social work, however, the foregoing analysis of family-related services suggests that the Wilensky and Lebeaux assessment is not entirely accurate when family services alone are considered. Most "institutional" programs directed toward the family arise within the social welfare realm, especially within federal, state, and local governments, and are administered only in small part by professional social workers. Most family programs within the purview of the social work profession, however, are of the "residual" variety. Circumstances contributing to this state of affairs and, similarly, influencing the prognosis for future social work developments, are worthy of special attention.

Institutional Structure

An extensive literature is available regarding bureaucratic structure and, more particularly, concerning bureaucracies within the social work profession. However, the vast preponderance of this literature is oriented towards correctional, mental health, and public assistance.
institutions rather than organizations engaged primarily in family service activities.

Perhaps more than any other profession social work is practiced within an organizational framework. The dysfunctions, as well as certain advantages, of organizational structures upon the delivery of social services have been well documented. For social work activities wherein professional services are relatively repetitive and uniform, such as the issuing of welfare payments, large formal bureaucracies have constituted a relatively effective milieu for the delivery of service. However, in instances wherein services tend to be relatively non-repetitive and non-uniform this type of organizational context has proven to be highly dysfunctional. In such cases (e.g., dealing with idiosyncratic familial problems concerning child-rearing, marital relationships, and so forth) organizational models that are much the opposite, such as the "human relations model", are considered to be more appropriate. And, on occasion, new organizational forms, such as "professional model" organizations, are deemed to be more efficient.

In addition to adversely affecting the quality of direct social work service to families, bureaucratic structures pose a rather low likelihood of adapting effectively to changing familial needs. Such structures are likely to sustain services that are rather outmoded or relatively low on the list of emerging priorities. Consequently new social work agencies will have to develop in order to meet emerging needs, thus posing different, but nonetheless perplexing, problems pertaining to interorganizational coordination, the duplication of services, and the possible countervailing effects of multiple uncoordinated services. Retention of a residual perspective toward family services will only serve to lessen the likelihood that pre-planned and effective family social services will develop in order to meet emerging needs. On the other hand, the elaboration of new interstitial services, such as leisure time services, may produce more effective approaches toward family social work than heretofore have been the case.

The expansion of social work services, moreover, is likely to have a similar dual effect upon the profession itself. The profession will become increasingly oriented toward a large variety of services which, in themselves, may serve a broad range of societal needs. Concomitantly, however, the increasing fragmentation of service perspectives is likely to foster decreased internal unity of the social work profession along with difficulties in formulating coordinated strategies for family welfare. Should such problems become unduly severe it is more than likely that there will be a gradual drift towards the emergence of broad scale minimum standard programs offered by national agencies, most probably governmental. By itself, however, this trend need not necessarily be considered as either inevitable or undesirable.
In the immediate future it is likely that the overwhelming majority of social work students will be employed in casework or group work settings. However, the proportion of social work students engaged in community organization training is expanding rapidly. This trend indicates the emergence of new non-familial foci for social work intervention. Moreover, it is illustrative of a tendency toward increased social action activities by many social work students although such activities may be expressed relatively little during one's formal employment hours. This trend, in part, also reflects the fact that social work schools are incorporating substantial knowledge from other disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, economics, political science, and law into the curriculum. The broadening knowledge base will enable social workers to direct their interventive efforts towards a variety of social units, will contribute to the diversification of interventive strategies, and will lessen the profession's reliance upon traditional treatment perspectives. Similarly, social work is tending towards a more academic educational orientation wherein it is increasingly necessary for new faculty to possess doctoral degrees and an ability to evaluate and/or perform empirical research concerning relevant social problems. This ought to lead toward a more valid and reliable knowledge base for the profession and to more effective interventive strategies. Although some of the foregoing trends may direct practice activities away from the family per se an increased focus upon problems concerning ecology, pollution, war and peace, economic sustenance, and so forth is likely to have long-term positive outcomes for all individuals insofar as problem-solving efforts can be operationalized and sustained through the creation of viable institutional structures.

Also, it is relevant to note that emerging technologies may re-emphasize familial performance of certain functions, such as socialization, and accordingly may serve to significantly redirect social work activities toward the family. Thus, for instance, as knowledge regarding techniques of behavioral modification is introduced to social work curricula it is increasingly likely that social workers will strive to train parents as: reinforcers and re-socializers of delinquent or otherwise deviant children. Likewise, as Litwak and Pollak have suggested, it is possible that social workers will become re-oriented toward the family unit as a possible mechanism for alleviating or countervailing some of the dysfunctions associated with the tendency toward bureaucratization in society. Thus, for instance, family members may be trained as medical diagnosticians for incipient symptoms of severe illness, may be organized into voluntary associations designed to assist other families who are experiencing transitions from one community to another, and may work more closely with mental health professionals in order to decrease bureaucratization or its dysfunctions.
Professional Composition

The demographic composition of the social work profession is likely to have determinate effects not only upon the profession, but upon its client populations also. As social work services expand there will be more out-of-home employment opportunities for women. Increasing proportions of men are entering the social work profession and assuming key administrative positions in disproportionate numbers. Similarly, large proportions of minority students are entering social work, often as a result of express recruitment efforts by the professional schools. While redressing the profession's perspective towards certain disadvantaged groups these trends are likely to prompt a concomitant focusing away from traditional middle class families and their problems.

Social Values

In one of the most devastating critiques ever directed against the mental health professions, including social work, Kingsley Davis suggested that such professions were inevitably doomed to failure in view of predominantly middle class ethics, objectives, and professional composition. To some extent Davis's arguments still hold true. However, as noted earlier, the composition of the social work profession is rapidly changing and, therefore, one may anticipate some alterations in its ethics and professional objectives. Moreover, recent data suggest that social workers' values may not necessarily be representative of the larger American society. This state of affairs, however, may be just as problematic as if they were altogether representative. McLeod and Meyer report, for instance, that social workers overwhelmingly favor such values as individual worth, personal liberty, group responsibility, security-satisfaction, relativism-pragmatism, innovation-change, diversity-heterogeneity, cultural determinism, and interdependence. This value structure, in large part, has a determinate effect upon the world view, objectives, and practice activities of professional social workers. In contrast, comparative data from elementary school teachers - a much larger occupational group - show that significantly larger proportions of teachers tend to favor opposing social values such as system goals, societal control, individual responsibility, struggle - suffering - denial, absolutism - sacredness, traditionalism, homogeneity, inherent human nature, and individual autonomy. To the extent that professional objectives and activities are a resultant of interplay within the larger social arena it would appear that social workers' planful efforts to operationalize their value preferences in service activities lie, in large part, outside of their control. This, in itself, may mitigate somewhat against the timely and purposive planning of effective family services. On the other hand, however, the afore-cited value profile may constitute a meaningful and, even, essential impetus toward constructive planning for family well-being.
A variety of other problematic considerations also are closely related to the question of social values. In many instances the legal rights and obligations of the social work profession are highly ambiguous and, consequently, practitioner activities are frequently decided upon the basis of immediate opportunity or upon value considerations that may be either explicit or implicit. Social work activities regarding child abuse cases are particularly illustrative since such cases call for interaction and decision-making among medical, judicial, legal, police, and social service authorities. In many instances the limits of such authority are ill-defined, thus causing severe problems pertaining not only to the provision of direct service and to interdisciplinary relations, but to the long-term planning of adequate services.

Likewise, definitions of normality or abnormality and of deviance or non-deviance frequently must be decided more upon the basis of value considerations than upon legal considerations. And, indeed, oftentimes the latter are determined by the former. Thus, for instance, should the divorce rate in America rise to substantially beyond 50% to what extent would it be "normal" and, therefore, desirable for the social work profession to provide broad-scale services aimed at diminishing that rate? Similarly, should the divorce rate increase what new services might it be necessary for social workers to devise in order to alleviate divorce-related stresses, particularly for children? And, moreover, should such services be successful to what extent would they serve to diminish the stability and viability of the family as a basic social unit?

A related question concerns the extent to which social workers ought to participate in more or less directive or "aggressive" activities designed to help multi-problem or "hard-to-reach" families. This question has plagued social workers for many years and, as yet, is still unresolved. Professional values regarding personal liberty and client self-determination frequently are weighed against strategic considerations regarding the long-term consequences of aggressive intervention for certain families. As community organization and social action activities have become increasingly associated with the social work profession these value problems have been exacerbated. Although the recent literature suggests a trend toward aggressive interventions at the expense of traditional professional values it is unclear to what extent this trend will be sustained. Related questions pertain to the desirability of new family arrangements such as day care, kibbutz, and communal living arrangements. Undoubtedly data eventually will be obtained that will permit the rational analysis of varying assets and liabilities of traditional family life and alternative living arrangements. Pending such data, however, it is relevant to note that some health professionals are providing services, such as drug clinics for hippie communities, that will serve primarily to sustain such alternative living arrangements and to draw services away from traditional family problems.
Extra-Professional Influences

A multitude of extra-professional factors are also likely to influence future developments within the social work profession itself. Thus, for instance, changing values of the larger society, competition from new and/or established health professions, continued industrialization, urbanization, and proliferation of the mass media, the development of alternative life styles and, of course, projected changes in family life itself are all likely to influence developments within the social work profession and, more particularly, the profession's approach toward projected family problems. A number of developments, for both family life and social work services, were suggested previously. Among the foremost, however, are a continuation and expansion of services devoted to foster care, day care, protective services, premarital counseling, migrant workers, services for the aged, and leisure-time services. As the profession expands it will be especially necessary for it to assess whether or not the totality of its services tends to sustain or to weaken family life, contributes to the enhancement or to the debilitation of the society and its individual constituents and, indeed, whether or not these tendencies are desirable or, even, reversible within present or projected bio-social milieus. Within this broad picture the future regarding traditional family treatment remains rather ambiguous. Although relevant treatment technologies may become more powerful the goals of family treatment and, even, the orientations of the populace toward such treatment may become altered.

It is important to note, also, that the development of social work rests largely upon professional developments elsewhere. Social work is becoming increasingly reliant upon knowledge from medicine, sociology, economics, psychology, and political science and, to a certain extent, can progress only as fast as those disciplines develop. Thus, for example, family planning activities have been dependent upon developments in the bio-medical disciplines whereas the trend towards community organization activities has become increasingly prominent only following relevant developments in sociology, political science, and related disciplines. Similarly, social work developments abroad are bound to have determinate effects upon American social work so long as viable cross-national communication channels are kept open.83

Finally, it is relevant to suggest that the social work profession itself may be subject to some of the debilitating stresses that affect its client populations. In prosperous times the need for social services may be relatively slight although resources for professional growth may be at a peak. In times of severe stress, when the services of social work professionals are most needed, supporting resources for the profession may be at their nadir. Indeed, it would be most germane to empirically ascertain whether or not the helping professions, including social work,
flourish most when they are least needed. Hopefully, during times of relative prosperity the profession will re-direct its focus towards the elaboration of preventive services, well-being clinics, definitions of familial adequacy and optimization, and related research endeavors. Although it may never prove possible or, even, desirable to control the interplay between family life and the helping professions the reciprocal interaction between these societal components constitutes a pervasive and continuous reality. This interaction must be recognized and accounted for by those who are concerned with either or both elements of our societal fabric.

FOOTNOTES


8 Reiss, op. cit.


FOOTNOTES


8 Reiss, op.cit.


For a relevant historical review see Bruce J. Biddle and Edwin J. Thomas (eds.) Role Theory: Concepts and Research, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1966, pp. 3-22.


21 See, particularly, Briar, op. cit.; Feldman, op. cit., 1970; Thomas and Feldman, op. cit.


Paul G. Hoffman, "Significance of World Conditions for the Well-Being of People in America, Social Work, 6, 3(July 1961), pp. 105-110;


33 Cf. Bryant, op.cit.; Sprey, op.cit.


36 Hill, op.cit.

37 Farber, op.cit., pp. 179-182.

38 Ibid., pp. 241-242.


45 Ibid., pp. 82-111.


47 Ibid., pp. 57-59.

48 For a detailed critique of the relationship between family instability and aid for dependent children programs see Alvin Schorr, "Problems in the ADC Program", Social Work, 5, 2 (April 1960), pp. 3-15; also, Miller, op.cit.


52 Ibid., p. 535.
54 Zitha R. Turitz and Rebecca Smith, in ibid., p. 138.
55 Ibid., pp. 141-142.
56 Leon Richman, "Day Care", in ibid., pp. 243-247.
61 Kadushin, op.cit., p. 426.
62 Ibid., p. 437.
65 Kadushin, op.cit., p. 507.
66 Levinger, op.cit.
69 Ibid., pp. 139-140.
70 Ibid., p. 140.
See, for instance, Mayer N. Zald (ed.), Social Welfare Institutions, New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1965; also, Piliavin, op.cit.; Vinter, Street, and Perrow, op.cit.


Of additional interest, perhaps, is the suggestion that social workers' values may differ markedly from those of other health professionals, such as doctors, and, moreover, that such values tend to be determined to a greater extent by sub-cultural contexts than by the professional milieu. (Cf. Ronald A. Feldman, "Professional Competence and Social Values: An Empirical Study of Turkish Social Workers", Journal of Applied Social Studies, in press).


Cf. ibid.