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Social Work As A Profession

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Introduction

For most of our history, social workers have struggled, both within and among nations, to establish ourselves as a profession. Perhaps a partial explanation can be found in role theory, which proposes that a sense of identity combines our views of ourselves with our sense of how others see us. For social workers, whose professional responsibilities range from individual case workers and community workers to social activists, policy analysts, and program administrators, the variety of roles to be included are extensive. Those around us, on the other hand, may view us as helpers in time of need, irritants raising problems where there otherwise would be none, and threats to a habitual social order where those who are comfortable do not want to alter their own lifestyle in order to make things easier for the downtrodden. Integrating these diverse views into a clear, mutually agreeable professional definition is understandably challenging.

Voluntary Vs. Professional Action

Charity and voluntary action, while part of the historical roots of social work and social welfare across societies, is different from professional social work. Many of the organized religions of the world have advocated charity as a great virtue. Examples include:

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- the Hindu religion sanctifies charity

- love for one's neighbors is an important duty in Judaism

- the Old Testament stresses caring for the needy

- Christians tell of Jesus Christ who was cared for by strangers and encouraged brotherly love

- in Islam, charity has been depicted as equivalent to prayer

- Sikh history is replete with examples of voluntary service to all of humanity

- Buddhism and Jainism advocate for compassion for the poor and needy

- followers of Zarathrushtra, known as Parsis, have a saying, "Ushta Ahmai Yehmai Ushta Kehmaichit" (Fatha Ushtavaiti), meaning happiness unto him who renders happiness unto others.

Perhaps it is a part of basic nature to come forward and provide help to persons in distress, and to do so altruistically, but human beings also tend to be self-serving, and this adversely affects voluntary action. Voluntary action is that action which is done by people voluntarily or of their own accord, out of feelings of compassion or concern for the well-being of others, and for which they are not compensated with wages. Voluntary action is mainly characterised by:

1) the urge to help others and promote their well-being in all possible ways—not necessarily monetarily

2) the absence of any kind of expectation for any material gains in lieu of the help given

3) a sense of social concern and orientation toward helping others in need

4) belief in the virtue of service

5) belief in the primacy of one's duty over one's rights.

In India, there is a tendency to label Shramdan as social work. The term is derived from Shram (manual labour) and Dan (donation), or voluntary manual labor to promote the collective good. While aimed at promoting well-being and reflective of common public interest, Shramdan is different from social work not only in terms of objectives but also in terms of methods and techniques, as well as philosophy. Shramdan has the goal of getting concrete work done and the underlying philosophy is that it is the duty of every person to contribute their labor for the well-being of others and community. Specialized knowledge and technical skills are not required, and meeting individuals' needs, particularly intangible needs such as for love, affection, autonomy, respect, recognition, and self-actualization, is not the focus. The means of supporting people or providing help also differs because with Shramdan, the means is manual labor.

Abraham Flexner was born in 1866 in the U.S. He is known as a reformer of medical education because he wrote an influential document, the *Flexner Report*, that was highly critical of American medical education at the turn of the 20th century.   Dr. Flexner was invited to speak at the National Conference on Social Welfare in 1915, and titled his speech, "Is Social Work a Profession?" In that speech, he listed six attributes of professions. Professions: 1) have intellectual operations with large individual responsibility (free, resourceful and unhampered intelligence applied to complicated problems; discretion as to what to do); 2) base practices

on science and learning; 3) use knowledge for a practical and definite end; 4) possess an educationally communicable technique; 5) tendency to self-organize (have a culture); and 6) [helping professions] are altruistic in motivation.

Although it has been common over the years to refer to social work as a "profession," scholars have been debating for almost a century as to whether social work meets all of Flexner's criteria. In 1957, sociologist Ernest Greenwood, published, "Attributes of a Profession," that further suggested that professions need societal sanction. Greenwood's list of attributes of a profession included: a systematic body of knowledge, community sanction, authority or credibility, regulation and control of members, a professional code of ethics, and a culture of values, norms, and symbols. Greenwood asserted that social work in North America appeared to marginally meet these criteria, although critics have continued to ask if social work is an art or a science, and if there is enough unity among social workers to say they have a shared culture. Others have suggested that since it is the purpose of social workers to advocate for social and economic justice through social reform, that societal sanction may not be easily gained.

Purpose and Objectives of Social Work

The Preamble to the American Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* states:

Social work practice promotes human well-being by strengthening opportunities, resources, and capacities of people in their environments and by creating policies and services to correct conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life. The social work profession

works to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and oppression. Guided by a person-in-environment perspective and respect for human diversity, the profession works to effect social and economic justice worldwide.

The *Standards* go on to outline the multiple objectives of social work as follows:

- To enhance human well-being and alleviate poverty, oppression, and other forms of social injustice.

- To enhance the social functioning and interactions of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities by involving them in accomplishing goals, developing resources, and preventing and alleviating distress.

- To formulate and implement social policies, services, and programs that meet basic human needs and support the development of human capacities.

- To pursue policies, services, and resources through advocacy and social or political actions that promote social and economic justice.

- To develop and use research, knowledge, and skills that advance social work practice.

- To develop and apply practice in the context of diverse cultures.

Due to the dual focus on individual or group functioning and social policies, social work has long had professional boundary and identity issues. The broad scope of practice in North America in particular, has meant that social work has been unable to hone an integrated identity. Such factors have been compounded by

society's ambivalence toward social work. While social work is rooted in humanitarianism and most do not want to see people suffer, shifting power and resources to those who are without threatens the status quo and has led to the lack of a clear mandate for publicly funded services. These dynamics have been serious obstacles in social work's ability to fulfill its mission and meet its objectives (Hopps & Pinderhughes, 1992).

The type, scope, and depth of knowledge and skills that social workers need is vast, and specialisation has increased (Hopps & Collins, 1999; Meyer, 1976). Specialization can threaten the unity of a profession if there are a variety of perspectives and no orderly and coherent scheme to classify the specialization areas. Some examples of ways to categorize the focus of social work that show the lack of a coherent scheme, according to Minahan and Pincus (1977), are dividing social work by methods such as casework, group work, community organization, administration, and social action, fields of practice, problem areas, population groups, methodological function, geographic areas, size of target (micro, mezzo, macro), and specific treatment modalities.

Over the course of the last century, social work in industrialized nations has fluctuated in its emphasis on cause or function, environmental reform or individual change, and social treatment or direct service. In more simple terms, if we consider the person-in-environment (PIE) framework that social work uses, sometimes the person has had the stronger focus and sometimes the environment. While the conceptual framework has remained constant (PIE), social work as a profession has been reflexive. When coupled with its desire to also be inclusive in terms of specialization areas, it has resulted in flux and a confusing identity.

Popple (1995) states that social work is seeking to firm up its domain by becoming more exclusive; that is, to restrict the title of "social worker" and what is called "social work" to those persons with formal social work credentials who perform certain tasks or play certain roles.

In India, social work is at a point in its development where some of the same issues are being considered. Mandal (1989) writes that the introduction of specializations, notably medical and psychiatric social work, emerged in India's post-independent period, followed by other specialization areas such as family and child welfare and criminology and correctional administration. Economic development of countries is tied to the expansion of knowledge. Mandal concluded, however, that while aspects of Western social work education are relevant to Indian society, what is needed is a focus on preventive and macro-based social work practice. In the same year and in the same journal (*International Social Work,* 1989), Ejaz wrote the following about the nature of casework practice in India:

> "...in this pursuit of indigenization in India, the role of casework has received little attention. The emphasis seems to have shifted to meeting social development needs (Brigham, 1982; Midgley, 1981; Resnick, 1980). Besides its economic and developmental problems India, and especially urban India, is beset with familial, personal and social problems (Jamshidi, 1978). Social work, and particularly casework, attempts to resolve such problems. To be effective as a form of social treatment, social casework therefore must incorporate the cultural elements and nuances that influence the life of people in India."(p.25).

To bring us more up to date with the direction and status of both Western social work and social work in

India, we can turn to two articles published in 2003 and 2002, respectively: "The Future of Social Work Practice" by Elizabeth Clark, then the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers in the U.S., and "Social Work in India: A "Bright" Future?" by Ajit Kumar, a faculty member with the Matru Seva Sangh Institute of Social Work, Nagpur. Clark believes that in additional to image, salary, and reimbursement issues, in the future, American social work practice will be faced with identifying and reacting to new needs in a timely fashion. This requires knowledge of politics and social trends. She cites that in times of conservative government and limited resources, political social work and activism will be strongly needed. Clark predicts that certain populations will continue to be more socially and economically vulnerable than others, only their needs will be even more intense in the future. Frail, elderly persons without resources are one example of such groups. A related trend will be an increased need for health and mental health services coupled with increasing disparities in access to care. Social agencies will therefore need to advocate and also attempt to raise more community and private resources to meet people's needs. There will be a trend away from single profession service delivery to integrated services that include social workers, and information and technology will play a role. Clark believes that the specialization areas of forensic social work and corporate social work will increase, and that national and international practice will help to shape the social work profession's role in social and economic development both in the U.S. and around the world.

With respect to the future of social work in India, Kumar states that there has been a reliance on market development and expansion of an industrial base to take care of social problems. Although such

development has helped to surmount some of the complexities of caste, religion, language, and history, enormous problems remain. He reports that the problems of poverty, illiteracy, child mortality, malnutrition, joblessness, and homelessness, are pervasive, and that corruption and inefficiency in institutional structures have contributed to not making basic resources such as water and roads available to groups of people. He asks whether the goals of social work will be manifested as conditions of deprivation and inequality continue in society, and the state's ability to mobilize resources and prioritize investment subsequently weakens. Kumar concludes that it is likely that growth of the market economy will result in relegating what he refers to as "cast offs," or persons who do not benefit from industrialization and other forms of development, to the care of social workers. He points out, however, that social workers will only be able to play a limited role in alleviating people's problems if these arise out of structural forces.

Universal and Culturally Relevant Perspectives: International Statements on Professionalism

Whether social work can be called a fully-developed, unified profession remains debatable even to this day. Across international boundaries, persistent divisions among countries identified as the 'North' (so-called "developed" countries) or the 'South' ("developing" countries) (Rotabi, Gammonley, Gamble, & Weil, 2007, pp. 418-420) continue to promote differences in the identities and activities of those working in the field. In some settings, the emphasis, historically influenced by North American and Western European developments, is on intervening with individuals or small groups, and less on larger scale environmental

forces (Hare, 2004).   In others, more typically though not universally in the South, the emphasis may be reversed.

For social workers, finding the right balance between these objectives remains a high priority.   As Hare observed, reciprocal influences of the individual and the environment represent powerful forces to be considered in all social work interventions.   "People are affected by their environments," she wrote, "-whether a polluted river, repressive social policies, a school or children's institution, the workplace or a family – and people also have the capacity to change their environments.   Indeed, empowering them to do so is also part of social work" (2004, p. 410).

At its general meeting in Montreal, Canada in 2000, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) concluded a six-year process by voting to approve a new international definition of social work.   The definition identified key values of the profession, defining its core activities, and acknowledging the importance of comprehensive theories built on appreciation of human behavior in the social environment (HBSE).   The definition promotes interventions with individuals as they interact with their surroundings on human, social, and physical levels, and encourages the empowerment and liberation of people as valuable social work processes (Hare, 2004).   Citing the contributions of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, social workers were encouraged to learn how to recognize social, political, and economic contradictions within the social order, and to take action against oppression accordingly.

This meant embracing a challenge to assess problems broadly, respect individual and cultural diversity, and develop responses that incorporated universal principles while adapting wherever appropriate to local and

cultural priorities. Because the IFSW definition and its language were so carefully crafted by an international task force, it is included in its entirety here:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.

Commentary

Social work in its various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and their environments. Its mission is to enable all people to develop their full potential, enrich their lives and prevent dysfunction. Professional social work is focused on problem-solving and change. As such, social workers are change agents in society and in the lives of the individuals, families and the communities they serve. Social work is an interrelated system of values, theory and practice.

Values

Social work grew out of humanitarian and democratic ideas, and its values are based on respect for the equality, worth and dignity of all people. Since its beginnings over a century ago, social work practice has focused on meeting human needs and developing human potential. Human rights and social justice serve as the motivation and justification for social work action. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate

vulnerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion. Social work values are embodied in the profession's national and international codes of ethics.

Theory

Social work bases its methodology on a systematic body of evidence-based knowledge derived from research and practice evaluation, including local and indigenous knowledge specific to its context. It recognizes the complexity of interactions between human beings and their environment, and the capacity of people both to be affected by and to alter the multiple influences upon them, including bio-psychosocial factors. The social work profession draws on theories of human development and behavior and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individual, organizational, social and cultural changes.

Practice

Social work addresses the barriers, inequities and injustices that exist in society. It responds to crises and emergencies as well as to everyday personal and social problems. Social work utilizes a variety of skills, techniques and activities consistent with its holistic focus on persons and their environments. Social work interventions range from primarily person-focused psychosocial processes to involvement in social policy, planning and development. These include counseling, clinical social work, group work, social pedagogical work, and family treatment and therapy, as well as efforts to help people obtain services and resources in the community. Interventions also include agency administration, community organization and engaging in social and political action to impact social policy and economic development (Hare, 2004, pp. 418-420).

To more fully define the implications of supporting social justice, two other principles have been emphasized: solidarity and social inclusion. Solidarity implies "not only understanding and empathy towards humankind's pain and suffering, but also identifying and taking a stand with the sufferers and their cause, ...expressing their solidarity in words and deeds in the face of any form of denial of people's political, civil, social, economic, cultural, or spiritual rights" (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, in Hare, 2004, p. 417). Social inclusion involves resisting any process that would deny access by certain social groups to resources or entitlements, or otherwise put them in a position of being outcaste.

As ambitious as these goals may seem, they have been equally hard to achieve. Some view modern forces of globalization, for instance, as honoring a "seamless web" of world systems wherein social workers are moved towards a "fuller understanding of the effects of social, economic, and environmental policies in one part of the world...on people in many other places" (Rotabi et al., 2007, p. 167). David N. Jones, President of IFSW, speaking for social workers world-wide, has noted that "we need to connect social work with that basic humanitarian concern with helping and supporting people in need, and doing that globally is important for the national as well as the international agenda" (Valios, 2006, p. 32).

Others are concerned that delivering on such promises has proved elusive over time. Summarizing a half century of international experience, David Drucker asked:

"whether, as we proudly and insistently claim, we really are to be found significantly at the centre of concern with the poor, the excluded, and the

fundamental conditions of poverty. Despite our sworn values, do we in fact function largely as selective stretcher-bearers….of our own society, and act predominantly with a Western cultural orientation, indistinguishable from others, currently dancing to the compelling tune of unrestrained free market forces?" (2003, p. 55).

Social workers' direct contact with poverty, according to Drucker, is too often through a kind of negative identification passed along by the larger society. "More often than not", he writes, "(social workers) find themselves valued and identified with, and their services funded as inadequately as, the poor themselves. Social workers become marginal, professional outcasts, expendable too" (2003, p. 63). Following a multi-country study (Thailand, South Korea, Hong Kong, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Burma), he concluded that these processes could have potential advantages when they served to make social workers more "alert and sensitive" to systematic problems. Useful action could follow if the reporting of such issues and incorporation of these into policy and planning became a normal part of social workers' interventions.

Conclusion

Social work continues to struggle to be viewed as a profession. While the field aspires to the status, credibility, and authority afforded other professional helpers, who, like social workers, are well-educated and skillful, social work's micro-mezzo-macro focus has been problematic. We have trouble defining what we do, along with what we should not do or specialize in, so others are confused about social work as well. Including all types of practice under the rubric of social work has resulted in an unintegrated professional

identity. Some social workers resist becoming more exclusive, however, and argue that while the nature of social work is diverse, the purpose and objectives of social work are what holds us together. These are based on values and ethics that are taught via social work education. The means vary, but the common objectives of social work across cultures, according to the IFSW's carefully worded purpose statement, are to promote social change, problem-solving in relationships, and the empowerment and liberation of people in order to enhance well-being.

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7

Social Work Education: Retrospect and Prospects

Vinton L. & Neil Abell

Introduction

During the last part of the 19th century, social work education in the U.S. emerged from the development of the social sciences, the opening of colleges and universities to women and the pressure from philanthropic organizations to develop training or educational courses that focused on organizing and managing institutions and charities (Austin, 1997). As early as the mid-1800's organizations such as the Associations for Improving the Conditions of the Poor and the Charity Organization Societies begin providing in-service training for their volunteers, but it was not until a crisis that left the country in an economic depression in the early 1890's that leaders of charity organizations began to ask for formal courses in colleges and universities in order to have a better educated, paid workforce. The emphasis shifted from a moralistic perspective on helping to one based on scientific principles (Frumkin & Lloyd, 1995).

The quest for evidence-based practice knowledge continues today although there continues to be a dualism in social work education. On the one hand, social work education focuses on professional socialization that, in part, consists of teaching the underlying values and ethics of the profession. This is

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the "heart" of the profession; whereas, knowledge and skills are taught that increasingly are supported by empirically-based research. Social work education has also strived to teach about ways of knowing that are specific to particular cultures. The challenge in developing global standards for social work education rests with balancing these components.

The History of Social Work Education in the U.S.

Three related trends in the U.S. during the late 1800's influenced the development of social work education. The first trend was related to the inception of organizations such as the Associations for Improving the Conditions of the Poor (1842) and the Charity Organization Societies (1877). These organizations were staffed by volunteers, mainly women, who provided direct assistance to those in need. The so-called friendly volunteers from these agencies were not always empathic, however, and some were thought to be self-righteous (e.g., "I will show you how to behave the right way"). Some also lacked understanding about cultural influences in terms of lifestyle and accepting help and the role that factors such as race, ethnicity, class, and gender played with respect to access to resources. Increasingly, it was believed that a complex interplay of individual and sociocultural factors were at the root of social distress. Philanthropic organizations wanted both their volunteers and paid workers to have a better understanding of these dynamics and to rely more on what they referred to as "scientific principles" (Frumkin & Lloyd, 1995).

The second trend was the focus of academic social scientists on social problems such as poverty and crime. The question of whether the cause of such problems

rested with individuals or socioeconomic conditions gained academics' attention. Colleges and universities such as Johns Hopkins University, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Michigan began to offer courses in social ethics and applied philanthropy that covered different perspectives on this debate. Such courses were offered either as sociology or economics classes. These classes laid the foundation for social work courses on organizational and community-based practice, as well as social policy.

Mary Richmond, a woman who was involved in the philanthropy movement who later wrote an important first textbook about social work called *Social Diagnosis* (1917), appealed for a training school of applied philanthropy. In response, tin 1898 the New York Charity Organization Society began offering a six-week training program. Other such programs also started in major cities in the U.S. The program in New York quickly developed into a one-year educational program and became known as the New York School of Philanthropy and later the New York School of Social Work, and since 1962, the Columbia University School of Social Work. A trend toward university affiliation by the philanthropic training schools in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, and St. Louis was seen during the early years of the 20th century. In each city, casework agencies influenced the curriculum that was offered (Frumkin & Lloyd, 1995). In addition to sociological and economic influences, the fields of psychology and human development influenced the curriculum and there were courses on casework or what we now call direct social work practice as well as human behavior. The emphasis was on how individuals and families responded to environmental stressors (person-in-environment).

The third trend influencing the advent of formal, university-level social work education was the development of women's colleges. The Victorian model whereby women did not work outside the home, was slowly being replaced with progressive thinking about women being able to play multiple roles when women began to work for philanthropic charity agencies and child welfare organizations in the late 1890's. Settlement houses or grassroots community social service agencies hired many women who desired more education and wanted a stronger voice in influencing policies that could help to end the oppressive and exploitive conditions they found people living under (Skocpol, 1995).

The first schools that offered curricula that developed into what is now called social work education were called "training schools." These first generation schools began between 1898 and 1929, and in 1919 the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work Practice was established with 17 charter members in the U.S. and 2 schools in Canada. According to Austin (1997), these programs shared the following characteristics:

- They were private, not governmental programs.

- The curricula were shaped by workers in voluntary social agencies.

- They were organized primarily as graduate education programs since most of the students, primarily females, had liberal arts college degrees.

- They had a structured curriculum and admission criteria.

- There were usually two years long.

- Teachers had social service experience and not necessarily social science degrees.

- They trained students to do casework in voluntary agencies, hospitals, public schools, and child guidance clinics.

In 1927 the Association of Training Schools for Professional Social Work became the American Association of Schools of Social Work. This organization developed educational standards as well as guidelines for responsible administrative leadership and standards for university affiliation. In 1932 the organization adopted a one-year minimum curriculum plan that specified courses and required a field internship along with classroom instruction. In 1934 standards for programs' budgets, number of full-time faculty, and library resources were added. By 1937 in order to be a member of the American Association of Schools of Social Work, programs had to be affiliated with a university or college. By 1939 the one-year proposed curriculum became a two-year curriculum that led to a master's degree in social work. The schools that were not eligible to join the American Association of Schools of Social Work joined together in 1942 to form the National Association of Schools of Social Administration. By 1950 both organizations had published educational standards and another group formed to resolve their differences—the National Council on Social Work Education. This organization became the Council on Social Work Education in 1952 and today is the only national organization that accredits both bachelor's and master's level programs in social work in the U.S.

During the 1960's and 1970's there was an expansion in the number of social work education programs, particularly in public universities. Many small

undergraduate social work programs in particular started up with limited resources. The first set of standards for BSW programs were promulgated in 1974 in order to assure quality control and program accountability. Each decade since then, revised versions have been distributed by CSWE that cover guidelines for administering programs, what resources are needed, and standards for delivering and evaluating educational content related to social work practice, human behavior in the social environment, social policy, research, and field. There are also standards that state that social and economic justice issues should be covered in the social work curriculum and attention paid oppressed or vulnerable groups.

Prior to 1950 there were only two doctoral programs in social work but the number of programs rose from 33 in 1976 to 69 in 2006 according to the CSWE website. Although there are some clinical doctorate programs, these programs mainly focus on research skills and producing social work academics who will teach primarily at the BSW and MSW levels. Most, but not all, doctoral programs in social work require students to have an MSW but MSW programs accept students without a BSW who have taken courses in such areas as sociology, government or political science, economics, psychology, and human development. Advanced standing MSW programs are those programs that accept students with BSW degrees and require students to take advanced and not foundation courses in the master's curriculum. All students do field internships, however, at the master's level, whether or not they have a BSW degree.

As of 2006 according to the CSWE website, there were 458 accredited BSW programs, 181 master's programs, and 69 doctoral programs in colleges and universities in the U.S. There were more than 27,000 BSW

students, 25,000 MSW students, and approximately 1,600 doctoral students. At the bachelor's level the highest percent of students expressed interest in child welfare, followed by family services and school social work. At the master's level, the highest percent of students reported interest in mental health, followed by child welfare, family services, and school social work.

Emergence of Global Standards in Social Work Education

Global standards for professional social work education emerged from an extensive process conducted jointly by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). The resulting document, *Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession* is available in full from several locations, one on the web (Work, 2004), and two in print (Sewpaul, 2004, 2005a). Sewpaul takes great care in describing the many challenges faced in developing a document that member countries could agree on, and states very clearly that the result should not be viewed as fixed or permanent. Rather, it expresses the current level of agreement on complex and passionately debated topics.

Why has the development of standards proved so challenging? Gray (2005) suggests that the process involves consideration of indigenisation, universalism, and imperialism, all viewed through the lens of culture. Culture, in his synopsis, amounts to "a system of beliefs and practices that is articulated at several levels wherein art, morals, rules and norms constitute 'social culture' "(2005: 234). Culture also includes political considerations, and provides a basis from which groups define themselves as "a nation" or "a people".

As such, it becomes a source of identity, giving continuity and meaning to social structures, and serving as a framework for deciding whether or not ideas or practices are to be viewed as acceptable or threatening. However, it may be too simple to think of culture as a "static, non-compromising set of values and customs that force all members of society to behave in ways that are expected of them" (Wolffers, 1997: 52). While culture is often the glue holds a society together over time, it, too, is dynamic. Its expression may vary as different members or groups compete for influence and control.

In this context, notions of universalism and indigenisation become important to the process of identifying and agreeing upon guiding principles for social work education. Universalism may be thought of as the search for common principles that are acceptable across differences in culture and context (Gray, 2005). Finding these makes it possible to "talk about a profession of social work with shared values and goals wherever it is practiced" (2005: 231). Indigenisation, on the other hand, is an effort to respect the multiple voices and ways of knowing that are specific to particular cultures. Thus, ideas about the nature and practice of social work that are imported from one setting to another are professionally critiqued for their relevance to the new setting. Emphasis is placed on the political principle that social work academics and professionals from local settings deserve full respect for their views, which must be considered when deciding on the potential usefulness of "outside" ideas (2005).

The challenges of balancing these issues while developing the *Standards* can be better understood by appreciating concerns about imperialism. This refers

to "trends within social work promoting the dominance of Western world-views over diverse local and indigenous cultural perspectives" (Gray, 2005: 231). Mandel (1989) notes that this has been a particular concern in the evolution of social work education in India, shaped by the greater exposure that Indian academics had to American social work educators following its independence in 1947, and the extensive use thereafter of American books and journals in Indian schools of social work.

Taking all of these dynamics into consideration, the IFSW / IASSW colleagues framing the *Standards* anchored their work in an international definition of social work:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (Sewpaul, 2005a: 218).

Acknowledging that all included statements and principles would have to be negotiated and renegotiated over time, rather than being considered permanently resolved, the Standards emphasize global priorities for social work interventions. These include approaches addressing social support, developmental, protective, preventive, and/or therapeutic purposes facilitating the inclusion of "marginalized, socially excluded, dispossessed, vulnerable and at-risk groups of people" (2005a : 219). The Standards are organized around nine central topics, including:

- the school's core purpose or mission statement

- programme objectives and outcomes

- programme curricula, including field education

- the core curricula

- professional staff

- social work students

- structure, administration, governance, and resources

- cultural and ethnic diversity and gender inclusiveness, and

- values and ethical codes of conduct of the social work profession.

In designing core curricula, schools should aspire toward identifying and including materials and methods that respect "local, national and/or regional international needs and priorities" while acknowledging that "there are certain core curricula that may be seen to be universally acceptable" (2005a: 220). Four conceptual domains are included:

- the social work profession, including knowledge of a) human behaviour and development in the social environment and b) how traditions, culture, beliefs, religions, and customs influence human functioning and development at all levels

- the social work professional, emphasizing development of "the critically self-reflective practitioner, who is able to practice within the value perspective of...the profession and shares

responsibility with the employer for their well being and professional development, including the avoidance of 'burn out' "(2005a: 221)

● methods of social work practice, including practice skills in and knowledge of assessment; relationship building and helping processes; research; and the promotion of care, mutual respect, and mutual responsibility within societies, and

● the paradigm of the social work profession, including respect for the dignity and worth of all human beings, inter-connectedness across systems, the importance of advocacy, and a focus on capacity-building and empowerment, recognizing the strengths and potential of all human beings.

Implications for Indigenisation of Social Work Knowledge

Efforts to adapt presumably "core" concepts regarding social work knowledge and skills from universalistic to culturally relevant perspectives are challenged by the complexity and sensitivities involved. The Standards are characterized by flexibility, balancing human rights and social justice with concerns for historical, sociopolitical, economic, and cultural concerns associated with specific settings (Sewpaul, 2005b). Continued dialogue within and across nations and regions is considered critically important.

Even when approached sincerely, the risks of misinterpreting or misrepresenting the needs of persons or groups whose background is unfamiliar to the social worker are great. A footnote in the *Standards* addresses this directly, stating:

While cultural sensitivity may contribute to culturally competent practice, the school must be mindful of the possibility of reinforcing group stereotypes. The school should, therefore, try to ensure that social work students do not use knowledge of a particular group of people to generalise to every person in that group. The school should pay particular attention to both in-group and inter-group variations and similarities (Sewpaul, 2005a: 228).

These issues are particularly important when social workers seek to empower disadvantaged people, and the moral, ethical and cultural issues shaping the social worker's own development may influence how he or she understands and responds to the needs of those being served (Sewpaul, 2005b). Global standards cannot assure perfect guidance, or consistent behavior. As Dominelli (2004) observes, even the very basic differences in language used within and across cultures can cloud communication and introduce barriers to truly understanding another's wishes and needs. Ultimately, social work educators and students must accept moral responsibility for carefully considering each situation and setting, and responding to the best of their abilities in each case.

Illustrations in Asia and India

In her study of social work education, training, and standards in the Asia-Pacific region, Noble (2004: 531) found that respondents from throughout the region, including India, agreed that the Standards were useful insofar as they could "help us negotiate with the higher authorities to convince them of the nature, scope, and structures of social work educational institutions and thus provide a substantial argument for....consolidation and future development of their social work

programmes".   Still, she found no consensus regarding how to avoid the risk of being dominated by Western ideas and practices. "Even the commitment to 'letting others speak' and engaging in 'inclusive dialog' can be viewed as another form of colonialism", she writes (2004: 535), implying that those with a dominant view are politely "making way" for marginalized opinions to be heard.

The American influence on professional social work education in India can be traced to the establishment of the first such school in Mumbai by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust in 1936 (Mandal, 1989). The Founder-Director of what was later renamed the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Clifford Manshardt, was an American missionary with social work experience in both America and India. Over time, the generic curriculum that was emphasized in the pre-independence period (1936-46) developed to include specializations in medical and psychiatric social work, family and child welfare, criminology and correctional administration, group work and community organization, and labor welfare and industrial relations. Shaped by priorities established in the United States, the emphasis was on curative social casework, with less attention to needs of social and economic development, or the promotion of prevention services and social action.

Ultimately, this approach was deemed inappropriate for post-independence India, whose social needs were substantially different from those in the developed West. Gore (1988) writes that professional social work education in India has often addressed itself to the consequences of poverty (homelessness, broken families, delinquency) rather than its causes. He argues that, beyond the influences cited above, another factor is the social background of the social worker,

wether voluntary or professional. Coming mostly from urban, middle-class backgrounds, the workers oriented themselves to offering relief for the poor and disabled, rather than addressing the root causes of their circumstances, and sought employment in settings, usually urban, where they saw the potential to advance their careers. In effect, these differences among persons existing within the same country, but in very different economic and social spheres, added to the challenges of indigenisation of social work educational standards.

Nimmagadda and Balgopal (2000) provide one illustration of success in adapting social work intervention principles across cultural boundaries. Initially inspired to adopt treatment models for alcoholism from the US to India, they found after some experimentation that techniques applied in one setting could not transfer seamlessly into the other. For instance, efforts to promote sobriety using the individualistic techniques familiar in the West were not appropriate in the joint family structure in India. Rather than blaming the clients for failing to improve via these imported intervention models, the social workers began by reassessing their own awareness of the treatment context. They decided that "beginning where the client is" meant understanding the meaning of alcoholism in the Indian cultural context. This lead to a cultural construction of social work practice, including adaptation of group therapy techniques to better fit the Indian point of view. Specifically, they acknowledged the wish that group leaders would be more directive and offer advice by introducing educational topics into every session. Further, accepting that "social workers in India are seen as *Gurus* who impart knowledge"(2000: 10), they developed more personal relationships with the whole family, and agreed to consult with them on a variety of

topics, not limited to a 50-minute counseling session. In the end, they moved away from strict adherence to the 12-step model originating in the West, and used their creativity and experience to adapt an approach better suited to their clients and conditions. This capacity for critical self-reflection, as stressed in the *Standards,* ultimately served them well and provided a basis for helping clients and contributing to the social work knowledge base for India.

For professional social workers, there is an increasing awareness that what happens in one country can and does impact one's own country's practices and policies (Noble, 2004). Issues such as HIV/AIDS, international crime, migration, economic and trade policies, migration and environmental issues become everyone's concern because of the very nature of moving across borders. As Noble states:

Post-colonial social work demands the resurrection of lost voices in the midst of Western dominance, while.. (the)...agenda is to encourage...not just ...individual and social change and social justice, but...a more general concern for accepting differences, cultural diversity, and inclusive dialogues. If further collaboration in revising global guidelines is mindful of these ideas, then it will represent a positive move forward and unsettle previously established power relationships that have in the past dominated the development of social work programmes."(2004: 535)

Conclusion

The impetus for the development of social work education in the U.S. was the development of the social sciences in the academy, new roles for women outside the home and in charitable organizations in particular, and the need for such organizations to have

a trained workforce. The first training school began in the late 1890's and by 1919 there were 19 professional schools of social work. Graduate level college and university-based social work programs grew rapidly throughout the 1920's and 1930's and by 1942 there were also 34 undergraduate social work programs. The Council on Social Work Education was formed in 1952 and has published standards for accrediting social work programs at the bachelor's and master's levels since the 1970's. A growth in doctoral programs has also been seen in the last 30 years and there are now 69 Ph.D. programs, along with 509 BSW and MSW programs in the U.S. Most students indicate an interest in direct mental health, child welfare, family services, and school social work, but schools of social work also typically offer courses or specializations in meso and macro level social work such as community development, administration, and policy and planning.

The development of global standards for education and training in the social work profession involved a thorough, respectful consideration of the balance between universal and culturally relevant principles. After careful and detailed effort, a common document was produced in 2004. It is not intended to be permanent; rather, it is viewed as subject to continual renegotiation as members of the IFSW and IASSW progress in their ongoing debate and experiences. Adapting these guidelines to individual countries incorporates a process of indigenisation. As professional social work educators and practitioners reflect on the realities and needs of their own countries, they must consider how culturally sensitive assessments will refine educational methods and content to best suit their situations.

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<div align="center">**8**</div>

Social Work Education Through Distance Learning

* Vinton L. and Neil Abell

Introduction

Founded in 1969, the British Open University was the first degree-awarding distance education university. It was founded on the belief that technology could bring high quality education to people who do not have the opportunity to attend campus universities. Earlier proposals for a "teleuniversity" (attributed to R.C.G. Williams of the Institute of Electrical Engineers) that combined broadcasted lectures, correspondence materials, and in person visits to universities, influenced administrators at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Ministry of Education. In turn, a Labour Party study group proposed a "University of the Air."

The notion of sitting in front of the television in order to get a degree was not heralded in Great Britain, despite the fact that television broadcasting of educational material was being done in the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. An Advisory Committee was formed in the U.K. that wrote a White Paper. This document laid out a comprehensive plan for an open university called the University of the Air. Although there were skeptics that suggested that the university was a gimmick and that the quality of teaching could never match standard university teaching, during 1969, the first staff of the new Open

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University began work on the first foundation courses, and in 1971, the first students were enrolled.

By 1980, the Open University had more than 70,000 students and about 6,000 were graduating each year with their degrees. Throughout the 1980s, the University expanded in terms of courses and subject areas and the University also began to offer professional training courses as well as academic degrees. The use of computers meant that study methods were multimedia (television, audio and videocassettes, personal computers) and enrollment at the postgraduate level expanded during this time to 20,000.

During the 1990s, the number of certificate, diploma, and degree programmes increased, and there was an international expansion. The Open University Worldwide was launched as fast-changing technology and e-learning allowed the University to reach all parts of the world, although it still continued to broadcast on BBC TV. The mid-1990s ushered in a time when students were exploring CD-ROM and web-based materials, and by 1998, 200,000 individuals had graduated from the Open University. The internet has widened the reach of the Open University even further, and today, there are more than 180,000 students (at least 25,000 live outside the United Kingdom) taking online classes. Founded on an ideal, many skeptics are now convinced of the value of an Open University education.

An Act of Parliament in 1985 started the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The objectives of IGNOU are to:

● Democratize higher education by taking education to the doorsteps of the learners;

- Provide access to high quality education to all those who seek it irrespective of age, region or formal qualifications;

- Offer need-based academic programmes by giving professional and vocational orientation to the courses; and

- Set and maintain standards in distance education in the country.

IGNOU is a member of The Association of Indian Universities and played a vital role in establishing the Distance Education Council which sets standards for distance education in India. IGNOU has a network of over 1800 Study Centers across India as on 2008.

Distance Education in Social Work

Like distance education in general, distance education in social work has developed as the result of advances in technology. Wilson (1999) reports on three distinct phases in the development of distance education in social work. The first phase witnessed the development of off campus programs, whereby social work classes were taught at a distant learning site by faculty traveling from a main campus of a university or by local adjunct instructors. The second phase ushered in the use of distributed education in the form of technology such as interactive television (ITV). And the third phase is what we are in now—a period in which computer-mediated education is becoming increasingly popular. Each of these phases has required innovation and caution when it comes to the quality of social work education.

Distributed education is principally defined by the location of the student and instructor (at a distance rather than face-to-face) and delivery mechanism such as satellite transmission, television, or compressed video (Coe & Elliott, 1999; Siegel, Jennings, Conklin, & Flynn, 1998). Computer-mediated education can take the form of computer-based technology in or outside the classroom and can be synchronous or asynchronous. A portion of a course, an entire class, or a whole curriculum may be delivered by computer.

The literature on social work education indicates there are supporters and detractors of distributed and computer-mediated social work education. Some studies have found a preference for face-to-face classes by students. These studies report that students had problems with technology, the learning environment, access to libraries and other student services, or classroom interaction (Coe & Elliott, 1999; Thyer, Artelt, Markward, & Dozier, 1998; Thyer, Polk, & Gaudin, 1997). Others have argued that interactions with one another are key to social work and that professional socialization and role modeling should take place in person (Krueger & Stretch, 2000). Other barriers to effective distance learning have been the expense of developing programs (e.g., technological enhancements, time for course development, etc.) and the lack of technical support (Siegel et al., 1998).

There are also proponents of ITV and online classes in social work who focus on the increased opportunities for students whose options may be limited due to geography, or work and family obligations (Smith, Smith, & Boone, 2000). Distance education can be a particularly important option for rural or geographically isolated communities (Card & Horton, 2000). Students who attend classes in their own communities may be

more likely to remain and contribute to their communities, while at the same time meet the need for professionally trained social workers.

Stocks and Freddolino (2000) found that increasing opportunities for interaction in a distance social work class resulted in greater involvement in the course and more positive experiences reported by students when compared to those who took the same class without the enhanced interactive options. Jaeger (1995) suggested that distance learning can bring about collaboration and interdependence among students, thus promoting mutual aid.

Social work has long been based on values such as respect for individuality and uniqueness. Student-centered learning can take place at a distance because students assume responsibility for when and where they learn. Technology can enhance an individual's own style of learning and therefore promote life-long learning (Geer, 2000; Sparrow, Sparrow, & Swan, 2000).

Research on Distance Education in Social Work

Research on distance education in social work has grown during the last decade. There are more studies that examine the effectiveness of ITV, but research on computer-mediated courses is steadily increasing. One study evaluating an entire online social work curriculum at the graduate level is also available (Wilke & Vinton, 2006). Central to these evaluations is an effort to ascertain whether the learning outcomes of students at a distance are comparable to those of face-to-face students (Macy, Rooney, Hollister, & Freddolino, 2001). Evaluations of distance learning usually consist of examining pretest-posttest change in individual

courses. They are not easily compared, however, because they look at different types of courses and instructors (e.g., in some studies the same instructor taught both the distance and face-to-face class, while in others the instructors differed).

The earliest studies of distance learning in social work education focused on the efficacy of ITV. An evaluation of an MSW research methods class was conducted by Dalton (2001) in which four groups were compared (two traditional face-to-face, one distance but in the on-campus studio, and one viewing the lecture via ITV). After controlling for demographic characteristics, no differences were found between groups on pretest to posttest changes, course grades, and course evaluations. Similar results were reported by Petracchi and Patchner (2001) for an evaluation of an MSW research methods course that compared face-to-face and ITV students over a two-year period.

Hollister and McGee (2000) found comparable academic achievement between distance and face-to-face students in substance abuse and child welfare courses and reported no differences between the groups in terms of their self-evaluation of learning. Students in face-to-face and ITV versions of a graduate social policy course significantly, and equivalently improved their critical thinking skills (Huff, 2000). No differences were also found between on-campus students and distance students in terms of grades and perception of instructors in a graduate social work practice class (Coe & Elliott, 1999).

Beyond evaluation of individual course offerings, there appear to be two published studies of entire social work degree programs that have been delivered using ITV. Haga and Heitkamp (2000) reported few differences between on-campus and distance ITV students in a

bachelor's level social work degree program that was delivered to four rural sites. Where dissatisfaction existed among the distant students, it was primarily related to technological difficulties (e.g., sound and picture quality). A seven-year follow up study was also conducted and alumni of the distance program were mainly employed as social workers in rural communities. In another evaluation of a social work program delivered completely by ITV, this time an MSW program, Freddolino and Sutherland (2000) found few differences between on-campus and distance students' perceptions of the learning environment. In addition, the groups had comparable perceptions of field placements (McFall & Freddolino, 2000).

Studies are just beginning to be published on the efficacy of online learning in social work, although a literature base has developed in other professional fields. The level of student involvement in online classes appears to affect their perceptions of learning. Two social work professors, Stocks and Freddolino (2000), found that when the level of interactivity was increased in an online social work research methods class (e.g., self-tests, discussion questions, etc.), students participated more in class discussions and viewed the course more positively.

Florida State University began an asynchronous completely online master's in social work program in 2002. In an article on the evaluation of that program, Wilke and Vinton (2006) compared online and face-to-face students in terms of demographics, academic characteristics, pre- and posttest scores for knowledge, values, and skills, field evaluations, and course/ instructor evaluations. Results showed that online students tended to be older, earned their bachelor's degrees earlier, had more work experience, and worked

more hours per week than face-to-face students. Both online and face-to-face students' scores increased from pre- to posttest on most advanced clinical skill items. No differences were found in grades or overall course and instructor evaluations with one exception—online students initially rated facilitation of learning lower than face-to-face students. Online students were rated significantly lower than face-to-face students in four of nine areas by their field instructors, although ratings were consistently high. These differences disappeared, however, when subsequent cohorts of online students were compared to face-to-face students. Despite the apparent comparability of face-to-face and online social work courses, in one study, social work educators' perceptions of web-based instruction were not as positive as for face-to-face instruction. In a survey of 56 social work faculty in the U.S. who taught web-based and in person courses, it was found that web-based instruction was perceived as less effective (Moore, 2005). Courses on social policy, research, and human behavior in the social environment were deemed more appropriate for a web-based format, while social work practice classes were perceived to be less appropriate.

The online teaching of social work has helped to globalize social work education although challenges still remain in terms of understanding socioeconomic and political considerations. Many departments and colleges of social work have reached across geographic areas and borders and jointly educate students. For example, instructors at the University of Hong Kong and University of Texas collaborated with Fudan University in Shanghai to offer students in Shanghai a master's in social service management. Most of the content was presented in Mandarin, but interestingly, it was noted that it was easier for some of the students to read and converse in English in an online chatroom than to

listen to and speak English (Wong & Schoech, 2005). The opposite was true for a course that was jointly taught by American and Dutch social work faculty through James Madison University in the U.S. and INHOLLAND University in Rotterdam. The Dutch students in found it easier to converse than to write papers in English. Both the American and Dutch instructors had difficulty in the beginning assessing students' papers but became more comfortable over time evaluating and commenting on students' work. Ford and Rorgans-Visser (2005) conclude that more descriptive and research based publications are needed that focus on international collaborations in social work education that use technology based teaching methods.

Conclusion

Distance learning models developed in the West originated in the Open University in Great Britain. Initially resisted as a "gimmick", the techniques have since been widely embraced, and emerging outcome evaluations have generally supported the usefulness of distance learning techniques. Overtime, social work distance learning progressed from off campus programs with live instructors to distribute education using interactive television, to the current computer-mediated models. These have been increasingly dependent on advanced technology, posing problems in both cost and access.

Detractors raised numerous concerns, emphasizing the importance of face-to-face learning opportunities, particularly in social work practice classes where opportunities for interactive role-play were viewed as essential. Though outcome studies show that there are many similarities in learning outcomes, development of critical thinking skills, and satisfaction

with the learning experience, questions remain regarding the degree of interaction afforded students. In general, distance learning models have become increasingly favoured by programs seeking to help students pursue their educations while managing limitations in their locations and challenges relating to coexisting work and family responsibilities.

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Values, Principles and Ethics of Professional Social Work

* *Vinton L. and Neil Abell*

Introduction

Values are beliefs about what is good and desirable. Values guide behavior and are derived from familial, cultural, and educational experiences. While societies and communities can be said to hold collective beliefs, it is often difficult to elucidate values within and across diverse groups.

In the case of social work, we say that our profession is value-based. In contrast to helping professions such as psychiatry, psychology, marriage and family therapy, and individual counseling, social work is grounded in a value system that focuses on social justice and fairness. Teaching social work students about the values and ethics of the social work profession is a crucial part of professional socialization. Values (how it should be) and beliefs (how it really is) often conflict for both clients and social workers. Awareness of personal values is a necessary first step before social workers can be expected to learn about and embrace professional values. Ethical decision-making calls for acting on professional over personal values.

The Evolution of Social Work Values and Ethics

During the late 1800's and early 1900's in the U.S., particularly in urban areas, growing attention was

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paid to the problems of poverty, child maltreatment, and delinquency, along with the poor working conditions of immigrants, former slaves and people of color, women, and children. The inhumane conditions in poor houses, mental hospitals or asylums, and jails and prisons also came to the public's attention because of such activists as Dorothea Dix. Social movements to improve the lives of oppressed groups gained momentum after the turn of the century during what came to be known as the Progressive Era. Charitable organizations and settlement houses formed in order to address human needs. People that worked for these organizations were not trained social workers and acted according to their own beliefs when dealing with people who needed help. Anecdotes about charity workers judging and acting insensitively toward clients began to trouble agency administrators who turned to the educational system for help with teaching workers "scientific principles."

From the beginning, charity organization training and then social work curricula covered the purpose and objectives of social work that were based on the values of respect, uniqueness and worth of individuals, self-determination, autonomy, equality, and social justice. Social work curriculum policies dictated the teaching of core professional values and in 1947 a formal code of ethics was adopted by the Delegate Conference of the American Association of Social Workers. This latest version of the social work profession's code of ethics was revised in 1999 by the NASW Delegate Assembly. Many authors have written about value and ethical dilemmas in social work. Cultural diversity, the complexity of problems, risk and liability issues, and the growing use of technology have all contributed to making professional ethics an important contemporary topic.

Moral Development and Ethical Decision Making

During the 20th century, prominent theorists such as Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Carol Gilligan, wrote about theories of moral development. The field of behavioral psychology also influenced psychological perspectives on moral development. Based on his observations of children, Piaget (1965) offered a cognitive developmental perspective that suggested a linear progression of moral development whereby higher forms could be reached over time. According to Piaget, children start off in a heteronomous stage of moral reasoning that is characterized by a strict adherence to rules and duties and obedience to authority. The young child's thinking is egocentric so a child can only take into account his or her own view and not the perspective of others. This cognitive structure is associated with moral realism or objective responsibility and translates into valuing the letter of the law above the purpose of the law. From a behavioral standpoint, actions are influenced by the expectation of punishment for a wrong doing. Through interactions with other children and adults, children discover that rules do not always seem fair. This precipitates the move toward a more autonomous next stage of moral reasoning that is characterized by the ability to look at rules critically and to selectively apply them based on the desire for cooperation or sense of reciprocity. Cognitively, children move from egocentrism to perspective taking.

Kohlberg (1984) modified and elaborated on Piaget's work. His lifelong commitment to address injustice began with his work as a volunteer on a ship that smuggled Jewish refugees from Europe to Palestine through the British blockade during the 1940's. As the

result of this work, he was captured and interred in Cyprus, escaped and fled to Palestine, and eventually made his way back to the U.S. where he joined another crew that transported refugees. He went on to earn degrees in psychology and taught at Yale University, the University of Chicago, and at Harvard where he established the Center for Moral Education.

Like Piaget, Kohlberg proposed that children form an understanding of moral concepts such as justice, rights, equality, and human welfare. Kohlberg ultimately asserted, however, that many individuals never reach the abstract or higher levels of moral reasoning despite socialization and maturation. Much of his theory was based on small samples of male children and adolescents' responses to hypothetical ethical dilemmas (the most famous one asks if a husband of a critically ill woman who cannot afford to pay for a drug that will save the life of his wife is justified in stealing the drug). On the basis of this research, Kohlberg identified six stages of moral reasoning that are grouped into three categories: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional morality (Crain, 1985).

Level 1- Preconventional Morality

Stage 1. Obedience and Punishment Orientation

Stage 1 is similar to Piaget's first stage in which the child assumes that powerful authorities demand obedience to a fixed set of rules. Examples of reasons given for behaving or not behaving in certain ways might include, "It's against the law," "It's bad to steal," or "I'll get punished if I do that."

Stage 2. Individualism and Exchange

At this stage children recognize that different individuals have different viewpoints about what is

right and wrong. Since justifications for actions are relative, each person can be free to pursue his or her individual interests. Fear of punishment is still an issue from the behavioral standpoint. What is different is that at Stage 1 punishment is tied up with what the child "knows" is wrong and punishment proves that disobedience is wrong. At Stage 2, a child believes that punishment is simply a risk that one would want to avoid.

Level II - Conventional Morality

Stage 3. Interpersonal Relationships

At this stage, preteens or adolescents see morality as a more complicated concept. They have a sense of what their family, friends, and others in the community expect in the way of "good behavior" but are relativist and can consider motives such as feelings of love, empathy, trust, and concern for others. They can view people as being well-intended even when they do not necessarily do what might be considered the right thing.

Stage 4. Maintaining the Social Order

This is the first stage where individuals become more broadly concerned with society as a whole. While motivations might be considered good, for the sake of maintaining the social order, the rules must be obeyed, authority respected, and one must do his or her duty. The reasoning goes, "What would happen if we all started breaking the laws when we felt we had good reason?" and the answer is society could not function because there would be chaos or anarchy.

Level III - Postconventional Morality

Stage 5. Social Contract and Individual Rights

At this stage, individuals can ask in an abstract way about what makes for a good society. They can question societal values and the rights afforded to people and be critical of prevailing views and the status quo. Stage 5 respondents recognize differences across social groups with respect to values but believe that all people would agree on some fundamental rights and would want democratic procedures for changing unfair laws and for improving society.

Stage 6: Universal Principles

Democratic processes alone do not always result in just outcomes. Morality and legal principles may collide. At Stage 6 individuals define principles for achieving justice. Kohlberg's conception of justice was influenced by Rawls and Gandhi. According to these philosophers, the principles of justice are universal and require us to view all people as equals who should be treated with dignity and respect. This may require civil disobedience. Martin Luther King, for example, argued that the commitment to justice entailed an obligation to disobey unjust laws because laws are only valid if they are grounded in justice.

Kohlberg suggested that his stage sequence was universal because researchers that attempted to test his theory interviewed children and adults not only in the U.S. but in India, Mexico, Taiwan, Turkey, Israel, the Yucatan, Kenya, and the Bahamas. There was some evidence, however, that people moved through the sequence at different rates and tended to reach different end-points in part based on socioeconomic status or degree of isolation. In urban areas across countries, the results were similar, and in isolated villages and tribal communities, it was rare to find adults exhibiting reasoning beyond Stage 3 (Edwards, 1979).

Carol Gilligan, a psychologist, wrote In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (1982). In her book she criticized Kohlberg and others for basing their theories on male samples. She offered that female moral development differs from male moral development in that it is based on the connected principles of helping those in need (care) and not treating others unfairly (justice). While the research is mixed with respect to gender differences and moral development, Gilligan has contributed to an increased awareness that care is an integral component of moral reasoning. The care ethic is also important in social work.

Based on moral reasoning, ethical theories can take a deontological perspective that holds that certain actions are inherently right or wrong without regard for their consequences, or teleological perspective (from the Greek word teleios meaning "brought to its end or purpose"). The two teleological schools of thought are egoism and utilitarianism. Historically, utilitarianism, or the view that action is right if it promotes the maximum good, has been used as justification for many of the decisions made by social workers. Utilitarianism can be problematic, however, because it can also be used to favor one group's interests over another. An alternative to utilitarianism is a rights-based or justice theory that focuses on fundamental rights and protection from oppression, unequal treatment, and intolerance. Rawls (1971) in his book, A Theory of Justice, surmised that if people have no awareness of social or status differences, they will formulate a moral framework that protects the least advantaged based upon a ranked ordering of priorities. Ethical decisions are often judgments about what values or duties take precedence over others. Rawls called this lexical ordering.

Frederic Reamer, a social work educator well-known for writing about social work values and ethics, suggests the following Ethics Decision-Making Framework (2006, p. 73):

i)   Identify the ethical issues, including the social work values and duties that conflict.

ii) Identify the individuals, groups, and organizations likely to be affected by the ethical decision.

iii) Tentatively identify all viable courses of action and the participants involved in each, along with the potential benefits and risks for each.

iv) Thoroughly examine the reasons in favor of and opposed to each course of action, considering relevant

    a)   Codes of ethics and legal principles;

    b)   Ethical theories, principles, and guidelines (for example, deontological and teleological-utilitarian perspectives and ethical guidelines based on them);

    c)   Social work practice theory and principles;

    d)   Personal values (including religious, cultural, and ethnic values and political ideology), particularly those that conflict with one's own.

v)   Consult with colleagues and appropriate experts (such as agency staff, supervisors, agency administrators, attorneys, and ethics scholars).

vi) Make the decision and document the decision-making process.

vii) Monitor, evaluate, and document the decision.

NASW Code of Ethics

The NASW Delegate Assembly adopted a revised Code of Ethics in 1999. The NASW also publishes standards for social work practice with various populations or in certain settings (e.g., clients with substance use disorders, adolescents, child welfare, health care settings, case management, long-term care settings, palliative and end-of-life care, genetics), along with cultural competence standards. These standards are based on social work professional values and ethics. The NASW Code of Ethics is shown below and can be viewed in its entirety at http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp.

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Code of Ethics of the
National Association of Social Workers

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Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of

direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service

- social justice

- dignity and worth of the person

- importance of human relationships

- integrity

- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code

is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1) The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.

2) The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.

3) The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.

4) The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.

5) The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.

6) The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances.

The Code offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the Code must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the Code's values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this Code.

In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research,

laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW Code of Ethics as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this Code. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The NASW Code of Ethics is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this Code does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged

violations of the Code would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The NASW Code of Ethics reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: Service

Ethical Principle: Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address

social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

Ethical Principle: Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

Ethical Principle: Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: Integrity

Ethical Principle: Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: Competence

Ethical Principle: Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These

standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

International Social Work Values and Ethics

While social workers' efforts to help their clients are almost always motivated by good intentions, as we have already seen, the nature of problems and their potential solutions give rise to conflicts and contradictions that are not always easily resolved. Since its founding in 1958 at the International Conference on Social Welfare in Munich, Germany, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) has attempted to reflect the interests of its diverse membership in a series of documents providing ethical guidance.

The first of these was developed in 1976, and provided the basis for The Ethics of Social Work: Principles and Standards (International Federation of Social Workers, 1994), which promoted ethical debate and reflection among organizations and providers in member countries. The goals included: formulating basic principles that could be adapted across cultures and settings, identifying ethical dilemmas in social work practice, and making recommendations for addressing them. The 1994 document declared that "social work originates variously from humanitarian, religious, and democratic ideals...and has universal application." In 2004, this document was replaced by the current

statement, Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles (International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2004), that emerged from a joint conference with the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) held in Adelaide, Australia. The current statement retains the goals of the earlier document, while adding the acknowledgement that "some ethical challenges and problems facing social workers are specific to particular countries; others are common." This recognition of the potential conflicts between universal and culturally relative ethical principles introduces critical concerns we will return to below.

While asserting that social work is significantly defined by its emphasis on human rights and social justice, the IFSW/IASSW statement of principles also identified key problem areas. These included:

- the fact that the loyalty of social workers is often in the middle of conflicting interests

- the fact that social workers function as both helpers and controllers

- the conflicts between the duty of social workers to protect the interests of the people with whom they work and the societal demands for efficiency and utility, and

- the fact that resources in society are limited.

Nevertheless, basic principles were promoted as guides for practice. Among them are:

- Human Rights and Human Dignity

  - respecting the right to self-determination

  - promoting the right to participation

- treating each person as a whole

- identifying and developing strengths

● Social Justice

- challenging negative discrimination (as distinguished from "positive discrimination", such as conferring special rights or taking affirmative action)

- recognizing diversity

- distributing resources equitably

- challenging unjust policies and practices, and

- working in solidarity.

The Statement also provided guidance on professional conduct, encouraging behavior consistent with the IFSW/IASSW statement as well as the ethical code or guidelines current in specific countries. Professionals seeking clarification on issues of their skills and competence, determination of humane (or inhumane) practices, or balancing compassion for their clients with responsible care for themselves could turn to this combination of sources for guidance.

Issues in Ethical Decision Making

The longstanding tension between universal versus culturally relevant ethics crystallizes a debate within social work, and provides a focus for considering how well principles advocated in one culture can be transferred to another. These issues can best be understood as opposite ends of a continuum, where the universalist view argues that the same moral rules and inalienable rights apply to all persons everywhere, and the extreme cultural relativist view maintains

that there are no common standards, only culturally specific ones (Healey, 2007). Healey observes that this issue has become increasingly important as the profession and its practice have become more global, and that social workers need not choose one extreme or the other when deciding where they stand. Between these two poles lie moderate or mid-range positions where social workers may reflect on other documents, such as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, 1948), and consider how well its principles apply in a specific cultural context.

Healy notes that issues regarding the roles and status of women and children in families are among the most frequent sources of value clashes between individual rights and cultural traditions. Consider, for instance, the challenges faced by a social worker consulting with a Vietnamese woman who has recently learned that her husband, like many men in her community, is unfaithful to her and regularly engages with commercial sex workers. In addition, the husband uses injection drugs, and has recently tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the condition associated with the onset of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Fearing for her own health, the woman has taken her children and fled her home, seeking shelter with her parents. There, her mother scolds her severely, and tells her it is her duty as a wife to return to her husband and resume relations with him, regardless of his behavior or the risk to her life if she acquires the virus from him.

According to the IFSW/IASSW Statement of Principles, this wife would have the right to self-determination, and the social worker would be obligated to stand up for this as well as protecting the woman from negative

discrimination (i.e. being treated differently because of her gender and family role). On the other hand, these "universal" principles might be in direct contradiction of cultural values determining the woman's rightful place in both her immediate and extended families. This ethical dilemma illustrates a serious conflict between the notion that one set of values applies to all, and the importance of cultural integrity in the lives of communities and their members. Professional social workers must refer to the guidance available to them, and decide which actions best respect their values and ethics, and honor the needs of both client and community.

In India, the nature of casework practice often involves relationships between professionals who are well-educated and financially advantaged, and clients who are often poor and frequently illiterate (Ejaz, 1989). In this context, there can be strong inclinations, despite the best professional efforts, to be directive versus non-directive with clients. The helping relationship may be "strikingly imbalanced, with the worker being at the giving end (in emotional, financial, and educational terms) and the client at the receiving end...(looking) up to the worker for guidance and suggestion" (1989, p. 35). Ejaz observed that in this context, despite their best efforts and training, social workers are challenged to truly respect the self-determination of clients, and may even be encouraged by them to abandon a non-directive approach. In this context, the National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) (National Association of Professional Social Workers in India, 2006) has included among its aims and objectives enhancement of the quality of life of persons, their family, and environment; promotion of social change, and adherence to principles of human rights and social justice. Much careful

thought and consideration will be required as these goals are translated into ethical codes balancing the complex principles and values outlined above.

Conclusion

In contrast to other helping professions, social work is value-based and focuses on social justice, fairness, and caring. Teaching about social work values is a crucial part of professional socialization. From the beginning, social work curricula covered values and ethics. A formal code of ethics was adopted in1947 by the Delegate Conference of the American Association of Social Workers. This code of ethics was revised in 1999 by the NASW Delegate Assembly. The NASW Code of Ethics is based on values including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development and ethical theories, the highest levels of moral reasoning are necessary in order to promote social justice and challenging the status quo. A framework for ethical decision making has been suggested by Reamer that includes identifying the ethical issue and conflicting values, listing viable actions along with the pros and cons and ethical and legal principles, being aware of personal values, consulting with colleagues and experts, making a decision, documenting the decision-making process, and finally, monitoring and evaluating the decision.

International social work values and ethics have evolved over time a long period of time beginning with the first formal statement in 1976, and culminating in the 2004 statement currently in use by the IFSW/IASSW. Over a time, ethical principles and values expressed by

these international organizations have evolved to consider the tensions between universally applicable versus culturally relevant views. Much work remains as professional social workers strive to adhere to the overarching values of human rights and dignity, and social justice.

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