

MACRO PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK

From Learning to Action for Social Justice

Frameworks for Practice

Report of the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work

Preface

This document is a project of Work Group 2 of the Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work. It makes explicit the role and connection of macro practice with direct service work. We hope this information will assist our colleagues in developing macro content in academic programs for social work practitioners, educators, and researchers.

Work Group 2 is tasked with advancing the development, transmission, and application of macro practice techniques to aid all social work practitioners. The members of Work Group 2 include Anna Maria Santiago, Barry Rosenberg, Claudia Coulton, Eli Bartle, Elizabeth L Beck, Margaret Sherraden, Marietta Barretti, Mimi Abramovitz, Nina Esaki, Rukshan Fernando, Shrivridhi Shukla, Stephen W. Stoeffler, Susan Roll, Wendy Shaia, and Yu-Ling Chang.

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INTRODUCTION: FIVE FRAMEWORKS

The Value of Frameworks Social Work's Ways of Knowing

A framework serves as a map, a sense-making device and analytic tool that can guide our work as educators, researchers, and practitioners. The context and content of practice and policy varies from issue to issue, place to place, and from one historical period to another. A framework can be applied to multiple issues, in different places, and over time.

Each framework we describe is based on underlying principles and perspectives that reflect the history and values of the social work profession. These “ways of knowing” lend substance and coherence to our work. Each framework moves our understanding from description to a method that includes analysis. Each operates as a lens that can guide the development of intellectual content, principles of action, and assessment criteria. Although designed for macro practice, each framework effectively links the experience of individuals to the wider context of oppression that affects personal, organizational, and community well-being.

Five concise macro frameworks are useful for social work education, research, and practice. The introductory framework is Case to Cause. The three frameworks for specific macro practice methods are Organizational Management and Leadership; Community Organizing; and Policy Practice. An emerging framework that looks into the future is Human Rights. Here is a brief introduction to the five macro frameworks we discuss.

- **Case to Cause** addresses the historical debate in social work about the role of micro and macro approaches. This framework suggests that social workers are most effective when they are equipped to explore the relationship between people’s “troubles” and larger social “issues” and to assess where and which type of interventions are required.
- **Organizational Management and Leadership** addresses ways to develop responsive organizations that foster professional leadership equipped to promote the well-being of clients and staff. Respect for progressive organizational policies is one focus of this work.
- **Community Organizing** emerged with the settlement house work of social work pioneers such as Jane Addams, among many others. Community organizing is the process of community action to understand and address inequality and unequal distribution of power.
- **Policy Practice** engages social workers in analyzing and creating policy change to give broader meaning to people’s individual troubles. The focus is on advancing policy changes that address social ills and improve social and economic well-being.
- **Human Rights** is an emerging field in social work. First principles stipulate that human rights are necessary for every human being to live in freedom, and with dignity, security, and equality.

Quotations at the beginning of each section speak to the framework’s challenges and potential. The authors of each section (1) review the framework’s conceptual underpinning and historical roots; (b) outline how the framework can help to bridge micro, mezzo, and macro practice approaches; (c) present applications for teaching about social work practice, education, and research; and (d) conclude with a discussion of issues and promising developments.

SECTION 1

Case to Cause

Mimi Abramovitz and Margaret Sherraden

Through my current work as a targeted case manager at a community mental health center, I strive to advocate with and on behalf of my clients at an organizational, community, and state level. By being aware of various social policies and community services, I am better able to advocate and secure needed resources for my clients.

—Meagan Bennett, MSW student, University of Kansas
(as cited in Reardon, 2012)

Every social worker should be exposed to both clinical and macro practice to allow for a better understanding of just how much each influences the other. It is exceedingly important that every social worker in a clinical setting understand the importance of advocacy on a macro level, as this is how the decisions that affect their day-to-day practice are made.

—Mac Crawford, MSW student, University of Kansas
(as cited in Reardon, 2012)

Conceptual Definition

Dealing effectively with the problems social workers confront requires the capacity to change both individual behavior and social conditions. Social work's pivotal location between the individual and society positions it well to work on both fronts. Yet historically the profession has focused on the "case" method and placed the "cause" tradition at the periphery of its work (Abramovitz, 1998). Macro practitioners (who adhere to the cause tradition) often see micro practitioners as losing sight of the need for structural change; micro practitioners who follow the "case" tradition often believe that their macro colleagues devalue the necessity of personal intervention. Integrating the two social work methods has remained elusive, leaving the field divided into two separate, unequal, and often adversarial camps. The result has often been to sideline macro social work. In contrast, Bertha Capen Reynolds (1942/1965), once a teacher at Smith College School of Social Work and a social activist, suggests that "we see social work whole and . . . in relation to society" (p. 8). She added "that all aspects of social work are interrelated as varying aspects of an art of working with people" (p. 5).

Historical Background

The "case versus cause" debate began in the late 19th century. The commitment to *case* was originally associated with the Charity Organization Society, and casework techniques were developed by Mary Richmond. The commitment to *cause* was associated with the social reform efforts of Jane Addams and the settlement house movement. Mary Richmond also distinguished between "wholesale" and "retail" methods of social work. She recommended "sticking" to the individual retail method based on an intimate knowledge of the individual and warned against the "diversionary" effect of the wholesale approach associated with the settlement house

movement and later with the development of social insurance programs such as Social Security and Unemployment Compensation (Schlabach, n.d.).

The debate intensified with Abraham Flexner's 1915 report to the National Conference of Charities and Correction ("Is Social Work a Profession?") and Porter Lee's 1929 speech to the National Conference of Social Work in 1929 ("Social Work as Cause and Function"). Flexner (1915) concluded that social work lacked specific skills required to qualify as a profession, which led the field to redouble its efforts to become more scientific. Lee's identification of case with function or techniques and cause with zeal cemented both the separation of case and cause and the trend that narrowed the definition of social work to working with cases (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989). Seeking to professionalize through the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills, the emerging profession eventually structured social work education and practice around three methods: casework, group work, and community organizing. In the end, privileging casework over the other two methods in the tripartite model created silos that encouraged caseworkers to treat individuals, group workers to work with groups, and community organizers to focus on social reform.

During the years following World War II, social work split into two camps: one focused on the individual and the other on social issues and social reform. Group work fell somewhere in between. In the 1950s the application of psychoanalytic theory fueled the division, and McCarthyism silenced social reform. The case versus cause dualism reappeared in various debates over the relative merits of the diagnostic versus the functional school, the problem-solving approach versus the strengths-based or empowerment approach (Jarvis 2006), and generic versus specific social work. The often-heated arguments created internal conflicts that turned the field inward, leading it to downplay the critical interface between the individual and society. The ongoing debates diverted social work's attention from the external pressures that often interfered with effective practice.

Societal changes and the demands of social movements revived the "cause tradition" in the 1930s and again in the 1960s. Except for these periods of activism, social workers paid minimal attention to the adverse living and working conditions that often undermine the well-being of their clients. Nor did the profession include prevention and social reform strategies as key components of effective work with individuals and families. As case continued to trump cause, many practitioners believed that they had to choose between these methods. The resulting division of labor obscured the interrelatedness of the methods and the role each could play in ensuring the intertwined well-being of individuals, communities, and wider society.

The predominance of case over cause persisted into the 1960s when active social movements and the war on poverty disrupted the imbalance by reawakening interest in changing the conditions that undermine the quality of life for many individuals and families. The case side of the coin held its own during this time, but the cause side gained ground.

Following wider societal trends in the mid-1970s, this short-lived interest in cause gave way under the rise of conservatism ("neoliberalism") and its call for individualized models, market-oriented strategies, and an enfeebled welfare state (Abramovitz, 2004). In this policy climate, the distance between case and cause reached new heights. Mounting budget cuts, the privatization of public services, and a policy discourse that once again favored punishing the poor poses new challenges for social workers.

Macro practice took a back seat to clinical practice (Rothman, 2012; Specht & Courtney, 1994), and an understanding of the interface between the two traditions was lost. Alice Johnson (2004, p. 319) said, "social work is standing on the legacy of Jane Addams," and asked, "but are

we sitting on the sidelines?” A 2010 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) survey of method concentrations in schools of social work underscored the move away from the profession’s effort to recognize both case and cause (Reardon, 2012). The most common concentration was direct practice/clinical (56%), followed by community organization and planning (16%), management/administration (16%), social policy (5%), and program evaluation (4%). Nearly 21,000 students were enrolled in a direct practice/clinical concentration, whereas fewer than 1,000 were enrolled in community organization and planning (Reardon, 2012).

Back to the Future

Recently Rothman and Mizrahi (2014) have called on social work to “recalibrate the imbalance between micro and macro practice” (p. 1). Two paradigms already well known to social work provide a way to recalibrate the balance between the two: C. Wright Mills’s distinction between “private troubles and public issues” and William Schwartz’s reformulation of “case *versus* cause to case *to* cause.”

Writing about the relationship between biography and history, the well-known sociologist C. Wright Mills distinguished between the “personal *troubles* of milieu” and the “public *issues* of social structure.” In *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), Mills explained that “a *trouble* is a *private* matter: values cherished by an individual are felt . . . to be threatened” (p. 8, emphasis added).

Troubles occur within the character of individuals and within the range of their immediate relations with others; they have to do with one’s self and with those limited areas of social life of which an individual is directly and personally aware. Accordingly, the *statement and the resolution of troubles properly lie within the individual as a biographical entity and within the scope of his immediate milieu—the social setting that is directly open to his personal experience and to some extent his willful activity.* (p. 8, emphasis added)

In contrast, Mills said, “an *issue* is a *public* matter: some value cherished by the public is felt to be threatened” (p. 8, emphasis added).

Issues have to do with matters that transcend the local environments of individuals and the range of their inner life. *They have to do with the organization of many such milieux into the institutions of an historical society as a whole, with the ways in which various milieux overlap and interpenetrate to form the larger structure of social and historical life.* An issue cannot very well be defined in terms of the immediate and everyday environments of ordinary persons. In fact, issues often involve a crisis in institutional arrangements, and often too they involve “contradictions” or “antagonisms” that are not readily resolved. (pp. 8–9; emphasis added)

Building on Mills, well-established social work scholar William Schwartz (1969) recognized that social work’s important location between the individual and society positioned the profession to bring its skills and societal resources to assist the *person-in-situation* (that is, “troubles”) *and* to intervene in the *situation* (that is, “issues”) to try to improve it when necessary. In the late 1960s, he argued that both case and cause comprised the unit of social work—not one or the other—and implored the profession to bridge the two. Although the methods for teaching social workers how to intervene at the level of case and cause were in short supply, Schwartz believed the profession had the capacity to renew its educational arsenal and to

develop a practice that replaced case versus cause with “case to cause.” This, he argued, would put the micro–macro dualism in social work “to rest” and “create a single vision of the professional function” (pp. 346, 357). Those who are engaged in solving societal ills, he wrote, “must look for solutions that not only include both polarities—the how and the what; the means and the ends; and the rest—but integrate them so completely that they cannot be pulled apart into false alternatives and inoperable choices” (p. 346).

Both Mills and Schwartz speak to the importance of recognizing and operating at the interface between case and cause, or between private troubles and public issues. Mills calls for continually translating troubles into issues and issues into terms meaningful to individuals. Schwartz, who seeks to bring a “siloeed” profession under one roof, adds that the polarization of private troubles and public issues cuts off each from the reinforcing power of the other. Both observers conclude that if we understand private troubles as a specific example of public issues and recognize that public issues are made up of many private troubles, there can be no choice, or even a division of labor, between serving individual needs and dealing with social problems. According to Schwartz (1969), “Every agency is an arena for the conversion of private troubles into public issues” (p. 359). In the words of Bertha Capen Reynolds, “social work and social living” are inextricably mixed and inseparable (as cited in Schwartz, p. 360).

Resolving the Dualism

Over the years social workers have tried to resolve the dualism within the field using different approaches. One approach called for a sharp separation of roles and the other for a merger. In 1963, Clark Chambers, a prominent social welfare historian, suggested that different groups should perform different functions with little interplay between the two. He distinguished between social work’s “prophets” and “priests.” He described the former as concerned with reform and political action, which relied on the social sciences, and the latter as concerned with individual welfare and personal social services, which relied on psychological disciplines. Chambers resolved the dual obligation by suggesting a deliberate or formal division of labor in which the vast majority of practitioners would be engaged in service functions while the profession as a whole worked for the general welfare (Morell, 1987). Scholars generally aligned the “priest” strategies with micro and the “prophet” strategies with macro or policy practice (Wolfer & Gray, 2007).

McLaughlin (2009) recommended a more synthesized approach. She rejects the standard division between case advocacy at the individual level (private troubles) and cause advocacy at the societal level (public issues). Like Schwartz, McLaughlin believes social workers are well positioned to do both. She links advocacy directly to clinical work through their common goal to “help clients become independent and exercise influence and control over their own lives” (p. 53). She adds that because social workers are regularly involved with their client’s financial, cultural, medical, legal, and spiritual issues, they are especially well equipped to assess and intervene in many areas in which injustice may occur. Reamer (2009), a professor at the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College, echoes this sentiment: “One of the enduring challenges in social work has been ensuring that its practitioners fully embrace both case and cause, understanding the complex and essential connections between individuals’ private troubles and the public issues that surround them” (p. 2). It is a two way street. It behooves micro practitioners to recognize that individual well-being depends on improved social conditions, but macro practitioners must keep in mind that changes in social policies may affect individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities for better or for worse.

We take this symbiosis one step further. It is often from working directly with people that we gain insights and understanding about issues as well as collect essential evidence for how policies and programs can be designed that best address the reality of people's lives as well as their aspirations. In the absence of helpful social institutions, people marshal their own resources—they make do. In so doing, their solutions provide information that can inform policy and program development. This is a real value of the case-to-cause framework.

Bridging Micro With Macro in Social Work

The case-to-cause approach calls for assessment, intervention, and research at all levels of practice: micro, mezzo, and macro. It suggests that social workers are most effective when equipped to explore the relationship between people's troubles and larger issues and to assess where interventions are required.

This approach draws from the person-in-environment perspective but goes beyond the most common interpretation (Smale, 1995). As Kondrat writes, "In this [person-in-environment] framework, one would ask not only 'what effect does the social environment have on individual behavior and life chances' but also 'what do routine and recurring interactions contribute to the production of the structures that make up the social environment?'" (2002, p. 444). Case to cause makes this explicit by calling on social workers to examine what individual cases tell us about larger social issues at the organizational, program, and policy levels. It challenges us to pursue actions for social reform.

Exploring some examples may help social workers understand the importance of bridging micro with macro practice. For example, the concept of *oppression* is a theoretical integration of personal and social life. Oppression, "the exercise of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner," is a social process (Morell, 1987, p. 148). The idea of oppression requires complex psychological mechanisms that conform self-image to burdensome and unjust power. People are oppressed by virtue of their membership in a category or group, according to philosopher Marilyn Frye (2010), not because of their personal qualities. Thus oppression links psychologies with social structural components. Oppression identifies personal troubles as shared problems requiring social solutions.

Another conceptual example comes from the field of financial social work. As families struggle financially, many have suggested that financial education and changing poor people's financial "habits" are a solution (Lusardi, 2008). A case-to-cause approach suggests that this is inadequate. Instead of intervening at the individual level alone, it is important also to intervene at the macro level. This approach is called "financial capability" because it increases people's *ability to act* and their *opportunity to act* in their best financial interests (Sherraden, 2013). In other words, improving people's financial knowledge and skills ("ability to act") is important, but without providing access to appropriate and beneficial financial products and services ("opportunity to act"), outcomes will be limited. This is critical for financially vulnerable populations who lack access to financial education, do not benefit from tax deductions such as for home mortgages (Howard, 1999), lack eligibility for public benefits when they have savings (Sherraden, 1991), lack access to banking institutions (FDIC, 2012), and are surrounded by predatory financial services (Caskey, 2005).

Applying the Framework

The following sections illustrate ways to incorporate a case-to-cause approach in practice, education, and research.

Case to Cause in Practice

Social workers can use a case-to-cause framework in their everyday practice. As Miller, Tice, and Hall (2008) suggest, social workers who adopt a “reflective stance” can “see both what is up close and what might be a bit further way” (p. 86). Direct practitioners can identify the impact and implications of macro issues on the ground. They can make important contributions through their membership, support, and participation in organizations and coalitions. They can be the eyes and ears of social reform movements. As Megan Bennett, a social work student observed:

Clinical social workers, through their direct practice with individuals, may become aware of previously undetected social issues that negatively impact clients . . . and it is not possible to fulfill the mission of social work, to combat social injustices and end societal oppression, without incorporating macro work into clinical practice. (Reardon, 2012, p. 3)

An example of this would be helping a family obtain medical care and new housing because the children have lead poisoning. Soon the social worker begins to receive more lead poisoning referrals. She joins a coalition to force municipal housing authorities to enforce housing regulations and participates in a task force that is encouraging development of affordable housing. The social worker’s interventions solve the family’s problem with lead poisoning and also improve the housing stock for other families.

In another example, individuals who lose their jobs often suffer depression and loss of self-esteem. Their personal troubles require individualized services. However, when large numbers of people become unemployed at the same time, joblessness becomes a public issue, requiring the development of an unemployment insurance program as was done during the Great Depression of the 1930s, job training programs that were launched in the 1950s to deal with automation-driven job loss, or job creation programs that emerged during the fiscal crisis of the 1970s.

Case to Cause in Education

Schools of social work can train students to view their practice through a case-to-cause lens. In one study, social work students “evaluate their macro learning experiences as less satisfactory than their micro ones” (Miller et al., 2008, p. 86). Student preference for direct practice, as well as questions about the relevance of macro to micro social work, suggests the need for more engaging pedagogy (Linhorst, 2002; Rocha, 2000; Rocha & Johnson, 1997).

Despite the trends that reinforce micro at the expense of macro, teaching can be adjusted to provide a balance of both. Macro social work can play a larger role in courses across the curriculum, including in direct practice classes. Melinda Lewis, Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Kansas, suggests infusing macro-level content in all courses, including clinical practice courses (Reardon, 2012). The goal is to highlight connections among policies, the social environment, and client circumstances—not to convert clinical students into macro practitioners.

In macro classes, faculty can link the why and how of organization, community, and policy development to micro practice. By incorporating practice issues and experiential learning, students may find it easier to understand and appreciate the need for policy reform (Sherraden, Guo, & Umbertino, in press). In line with this, a semester-long policy advocacy project that focuses on a current and compelling issue that has clear implications for direct practice, such as diabetes, immigrant children’s health, or student debt, can enhance student learning (Sherraden et al., in press). The class studies the issue, its history, policy precedents, and potential solutions

and links the issue to the range of social policies covered in a typical introductory policy course. Students learn how policies affect people but also consider how to design and undertake policy change. Along similar lines, Jansson, Fertig, Hansung, and Heidemann (2011) propose “practicing policy, pursuing change, and promoting social justice” to bring together social work students from different course sections to work on an eight-stage, multiyear advocacy project. The instructor chooses a target issue based on (a) potential for meaningful impact, (b) confidence that policy change is possible, and (c) needs in the local community.

Faculty also can highlight the work of social workers who have embraced both case and cause as part of their professional lives. These professional role models show students how they can connect case and cause. Faculty members can also serve as role models, says Nancy A. Humphreys, DSW, a professor of policy practice at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and director of the Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work. The institute works to increase the role of social workers in political campaigns and to empower social workers to use tools such as voter registration drives to engage clients in the political process. “If faculty is not involved in community change activities, then students are not going to do that,” Humphreys says (as cited in Reardon, 2012, p. 2).

Case to Cause in Research

Case-to-cause thinking can be applied to social work research by breaking down the silos represented by micro, mezzo, and macro level inquiries. Micro studies traditionally focus on individuals, clinical practice with individuals, small groups in a social setting, and other smaller units of analysis. Macro studies cover larger groups, organizations, and communities as well as societal conditions, service programs, and social policies.

The terms *micro*, *mezzo*, and *macro* originated in the field of economics. Micro economics refers to the study of the behavior of firms and consumers, and macro economics refers to the study of the workings of the market economy. Just as economists cannot fully understand the behavior of firms or consumers without understanding the “behavior” of the market economy, and vice versa, so social workers cannot fully understand the behavior of individuals and small groups (micro) without understanding the workings of organizations and communities (mezzo), and the dynamics of societal institutions (macro). At all levels the case-to-cause researcher benefits from including clients, students, community residents, and other such stakeholders in all phases of the research design from planning the study, to developing the data collection instrument, to collecting the data, and to interpreting the findings.

Scholars using a case-to-cause framework seek to avoid research (as well as practice) silos. Each level of research involves asking relevant questions about all three levels. For example, when designing research about agency clients (micro level), the case-to-cause researcher examines the client’s concerns and interpersonal relationships, but in addition identifies and explores issues related to the client’s relationship with the agency, local groups, and community-based organizations and the functioning of these units (mezzo level). The case-to-cause researcher also considers the conditions in which the client lives and works, the social policies that contribute to risk factors, and policy changes that provide protection for the individual in a specific context (macro level).

When designing research about program effectiveness (mezzo level), the case-to-cause researcher measures quantifiable program outcomes and compares these findings to perceptions about organizational effectiveness derived from interviews with clients, staff, and administrators (micro level). In addition, the case-to-cause researcher can explore social policies that affect the quality of service provided and identify policies that might be needed to improve services (macro

level). When designing research about social policies and social conditions (macro level), the case-to-cause researcher can also demonstrate how these macro level forces interact with micro- and mezzo-level issues.

Research Methods. In case-to-cause research, it is often helpful to use mixed methods and to include participatory action research and interdisciplinary research teams composed of micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level social work researchers, as well as scholars from related fields.

Data sources at the micro level may include case records, individual and group interviews, and focus groups. At the mezzo level, data sources include organizational records and administrative data. At the macro level, data sources include legislative histories, governmental data sets, U.S. census data, and other secondary data sources. Clearly, collecting data across micro, mezzo, and macro levels provide a more comprehensive and nuanced depiction of reality. Collecting quantitative and qualitative evidence at all three levels also can provide greater understanding of incident rates and patterns (quantitative) as well as explanations and interpretations (qualitative). For example, qualitative approaches in case-to-cause research draws out meaning at all three levels, including reporting on the meaning of the findings for individual clients, agency staff, community leaders, and public officials.

Almost by definition the case-to-cause researcher is investigating in an applied research environment. The researcher aims to move beyond developing knowledge for its own sake to actively applying research findings in ways that improve the lives of clients, the work of organizations, and the impact of public policies.

Conclusion

The future roles of case and cause in social work will be shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of today's social work students. We encourage social work educators and scholars to use the case-to-cause framework to examine social work practice models, curriculum, and research. The case-to-cause lens can inspire students to embrace social work's unique mission to "to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people . . . [through] the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society" (NASW, Code of Ethics, Preamble, 2008).

SECTION 2

Organizational Management and Leadership

Rukshan Fernando, Nina Esaki, and Barry Rosenberg

Vision without execution is hallucination.

—Thomas Edison

There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.

—Niccolo Machiavelli

Background and Conceptual Definitions

Organizations, organizational management, and organizational change are central concepts in social work. In communities all over the country, people face a variety of social problems that create the need for organized action. Organizations are the predominate setting for social work practice, the vehicle for social change, and, all too frequently, obstacles to achieving social justice and meeting human needs. Human service organizations are increasingly expected to demonstrate tangible social value to the people they serve (Lynch-Cerullo & Cooney, 2011). As macro social work practitioners deal with human service needs and larger systemic issues in the social environment, they use the collective power of human service organizations to promote well-being and progressive policies and mechanisms in the social environment. To overcome social problems, social workers must understand and develop skills to function effectively within and through organizations (Furman & Gibelman, 2013). Social workers should be open to efforts to increase efficiency and apply relevant practices from business and public administration, while challenging and resisting practices and policies that can disempower both workers and clients. This framework encapsulates the process through which social workers both manage and crystallize change within an organization, creating a comprehensive alignment across the service, policy, communal, and societal contexts.

Social workers are employed by a wide array of organizations: public, nonprofit, for-profit, and hybrid. Acting as agents, they receive sanction and authority from the organization. The manner in which they practice and the barriers they may face are affected by the organizational philosophy and setting (Furman & Gibelman, 2013). Further, social workers' adherence to a Code of Ethics obligates them to balance their dual and at time conflicting commitments to client and organization (National Association of Social Workers, 2008).

Most social work graduates will assume management responsibilities, such as supervision or budget responsibility, within several years of graduation (Ginsberg, 2008), and most social workers report having had some management responsibility during their careers (National Association of Social Workers, 2009). Faced with enormous need and limited resources, social workers must bring skill and an ethical commitment to the effective and efficient stewardship of resources and management of paid and volunteer workers (National Association of Social Workers, 2009).

Unfortunately, social work's position in leadership and management of human service organizations is threatened by reduced professional interest, increased competition from other professions, and poor perceptions of social workers as managers (Perlmutter, 2006; Wuenschel,

2006). Organizational change is a continuous and common process in nonprofit human service organizations (Devine, 2010), which results from external pressures, such as changes in funding, or internal ones, such as the recognition of unmet needs (Kerman, Freundlich, Lee, & Brenner, 2012). The social work profession values those changes that incorporate the voices of consumers, service providers, and other stakeholders.

Bridging the Micro and Macro

The core inspiration of the social work profession, dating back to its historical roots in the settlement house movement and Mary Richmond's (1922) book, *What Is Social Casework?*, is its person-in-environment perspective. This is social work's central stance for understanding and attending to what impedes human functioning at the individual, family, agency, community, and policy levels (Austin, Coombs, & Barr, 2005). Despite a tension between micro and macro practice, there is an underlying commonality and continuity of practice reflected in the social work mission, and this is reinforced by our reliance on common knowledge and skills (Austin et al., 2005).

In many ways, organizational managers and leaders serve as a bridge between micro and macro practice. For example, managers' understanding, skill, and behavior might enhance or inhibit the development of community-centered clinical practice that embraces simultaneous micro and macro interventions (Austin et al., 2005). Moreover, it is senior managers who most commonly bring the insights, needs, and innovations of direct practitioners to the attention of organization and government policymakers.

Similarly, with the increased focus on evidence-based practice (EBP), research has identified the importance of the organizational setting in the effective delivery of such interventions (Aarons, 2005, 2006; Aarons, Sommerfeld, & Walrath-Greene, 2009). Sadly, the recent proliferation of promising and empirically tested interventions and protocols has not been matched by widespread and effective implementation in community settings (Aarons et al., 2009). Concern about this development has focused attention on identifying and testing mechanisms that facilitate or inhibit EBP dissemination and implementation (Aarons, 2005; Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004; Simpson, 2002). Researchers have found that adoption and use of EBP is influenced by both organizational context and individual provider characteristics (Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002; Greenhalgh et al., 2004).

Applying the Framework

Ideas for incorporating a case-to-cause approach to education, practice, and research are illustrated in the following sections.

Organizational Management and Change in Education

Social workers are often leaders of nonprofit organizations (Wilson & Lau, 2011). Social workers rise through the ranks of social service organizations because of their social justice perspective, ethical base, and the overarching values of the profession (Brown, 2008). Despite their success in the field, schools of social work do not provide enough students with the competencies and training needed for effective management practice.

Schools of social work currently do not provide adequate professional preparation for the management and leadership of organizations. Some schools are developing new or expanded programs centered on organization, management, and leadership, but in schools of social work these programs are limited for a number of reasons:

- **Lack of student interest.** According to Ezell, Chernesky, and Healy (2004), only 2.4% of MSW students are enrolled in programs of management and administration. This shows a significant lack of student interest in management and leadership. Many social work students do not fully appreciate the management and leadership issues they will face on a daily basis.
- **Lack of faculty expertise and interest.** The social work profession's focus is primarily at the micro level. Few social work educators are interested in or have the capacity to teach management and leadership courses. This has led to fewer courses being offered and less focus on management.
- **Lack of curriculum.** With some notable exceptions, the vast majority of curriculum in schools of social work focuses on issues pertaining to topics such as mental health, physical well-being, aging, and addictions. However, schools of public administration, public policy, and business now offer nonprofit management tracks and some graduate schools offer nonprofit management degrees.
- **Limited practicum opportunities.** For graduate programs, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) mandates that field placements be supervised by social workers. With declining numbers of social workers in management, students find it difficult to secure management-oriented field placements with social workers in leadership positions.

Organizational Management and Change in Practice

Kotter and Heskett (1992) suggest that adaptive organizational cultures that encourage continuous change perform better than organizations with a strong, notable style and culture designed for their current organizational conditions (Frontiera, 2010). Agency leaders and members must understand the changes occurring in the external environment and recognize how these changes affect their organizations. Private and public human service organizations exist in environments in which the pace of change is dizzying and the need for responsive adaptation is demanding. At the same time, some of these changes may not align with the mission of social work. Organizations must maintain a critical stance to ensure that change does not jeopardize professional standards, but they do not have the luxury to change or not. Organizations must change in response to the external driving forces or jeopardize their very existence (Proehl, 2001).

Organizational culture and climate are contextual factors that affect staff acceptance of innovation. In a study among 301 public sector mental health service providers from 49 programs providing mental health services for youth and families, Aarons and Sawitzky (2006) found that a constructive culture was associated with more positive attitudes toward adoption of evidence-based practices (EBPs), and poorer organizational climates were associated with perceived divergence from usual practice and EBPs.

One of the key factors associated with successful organization change is leadership (Schmid, 2010). Effective leaders are critical to the creation and maintenance of healthy organizations. They direct the organization under routine circumstances and guide the organization when change is required. Their commitment is particularly important when change is being implemented due to ensuing crises. When the leadership is committed to change, and when that commitment is articulated to the members of the organization, the workers' sense of uncertainty and insecurity is reduced (Schmid, 2010).

Leadership and management in social service agencies differ in some respects from that in other types of organizations (Watson & Hoefler, 2014; Wuenschel, 2006). Social service agency leadership includes addressing difficult moral choices, accommodating the expectations of external constituents, advocating for stigmatized populations, collaborating with other agencies, and relying on frontline professional personnel (Patti, 2000). Individuals with alternate training may not share these social work commitments and may find these leadership challenges difficult to meet. They may struggle with meeting the ethical commitments to the client, crafting a vision of social justice, understanding the person-in-environment focus, and developing a commitment to social policy work and a sensitivity to social work practice. To ensure that the values of social work remain prominent within social service agencies, the social work profession needs to be more competitive in training leaders in the social service labor market (Wuenschel, 2006).

Organizational Management and Change in Research

The Network for Social Work Management sponsors the journal *Human Service Organizations, Management, Leadership & Governance*, formerly known as *Administration in Social Work*. Likewise, the *Journal of Community Practice*, sponsored by the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA), publishes research on management, leadership, and organizational change. Social work also draws freely on scholarship from business, nonprofit management, public administration, and numerous other fields.

The past decade has seen a rise in the commitment to evidence-based management practices. The Center for Evidence-Based Management promotes the application of high-quality evidence and empirical knowledge to management decision making and provides resources to assist in research, teaching, and practice (Center for Evidence-Based Management, n.d.). The application of evidence-based principles and methods bridges the micro–macro divide and is appropriate across the spectrum of social work practice. Though less developed than in direct practice, there is a growing body of empirical knowledge available to guide managers (McNeece & Thyer, 2004). Adoption by social workers of evidence-based management practices may improve external perceptions of social work management abilities.

Major Issues and Promising Developments

The current economic climate remains difficult for many individuals and organizations despite the official end of the 2007 recession. Nonprofit leaders have described this environment as a perfect storm in which revenues have decreased at the very time demand for services has increased (Nonprofit Finance Fund, 2014; Wilder Research, 2011). In fact, 12% of organizations responding to a 2010 survey about the effect of the nonprofit economy in the nonprofit sector said they had restructured or merged with another organization to reduce their budgets (McLean & Brouwer, 2010). Many funders are now asking how nonprofit organizations can become more cost effective, efficient, and avoid duplication of services (Wilder Research, 2011). Likewise, funder and stakeholder demands for outcome measurement, evaluation, and organizational accountability are growing.

Nonprofit human service organizations are being asked to do more with fewer resources. Today's complex social problems require creative solutions, and nonprofit sector activity in social entrepreneurship is increasing. This is essentially a hybrid phenomenon of social work macro practice principles and business innovation activities (Germak & Singh, 2010). Social venturing, nonprofit organizations adopting commercial strategies, social cooperative enterprises, and community entrepreneurship are just some of the distinct phenomena discussed

and analyzed under the “umbrella construct” of social entrepreneurship (Mair, 2010). Given the increasingly competitive nonprofit marketplace in which administrators routinely vie for limited funds (Salamon, 1999), social work professionals need to leverage business practices to meet the changing demands in the marketplace (Germak & Singh, 2010).

Venture philanthropy, a novel practice available to social work administrators, is gaining ground in the arena of social entrepreneurship (Germak & Singh, 2010). Frumkin (2003) equates venture philanthropy in the nonprofit sector to venture capital and private equity in the business world. For example, a venture grant will typically last five to seven years (similar to a venture capital investment); during this time the venture philanthropist participates in a partnership with the grantee, advising its management and remaining fully invested in the success of the venture (Germak & Singh, 2010). Increased collaboration, hybridization, and growing stakeholder expectations for input into organizational services and strategies are reshaping our understanding of organizational accountability and nonprofit governance (Renz, 2010).

Governance structures also differ in hybrid organizational arrangements (Cornforth & Spear, 2010). An expanded understanding is emerging of governance as a function, as distinct from the organizational board, which is a structure. The governance function—how an agency delivers, designs, resources, and coordinates its services—is shaped by a network of organizational relationships. Governance is characterized as segmentary, polycentric, networked, and integrated (Renz, 2010). Such a conception challenges the traditional notion of governance whereby authority, responsibility, and liability are vested solely in the board.

Other scholars have advanced the need for new forms, such as engagement governance, in which a network of stakeholders shares governance responsibility and authority, embraces principles of participatory democracy, and reflects open systems and community-level decision making (Freiwirth, 2007). Guo (2012) has advanced the concept of participatory representation, which entails direct involvement between organizational leaders and their constituents. Expanded notions of accountability that include mission performance in addition to legal compliance and fiduciary performance place new demands on the work of governing bodies and their need to engage diverse stakeholders, including those outside the organization (Coule, 2013; Morrison & Salipante, 2007). Social workers are particularly well equipped to embrace an organization-in-environment perspective that complements our historic micro–macro orientation.

Conclusion

Organizational management and organizational change are essential functions and processes embedded and flowing through the life of human service organizations. The internal and external pressures that social workers face in organizations are common and continuous. As managers, social workers must function with the highest commitment to the effective and efficient provision of services and the ethical treatment of clients as well as paid and volunteer workers. As change agents, social workers must discover, craft, and employ organizational change strategies that counteract oppression and expand social justice for communities. A thorough knowledge of how organizations work and well-honed leadership and management skills form the basis of organizational management and change. This knowledge and these skills need to be created, explored, and incorporated through research, teaching, and in practice.

Two of NASW’s (2010) Imperatives for the Next Decade are:

- Infuse models of sustainable business and management practice in social work education and practice.
- Integrate leadership training in social work curricula at all levels.

To achieve these goals, we must increase the number of social workers who possess the capacity to lead organizations through education and training. This movement will shape the course through which organizations are the conduits of social change and empowerment in communities across the globe.

SECTION 3

Community Organizing

Susan Roll, Mark S. Homan, and Steve Burghardt

*The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until
it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.*

—Jane Addams

*Social work can defend its standards only if it realizes the organized
nature of the opposition to it, why these interests are opposed,
and where its own allies are to be found.*

— Bertha Capen Reynolds
An Uncharted Journey (1963)

*We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community
gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change
takes place in living systems, not from above but from within,
from many local actions occurring simultaneously.*

—Grace Lee Boggs

Conceptual Definitions

Community organizing is a broad term with an essential focus on inequality and the redistribution of power through community action. Simply, community organizing can be defined as “a process of helping communities join together to identify and solve problems” (Ohmer & Brooks, 2013, p. 3). Recently scholars have shifted focus from identifying problems to identifying strengths and opportunities (McKnight & Block, 2012).

The process of relationship building is a central piece in community organizing because it provides for greater sustainability of an effort. According to Bobo, Kendall, and Max (2001), community organizing is based in large part on personal relationships. It is through building our capacity to work together that we can change the larger systems. Also important is that the effort be led by the community itself. As outlined by Lewin (1946, p. 40) early in the 20th century, “those closest to any change must be involved in the change in order for the change to be effective.” This creates local leaders who are able to benefit as individuals, it strengthens community capacity, and it allows for the change efforts to be sustainable over time (Homan, 2016).

Historical Background

Much of our work in community organizing is based on brave activists whose work demonstrated how oppressed groups can gain power through collective action. Jane Addams, founder of Hull House and the settlement house movement is one such pioneer. Saul Alinsky (1971) is another whose radical model of organizing has informed our work in the community. Here he outlined the importance of tackling power disparities:

We are concerned with how to create mass organizations to seize power and give it to the people; to realize the democratic dream of equality, justice, peace, cooperation, equal and full opportunities for education, full and useful

employment, health, and the creation of those circumstances in which man can have the chance to live by values that give meaning to life. (p. 3)

Although Alinsky focused on the ends over the means and the use of creative tactics to achieve them, much of community organizing, as demonstrated through successful movements, is about the process itself. Gil (1998) outlines four key principles of radical social work that are fundamental to community organizing. These include taking a firm stance on social justice and rejecting politics; moving beyond technical or professional approaches in favor of progressive action; maintaining the centrality of critical consciousness as outlined by Freire (1970); and creating reciprocal and nonhierarchical relationships between social workers, clients, and communities. Not all change efforts are necessarily about creating a broader movement, but these principles still hold.

Community organizing is not unique to social work, but it most certainly is a central component of our history and current practice, although in recent decades its importance has decreased due to competing agendas (Reisch, 2013). Many attribute social work's early community organizing work to our partnership with the rank-and-file movement, largely led by Bertha Capen Reynolds, and the rapid growth of labor unions (1931–1950).

Reynolds (1963), a leader in the rank-and-file movement of the 1930s, articulated a vision for social work theory and practice focused on addressing the fundamentally unjust social order of the time. In her autobiography, she articulated “five simple principles” for developing justice-centered social work practice.

1. Social work exists to serve people in need.
2. Social work exists to help people help themselves. As such, social workers should support organizing efforts among poor and vulnerable populations.
3. Social work practice operates by communication, listening and sharing experiences.
4. Social workers should join forces with other movements and efforts designed to improve social conditions for the most vulnerable.
5. Social workers should promote mutuality and equality between workers and clients rather than professional dominance and hierarchy.

On this last point, it is important to put together a solid argument to support our position or to help communities put together a good argument, but it is not the power of argument or position that most matters. It is the power of the support for that position, the power of organization and its ability to mobilize various forms of expressions of support. An organized effort makes the difference. Saul Alinsky's work provides one historical example of successful organizing. In organizing in Chicago's neighborhoods during the 1950s, Alinsky sought improved working and living conditions for low-wage families. Both the civil rights (1954–1968) and women's (1848–1920) movements offer other examples of successful community organizing.

More recent examples show that organizing remains connected to the original principles of broad community involvement based on building partnerships over time through relationship building and developing indigenous leadership. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a classic example of community organizing in the contemporary context. DSNI has been organizing in their marginalized urban neighborhood of Boston for decades in a fight for fair housing loans and access to city services and support. The environmental justice movement represents another arena in which organizers have mobilized oppressed communities to fight the power of corporations who pollute poor neighborhoods. It includes groups such as Clean Water Action, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, and Women's Voices for the Earth. In fact,

community organizing has contributed to gains on most issues including LGBTQ+ rights, movements to end the death penalty, the fight for a livable wage, and food justice.

Hundreds of small and large examples of community organizing can be found throughout U.S. neighborhoods: a small group of residents successfully come together to build a community garden or kids in schools organize for healthier food in the cafeteria. Although different in scale, these movements use similar strategies and tactics to gain power. Some of the latest iterations of community organizing can be found in the work around strengthening and preserving communities, supporting the development of social bonds, and employing collective problem solving.

Twenty-first century community organizing has also adapted its historic principles and practices to include work on agency program development for oppressed populations, electoral reform work, youth development work often located in schools, and, more recently, environmental activism. Rather than relying on “radical” tactics alone, these organizing efforts, often involving social workers from different methods, emphasize the development of indigenous leaders from oppressed groups, the expansion of social welfare entitlements to the disenfranchised, and community empowerment as a mechanism for social capital formation (Burghardt, 2014; DeFilippis, Fisher, & Schragge, 2010; Fabricant, 2010; Wagner, 2005).

Bridging Macro and Micro Social Work

Many who teach and learn about community organizing are familiar with the parable of the babies floating down the river. In this story, people in a small village located next to a stream are alarmed when they find a small baby floating in the river. Soon after rescuing the baby, villagers see another floating down the river . . . and another . . . and another. The villagers get together and distribute the tasks of rescuing, feeding, and attending to the babies. Soon they have a dependable system for tending to the babies, but they failed to investigate why the babies were in the water in the first place and could not solve the problem upstream. The macro practitioner helps to save the babies in the village but also works upstream to determine and prevent more babies from entering the river. The parable demonstrates the connection of practice with individuals (micro) to community organizing (macro). Social workers attend to the immediate problems of those in trouble, but they also organize and build systems to prevent those troubles from occurring.

This example demonstrates the importance of working on multiple levels. Families and individuals must have food, shelter, and support today, but we also must work to change the systems that cause inequality and oppression. Through community organizing, social workers complement and strengthen the profession’s work with individuals and families.

These ideals are reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics (2008), which requires that we “engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully” (Sec. 6.04). Where social workers are called to service, the charge is not only to aid the individual but to “address social problems . . . and challenge social injustice.” It is through the collective action of community organizing that social workers realize commitments to clients, to the profession, and to society as a whole.

Applying the Framework

The following sections offer examples for incorporating a community organizing approach in practice, education, and research.

Community Organizing in Practice

Social workers can use a community organizing framework in practice with individuals and families. Helping a family obtain an affordable housing loan will help the family meet its immediate needs. However, families that get involved in a local organizing project in their neighborhood for fair housing practices not only receive short-term benefits but also meet their neighbors and feel invested in their neighborhood and gain a sense of control in local policy decisions, all of which can empower families to realize the strength of their voices. Research shows that community organizing initiatives can be effective for promoting empowerment in participants (Maton, 2008; Speer & Hughey, 1995).

Community Organizing in Education

Social work students at bachelor's and master's levels take courses on community practice. Often these courses utilize community engagement and service-learning components in which students develop or engage in some local community organizing work. Service-learning is a high-impact learning opportunity that is growing rapidly in social work programs.

This increased emphasis on service-learning and civic engagement creates a platform for social work, which has long practiced community organizing as a way to empower communities and individuals. However, there is need for caution. Service without the learning and critical analysis is like charity work that often only furthers economic and class divides. It is incumbent on social work educators to ensure that students engage in real community work that addresses not only the immediate needs of families and individuals but also works toward changing the larger systems that keep people oppressed. Indeed, we would do well to be on the forefront of such initiatives in higher education nationwide.

Community Organizing in Research

Universities, particularly in urban areas, are becoming involved in urban planning and renewal out of necessity and by obligation. Large universities in major cities such as New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Los Angeles find themselves in complicated political discourse around issues of eminent domain, public good, and gentrification. Meanwhile, federal funding, such as Promise Neighborhood and Neighborhood Choice grants, is engaging universities in community development work (Soska, 2012). A host of local issues could benefit from research with an organizing orientation: community policing, infant mortality, food justice, obesity, and the growing attention around local alternative economies, to name a few.

How do we support strengthening the health and well-being of urban communities while fostering the voice of local neighborhoods in a fair and equitable way? Universities will be looking for research and best practices as they work jointly with neighborhoods and cities to answer this difficult question. Social work would do well to be positioned to inform these answers.

Equally important—and often overlooked—is the work of colleagues in rural communities with their unique challenges and opportunities. Southern Echo, Rural Organizing Project, and FEAST are some of the many examples of solid community organizing work being done in rural settings. Issues facing rural communities include economic development, environmental health, drug use, and intimate partner violence, which offer a rich agenda for community organizing education, research, and practice.

Major Issues and Promising Developments

One of the most significant issues in community organizing in the U.S. context is the widening chasm between people in power and people on the local level. The significant power grab by corporations, who increasingly have influence over media, politicians, and public discourse, has made many traditional methods of organizing less effective. Alperovitz (2013) foresees a revolution in which we democratize wealth acquisition and strengthen diverse communities to build local capacity. As we become increasingly aware of the devastating effects on community of income and wealth inequality, social workers would do well to develop community organizing tactics that are relevant and effective.

Fortunately, rapidly expanding communication technologies and social networking sites provide new and dynamic opportunities for organizing communities and gaining people's support. Online channels have created new types of organizing power, even though they remain based on many of the fundamental tenets of our earliest work. Taking to the streets and boycotts, for example, have given way to cyberprotests and cyberactivism (Martin & Kracher, 2008). These new tools for creating change are inexpensive and increasingly accessible and can produce immediate and dramatic responses in terms of the sheer number of people involved, allowing them to be highly influential in changing policies and tackling oppressive business practices (Homan, 2016; Rehbein, Waddock, & Graves, 2004). Using these new communication channels, campaigns for marriage equality, a living wage, climate change, and chemicals in consumer products can organize and successfully pressure those in power to create change.

Conclusion

Today's community organizing is based on a set of practices that commits people to collective action through a blend of individual, group, and community approaches capable of sustained efforts for change. With an essential focus on inequality and the redistribution of power, community action has adapted in the 21st century to encompass individual skill sets, Internet resources, and a commitment to bottom-up approaches to sharing problem solving as well as sharing power. Social work itself has deep roots that spring from community organizing efforts. The central tenets of building relationships and developing local leadership can be seen in the work done in both urban and rural settings. As new tactics and strategies develop through social networks and the dynamics of globalization help us to mobilize even more broadly, there is great possibility in our field. By uniting all types of social workers and community members committed to a vision of a more just and equitable and humane world, 21st century community organizing is emerging as the vital center for our profession and for the people with whom we work.

SECTION 4

Policy Practice

Eli Bartle, Marietta Barretti, and Yu-Ling Chang

The absence of social workers from social policy practice is damaging to the identity of the profession and to the clients whose interests they should represent and defend.

—Josefina Figueira-McDonough
(1993, p. 180)

As a social worker, I view social policy reforms as a way to give meaning to the experiences of my clients, as well as a means to serve them better.

—Gail Abarbanel
(as cited in Jansson, 2014, p. 9)

Advocacy is the cornerstone on which social work is built. It is so important that it is framed in three sections of our Code of Ethics. Advocacy for individuals, communities and systems is not just a suggested activity for social workers.

It's not a "do it if you have some extra time" or a "do it if the inequity and disparity are very great" activity. It is a requisite.

—Elizabeth Clark,
NASW Executive Director (2007)

Conceptual Definition

Policy practice refers to efforts by social workers to analyze and create policy change at various levels beginning with the agency/organization and advancing to the local, state, federal, or global level. It works by “establishing new policies, improving existing ones, or defeating the policy initiatives of other people” (Jansson, 2014, p. 1). The purpose of policy practice is clearly articulated in the latest version of the Council on Social Work Education accreditation document under Education Policy 2.1.8: “Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services” (CSWE, 2014, p. 6). Many prominent social work scholars’ efforts are reflected in the inclusion of policy practice in the new CSWE EPAS, prompting among other changes, the adoption of policy practice as a concentration in the curricula of social work graduate programs.

At first glance, policy practice appears to parallel the activities carried out by elected officials in the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government. However, policy practice in the area of social welfare is not limited to government practices. Figueira-McDonough (1993) contributes to an understanding of policy practice by addressing “formal processes of policy decision making (legislative and judicial) and constituency-based patterns of influence (community and organizational)” (p. 181). Thus elected officials are key but not sole players in policy practice. As Jansson (2014) notes, policy practice occurs in legislative, agency, and community settings.

Policy practice typically includes policy analysis, policy advocacy, and policy implementation. *Policy analysis* lies at the center of social work policy practice because it enables social workers to better understand policies and evaluate their effectiveness. By viewing policies through a historical and ideological lens, social workers can assess the implications of

recycled policy responses, thus anticipating their intended and unintended implications for clients. Analysis and critique help practitioners evaluate and change existing policies while assessing how policy implementation, including funding and service delivery, affect clients. Analysis equips practitioners to advocate for policy change and educate communities about policy (Barusch, 2009, pp. 55–65). Jansson (2014) defines *policy advocacy* as “policy practice that aims to help relatively powerless groups” (p. 1). Jansson describes policy advocacy as a distinct type of policy practice that involves more than understanding policies or change at the individual level. It involves positively affecting the lives of powerless individuals or groups, often in the face of controversy or opposition. *Policy implementation* refers to the process of enacting, implementing, and assessing policies.

Most social welfare policy texts identify key substantive areas or issues for policy practice. For example, Chapin (2007) includes the following categories of social policies and programs: (1) civil rights, (2) income and asset-based, (3) children and families, (4) health and mental health, and (5) older adults. Other areas may include housing, criminal justice, and substance abuse. More recently, economics and international development have been included as subareas. Most texts examine these areas from historical and political points of view to better inform and frame policy options in the current environment and suggest directions for socially and economically just policies in the future.

Not surprisingly, policy practice has been defined in various ways. Wyers (1991) defines policy practice as an emerging recent development in social work (specifically in the 1970s and 1980s), “[a] variant of the cause-function debate [that] has surfaced in the past decade [1980s]: The focus is the juxtaposition of social policy and social work practice; the outcome has been conceptualized as policy-practice” (p. 1). The debate often compares helping people accept and adjust to social conditions with challenging and changing social conditions (Rein, as cited in Wyers, 1991). The second results in societal level change. Thus Cummins, Byers, and Pedrick (2011) define policy practice as “using social work skills to propose and change policies in order to achieve the goal of social and economic justice” (p. 2).

Historical Background

Jansson (2014) coined the phrase “policy practice” in 1984 when he “discovered that policy texts and curriculum rarely discussed how social workers might actually work to reform policies” (p. 1). Though the term *policy practice* is relatively new, some scholars argue that human service workers have engaged in policy practice since the beginnings of modern welfare (e.g., Haynes & Mikelson, 2003). Ginsburg and Miller-Cribbs (2005) note influential policy practitioners in social work history including Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, Mary Richmond, Robert Hunter, and Harry Hopkins. Cummins, Byers, and Pedrick (2011) describe Julia Lathrop’s efforts to start the juvenile court system at the turn of the 20th century in America as an example of policy practice. Other social work scholars point to the influence of recent trends in the development of policy practice. For example, Rocha (2007) grounds her policy practice information in devolution and the change in the political climate in the United States over the past 25 years.

Policy practice is not unique to social work. Policy practice emerged alongside the development of policy studies and policy institutes, which proliferated in the 1970s (Caputo, 2014), and across many disciplines including political science, economics, sociology, and urban studies (Ginsburg & Miller-Cribbs, 2005). Meehaghan, Kilty, and McNutt (2009) trace policy practice to the origins of social science research, particularly as it informs knowledge development and leads to social action, including policy practice.

In sum, policy practice is a focus shared by several disciplines. However, policy practice in social work is uniquely associated with applying ethical principles to initiate and change social welfare policy in an effort to advance social and economic justice in all segments of society.

Bridging Micro and Macro

Social work's emphasis on the person-in-environment and its commitment to social justice make the profession distinct from other helping professions. Social workers have long intervened on the micro level to promote individual and family well-being. However, the literature is replete with debates over social work's diminishing interest in social action as opposed to its increasing focus on direct practice (Specht & Courtney, 1994) and the role of the profession in policy reform (e.g., Abramovitz & Bardill, 1993; Haynes & Michelson, 2003). Although history documents social workers' engagement in policy, social workers have been criticized for underemphasizing macro-level interventions that challenge social injustice in the community, organization, and broader society. For example, Ritter (2013) pointed out recently that "the social work profession has been accused of neglecting its commitment to social problems such as racism, sexism, poverty, and access to health care and of being more committed to private practice and efforts to enhance the status of the profession" (p. 4).

Drawing from the person-in-environment perspective, several social work scholars and educators have reclaimed a balanced approach to bridging micro and macro practice. Abramovitz and Sherraden (2015) propose that the social work paradigm should shift from a "case-over-cause" or a "case-versus-cause" paradigm toward a "case-to-cause" paradigm. Instead of pitting micro practice that addresses "case" over macro practice that addresses "cause," and debating which should be preferred, the "case-to-cause" approach calls on social workers to engage in policy change during their everyday direct practice in any context. Ritter (2013) calls for moving beyond a "false debate" between micro changes and macro changes: "the beauty of social work, and what sets it apart from most other professions, is that it includes both" (p. 245). Similarly, Jansson (2014), through the lens of the ecological framework, argues that it is the social work profession's duty to reform the environmental factors that cause individuals' or families' problems. These arguments provide insights into the critical role of policy practice in social work.

Applying the Framework: Policy Practice in Education and Research

Policy practice requires assessment skills to decide the best place to intervene in the policy arena when focused on a particular social problem and the policy related to it. Reisch (2014) notes that policy practice requires interventions during each stage of policy development: (1) recognition of private troubles and public issues, (2) legitimation of when a private trouble becomes a public issue, (3) mobilization of key actors, (4) formulation, frequently in the legislative arena, (5) implementation that entails the actualization of policies in the form of social welfare programs, and (6) evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy.

According to Wyers (1991), policy practice seeks to integrate direct social work practice with social welfare policy skills. It differs from other forms of direct practice in that it incorporates social welfare policy skills into every aspect of practice. Wyers (1991) offers several roles for the social work policy practitioner. First is the *policy expert* who has formal training in social policy and works at the community or legislative level. Second is the *change agent* who works as a direct practitioner or administrator with a focus on policy change at the organizational level. Acting as a change agent is not necessarily part of the job description. Third

is the *policy conduit* who implements policy and acts as a sounding board for the policy's effect on clients. Last is the social worker as *direct practitioner* who "becomes the embodiment or personification of policy" by combining social policy and direct practice (p. 1). This social work practice role overlaps with the change agent and the policy conduit roles, but it does not overlap with the policy expert.

In the same vein, Ginsburg and Miller-Cribbs (2005) provide an overview of different policy practice types and the skills associated with each type. A policy practitioner chooses which set of skills to focus on based on the needs of the individual client, a small group of clients, or a community, along with the practitioner's own interest and commitment to a particular cause. These types and their related skills help the social worker understand the focus of their policy practice in terms of advocacy. The types are (1) analytic policy practice, (2) electoral advocacy, (3) cause or class advocacy, (4) administrative advocacy, (5) client advocacy, (6) empowerment through public policy education, (7) electronic advocacy, (8) legislative advocacy, (9) methods of lobbying, and (10) lobbying the executive branch (pp. 294–308).

Teaching policy practice involves teaching research skills for policy analysis. Social workers need to know how to investigate legislative history, evaluate policy, and use policy analysis models. However, research skills used to analyze all sides of a policy issue are a necessary but not sufficient part of policy practice. Policy practitioners must be able to identify the ideologies, values, and beliefs that influence policymaking. Teaching policy practice also involves a critique of the values that influence social problems and the resulting social policies.

Effective training in policy practice requires the use of analytic and experiential assignments such as critiquing and writing policy briefs, engaging in classroom debates, conducting mock legislative hearings, using media assignments, observing the legislative process, sitting in on congressional hearings, developing position papers, and providing advocacy and organizing opportunities in field internships. Saulnier (2000) studied one graduate policy class aimed at encouraging graduate students, particularly those planning to enter micro social work, to commit to policy change efforts in their jobs. The data indicated that out of a variety of assignments, an intervention exercise was most helpful to them in learning how to incorporate policy change efforts into their practice.

Conclusion

Social work boasts a robust history advancing social and economic well-being of client systems at every level. Although policy practice is not the exclusive domain of social work, the profession can claim a unique role in translating technical policy practice activities into ethically, socially, and politically just interventions. There is general agreement in the profession that it is the duty of all social workers to engage in policy practice and that it is analogous with good practice.

In reviewing Jansson's (2014) policy practice tasks and Wyers (1991) policy practice roles, most social workers can probably identify numerous situations when they assumed one or more of these tasks and roles over the course of their careers. Frontline social workers employing any and all means necessary to advocate for the primacy of their clients' needs may perceive as artificial the academy's bifurcation between micro and macro, or between case and cause. False debates have no relevance to their day-to-day professional endeavors. In view of the fact that there is little agreement in social work on the "best" or most effective policy practice frameworks, inductive research into practitioners' collective wisdom and skills is a useful starting point for creating evidence-based educational interventions in policy practice. Perhaps

then social work scholars can shift attention from abstract theoretical deliberations of case vs. cause, and micro vs. macro to the more critical dilemma of knowledge sequestration between the academy and the field. Ginsburg and Miller-Cribbs (2005, p. 311) point out that in the future increasing numbers of human service and social service workers will be policy practitioners. It may be possible, however, that they already are.

SECTION 5

Human Rights

Margaret Sherraden, Rukshan Fernando, and Mimi Abramovitz

Recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.
—Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.
—Eleanor Roosevelt (1958)

I think it is necessary to realize that we have moved from the era of civil rights to the era of human rights.
—The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (1967)

Conceptual Definitions

This framework asserts that human rights are necessary for every human being to live in freedom, and with dignity, security, and equality. The human rights framework gained currency after passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the foundational document of the human rights framework. Eleanor Roosevelt, the former first lady and chair of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, was the powerhouse behind creation of the UDHR in 1948.

The UDHR set the stage for making human rights the foundation for international policies and other UN conventions that followed over the next two decades (Wronka, 2012). Its guiding principles include human dignity; nondiscrimination; civil and political rights; economic, social, and cultural rights; and solidarity rights (Wronka, 2012). The UDHR begins with an assertion that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” These rights are universal; that is, they apply to everyone, regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, social origin, property, religion, birth, or other status.

The first group of human rights spelled out in the UDHR is civil and political rights, or “negative” rights, that protect individual liberty (Reichert, 2007; Reisch, 2014; United Nations, 1994). They focus on freedom from arbitrary interference, generally by government.

The second group consists of economic, social, and cultural rights, or “positive” rights, that ensure social justice, freedom from want, and a right to participation.¹ The United States

¹ These were spelled out in the International Covenants on Human Rights in 1966, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1984, the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, and others (United Nations, 1994). A source for more information on social and economic rights in the United States is the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative: <http://www.nesri.org/human-rights/economic-and-social-rights>.

signed and ratified the first, but has not ratified the second. These wide-ranging rights have profound implications for social work. They include the right to work, nondiscrimination in pay, a decent wage (similar to what we call a living wage), unionization, leisure, an adequate standard of living, social security, education, participation in community life, and access to the benefits of scientific and technological advances.²

The third set of human rights consists of collective rights among nations and is the least developed conceptually and practically (Reichert, 2007). This idea is based on solidarity, intergovernmental cooperation, protection against exploitation, and the realization of human rights internationally (Reichert, 2007; Reisch, Ife, & Weil, 2013; Weil, Reisch, & Ohmer, 2013; Wronka, 2008).

Critics of the human rights framework assert that a universal list of human rights circumvents the democratic processes of specific nations and reflects a Western bias. For instance, Amartya Sen (2005), in a discussion about capabilities, asks if a universal list contradicts democratic decision making, or “the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why” (p. 77).

Martha Nussbaum (2001) counters that an abstract list (that is sufficiently abstract) allows people in diverse social and economic contexts to protect pluralism. Reichert (2007) suggests that conflicts between cultural norms and human rights can be evaluated by examining (a) the history of a cultural practice and its rationale, (b) who determined the cultural norm and how (i.e., was it a democratic process?), and (c) the cultural norm within contemporary human rights standards (i.e., is the norm incompatible with contemporary thinking?). Ife (2010) suggests that a solution to the dilemma may be found in the concept of developing “human rights from below”; that is, embedding human rights in people’s lived experiences. He proposes bringing together human rights and community development—or the notions of “human community” and “common humanity”—in an overlapping project (p. 129).

Human Rights as a Global Framework: A Historical Perspective

Global events, especially the World Wars of the 20th century, have profoundly influenced the human rights framework. They have resulted in a global focus (Reisch et al., 2013) that is reflected in the mission and goals of many organizations created to protect human rights. For instance, the International Labor Organization (ILO), created in the aftermath of World War I, convenes government representatives, employers, and workers based on the idea outlined in its constitution, that “universal and lasting peace [in the world] can be established only if it is based upon social justice” (as cited in Rodgers, Lee, Swepston, & van Daele, 2009, p. 3).

Following World War II, the UDHR adopted an explicitly international focus, spelling out the obligations of individual nations and the mandate for “international cooperation” in assuring economic, social, and cultural rights across nations (Levin Institute, 2014; United

² Two other concepts related to the idea of human rights are capabilities and development. Human rights are fundamental to the idea of capabilities, which are people’s ability to do and be what they determine to be valuable (Sen, 1999). Martha Nussbaum (2001) created a list of basic capabilities that reads much like a list of human rights. Nonetheless, human rights and capabilities are not the same concepts, and further work is needed to sort out the relationship between the two (Nussbaum, 1997; Sen, 2005). Some also suggest that the human rights framework is the basis of development, another key concept in social work (Midgley & Sherraden, 2009). The World Bank, which has not adopted a human rights framework, nonetheless asserts that “creating the conditions for the attainment of human rights is a central and irreducible goal of development” (Gaeta, 1998, p. 2). The relationship between human rights and development is “complex,” according to the World Bank (2012), and needs further assessment and interpretation.

Nations, 1994). In the UN system, international cooperation is the basis for achieving human rights goals in organizations such as the UN Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, which protects the human rights of the world's refugee populations, and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the UN Development Program (UNDP) which promote human rights through development activities (Wilson, 2012). Similarly, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, use the human rights framework as a basis for their work. On the domestic front, the National Social and Economic Rights Initiative (NESRI) brings human rights home by explicitly addressing the often ignored social and economic rights that parallel the needs embedded, but not fully met, by the U.S. welfare state.

Human Rights and Social Work

The human rights framework has a long tradition in social work, and it has increasingly become a central focus, especially in global discussions (Healy & Link, 2012; Ife, 2012; Staub-Bernasconi, 2012). As Lombe (2013) points out, "at the core of social work is the 'intrinsic' value of every person and the mandate to promote social justice while upholding human dignity" (p. 9).

A training document published by the United Nations (1994), in collaboration with the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), highlighted the close ties between human rights and the social work profession:

More than many professionals, social work educators and practitioners are conscious that their concerns are closely linked to respect for human rights. They accept the premise that human rights and fundamental freedoms are individual freedoms and that the full realization of civil and political rights is impossible without enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. They believe that the achievement of lasting progress in the implementation of human rights depends on effective national and international policies of economic and social development. Their direct knowledge of the conditions of the vulnerable sectors of society makes social work educators and practitioners valuable in the formulation of social policies. (p. 5)

Social work organizations have adopted the idea of human rights as an organizing framework (Hokenstad & Midgley, 1997), especially at the international level. For instance, the definition of social work, adopted at the 2000 IFSW General Meeting in Montreal, similarly asserts the centrality of human rights:

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 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. (IFSW, 2012)

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body for baccalaureate and master's programs in social work in the United States, is explicit about the importance of the human rights framework (Hokenstad, Healy, & Segal, 2013; Libal, *Berthold, Thomas, & Healy, in press*). Using language that mirrors the UDHR, it asserts that:

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. (CSWE, 2008, p. 8)

These official statements challenge the profession to incorporate human rights “as a central, regulative idea into the whole discipline and practice of social work,” including its goals, theories, practice, and values (Staub-Bernasconi, 2012, p. 31).

Bridging the Micro and Macro in Applying a Human Rights Lens

According to Julie Steen (2012), social workers can view the human rights framework as a “companion” concept to the person-in-environment (PIE) perspective. Like the PIE perspective, practitioners can apply human rights across the three levels of social work practice. In micro practice, social workers ensure each client’s human rights. In mezzo practice, social workers focus on the responsibilities of families and communities to respect all people’s rights by “promoting peaceful dialogue and community well-being,” and organizing and mobilizing communities to create and sustain socially just organizations (Steen, 2012, pp. 855, 858). At the macro level, social workers use community organizing to challenge oppressive systems and structures. When combined with a human rights framework, community organizing may create a pathway to achieve greater equality (Jewell, Collins, Gargotta, & Dishon, 2009). Finally, social workers advocate for and reimagine public policies to protect and enhance human rights and ensure social and economic justice (Ife, 2010; Steen, 2012).

The human rights framework suggests that meeting human needs is not a “matter of choice” but rather “an imperative of basic justice” (United Nations, 1994, p. 5). Social workers can adopt a human rights perspective to promote social justice issues and build coalitions with other human rights advocates. We present a few examples of how social workers can apply a human rights lens to social issues next. These are illustrative only; we can use a human rights framework to examine many other issues.

Human Rights and Incarceration

One in a hundred adults is incarcerated in the United States in federal and state prisons and local jails (Pew Center on the States, 2008). Black men were 6 times more likely than white men to be incarcerated in 2010 (Drake, 2013), and 1 in 28 children have a parent in prison (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2010). Social workers use the human rights framework at all levels of practice to examine the question of incarceration. At the micro level, social workers intervene on behalf of prisoners to enforce international standards for human rights, advocate for access to family visitation, and ensure children receive appropriate child welfare services. At the mezzo level, they develop programs and organizations that address the needs of children and families of the incarcerated and reentry of those released from prisons. At the macro level, they advocate for improvements in the correctional system and changes to unjust policies, such as racial profiling and “three strikes” laws (Wilson, 2010), and advocate for decarceration (Pettus-Davis & Epperson, 2014).

Human Rights and Gender

The human rights framework challenges the notion of patriarchy, which denies women basic human rights (Ife, 2010). Social workers use the human rights framework to challenge violence against women, which threatens many with physical injury, sexual and reproductive health issues, health and mental health problems, substance abuse, and injury and death (Mapp, 2012). By promoting and advocating for the human rights of women, social work affirms its mission by empowering diverse and marginalized populations that require special attention (Reichert, 2001, 2012). On a micro level, social workers advocate for women through a human rights framework by ensuring that all women's work is valued and that women are placed in positions of decision making and power. Social workers at the mezzo level create programs and services that invest in women's health, education, and economic self-sufficiency. At the macro level, social workers join with international organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and others, to generate and defend policies that protect women from fear and violence and raise awareness about the complex relationships between gender and other identities, such class, race, and religion (Mapp, 2012).

Human Rights and Sexual Preference

In December 2008, the UN General Assembly took a historic step by confirming human rights protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people. Although the UN General Assembly adopted the declaration in support of LGBTI rights, Bailey (2012) states that the vote was deeply divided, with 57 countries opposing and 69 abstentions.

Social workers use the human rights framework at all levels of practice with LGBTI populations. On a micro level, social workers ensure that the LGBTI community is treated according the UN General Assembly declaration and standards. At the mezzo level, social workers develop programs and services that address gay-affirmative practice and address issues across the life span. On a macro level, social workers are in the forefront of advocacy for decriminalization and marriage equality in the LGBTI community and are advocates for fair housing and employment nondiscrimination as well as transnational policies against hate crimes and violence directed at LGBTI individuals (Bailey, 2012).

Human Rights and Children

Children's human rights are frequently violated, especially when using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as the yardstick (United Nations, 2012). For example, Reichert (2012) points to the girl child who has historically encountered significant discrimination, especially lack of education. Nonetheless, this is a controversial area of human rights work, as evidenced by the refusal of the United States to ratify the CRC (UNICEF, 2005). Children often lack the ability to challenge their own oppression, especially in the work and home spheres, but there is little agreement on whether to extend human rights guarantees to them (Walker, Brooks, & Wrightsman, 1998).

Social workers use the human rights framework at all levels of practice with children. On a micro level, social workers ensure that the children's human rights are protected by CRC, and where they are not, social workers advocate for reforming these policies. In addition, social workers protect children when their childhood is taken from them due to social and economic circumstances (Link, 2012). At the mezzo level, social workers develop programs and services that protect human rights of children and youth, from birth through young adulthood. On a macro level, social workers are in the forefront of advocacy for children who find themselves in acute poverty, prostitution, human trafficking, all forms of abuse, and exploitative employment. For

example, international social workers use the CRC to safeguard children crossing international borders to combat sexual exploitation and human trafficking (Link, 2012). Child and Youth Finance International (2015) advocates for governments to extend economic citizenship rights to children and youth worldwide (Sherraden & Ansong, 2013).

Conclusion

Despite its potential, the human rights framework is not yet a universally embraced organizing framework in social work (Reichert, 2007). There are still relatively few applications in textbooks and courses, especially at the micro level, although it is more likely to be incorporated into texts on diversity, community practice, advocacy, and policy (Steen, 2012).

To date, the National Association of Social Work (NASW) has not adopted a human rights perspective. NASW (2000) calls human rights an “emerging framework” in U.S. social work. Despite its acknowledgment by social workers, international social work organizations, as well as NASW’s 1990 International Policy on Human Rights, NASW states that, “the fact is the profession does not fully use human rights as a criterion with which to evaluate social work policies, practice, research, and program priorities” (2000).

Nonetheless, there are indications that the human rights framework is becoming more influential in the profession. NASW (2000) “supports the adoption of human rights as a foundation principle upon which all of social work theory and applied knowledge rests.” As Steen (2012) suggests, human rights provides a conceptual framework for all levels of social work practice that infuses “social work values in the person-in-environment perspective” (p. 857). The human rights perspective offers social workers a powerful conceptual tool to achieve its mission “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” (NASW, 2008).

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