Advancing Social Welfare Policy through Critical Social Work Education and Practice

Rebecca Hoffman

Follow this and additional works at: https://sophia.stkate.edu/dsw

Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

This Banded Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Social Work at SOPHIA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctor of Social Work Banded Dissertations by an authorized administrator of SOPHIA. For more information, please contact amshaw@stkate.edu.
Advancing Social Welfare Policy
through Critical Social Work Education and Practice

by

Rebecca Hoffman

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

St. Catherine University | University of St. Thomas
School of Social Work

May 2018
Abstract

Practitioners in the critical tradition seek to identify the shortcomings of systems and beliefs that contribute to an ineffective social welfare system (Forte, 2007). This dissertation examines the intersectional systems of macro social work education practice. It explores the early history of macro social work education and practice and provides a contemporary practice application for shaping agency-level policies that address the subjugation of marginalized populations.

The first product is a critical analysis of Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project (COCDP). It illustrates the focalization of macro social work education during a transitional period in which social work both professionalized and narrowed its macro practice approach. It examines the COCDP in the context of the professional, political, and economic influences that shaped the era.

The second article provides case study of best practices research at the agency level. It illustrates how, left unchecked, domestic violence shelter policies and practices continue to subjugate women who are fleeing intimate partner violence through a system of rules and punishments. It examines staff perceptions of a Voluntary Services Model as an alternative, emancipatory approach to shaping policies and procedures that empower victim/survivors of IPV.

The final section of this dissertation is an overview of a presentation of the author’s research on the COCDP. A historical analysis of the sociopolitical landscape that informed the COCDP and profession’s approach to empowering marginalized groups through macro social work practice was presented. The implications of the nearly simultaneous professionalization of
Social work practice and education in shaping social welfare policy through macro practice were discussed.

Social workers are ethically bound to addresses systems that subjugate marginalized populations. This research indicates that social work educators and practitioners must address systems *within* the profession that continue to subjugate. Implications for social work education suggest a need to revisit the profession’s macro practice curriculum. Implications for social work practice suggest that organizations attend to internal frameworks that may re-oppress. Key findings address structural artifacts within social work education and practice that subjugate marginalized populations.

*Keywords: community organizing curriculum, macro practice, power and control, Voluntary Services Model, best practices research, intimate partner violence, Social Group Work*
Dedication

To those who endure the hardships of homelessness and those who are dedicated to their care, this journey begins and ends with you.
Acknowledgments

Brodie, you are the ultimate champion of my hopes and dreams!

Calder and Quinn, you two are my heart and soul embodied. Thank you for hanging in there with me for these last three years.

Mary Ann Reitmeir, you set the proverbial bar so high I will never quite reach it and, yet, you conveyed from the start that you believed that I could.

Amanda, Carey, and all of DSW Cohort Two—thank you for being so integral to this journey of a lifetime!

Janice Andrews, thank you for the major assist from the great beyond.
Table of Contents

Title Page....................................................................................................................... i
Abstract.......................................................................................................................... ii
Dedication..................................................................................................................... iv
Acknowledgements..................................................................................................... v
List of Figures............................................................................................................... vii
Introduction.................................................................................................................1
Conceptual Framework...............................................................................................3
Summary of Banded Dissertation Products...............................................................6
Discussion...................................................................................................................... 8
   Implications for Social Work.................................................................................... 9
   Implications for Future Research...........................................................................11
Comprehensive Reference List.....................................................................................14
Critical History: Social Group Work and CSWE’s Community Organizing Curriculum
Development Project.....................................................................................................22
Challenging Power and Control within the Domestic Violence Shelter: A Voluntary Services
Model.............................................................................................................................50
Civic Engagement through Partnerships between Social Work Educators and Practitioners…..82
List of Figures

Power and Control Wheel ................................................................. 60
Advancing Social Welfare Policy through Social Work Education and Practice

This banded dissertation examines the tools, and the sociopolitical contexts in which they exist, that frame social work practice and education. With its focus on the interconnectedness between social work practice and education, it places citizens who are oppressed at the forefront. The author contends, throughout all three products, that social work practitioners and educators must create opportunities to reexamine frameworks for practice and education to ensure they contribute to the emancipation of marginalized communities.

What is now known as the critical approach to social work practice emerged during the settlement movement as an alternative to the individualized approach espoused by the Charitable Organization Societies (Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012). Critical social workers’ views of social justice expand well beyond the profession’s expectations to integrate social justice into practice as delineated in its code of ethics (NASW, 2018). Critical social workers seek to expose not only society’s structural, economic, political, and social oppressions but also their own profession’s oppressive practices and to transform these shortcomings into just and inclusive practice. “Critical social workers see social work practice as a site of social oppression and, potentially, of social transformation” (Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012, p. 192).

The structural focus on education and practice through this dissertation stems from the fact that the creation of social work education’s macro practice framework has received little critical scrutiny. Developed in an era in which women were continually subjected to patriarchal constructs of power and control, social work—viewed largely as a woman’s profession—macro social work education was heavily shaped by such constructs. As a
result, the profession’s own macro practice framework falls short in its ability to shape and
impact social welfare policy development.

The critical social work movement seeks to build the capacity of oppressed service
users by intentionally creating opportunities for service users to exercise greater influence in
defining their needs while having a voice in creating effective services that address those needs
(Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012). In rejecting oppression in all forms, social workers in the
critical tradition value:

• A commitment to standing alongside oppressed and excluded
  individuals and communities.

• Dialogical relationships between social workers and service users or
  community members.

• Recognition of the profoundly influential role of social, economic, and political
  systems in shaping individual and community experiences and opportunities,
  and the relationships between service providers and users.

• A commitment to the transformation of the processes and structures
  perpetuating domination and exploitation both at the level of human service
  provision and the broader society (Gray, Midgley, & Webb, 2012, p. 192).

In reality, social workers often work in isolation within human service organizations
governed by people from a vast array of professional backgrounds—from criminal justice to
business administration and every profession in-between. Organizational systems often do not
reflect person-centered, emancipatory approaches and, as a result, agency policies and
procedures inadvertently continue to subjugate participants. In order to affect the
transformation of human service organizations, critical approaches call upon practitioners and
educators to collaborate with one another in conducting research on the very systems within
which services are delivered.

Critical practitioners bring to light practices and beliefs that subjugate people in an effort to inspire radical change (Forte, 2007). Practitioners in the critical tradition also seek to educate participants about the shortcomings of systems and beliefs that contribute to an ineffective social welfare system and a derisory provision of resources and support for oppressed and marginalized citizens. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the shortcomings of social work education and social work practice in addressing the structural frameworks from within the profession that contribute to the further subjugation of oppressed populations.

**Conceptual Framework**

This banded dissertation examines the tools, and the sociopolitical contexts in which they exist, that frame social work practice and education. With its focus on the interconnectedness between social work practice and education, it places citizens who are oppressed at the forefront. The framework for the dissertation is grounded in critical theory, an empowerment perspective. Critical theory merges a Marxist approach to social theory along with an array of theoretical perspectives that strive for empowerment including critical feminist theory and critical race theory (Forte, 2007). Such a framework seeks to empower the practitioner and participant to seek and create solutions to social justices that were not previously considered and/or implemented. Critical perspectives are generally concerned with broad sweeping anti-establishment change. Such an approach, also known as an “emancipatory” approach, involves consciousness-raising around issues of subjugation and oppression with the goal of transforming citizens into activists—hence its role as an empowerment theory (Forte, 2007). Throughout this banded dissertation, the author seeks to raise consciousness surrounding the historical roots of macro social work practice and
education and the socio-political forces that led to the disconnect between the two. Critical Theory encompasses an array of emancipatory theories, each of which endorses the major assumptions of critical theory to one degree or another (Forte, 2007). One major assumption is a preference for structural analysis of problems.

**Preference for structural analysis of problems.** Although C. Wright Mills was not a critical theorist, per se, he is credited for being “an angry and radical sociologist, a maverick, and an outsider” (Forte, 2007, p. 501) whose work contributed to the development of critical theory. His philosophical lens allowed him to observe and deconstruct societal oppression and political manipulation that characterized the political economy of the United States. He coined the term “sociological imagination” or the ability to understand “the large historical scene in terms of its meaning to the inner life” (Forte, 2007, p. 501). This imagination directly links social, political, and economic policies or shortcomings both with personal problems and pleasures, a problem often replayed in social work practice. In social work education and practice, practitioners repeat the shortcomings of the profession when investigation into the larger historical scene that provided the foundation for both practice and education is lacking.

**Key Concepts and Major Propositions**

Critical theory contains key concepts and major propositions that largely speak to transactions between the person and her/his environment. A central proposition of critical theory is that, if community members are connected to each other, then it is because of civic-minded communication (Forte, 2007). Families, neighborhoods, communities, organizations, political parties, civic systems collectively form a shared language through which their citizens bond with each other. Vital to this transactional flow of communication is the act of problem solving around issues central to common life (Forte, 2007).
The critical theorist’s eco-map places citizens at the center of all transactions. From here, all interactions revolve around the government’s responsibility to “ensure opportunities to all citizens for a healthy and socially useful life, and all citizens have the concurrent responsibility to ensure that community needs are met and democracy is protected” (Forte, 2007, p. 524). Social workers seek opportunities to support citizens in this right to full participation in decisions and actions that sustain the common good.

Citizenship takes place within an environment that is conceptualized by “intersecting spheres of influence” (Forte, 2007, p. 525). These include the private sphere, dominant public sphere, oppositional public sphere, and social welfare system sphere. The private sphere is comprised of friends, family, and extended family. The dominant public sphere is comprised of political parties, civic associations, public forums, the state, mass media, and corporations while the oppositional public sphere is comprised of social movements, alternative media, cooperatives, and alternative schools. Critical theory is cognizant of the power relationships between citizens and the public spheres, maintaining that authentic communication is only possible when power is balanced and conversely a power imbalance is characterized by distorted communication (Forte, 2007).

Ultimately, critical theorists are concerned with affecting radical, anti-establishment change. Such change is represented by the oppositional public sphere (Forte, 2007). Critical social workers seek to ignite a passion for change through exposing power imbalances and social injustices that affect communication (authentic or distorted). If social injustices are identified, then citizens will passionately challenge public forums to become more inclusive of all citizens.
Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

This dissertation is comprised of three distinct products. The first is an archival research project examining CSWE’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project. The second is a case study of the benefits and challenges of implementing a Voluntary Services Model in a shelter for victim/survivors of domestic violence. The final product is a presentation at the Minnesota Social Service Association’s Annual Training Conference on the history of macro social work education with contemporary implications for civic engagement between human service organizations and social work educators.

Social Group Work and CSWE’s Community Organizing Curriculum Project

The first article examines the influences of the political economy surrounding both the professionalization of macro social work practice and the Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project (COCDP). The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical texts of the COCDP within the political and economic contexts that shaped the professionalization of macro social work practice. Furthering our understanding of these two influences on macro social work education remains germane, as this curriculum continues to serve as the foundation for the competencies and practice behaviors that define macro social work education (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015). As the political economy fluctuates—becoming increasingly more destabilizing for marginalized individuals, groups, and communities—the social work profession will benefit from a re-examination of macro social work education. Philosopher George Santayana famously proclaimed, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (1955, p. 284).
Indeed, what history can help us understand about the past can be used to make better-informed decisions about the future.

**Challenging Power and Control within the Domestic Violence Shelter**

The second product examines the re-tooling of social welfare policy at the agency level to better support victim/survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV). The provision of domestic violence (DV) shelter services for women experiencing IPV dates back to the 1960s ("History of the Battered Women’s Movement", 1999). Theoretically, most shelters strive to provide services that support the empowerment of women experiencing IPV (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). However, the study of best practice models for DV shelter operations has been virtually non-existent. Many shelter systems have evolved to function much like Goffman’s Total Institution (Stark, 1994), controlling nearly every aspect of women’s lives by relying heavily on a system of rules and punishments.

There are multiple dimensions of power and control exerted by perpetrators of IPV—the use of intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, children, privilege, economic abuse, coercion and threats and minimizing/denying/blaming ("The Duluth Model,” 2011). Women experiencing IPV often report an “overlap between staff enforcement of rules and abusive dynamics they had experienced in their previous relationships” (Glenn & Goodman, 2015, p. 1491). Consequently, shelter rules have the opposite of their intended consequences by adding to the emotional stress of the situation and increasing social isolation.

A Voluntary Services Model (VSM) is a transitional housing model based on the notion that women who are survivors of IPV have full control over decisions about their lives (Donovan, 2013). A VSM promotes the building of relationships between women who are surviving IPV and those providing care for them (Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence...
& Sexual Assault [MOCADSV], 2015). Such relationships provide a foundation for advocates to support and empower women in meeting their needs. The aim of this research is to explore the benefits and challenges of operating a DV shelter for victims of IPV within the context of a VSM.

**Partnerships between Social Work Educators and Practitioners**

The final product is a presentation on civic engagement through partnerships between social work educators and practitioners aimed to identify the historical models of civic engagement in social work practice in order to inform contemporary approaches to social welfare policy development. It identifies political and economic contexts in which models for civic engagement emerged, pinpoints the development of macro social work education through Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project, and identifies contemporary implications for social welfare policy development through partnerships between social work educators and practitioners.

**Discussion**

Advancing social welfare policy is a core mission of social work practice and education. Defining, examining, and advancing principles of social justice requires a workforce that is versed in addressing the structural elements of social welfare policy—both the sociopolitical context in which policy is developed and the organizational context in which it is operationalized. Both of these require a workforce that is energized by and prepared for social change.

Because of social work’s role in addressing systemic barriers to social change, it is vital that social work educators and practitioners seek and create solutions to social injustices that have not been previously considered and/or implemented. This involves scrutiny of the
socio-political roots and ramifications of macro social work education in order to highlight
systemic barriers to empowerment within the profession.

Beyond the ethical obligation of social work practitioners to address the systemic
causes of oppression, practitioners require effective tools with which to achieve such
aspirations. The conceptual research done for this dissertation looked at the interplay between
early macro social work practice methods and macro social work education within the
conceptual framework of critical theory. To increase the efficacy of social workers in
addressing macro practice issues related to social welfare policy development, it is critical to
determine the efficacy of the practice frameworks that have been developed for macro social
work education. This begins here with an exploration of the roots of macro social work
education and the socio-political landscape that helped shape the profession’s macro social
work education curriculum.

Implications for Social Work Education

The findings from this research have numerous implications for social work research
and education. Social work education struggles to create a framework for transformative social
change. The professionalization of social work education and practice, with the nearly
simultaneous creation of the Council on Social Work Education and the National Association
of Social Workers in the 1950s, severed the historical roots of macro social work practice from
the profession. Through the elimination of social group work methodology and its replacement
methodology of community organizing, macro social work practice mirrors the helping
relationship model of engagement, assessment, intervention planning, and action. This model
has proven inadequate in addressing the social injustices that underlie the community and its
socio-political economy.
Examination of the University of Minnesota’s Social Welfare Archive files on the COCDP suggest that the socio-political context in which the COCDP operated in the 1950’s played a major role in shaping an ineffective foundation for macro social work education. The COCDP rejected the highly successful social group work as a macro practice method in favor of community organizing method. Implications for social work education suggest that the community organizing model be revisited as a viable macro practice approach to systems change. Additionally, there is a lack of current research on social group work as a practice method for systems change. Research findings show that there was a historic context in which social group work method was highly successful at systems change (Andrews, 2001). Additional research is needed regarding this historical method and implications for modern macro social work education.

Social work education plays a critical role in preparing future practitioners for identifying and addressing social injustices. This preparation must include techniques for auditing and evaluating systems (i.e., internal policies and procedures) of human service organizations within BSW generalist practice courses such as Social Welfare Policy. Often these systems are strongly reflected in documentation tools which are heavily used by entry-level social workers. It is critical that entry-level practitioners are prepared for a supporting role in organizational policy and procedure development within BSW education. Direct support professionals are best poised within an organization to identify and then contribute to the alteration of policies and procedures that continue to subjugate marginalized populations.

Macro social work practice garners the least attention as a construct of social work practice. The profession as a whole struggles to articulate the scope of macro social work practice as well as a succinct methodology. Social work education, subsequently, falls short in
recruiting and preparing students for careers in macro practice that affect social welfare policy
development. Students are often discouraged from field placements that are macro in nature as
educators underscore the emphasis on micro and mezzo practice arenas. As a result, the
profession does not attract professionals who are passionate about systems change. In fact,
practitioners who do engage in systems change often fail to professionally identify as social
workers to avoid being confused with their micro and mezzo practice counterparts.

Social work educators must also seek ways in which to prepare macro social workers
for administrative practices that advance social justice within human service organizations at
both the BSW and MSW levels. Structurally, social workers often work in isolation within
organizational structures that inadvertently promote social control rather than advocate for
social change. Such a focus, at the BSW level, would serve to energize and recruit a workforce
who otherwise would not be interested in micro and mezzo practice. This would also serve to
strengthen the development of policies and procedures within the human service agency that
reflect ethical social work practice. Furthermore, this would help to address the fact that social
work practitioners are often overlooked for administrative positions because social work
education has focused so heavily on micro and mezzo practice.

Implications for Future Research

The socio-political landscape leading up to CSWE’s macro social work practice
curriculum creates an argument for the critical examination of community organizing as an
appropriate macro practice method for addressing the complex social welfare policy
development needs of modern times. Research is needed to address the efficacy of
community organizing, the profession’s macro practice approach which is grounded in the
helping relationship model of case management, at navigating the complexity of
simultaneously operating within competing spheres to effectively address social welfare policy development.

Preparing social work professionals for careers in social welfare policy development—at both the community and the agency level—requires research of new (and old) macro practice models for BSW and MSW social work education. Social group work methodology deserves to be revisited as a viable, interprofessional macro practice methodology that prepares practitioners for careers in social welfare policy development. This also underscores the need to examine the strengths and weaknesses of community organizing methodology to determine its appropriate role in macro social work practice.

Addressing systematic oppression from within the social work profession through social welfare policy development is an oft-overlooked research subject. The NASW Code of Ethics calls upon practitioners to ensure that the organization’s administrative functions do not interfere with ethical social work practice (NASW, 2018). Yet BSW practitioners are not adequately prepared to examine organizational policies and procedures, audit practices, and organize agency-level interventions that both prevent and eliminate discrimination. Social work researchers must examine and develop methodologies for addressing structural, systematic oppression within the practice arena.

Finally, there is a need for research on methodology for creating structural reforms at the agency level that seek to emancipate service users as a component of macro social work practice. The lack of best practices in delivering emergency shelter services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness due to intimate partner violence exemplifies this point. The Voluntary Services Model was adapted from a transitional housing model into the shelter setting due to this lack of evidence-based approaches to delivering shelter services.
The author of this dissertation worked in a shelter setting for nearly two decades and recognized the tendency for shelter settings to function according to Irving Goffman’s theory of the Total Institution (1961). This study revealed emergency shelter advocates’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of eliminating this system of rules, incentives, and punishments through the implementation of a Voluntary Services Model (VSM) in a shelter for women. Further research is needed to explore the processes surrounding the creation and dissemination of best practices methods for delivery of human services, including emergency shelter services. Further studies are also needed to explore the perceptions of the service users of such agencies, including victims/survivors of IPV, of these structural methodologies.

**Conclusion**

Vital to the intersectional flow of communication within a community is the act of problem solving around issues central to living (Forte, 2007). Social work bills itself as being suited for such problem solving around community issues. However, structural attention to the historical roots of macro social work practice and education, and their contemporary implications, is an ethical, essential approach to ensuring professional accountability for addressing systematic barriers to emancipation for marginalized communities. Macro social work practice, with its focus on interventions that are broad in scope, requires a new methodology that is born out of effective social welfare policy development practice and that is not marred by historical remnants of oppression and marginalization of both service providers as well as service populations. A new emphasis on macro social work practice, as a tool for systems change through social welfare policy development, requires a new approach for educating professionals for careers in macro social work practice. Such a revitalization of
macro social work education would render a workforce who is both passionate about and committed to macro systems change both within organizations and communities.
Comprehensive Reference List


earth didn’t fly into the sun: Missouri’s project to reduce rules in domestic violence


Flexner, A. (1915, May). *Is social work a profession?* General Session Presentation presented at the Forty-Second Annual Session of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, Baltimore,
MD. Abstract retrieved from http://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/social-work/is-social-work-a-profession-1915/


IFO MnSCU master agreement between Minnesota State Colleges & Universities Board of Trustees and Inter Faculty Organization: 2015-2017. IFO: MnSCU. Retrieved from https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2016/other/160968.pdf


Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (MOCADSV). (2012). How the
Moehling, C. M., & Thomasson, M. A. (2012). The political economy of saving mothers and babies:
The politics of state participation in the Sheppard-Towner program. *The Journal of Economic
History, 72*(1), 75–103. doi: 10.1017/S0022050711002440.


Olsen, L. (n.d.). Rules: The good, the bad, the ugly. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic
Good-the-Bad-and-the-Ugly.pdf


Papell, C.P. (2011). More than sixty years with social group work: A personal and professional
history. Retrieved March 20, 2017 from /programs/60-years-social-group-work/

doi: 10437797.2016.1174652


violence prevention and services program: A guide for state and territorial administrators.

Retrieved from:
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fysb/fvpsa_admin_guide_20121119_0.pdf

violence shelter practices. *Feminism & Psychology*, 13, 49-71.


https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109915626213
Critical History: Social Group Work and CSWE’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project

Rebecca Hoffman

St. Catherine University – University of St. Thomas
Abstract

This critical analysis of the Council on Social Work Education’s (CSWE) Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project (COCDP) illustrates the focalization of macro social work education during a transitional period in which social work both professionalized and narrowed its macro practice approach. Drawing on archival data (i.e., reports, correspondence, and grants) from the University of Minnesota Social Welfare Archives and journal articles, this historical analysis examines the COCDP in the context of the professional, political, and economic influences that shaped the era. Implications for macro social work education within the context of a fluctuating and uncertain political economy are discussed.

Keywords: community organizing, curriculum, macro, social group work, social work education, political economy
Critical History: Social Group Work and CSWE’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project

In this article, I examine the influences of the political economy surrounding both the professionalization of macro social work practice and the Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project (COCDP). The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical texts of the COCDP within the political and economic contexts that shaped the professionalization of macro social work practice. Furthering our understanding of these two influences on macro social work education remains germane, as this curriculum continues to serve as the foundation for the competencies and practice behaviors that define macro social work education (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2015). As the political economy fluctuates—becoming increasingly more destabilizing for marginalized individuals, groups, and communities—the social work profession will benefit from a re-examination of macro social work education. Philosopher George Santayana famously proclaimed, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” (1955, p. 284). Indeed, what history can help us understand about the past can be used to make better informed decisions about the future.

Though rarely recognized as such, the social work profession’s ethical aspirations for macro social work practice emerged from the social group work method—an interdisciplinary practice that included leisure activities, education, social assistance and social and political reform efforts. Theoretically, social group work was rooted in “social reform; social responsibility, democratic ideals, and social action as well as social relatedness and human attachment” (Lee as cited in Andrews, 2001, p. 47). Group workers were concerned with intentionally developing relationships both with individuals and the communities to which
workers belonged. This facilitated the creation of strong and vibrant communities that had the capacity to collectively address common issues through social and economic reform.

Settlement house workers, self-help groups, parks and recreation facilitators, educators, neighborhood center workers, labor union organizers, and scouts comprised the first social group workers, prior to Social Group Work’s merger with the social work profession through the creation of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (Andrews, 2001; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001, p. 225). A structurally distinguishing feature of social group work continues to define organizations that seek to dismantle institutionalized oppression today with an “emphasis on the importance of building and sustaining relationships—with clients, constituents, and colleagues—based on principles of mutuality and collaboration rather than status hierarchy” (Reisch & Garvin, 2016, p. 201).

As a result of the formation of the NASW, social group work ceased to be recognized as a practice method (Andrews, 2001). What arose in its place, in the wake of the civil rights era, was the community organizing model which was grounded in social casework methods (Reisch & Garvin, 2016; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). During this same period, the CSWE became the driving force of social work education. Social work education formalized with the creation of the CSWE in 1952 and, with it, the social work profession as a whole came to be recognized as a formal establishment (CSWE, 2017). The mission of CSWE, in part, is to ensure and enhance “the quality of social work education for a professional practice that promotes… social and economic justice” (CSWE, 2017). CSWE, arguably, had the singularly greatest influence on the manner in which the profession prepared and cultivated its new professionals.

Early on, CSWE undertook an effort to formalize macro social work practice using a method that is now called community organizing through its COCDP (CSWE, 1964). The
method that emerged from the COCDP closely mirrored the case method of social work practice and was bereft of an emphasis on relationship-building with communities as a path to social, economic, or political reform.

Using historical textual analysis as the primary method of research, the purpose of this paper is to examine the historical texts of the COCDP and the political and economic contexts that helped to shape it. During these pivotal years in which social work education formalized, CSWE made critical decisions about the development of macro practice methods. In doing so, the social work profession was not immune to the influences of the political economy. This paper uses a critical lens to highlight ways in which the political economy shaped macro social work education and, ultimately, interfered with the aspirations of the profession to “pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people” (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2008).

To accomplish this, this paper explores the historical role of social and political reform within the profession and the threat this posed to America’s emerging economic forces, the creation of the CSWE’s COCDP, and the eras leading up to it including the Progressive Era (1890 – 1918), FDR’s New Deal (1933 – 1938), World War II (1939 – 1945), and postwar America (1950 – 1956) as defined by McCarthyism and the blacklisting of social work educators.

**Literature Review**

Social group work practice, more so than any other form of social work practice, assimilated itself with all facets of society. From schools to industry to healthcare, social group workers actively worked alongside their constituents to safeguard the rights of children, women, and immigrants—all people who played a key role in industrializing America. To that end,
social group workers influenced legislation and workplace reforms that intersected with, and sometimes interfered with, the goals of industrialists. This early macro practice method was, at its core, integrative—demonstrative of the intersectional qualities of social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Macro social work practice has since evolved into a nebulous method, at times integrated within various forms of practice such as policy development or community organizing. At other times, it stands alone as a distinct method (Reisch, 2016). Some view the roots of this predicament as residing in CSWE’s treatment of macro social work education. It is probable that the reason lies in the disconnect between the historical roots of social group work with CSWE’s development of the curriculum for macro practice education. To understand how, one must examine the influences of the political economy in shaping the social work profession.

**Membership Clubs and Progressive Era Capitalism**

The Progressive Era marked a period of intense capitalistic competition throughout the U.S. (Fisher, 1980). Central to these competitions were industrialists such as General Electric and U. S. Steel, whose emergence simultaneously contributed to the evolution of big banks such as J. P. Morgan through purchases of controlling shares of the corporations (Fisher, 1980). During this period, expansion of capitalist interests was facilitated through selective membership in elite Anglo men’s clubs (Pak, 2013). Elite men’s clubs served a combined recreational, social, and political purpose. They enhanced group cohesion through recreation, solidified common ideologies, and facilitated political and economic exploits.

Private membership clubs served three primary purposes (Pak, 2013, p. 705). They developed cohesion among elite bankers and investors through extracurricular activities. Pak (2013) describes how they created access to resources external to the firm and promoted a sub-
culture of elite professionals with a shared vision for economic advancement. The role of the press was reinforcing the prominence of these clubs by publishing detailed membership lists, social gossip columns, society news columns and obituaries of the elite. Obituaries provided the most comprehensive account of social and economic ties, often including a complete listing of the deceased’s private club memberships (Pak, 2013). Such clubs reinforced a ‘we versus they’ approach to growing the economy and were foundational in promoting the subjugation of working class America. Few could counter the powerful effects of the selective socialization of the elite.

Tightly structured social-political networks of elite capitalists led to unprecedented waves of industrial growth in major urban areas throughout the U.S., growth that taxed industrial centers and led to widespread social destabilization for the working class (Brieland, 1990). Concerns surrounding corporate greed and social destabilization had led Anna L. Dawes, in 1897, to make a speech at the National Conference of Charities and Correction calling for the development of a social work profession (Andrews, 2001). “Except in special cases a man has more influence and carries more weight with the business men of the town in presenting matters of charity and public welfare than a woman. I do not discuss the reasons for this, nor its justice; I simply state it as a fact, and I think it cannot be disputed” (Dawes, as cited in Leighninger, 2000, p. 2; Chambers, 1986).

**Emerging Social Group Work Method**

Social workers responded to the rapid industrialization of America by developing an integrative method that tended to the intersecting needs of the working class. Hull House, the first settlement house in the Midwest, opened its doors in 1889 (Brieland, 1990) and became a hallmark of the social group work method. Much like the elite private membership clubs, social
group work method cultivated robust social networks among workers and residents of inner city neighborhoods, “(1) to provide a center for higher civic and social life, (2) to institute and maintain educational and philanthropic enterprises, and (3) to improve conditions in the industrial districts of Chicago” (Brieland, 1990, p. 134). In doing so the workers, or ‘residents’, of Hull House invoked a fraternal mission of getting to know and interacting regularly with the surrounding neighborhood community—often through leisure, work, political, medical and social endeavors (Brieland, 1990; Trattner, 1999, p. 169; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001).

One of the most unique features of the settlement movement was that, for a period of time, oppressed populations were operating within the center of economic, political, and social power. Through conducting surveys, creating community meals, residing in settlement houses, and developing authentic relationships with their communities, residents of Hull House became “technical experts” on their neighborhoods and used this information to influence local, regional, and national legislation, backing-up demands for change with empirical and anecdotal data (Brieland, 1990). “Hull House conducted investigations into factory conditions, housing conditions, truancy, sanitation, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, cocaine distribution, midwifery, children’s reading, infant mortality, newsboys, and social value of the saloon” (Brieland, 1990, p. 136). Ultimately, the goal of settling was to reduce the distance between social classes in order to understand and, thereby, work towards meeting the needs of the community. A high degree of trust was built between residents of Hull House and its surrounding neighborhood.

Much like the effect that private men’s clubs had on capitalist expansion, social group work proved to be innovative and effective when it came to social reform. Many of the “firsts” of Hull House were notably working class-oriented and included…

[a] social settlement in Chicago, social settlement with men and women residents, public baths in Chicago, a public playground in Chicago, a gymnasium for the public in
Chicago, a little theater in the United States, citizen preparation classes, a public kitchen in Chicago, college extension courses in Chicago, a group work school, a painting loan program in Chicago, a free air school in Chicago, a public swimming pool in Chicago, and a Boy Scout Troop in Chicago. (Brieland, 1990, p. 135)

During this same period, Hull House resident Julia Lathrop successfully developed a juvenile court, separating juvenile court from adult court and creating a model that focused, instead, on the offender’s environment, thereby reducing the tendency to blame the victim (Brieland, 1990). Eventually this juvenile courts model was adopted throughout the U. S.

Sweeping industrial reforms also characterized the community organizing work of Hull House residents and are perhaps the most well-known accomplishments of the settling movement. Labor reforms spearheaded by settlement workers included the formation of four labor unions—all geared towards improving the conditions of women in the workforce—factory inspection, legislation for working hours, and child labor laws (Brieland, 1990). Ultimately, settlement house workers addressed the systemic oppression and exploitation of women, children, and immigrants—successfully apportioning their specialized form of social work practice amongst individualized casework and social welfare reform (Austin, 1990; Brieland, 1990; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001).

Is Social Work a Profession?

Social group work methods came to be loosely viewed as an appendage of the emerging social work profession in the 1910s. Much has been made of the speech by Abraham Flexner, Assistant Secretary of the General Education Board of New York, who spoke at the general assembly of the Forty-Second Annual Charities and Corrections Conference in 1917 (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Flexner imposed an admittedly uninformed professional judgment on the social work profession (Flexner, 1917). His status quo argument was that, unlike law and medicine and preaching, social work was not a profession in part because
the social worker is at times perhaps somewhat too self-confident; social work has suffered … from … excessive facility in speech and in action….is it not possible that part of the vast army of reaction is made up of those needlessly terrified by the occasionally reckless—and perhaps somewhat baseless—confidence of the reformer? (Flexner, 1917).

Flexner’s speech had a profound impact on social work practice that resulted in increased efforts to shape the social work profession around the provision of individual and family services rather than social reform. Such efforts continued to widen the social gap between the case worker and the needy (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001 p. 50). Rather than looking to the business community for models to successfully advance legislative reforms, the profession began to accede to the notion that it was not scientific enough to be a profession and made a comprehensive pursuit of its elusive scientific approach.

Meanwhile, the business community successfully advanced their political and economic agendas. In fact, early private banks were not able to provide economic portfolios to prospective investors, as none even existed (Pak, 2013). Nor did negative financial data hinder a bank’s reputation (Pak, 2013). Banking took place in a shroud of secrecy, relying solely on reputation, which was built through social relationships between investors and bankers (Pak, 2013). Jack Morgan, founder of J. P. Morgan, wrote “if that [reputation] is gone, our business is gone, however attractive our show window might be” (as cited in Pak, 2013, p. 705). Private membership clubs provided the conduit for socialization as often as daily through club activities such as yachting, golfing, tennis, and dining that defined one’s social circle (Pak, 2013).

As the business community successfully united, attacks from the business community on social workers intensified (Trattner, 1999; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001, p. 271). The Sheppard-Towner bill, largely authored by social group worker Julia Lathrop and Representative Jeanette Rankin, was put forth by the Children’s Bureau. The bill was created to provide matching funds to states for maternal and child welfare and became the first federally-funded legislation to
provide adequate medical care for women and children (Moehling & Thomasson, 2012; Trattner, 1999; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Yet, with its passage came a heavy backlash against the women who championed it. Attacks castigated women, including Lathrop and Rankin, as “endocrine perverts [and] derailed menopausics” and rebuked those supporting the legislation as “masquerading as humanity…imposing a yoke that will annually become more unbearable in its crushing burdens” (Trattner, 1999, p. 220). Attacks originating from businessmen intimidated many social workers and, consequently, pressed the profession further toward methods based in individualized case work (Trattner, 1999).

The Russell Sage Foundation

The creation of the Russell Sage Foundation (RSF) further exacerbated this divisive struggle between pursuing social reform versus individual change through casework within the profession. RSF was created by Margaret Olivia Sage, the widow of a wealthy railroad magnate and financier (RSF, n.d.). Heavily corporate financed, RSF solidified the momentum to steer social work practice towards casework and away from social group work, investing an unprecedented amount of money into stylizing the social work profession on social casework methods (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001, p. 56). Over three decades, nearly $6 million in grants was directed towards social work organizations, associations, and planning efforts based in the Charity Organization Society’s casework model (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). During this time no RSF funding was directed towards the social reform-oriented settlement movement, nor was funding from any other source (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Paradoxically, external to the social work profession, RSF became a foremost leader in the research of social welfare issues throughout the progressive era and beyond (Anderson, 2008).
Evolution of Casework

The evolution of casework began with the charity work performed by “friendly visitors” in the mid-to late-nineteenth century (Arnold, 2015). Friendly visitors aided the poor and destitute—primarily women trying to feed their families—through direct aid to families and individuals. Casework existed in contrast to the environmental reforms that targeted community issues including poverty, working conditions, sanitation, and housing conditions that were addressed by settlement workers. In the early 1900s, the term “social worker” replaced “friendly visitor” due to advancements in methodologies that were distributed through emergent literature that formulized casework (Arnold, 2015).

The role of gender had a classifying effect on the charity organization societies—and consequently the social work profession (Arnold, 2015). Women predominantly held the title of caseworker—a position that offered the lowest wages and least status within the profession. Meanwhile, men primarily engaged in administrative work such as long-range visioning and strategizing and held the majority of paying jobs in social work (Austin, 1997; Galper, 1975; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). This had wider implications on the development of the social work profession, as caseworkers were overworked, underpaid, and had little energy left to focus on the debates of broader social issues (Arnold, 2015; Austin, 1997; Wenocur & Reisch, 2001).

Mary Richmond, author of the first casework textbook Social Diagnosis, focused on the practical knowledge gained through casework practice and channeled its technique into a scientific approach (Arnold, 2015). This, too, may have had a “conservative effect on social work by favoring the practical over the study of social conditions that may have led to more radical critiques of inequality, and a more understanding approach to assessing the lives of the social workers’ clients” (Arnold, 2015, p. 35). Richmond’s contributions were significant in
propelling the profession towards a *scientific* model and away from social reform efforts. Social Diagnosis was published by the Russell Sage Foundation (RSF, n.d.).

**The Rank and File Movement.** In the 1930’s, the Great Depression shifted the public’s impressions of the causes of poverty to structural explanations and allowed for major social reforms to follow (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Social workers widely endorsed and accepted the New Deal and its aspirations (Fisher, 1980). Not *all* agreed, however, that this was enough. Social worker and New Deal administrator Harry Hopkins only delivered $500 million through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration for relief payments to unemployed workers (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). This signaled to many social group workers that capitalism needed to be replaced altogether with a socialist form of public ownership of national resources (Reisch & Andrews, 2002).

The Rank and File Movement was born out of a heightened awareness of social workers’ shared vulnerability to economic destruction alongside and in partnership with those with whom they worked (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). They were among the first to recognize their shared political and economic class struggle between laborers and capitalists. The authors describe Rank and Filers as keenly aware that a mere $75 monthly paycheck separated them from their clients (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). This shrinking class gap served to strengthen the impact of the movement. Social group workers fully integrated themselves within their communities and held positions at the center of the political and economic struggle between labor and industry.

Grounded in the methodology of social group work, Rank and File members’ goals were a combination of self-help and political action to enact public social protections (Reisch & Garvin, 2016). To accomplish this, they turned to relationship building and information sharing through discussion clubs.
The relational, multidisciplinary, and empowering social group work method proved to be successful in matters of social welfare reform. Discussion club members successfully enacted a series of political actions on key civic issues including unemployment, low wages, poor working conditions, birth control, and civil rights issues including lynching (Reisch & Garvin, 2016). Chicago’s Social Service Workers union became the first workers’ union to emerge from the collective action of discussion groups (Reisch & Garvin, 2016). Unionization of relief workers soon followed in most urban centers throughout the country (Reisch & Garvin, 2016). Rank and File era social group workers operationalized this narrow but powerful practice method, influencing broad-based social welfare reform.

Social Work Today: Developing a National Voice for Dissent

Mainstream social workers had little opportunity to broadcast dissent with the economic and social destruction they were witnessing in the aftermath of the growing political economy (Fisher, 1980). Professional journals and national conferences were not likely to accept anti-establishment articles or presentations. As a result, Social Work Today became the media arm of the Rank and File Movement to remedy this. Published first in 1934, Social Work Today generated national momentum for the Rank and File membership (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Membership peaked around 15,000 in the mid-1930s and the movement’s leaders began to articulate a reform agenda to tackle key issues such as labor reform and civil rights (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). As a result, social group work was beginning to eclipse casework both in professional organization membership and impact (Andrews, 2001). In response, a heavy backlash awaited the social work profession in the form of blacklisting of social workers who built coalitions, worked for social justice, and advocated for social welfare reforms (West, 2012).

Postwar America: The Blacklisting of Radical Social Workers
An agenda of coalition building, peace, and social justice put social group workers at great odds with the mainstream political agenda of the 1940s. The decade was dominated by the challenges brought by the World War II and the Cold War. Social group workers published a special issue of *Social Work Today* entitled “Social Work, Peace, and the People’s Well-Being,” including works by Bertha Reynolds and Marion Hathway calling upon the U.S. government for neutrality and peace and a stronger emphasis on domestic issues such as civil rights, expansion of WPA employment, and worker’s rights (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). This ideology proved to be divisive between social group workers and mainstream social workers.

During the post-war era Rank and Filers were attacked, demoted, fired, and blacklisted for their promotion of civil rights and domestic concerns over military action overseas (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). “McCarthyism” as it came to be known, resulted in the suppression of political dissent and caused social workers to withdraw their union membership and return *en masse* to a centrist position on civil rights and social reform. Bold, progressive social action became synonymous with Communism as corporate America fought to push back on the New Deal and its programs (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). By the 1950s the social work community, scarred by the bullish tactics of McCarthyism, retrenched (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). Union membership declined from 45,000 in 1945 to 12,000 by 1950. By the mid-1950’s even the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was assisting the FBI in “weeding out” suspected radicals from social welfare organizations. This culminated in the demise of prominent social group worker Marion Hathway as the University of Pittsburgh forced her resignation with its Chancellor citing the Cold War as the foremost cause for dismissing suspected Communists from university posts. In the end, more than 150 college and university teachers, many of whom were
social workers, were brought before investigating committees, 65 of whom lost their jobs as a result (Reisch & Andrews, 2002). The social work profession was attacked at its core.

**Community Organizing**

In the 1930s and 1940s, community organizing became recognized as a distinctive form of social work practice (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). Manuals began to emerge that closely aligned community organizing with the casework model of engagement, assessment, intervention planning, and action. _The Lane Report_ of 1939 represented the first official call for the intellectual fundamentals of community organization practice (Austin & Betten, 1990; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). Throughout this time, members of the profession could not agree on the concept of community organization as a means to develop services within organizations versus a means to establish a redistribution of wealth through legislative advocacy (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). The fields of social action and community organization became so distinct that they each had their own organized section with the National Council on Social Work from 1935-1945 (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001). This distinction between social workers who aligned with social action versus community organization was further heightened as a result of the Great Depression.

Unlike social group work, which utilized an integrative and multi-disciplinary model that could be applied within an undergraduate or graduate curriculum, community organizing has almost exclusively been classified as a graduate-level practice concentration. In 1952, there were about a dozen MSW programs offering a community organizing concentration (Jones & Lauffer, 1968). Community organizing became an officially recognized practice area in 1962, and by the mid-60s the community organizing field had grown exponentially (Rothman, 1966). There were approximately eleven hundred MSW graduates (8% of all graduates) with a
community organizing concentration in 1968 (double the number from two years prior) and two-thirds of all MSW programs offered the concentration that year (Jones & Lauffer, 1968).

**Social Group Work**

Leading up to the harsh climate that awaited social group workers, a group work section was added to the National Conference on Social Work convention for the first time in 1935 (Andrews, 2001; Coyle, 1954). Throughout the decade social group work associations emerged to support the continuation of the methodology. Despite the fact that group workers represented many professions, including recreation and government, Grace Coyle invited the notion that group work fell within the definition of a graduate-level social work method in the mid-1940s at the National Conference on Social Welfare (Andrews, 2001; Coyle, 1954). Many within group work disagreed, indicating that group work “wasn’t just a method to be taught, but a philosophy that opened doors” (as cited in Andrews, 2001, p. 50).

By the late 1940s, the American Association of Social Group Workers was flourishing with an interdisciplinary membership totaling over 1,800 (Andrews, 2001). Group work’s empowering philosophy statement designated group work as a “method of group leadership used in organizing and conducting various types of group activities…namely, the opportunity for each individual to fulfill his capacities in freedom, to respect and appreciate others and to assume his social responsibility in maintaining and constantly improving our democratic society” (as cited in Andrews, 2001, p. 49).

The eventual desire of social group workers to professionalize stemmed from their belief that this would help them “find a home” within the university and offset what they lacked in numbers (Andrews, 2001). A merger to professionalize group work was thought to have a direct influence on curriculum content-building within the professional schools of social work. This
led to social group work’s alignment, and eventual merger, with the social work profession. Many group workers later acknowledged that it was this move to professionalize that destroyed the tenants of social group work that focused on community building as the path to social, economic and political reform.

It was the founding of the NASW in 1955 that pressed group workers to make a pivotal decision—either merge their formal group workers’ associations (the American Association for the Study of Group Work and the American Association of Group Workers) with NASW and become a method of social work practice or remain separate with weak ties to the University (Andrews, 2001). Group workers reluctantly elected to join NASW. Ultimately, this merger proved fatal for group work’s social reform orientation. Rather than becoming a recognized sector of social work practice, NASW relegated group workers to a “committee” status upon merging. The NASW ultimately eliminated all practice committees—among them group work—just a few years later (Andrews, 2001). What remained in the end was a version of group work that focused on individual treatment within a group setting, a method derived from what was perceived as the more “scientific” method of casework. This, ultimately, paved the way for social work education’s focus on community organizing as macro practice as opposed to the highly effective methods attributed to social group work. Social group workers had risen up against a capitalism-favoring political economy and lost. Ultimately, social group workers were systematically marginalized by NASW as well as CSWE.

**CSWE Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project**

The civil rights movement provided a major impetus for CSWE to more formally integrate community organizing into social work education. The movement spurred an increase in enrollments in social work programs across the country (Jones & Lauffer, 1968). Many
advocates who were intimately involved in the civil rights movement sought a degree in community organizing. The Community Organization Curriculum Development Project was created by CSWE to “develop a systematic, comprehensive curriculum to prepare social workers to perform professional roles in community organization and social planning” (1966). The authors suggested that, at the time, social work was the best fit for this type of community planning and organizing (1966). Ultimately, the study sought to develop a professional social work curriculum that would be used within universities across the country for teaching community organizing. Using a three-pronged approach, the organizers of the COCDP expected to develop a curriculum through…

(a) coordination and systematization of information, theory and research that are relevant to community organization practice; (b) clarification and systematization of principles of community organization practice, based on empirical studies of actual practice and the needs of the field; and (c) construction of curriculum guides and training materials for graduate school professional training as well as short term in-service training. (CSWE, 1966)

**Scope of the COCDP**

Six months into his role as Project Director, Meyer Schwartz (1963) again authored an illuminating confidential memorandum to Katherine Kendall, Executive Director of CSWE, the project’s Senior Consultant, Stanley Budner, and Alan Fite, the CSWE Executive Officer of the project, giving voice to concerns surrounding the COCDP. Schwartz begins by stating that scope of the project should remain basically the same—the study of community organizing practice and curriculum in order to effect curriculum development. In fact, he labels this a “firm recommendations [sic]” (Schwartz, 1963). However, doubts about the scope and intent of the project characterize further content of this memo. Schwartz goes on to indicate that “a secondary result of this study might well be development of insights and understandings of practice. This study will not yield, as presently constituted, firm recommendations on how practice should be
or ought to be conducted. If we were to attempt this a different framework would have to be proposed” (Schwartz, 1963, p. 1). It is noteworthy that this study did, in fact, result in the form of firm recommendations on how practice should be conducted through the development of a textbook on community organization.

Project Director Meyer Schwartz (1963) acknowledged the two strains of macro practice methods, one molded in the traditions of the community organization societies’ casework framework and the other in the traditions of the social group workers, stating:

So, from the beginnings, in the twenties of community organization as a social work practice, we are struck with the duality of a goal or task orientation as embodied in the Charity Organization Society activities in social reform, culminating in the spread of Councils of Social Agencies and Chesses, and the orientation of a democratic process stemming from the thinkers like Pettit, Lindeman, and Steiner carrying on the tradition of the Settlement House movement’s devotion to the idea of the ‘small community’ as exemplified in the idea of ‘neighborhood’. (p. 1)

Ford Foundation, one of the most influential foundations in the U.S. at the time, sought to fund the program presumably in an effort to sway the project’s outcome as suggested in the following correspondence from the COCDP project director, Meyer Schwartz:

Of little that is certain, I think that they [Ford Foundation] reached the conclusion that ‘social welfare is too important to be left to the social workers.’ (I paraphrase Clemenceau, not Yivisaker). With this, I cannot dissent. On the other hand, social workers are too important to be left out of social welfare. (1963, p. 2)

Unlike social group workers, who operated with the philosophy of creating egalitarian relationships with members of the communities they worked within, the planners and leaders of the COCDP exhibited vastly conflicting views regarding the development of relationships with target communities. The project’s initial director, Meyer Schwartz (1963), underscored these differences, stating…

I do think we have to sharpen our study of population and practice, i.e., pitch our designs so that we will: A. Heighten insight and understanding of practice and
population; B. Exhibit a logical scheme whereby our findings about practice and population can be connected into curriculum recommendations; C. Yield tentative assessments of what practice ought to be in such a population. As a matter of fact, points A, B, and C are either implicit or explicit in our present framework. It remains to make explicit what is now implicit… in any case we ought to be explicit for our present purposes. (Council on Social Work Education, p. 3)

Soon after, CSWE records indicate that Meyer Schwartz’s involvement with the COCDP ended. Despite the fact that the COCDP files provide detailed records regarding project staffing decisions, no correspondence regarding Schwartz’s departure was located the COCDP files. He was replaced by Arnold Gurin in the spring of 1964. The scope of the project from that point forward did not expand to include either an implicit or explicit understanding of heightened relationships among social workers and the communities they purported to organize. Ultimately, records point to the repeated marginalization of the role of “non-professionals” including people of color, women, and micro level practitioners.

Project consultant Daniel Yankelovich from the Cambridge Center for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, conducted surveys as part of the project’s feasibility study. He received a letter in early 1967 from Arnold Gurin articulating his “major disappointment” in the inclusion of “people who cannot remotely be defined as community organizers” including “16 non-professional indigenous … 6 Headstart [sic]…12 YMCA-YWCA… [and] 10 VISTA” (p. 1) personnel in his study. Gurin continued, stating “there is some of this weakness in the depth interviews, as well” (p. 1).

Gurin (1968) published a manuscript titled Community Organization: For Political Power or Service Delivery? along with his colleague Joan Levin Ecklein during the concluding years of the COCDP. This manuscript offers the most revealing insights into the COCDP. Gurin and Ecklein (1968) shared, “characterization[s] of a social movement are unity and continuity

```
over time… precisely the factors which have been largely lacking in the neighborhood-based action programs that have arisen both within and outside the framework of the antipoverty programs” (pp. 9-10). The authors continued, stating “we are saying that demands for substantial change in political power and the redistribution of economic resources comes about only through the forces that are mobilized by change-oriented social movements” (1968, p. 10).

Gurin and Ecklein purported that community action programs were too limited in potential to produce social reform because they were bound to governmental compliance because their programs were government funded. As a result, they conclude that “service programs are not a source from which one can reasonably expect to generate a social movement… [however], “it is very reasonable to expect that social movements will generate service programs” (1968, p. 11).

Gurin and Ecklein (1968) envisioned that a movement similar to the organized labor movement of the early 1900s was what was needed to organize social welfare agencies. Such a movement would exist outside of the profession of social work. The signs of organized civic action that illuminated the 1960s led them to believe the next step was for social revolutionaries to establish “a legal mechanism for negotiating with the public welfare system, following pretty much the trade union model” (1968, p. 12). Yet they admittedly had no vision for what such a social welfare reorganization would look like.

Discussion

Social work practice and social work education were professionalized in the 1950’s, on the heels of The Progressive Era, Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal, World Wars I and II, and a post-war climate in America that was characterized by McCarthyism and the blacklisting of social work educators. This study explores how these sociopolitical factors had a deleterious impact on the development of the profession’s macro social work education curriculum,
eliminating social group work method and replacing it with a community organizing method. The result is a social work profession that is ill prepared to significantly advance social welfare policy, thereby eliminating societal constructs of oppression. Implications implore macro social work educators to explore alternative practice methods that prepare future generations of social work practitioners to advance social welfare policy.

Social group work method occupied a place at the epicenter of community life. The method integrated a multi-disciplinary approach that aimed at empowering a community’s democratic involvement in civic life by cultivating social connectedness, social responsibility and social action as a means to achieve social reform. Much like the banking and business industry’s elite men’s clubs, it represented a highly relational model that cast the development and maintenance of intergroup relationships as the foundation for social and civic participation. It resulted in highly effective socio-political reforms that addressed the social constructs of poverty and oppression.

Community organizing as a social work practice method was cast in the mold of the individualized casework method, with an emphasis on developing programs and services in conjunction with corporate and/or government funders. It never was designed to promote or achieve the social reform agenda that characterized the social group work method. Given the political context of the time, it made sense for the COCDP to adopt a mainstream community organizing agenda. Social work education had just weathered what amounted to a war tribunal on its own people culminating in the dismissal of social work educators who supported the social group work agenda of social and political reform through education and coalition-building.

Unlike social group work, community organizing positioned social workers as outside experts. Also contrary to social group work, COCDP organizers believed that the role of helping
professionals was to help individuals solve their individual problems as opposed to changing the fabric of political and economic policy. This critical departure from social group work failed to solidify community organizing as an effective tool with which to achieve social reform.

**Implications for Future Research**

True to the profession’s ethical obligation to address systemic components of oppression, social work education must first examine its own contributions to such oppression. The socioeconomic pressure to dismiss social group work method in the 1950’s requires the profession to revisit this practice method and its implications for macro social work education in a modern context. Further research is also needed to explore integrative and interdisciplinary approaches to social work education that prepare social workers for political and economic advocacy aimed at eliminating systemic oppression.
References


Columbus, OH. Retrieved from Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries. (CSWE RG 34, Box 43)


Challenging Power and Control within the Domestic Violence Shelter:

A Voluntary Services Model

Rebecca Hoffman

St. Catherine University – University of St. Thomas
Abstract

Left unchecked, domestic violence shelter policies and practices can inadvertently recreate attempts to exert power and control over women who are fleeing intimate partner violence. Little attention has been given to examining the use of power and control within the DV shelter environment. I asked a group of eleven domestic violence shelter advocates to share their perceptions of the benefits and challenges of operating a Voluntary Services Model—essentially eliminating the practice of exerting power and control through a system of rules and punishments—using a qualitative exploratory study. Key findings addressed the most prevalent themes of intimidation vs. non-threatening behavior, emotional abuse vs. respect, isolation vs. trust and support, and coercion and threats vs. negotiation and fairness. Implications suggest that, while power and control manifests in a shelter environment, the Voluntary Services Model introduces a framework for providing shelter services that encourages shelter providers to examine internalized facets of power and control and replace them with empowering practices.

Key words: domestic violence, intimate partner violence, voluntary services model, emergency shelter, best practices, equality
The provision of domestic violence (DV) shelter services for women experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) dates back to the 1960s (“History of the Battered Women’s Movement”, 1999). Throughout the United States, there are nearly 1,949 domestic violence shelters (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). DV shelter services, typically provided for up to six months during the initial separation of a relationship, are delivered during the most vulnerable and deadly period of IPV (“Understanding Why Victims Stay”, 2017). In addition to the high-stakes environment faced by women experiencing intimate partner violence, the DV shelter environment itself is often rife with challenges. Some of the challenges include the “professionalization of services, racism, rigid hierarchies with insufficient supervision, reduced compensation and fringe benefits, insufficient time to complete tasks, co-worker stress, restrictive policies and procedures, on-call requirements, inadequate number of staff, division between staff and supervisors, poor communication, indistinct goals, and lack of safety” (Merchant & Whiting, 2015, p. 468). Women residing in shelters also face an array of challenges within the DV shelter setting.

Theoretically, most shelters strive to provide services that support the empowerment of women experiencing IPV (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). However, the study of best practice models for DV shelter operations has been virtually non-existent. Many shelter systems have evolved to function much like Goffman’s Total Institution (Stark, 1994), controlling nearly every aspect of women’s lives by relying heavily on a system of rules and punishments. Such systems favor the stripping of individualism, rewards and punishments, and adaptation. The provision of shelter services within this framework reinforces the power and control dynamic of an abusive relationship. Women’s experiences become dictated by the requirements of the system rather than by their individual needs. “Private decisions become a matter of public scrutiny and,
sometimes, social and organizational control” (Hartnett & Postmus, 2010, p. 292). Ironically, although the very definition of domestic violence centers on an agenda of control and coercion, this agenda replicates in the very place where women seek refuge.

There are multiple dimensions of power and control exerted by perpetrators of intimate partner violence—the use of intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, children, privilege, economic abuse, coercion and threats and minimizing/denying/blaming (“The Duluth Model,” 2011). Similarly, left unchecked, DV shelter policies can represent “an attempt to reproduce a sense of what is considered to be the appropriate way to behave in a home” (Hartnett & Postmus, 2010). Women experiencing IPV often report an “overlap between staff enforcement of rules and abusive dynamics they had experienced in their previous relationships” (Glenn & Goodman, 2015, p. 1491). Consequently, shelter rules have the opposite of their intended consequences by adding to the emotional stress of the situation and increasing social isolation.

A Voluntary Services Model (VSM) is based on the notion that women who are survivors of IPV have full control over decisions about their lives (Donovan, 2013). A VSM promotes the building of relationships between women who are surviving IPV and those providing care for them (Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault [MOCADSV], 2015). Such relationships provide a foundation for advocates to support women in meeting their needs. The aim of this research is to explore the benefits and challenges of operating a DV shelter for victims of IPV within the context of a VSM. Emphasis will be placed on answering the question “What are the benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM?” from the perspectives of employees of a DV shelter for women experiencing IPV.
Literature Review

The battered women’s movement began in the 1970s with a consciousness-raising focus on systems that contribute to IPV, such as oppression, patriarchy, economic injustice, and repression of women’s reproductive rights versus an individualized focus on the issue (Mehrotra, Kimball, & Wahab, 2016). Today, much of this historical approach has been lost as the result of public policies tied to government funding, a loss of the social movement behind addressing IPV, and overburdened shelter systems that impose rules in response to the challenges of operating a shelter system (Mehrotra, Kimball, & Wahab, 2016). The remains of the movement within shelter systems often reflect more of an exercise of social control than an exercise of women’s empowerment (Mehrotra, Kimball, & Wahab, 2016). The use of feminine pronouns throughout this study acknowledges that women represent the overwhelming majority of victims of IPV, including and especially the most violent and deadly forms of IPV which lead to DV shelter stays, hospitalization, and/or death (Hamberger & Larsen, 2015).

The Domestic Violence Shelter

Domestic violence (DV) shelters typically provide an array of services including emergency shelter, individual support and/or advocacy, group support, court advocacy, education and prevention, children’s programming, transportation, financial support for housing-related expenses, and other housing services such as transitional housing and permanent supportive housing (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). Central to the operation of a DV shelter is its staff, typically referred to as shelter advocates, who keep the shelter open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through weekends, holidays, and inclement weather.

Despite acute demand for services, “many programs reported a critical shortage of funds and [therefore] staff to assist victims in need of services” (“2015 MN DV Count”, 2016). During
2015, over forty staff positions were eliminated; most of them direct services positions, in the Minnesota DV shelter system. The median pay for shelter advocates is universally low with a national average of $13.19/hour (“Hourly Rate for DV Workers,” 2016). Wages and working conditions tax shelter advocates, creating high turnover rates, and making the staffing of the shelter a continuous process of hiring and training, especially in small rural communities.

**Lack of Best Practices Research and Gaps in Research**

Quality evaluation of the extent to which emergency shelters meet the needs of women experiencing IPV is lacking. As a result, the “provision of crisis services for women at high risk of injury or death, which is a common aspect of responding to women’s immediate support needs, may not always be guided by the available evidence on the issue” (Gierman & Liska, 2013, p. 17). Gierman & Liska (2013) urge that shelter models be evaluated to understand and control for benefits and potential harms to women experiencing IPV. Ultimately, it is unclear how to implement promising practices and interventions. Research lacks in part because women are navigating a dangerous and potentially volatile situation. All forms of research must be broadly scrutinized and, ultimately, approach the issues from secondary sources to the greatest extent possible (Gierman & Liska, 2013, p. 17).

Despite—or, more likely, because of—the complexities involved with providing DV shelter services many shelter systems operate without a clear framework or model for service provision. Only in recent years has research emerged that contributes to the design and implementation of best practices in providing DV shelter services for women experiencing IPV (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008). Much remains unknown about the effective design of shelter services and its impact on the outcomes for women experiencing IPV. Without a framework for providing DV shelter services, it is impossible to evaluate participant outcomes based on
interventions provided, improve upon existing service delivery models, discard ineffective practices, and replicate successful models (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008).

**Social control versus social support.** Shelters, often unintentionally, reinforce a form of social control that resembles the coercion and control of the battering relationship through strict rules that restrict behaviors of shelter residents both internal and external to the shelter environment (Haaken & Yragui, 2003; Arnold, 2009; DeWard & Moe, 2010; Hartnett & Postmus, 2010; Katuna & Glasberg, 2013; Mehrotra, Kimball, & Wahab, 2016; Zufferey et al., 2016). The use of coercion and control within the domestic violence shelter setting inhibits the rights of women to “fulfill their human right to housing” (Katuna & Glasberg, 2013, p. 1), reinforces women’s subordinate place in society (Hartnett & Postmus, 2010), and results in a “systematic deterioration of personhood” (DeWard & Moe, 2010, p. 115).

The experiences of women within a shelter environment are largely shaped by its rules (Koyama, 2003; Olsen, n.d.). “Over time, detailed rules concerning who could be admitted and how residents should behave once admitted became a way for shelter staff to meet funders’ demands for structure, to establish safety, confidentiality, and predictability as shelters became increasingly in demand” (Glenn & Goodman, 2015 p. 1483). Scrutiny by staff is nearly constant within a shelter environment and women quickly learn how to modify their interactions with staff in order to “measure up”.

Such a focus on the enforcement of rules takes a toll on those providing the services as well. Dewey and St. Germain (2014) report that social service fatigue increases as a result of being tasked with judging the extent to which women are meeting their assigned goals, enforcing rules, and amassing measurable outcomes. Further, this “wide margin of staff discretion, and their potential misuse of authority, [creates] a deep power differential from the residents’
perspectives” (DeWard & Moe, 2010, p. 120). It creates, essentially, a difficult situation for all parties involved.

**Goffman’s Total Institution**

Erving Goffman (1961) coined the term total institution referring to institutions that separated their residents from the general population, required special access to enter (and sometimes leave), and existed to re-socialize its residents into new societal roles. The DV shelter setting meets Goffman’s criteria for a total institution. The shelter setting, along with all other total institutions, is prone to restricting the right to self-determination of its residents.

Four central characteristics characterize a total institution—totalistic, degrading, privilege and punishment-based and requiring adaptation. A total institution, without the examined framework of an evidence-based model for services, relies heavily on rules and regulations. “Rules and regulations are the outward manifestations of the social cultures of total institutions, with their emphasis on mechanisms of control. This culture is antithetical to the tenants of ‘civil society,’ where the adult actor is… autonomous… possessing self-determination and freedom of action” (Stark, 1994, p. 556). Within such a setting, compromised self-efficacy and adaption oppose the empowerment of women experiencing IPV.

**Totalistic.** DV shelter settings, like other institutions, control the key functions of daily life (Goffman, 1961). Once women reside in a shelter, the operation of their daily lives becomes subject to the discretion of those in charge (Cole, 2017). This includes waking times, meal times, chores, participation in groups, curfews, and bed times. Furthermore, residents are closely monitored by those in charge of compliance (Cole, 2017).

**Degradation of identity.** Residing in a shelter restricts the autonomy of women experiencing IPV first by lowering their status in relation to the general population and, next,
relative to those operating the shelter at any given time (Cole, 2017). Such restrictions also include limited communication with the outside world, often enforced under the guise of “confidentiality” of other shelter residents, and an overarching belief that women experiencing IPV are incapable of caring for themselves. The dual identity of victim of IPV and social deviant often become intertwined within the shelter institution (Bogard, 1998).

The loss of personal efficacy is directly linked to the rhetoric of identity, rendering women powerless within the lens of those who run the institution (Bogard, 1998). The parental role is directly or indirectly targeted, labeling shelter residents’ parenting skills as insufficient or deviant to effective child rearing (Lyon, Lane, & Menard, 2008).

**Loss of roles.** Within the shelter setting, the role of parent often becomes vanquished by the institution. “Chafing under poverty and isolated from their partners, they must carry the burden of parenting alone, all while under the watchful eye of strangers who believe they control their fate” (Arrighi, 1997, p. 51). This has a particularly harmful effect on family units, since children come to view their parents as powerless within the shelter system. “As children see the adult members of the family losing their power to make decisions and, symbolically at least, ‘becoming radically demoted in the… system’ (Goffman as cited in Stark, 1994), they often begin to lose respect for their parents” (Stark, 1994, p. 557). As family members’ roles become obfuscated, “parents, once perceived as powerless by their children, often find that they begin to lose control [as] children are paying attention to the advice and reprimands of service providers” (Stark, 1994, p. 558).

**Privilege and punishments.** The system of rules and privileges generally entails rewards and special privileges for compliance and is designed to foster obedience (Cole, 2017). Punishments often involve threats to wellbeing such as shelter eviction, calling child welfare
services, and loss of access to shelter resources (Koyama & Martin, 2002). The system of
privileges and rewards discourages shelter residents from “falling out of line” with the
institution’s expectations of them.

**Adaptation.** As a result, adaptation to a shelter setting can have four distinct responses:
withdrawal from the situation, turning inward and focusing on immediate circumstances,
rebellion, or assimilation to life in the shelter (Goffman, 1961). “Many actions taken by
institutionalized homeless women are best viewed as strategic impression management or
attempts at working the system” (Bogard, 1998, p. 231). Manipulation of identity between
victim and social deviant allows for the resistance of domination within the confines of the total

**Manifestation of Power and Control within the Shelter Setting**

Advocacy encompasses a broad array of services ranging from meeting basic needs such
as food and shelter, to connecting women with community-based services such as legal, housing,
and medical care, to providing support and information essential to community change efforts
grounded towards eliminating IPV (Allen, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2004). Women who have received
advocacy services demonstrated better outcomes than their counterparts (Sullivan & Bybee,
1999). This included an overall higher quality of life with more active social supports compared
to the control group (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999).

However, without a clear framework for advocacy services within the shelter
environment, advocates run the risk of inadvertently manifesting a totalistic system framed by
rules that perpetuate the exercise of power and control over women experiencing IPV.
According to Koyama and Martin (2002), creators of the Power and Control in a Shelter Setting
(see Figure 1), the discussion of the use of power and control in a shelter setting is not meant to
“discount the fact that advocates have been doing, and continue to do, extremely important and life-saving work. Rather, it is meant to incite discussion as to what we still need to work on in our empowerment-based and social change advocacy”.

Figure 1. This figure illustrates eight dimensions of power and control in domestic violence shelter settings.


Voluntary Services Model

In recognition of the advocacy dichotomy—social control versus support—the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (2012) developed a groundbreaking approach to providing services within a shelter environment—a voluntary services model (VSM). The VSM examines and implements “intentional efforts to reduce the number of rules in residential
programs to allow for more effective advocacy and offer services that better align with agencies’ stated philosophies” (MOCADSV, 2012, p. 8). A VSM honors both the unique circumstances of each woman and the power of having personal agency over decision-making that is essential in the recovery from IPV. Within such a model, the transformed role of shelter advocate focuses on relationship building in order to support the needs of women experiencing IPV.

A VSM is not devoid of rules. However, instead of creating and implementing rules to control behavior, a VSM shifts its philosophy to “reasonable expectations” of residents to both ensure safety and affirm advocacy (MOCADSV, 2012, p. 9). This shift is based on an organizational value of safety as a basic human right as opposed to an earned reward for good behavior. As the role of the shelter advocate shifts from rule-enforcer to provider of services that promote safety, support, resources, and options (MOCADSV, 2012) within a VSM, it allows advocates to create trusting and supportive relationships with women who are experiencing IPV.

There has been little discussion of the efficacy of implementing a VSM in a DV shelter. This study examines the perceptions of employees of the VSM implemented within their DV shelter. It seeks to explore the employees’ perceptions of the benefits and the challenges of implementing a VSM in a DV shelter for women fleeing IPV.

**Methods**

**Sample Population**

In this phenomenological study, I employed a qualitative exploratory methodology utilizing semi-structured, in depth interviews to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing a voluntary services model (VSM) in a domestic violence shelter. I interviewed a convenience sample of eleven employees of a domestic violence shelter located in a rural community in the upper Midwest. The goal of the study was to explore employees’ perceptions...
of the benefits and challenges of operating a VSM within a domestic violence shelter. I chose to limit the sample to people who were employed by the shelter as of the final month of 2016.

Identifying information was not solicited from respondents during the interviews. However, basic information about their length of service and position within the shelter was collected. The sample consisted of 100% of the employees of the DV shelter during the identified timeframe. All of the respondents were women. Respondents varied from having worked at the shelter from one and a half months to four and a half years. Collectively, respondents had been employed by the shelter for nearly 24 years at an average of 2.1 years per respondent. Position titles of respondents included shelter advocate, legal advocate, business manager, and executive director.

Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews were administered during regularly scheduled shifts. They were scheduled in advance to ensure that each employees’ responsibilities were covered during the interview. Interviews were conducted on-site at the DV shelter in the staff office.

Interview content. The interviews consisted of sixteen pre-determined questions. Interviews ranged from fifteen minutes to one hour with an average time of thirty-four minutes. Questions sought to explore the employees’ perceptions of the types of services provided by the shelter, common issues and challenges faced by shelter residents, the VSM and how it informed their role within the shelter setting, and the benefits and challenges associated with the VSM within the DV shelter setting.

Human participants’ protection. This research proposal was submitted to an Internal Review Board (IRB) for a full review and subsequently approved. Informed consent from participants was obtained by the researcher through an informed consent process approved by the
IRB. All participants were notified of the option to opt out of the study without retribution. A separate informed consent form was collected for the interview to be audio recorded and an option was given to be interviewed but not recorded.

A cell phone was used to make an audio recording of each semi-structured interview. The cell phone was password protected. The audio file was then transferred to a password protected cloud server and deleted from the mobile device. Interviews were transcribed from their location on the cloud server, and the transcribed versions of the interviews are stored on the same cloud server. Transcribers signed a confidentiality agreement prior to transcribing the interviews.

Raw and transcribed interview data is stored on the cloud server with no identifying names or other identifying items connected to any study instrument. All data, interview recordings, and transcriptions will be stored for three years per federal guidelines and then destroyed.

**Data Analysis**

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then selectively coded using NVivo software. Each interview question was analyzed for content on the benefits and challenges of operating a DV shelter utilizing a VSM. Benefits and challenges were coded by content area. During the process of data collection and transcription, a deductive analysis was conducted to identify benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM. A final, inductive analysis was conducted with the transcribed interviews to identify analytic categories and conceptual themes within the data related to power and control within a domestic abuse shelter. Deductively, data were re-analyzed for evidence of the benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM within the context of power and control versus empowerment.
Strengths and Limitations

This sample represents a very small group of shelter employees from a small fourteen-bed shelter in the rural Midwest. However, the emergent themes offer insights for future research on best practices in providing victim/survivor-centered approaches in DV shelter service delivery. Additionally, this information provides insights for shelter board members, administrators, and advocates considering implementation of a voluntary services-based DV shelter model.

Results

Domestic violence shelter employees’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of implementing a voluntary services model (VSM) are explored in this study. All employees are referred to herein as “advocates” to protect the confidentiality of individual respondents. While the interview questions were not developed around the concepts of power and control within the shelter environment, the respondents’ answers spoke broadly and in depth to these concepts. Advocates’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM are presented within the framework of a rules-based power and control framework versus the empowerment framework of a VSM. The most prevalent themes that emerged from this study addressed intimidation vs. non-threatening behavior, emotional abuse vs. respect, isolation vs. trust and support, and coercion and threats vs. negotiation and fairness.

Intimidation vs. Non-Threatening Behavior

Intimidation manifests in a shelter environment through the arbitrary enforcement of rules, constant staff surveillance, and expectations to submit to involuntary drug testing (Koyama & Martin, 2002). Non-threatening behavior, conversely, involves residents “making decisions
and, in the natural learning of life, being able to learn from those decisions” (Bridges to Safety, 2016).

**Benefits of a VSM.** Advocates indicated an overwhelming sense of relief that their role does not involve monitoring and surveillance of residents, conducting involuntary drug tests, or enforcing the rules. In drawing upon the parallels of an abusive relationship and the exertion of power and control in a shelter environment, advocates observed:

[Shelter residents] are already oppressed, or might already feel less-than or belittled, or might have already had somebody else dictate their life and control it. Control their food. Control this and that. I don’t think it is good for us to—it’s the abusive power and control within the domestic violence shelter.

Especially in our situation, where they’re coming out of an abusive relationship, we’re empowering them to make their own decisions, rather than telling them that they have to make the decisions. So, I think that we empower them with our model and give them the strength and we’ve put all the decisions in their hands so they feel that they are doing it and they are making these choices.

**Challenges of a VSM.** The shelter initially reduced its rules from twenty-five to five and, later, eliminated them altogether. Today, residents are expected to behave in a manner conducive to communal living. Advocates continue to struggle with the ambiguity that remains in light of having eliminated the rules. Whether it is addressing the problems of communal living or providing services to help women succeed, it has proven difficult to meet women where they are at as opposed to having a set of expectations that residents are required to comply with. Some advocates observed:

It’s like okay well, we meet them where they are, we talk about what’s going on, it may be really difficult, I think that’s really hard. You know, having those hard conversations, it’s really difficult because you know, you have to have a rapport with them, and if you don’t have that rapport, that conversation might not go very well.

It’s hard for the advocates. We have lots of conversations about [the lack of rules] and they go, ‘well if we just add this one rule’… but then we add another rule for someone else… but then you add that rule and then you add another rule and then you got to meet
with an advocate once a week. You know? But, we can’t seem to get people involved in wanting or knowing how to make their life better than what it is.

I think the most difficult part about it is, you know, when there becomes an issue. Like if somebody is smoking in the house, if somebody is using drugs in the house, if there’s a physical altercation, you know, um treating each individual instance instead of saying like oh well this happened so now we have to create this rule so it makes it so it doesn’t ever happen again.

**Emotional Abuse vs. Respect**

Emotional abuse—within a shelter environment—stems from the notion that women, especially victims of IPV, are incapable of protecting themselves. This manifests by requiring women to disclose intimate details of their life histories and questioning their capabilities (Koyama & Martin, 2002). Alternatively, respect stems from the belief that women know what they need. It is expressed through supporting residents in building self-confidence through decision-making, goal setting, and in knowing that their choices are being validated (Bridge to Safety, 2016).

**Benefits of a VSM.** Advocates overwhelmingly recognize and appreciate the significance of empowerment through respect within the VSM. One advocate observes, “We weren’t advocates [prior to implementing the VSM]. We were judgmental. We were harming the people that we were supposed to be serving and supporting. We did things like, had people sign blank releases of information”. Another shared:

I think there needs to be sort of a shift in the thought that a victim knows how to keep herself safe. And we should take the lead from her and kind of give back some of that power that she loses by her perpetrator or batterer being involved with the criminal justice system because she loses any say over what happens to her family.

The experience of supporting residents also proved to be empowering for advocates. By eliminating the surveillance role from the advocate’s position, advocates expressed increased satisfaction and purpose in working to support women fleeing IPV:
Before I started working here there [were] twenty five rules and I read them when I first came here and they would only give women three strikes and they were out. They would just throw them out on the street. And, I was like, if I worked here back then, I wouldn’t have lasted because I can’t just do that to somebody.

I think just changing the mentality so it’s not [about] catching them doing bad, but really just catching them doing good and cheering them on and I think part of me being an advocate is to be their cheerleader.

I think there’s a certain point of how much control an agency can have over their clients. Especially when it comes to domestic violence. How does one expect somebody to get away from that if you’re still being the abuser? And that’s one thing I’m glad that we don’t have the rules anymore because I probably would have quit.

**Challenges of a VSM.** Navigating a complex situation such as IPV is fraught with challenges. In the midst of this crisis, women may resort to unhealthy protective behaviors such as drug or alcohol use or attachments with people who do not support their recovery process.

For advocates, their role often involves witnessing such behaviors unfolding. One advocate summarized the struggle involved with being a witness to this without assuming the role of ‘protector’ under the pretense of ‘safety,’ stating:

Everyone’s definition of success is different and so people make their own choices and set their own goals, and the reason for that is someone could come in here and they, for the last twenty years, haven’t even been able to go to the bathroom without asking or to go look into a mirror or do anything without getting someone else’s permission. So, while it can be a confusing time for someone to have that amount of freedom when they haven’t had that before, if we are telling people what to do then we are just continuing the abuse and it’s like, we’re their batterer. That’s how I see it.

Another advocate remarked on what it took for her to overcome the tendency to question survivors’ choices without imposing her will onto others, “Once you realize that they’re not, you know, they’re just not there for whatever reason, they’re not ready, it’s allowing them to be that, to not be ready”. Sometimes, when residents are ready, they are unsure about where to begin seeking help, resulting in the situation described by one advocate:

[One of the] challenges [is] that in a voluntary model you have to ask for what you need. And you get it, but you know, we allow the women to decide what’s best for them and
what their needs are. But they have to ask for them then. Where, yeah, someone whose not been allowed to make decisions, that would be a difficult thing.

**Isolation vs. Trust and Support**

Within the shelter environment, social isolation is reinforced by strict curfews, restricted access to the telephone and social media, and restrictions on visitors (Koyama & Martin, 2002). Trust and support, conversely, is grounded in an inherent value for others, even amidst the vast array of differences that exist between all people (Bridges to Safety, 2016). Supportive relationships are built upon the understanding that we all grow and evolve through experience (Bridges to Safety, 2016).

**Benefits of a VSM.** Women who have been socially isolated and maltreated are deprived of supportive, trusting relationships. Because of this, relationships create the foundation of the VSM. Advocates overwhelmingly view this as one of the most significant benefits of a VSM. One advocate remarked:

Well, one of the biggest benefits, I think, is that … we’re able to have a relationship that you’re all on the same level and that creates trust. I’m not saying it can create a lot of trust. Everyone is different, but you create trust. And you also become that person that when someone needs help, or they need to talk, or they’re sad, or they’re upset, or they need advice, or they just need to bounce their own thoughts off someone, they have a safe place to do it. And, you know, that’s what you want to be. Because, if nobody feels safe anywhere and doesn’t have any trust in anyone, then there is no success anywhere.

Some advocates are strategic about developing opportunities to connect with residents through housework such as chores or cooking. One reflected:

I like to go in the kitchen and clean, do the dishes and then talk to them while they’re in there and they’re always like, ‘Oh you’re doing our cleaning, thank you,’ and some of the time they’re like, ‘I’ll do my own dish.’ So I didn’t mind things like that, but I know that was a concern for some people as well as ‘well that means we’re going to have to do the cooking and cleaning.’

Overall, advocates recognized and supported the rationale that relationships matter more than rules when healing from IPV. Some prevailing sentiments shared by advocates included:
We’re empowering them to make their own decisions, rather than telling them that they have to make the decisions. So I think that we empower them with our model and give them the strength and we’ve put all the decisions in their hands so they feel that they are doing it and they are making these choices. And we are able to support them so that they gain this confidence, like, ‘I did it, I did it all on my own.’ It’s exciting to see that when they realize, ‘I can do this on my own, I am enough.’ That’s what they say a lot. ‘I am enough.’

I’m like ‘why do the rules matter? Who cares? Why should someone not be safe because they didn’t mop a floor or sweep,’ and some people are like ‘oh well they need to do those things in their home and they haven’t been taught so we need to teach them.’ Well, once again, your cleanliness may be different than the cleanliness of what I think is clean in my house. So, really what does it matter because everyone deserves to be safe without having to mop a floor. It took me a little time but now I can see that the way we did things was so wrong and I’ve been here long enough to see that, no matter if someone is successful… like, we think they should be successful or we hope they should be successful… that we establish relationships.

**Challenges of a VSM.** There are significant challenges involved in developing supportive, trusting relationships with shelter residents. Connecting with someone who is in the midst of a major crisis proves to be tough. When the VSM carries no requirements to have contact with advocates, the process of building rapport can be daunting. One advocate shared:

> It has been really difficult—it’s hard to build rapport when there isn’t any way to entice the victims to come and talk to me. For instance, last night I had a group – we were just going to decorate Christmas cookies and talk about Christmas and you know just kind of hang out together. I could not get anyone. I even bribed them with a Wal-Mart card. You know, someone will come down and win a Wal-Mart card, and nothing.

Both mental health and chemical use complicate this process, making this a point of ongoing frustration for advocates. One advocate expressed concern that some “[residents are] finding coping mechanisms that are unhealthy, but that’s what they’re used to and there’s, there’s no way to really entice them to come and choose some healthier activities”. Other advocates reflected:

> We see people that have experienced a life full of trauma and so they may have chemical dependency, mental health—which I kind of see as both the same thing—just they show themselves in different ways I guess. I mean, I see chemical dependency as a mental health issue or a way to cope with mental health issues.
It kind of bothered me when mothers would, like, use if they had kids. And I didn’t really get that. But I kind of took a step back and said, ‘Okay, this isn’t my life. They’re the ones parenting. They’re the ones that have to cope with whatever they’re dealing with or it could be past issues.’ I’ve become more understanding because there’s more resources for helping people with their addictions.

Most advocates struggled with the reality of chemical use and, while they welcomed the opportunity to have open communication with residents around chemical use as a coping mechanism, they contend with the reality of not being able to fix the situation:

Because we do have quite a few women here, right at this point, that are using and openly using I’ve had talks with a couple of them, you know? Some hard conversations with them just due to other things that have happened in the shelter that can’t happen at the shelter. But, advocates want everyone’s life to be better and it’s really difficult not to be able to say, ‘You really need to do this. This is kind of what we’re expecting of you, and if you did this, your kids would be happy and your family would be happy.’ So, there is a real wanting to help, and then having to stand back sometimes and just watch what happens is difficult, and it’s really difficult for me, and I know it’s hard for the [others].

While many advocates worried that community buy-in would be a primary challenge in implementing a VSM, staff buy-in proves to be a more significant challenge. One advocate voiced, “I know other [advocates] were like, ‘Well, if they don’t do the chores or if they don’t clean then does that mean we’re going to have to…?’ and so that was a concern for the people”. Another stated, “For a while I didn’t really see how it could make much of a difference”. The role of either residents or advocates in completing chores is consistently questioned. While some advocates viewed it as an opportunity to connect with and care for women in crisis, others struggled with residents’ lack of participation in household chores. One advocate discussed her process of coming around on the point of chores:

It was like the constant cleaning up after other people and that was my own belief. But now when I’m doing the dishes I’m just like, not everybody lives the same lifestyle as me so I just got to let go. Or it could be picking up their stuff in the bathroom. Like, if they didn’t wipe up the water off the floor. The small little things like that, I remember, just irked me so much because the way I was taught, like you have to clean up after yourself. So that was one of the things that I finally let go.
Several advocates, however, continued to struggle with accepting ambiguous cleanliness standards. Challenged with a small shelter facility, rooms often are crowded with residents’ belongings and cleaning styles vary greatly from resident to resident. One advocate remarked:

You go up to some of the rooms and they’re, they’re pig sties. To me, that’s a fire hazard. And if I were living in one of the other rooms, I would be upset with that. Um, and things like limits on what you can bring in. I mean you’re only here sixty days anyway, why do you need five suit cases and I don’t, I don’t know.

Advocates discussed how challenges compounded each other. Working with past residents within a new framework while at the same time trying to adjust to it themselves was a major theme. Past residents are used to the way things used to be and often apprehensive about the lack of rules and structure. Advocates shared:

I know that it can be very difficult for people to utilize it at first because it means that you might have to go out your comfort zone. And that can be really difficult and I mean it’s difficult for me, I’m sure it’s difficult for other people…And it’s like, okay well, then you have the program participants like, ‘Well there’s no rules, so does that mean everybody can use drugs in these facilities?’ It’s like, ‘Well no, you use your common sense, you have a respect for yourself, have respect for the facility, have respect for the workers, and have respect for other people utilizing the services’.

If people are using and then they come back to the shelter – so that was in the past – if they were using and they came back to the shelter we would be like, ‘Nope, you’re gone. You can’t stay here.’ And so now the model is, ‘Okay you’re using. You can come back as long as you’re not aggressive, not loud or insulting to people.’

Another advocate cautioned that these challenges have the potential to result in a lack of staff buy-in, which could result in intentional sabotage of the VSM:

I think another challenge could be the staff mentality and getting the staff buy-in. And so that can be a barrier, just working with the staff and whether or not they support the mission because if they don’t, there could be that little sabotage thing going on and that’s not a healthy productive way to be in a business or be an employee.

Coercion and Threats vs. Negotiation and Fairness

Coercion and threats within a shelter setting take the form of threats to evict and punishment of residents who voice complaints by labeling them “disrespectful” (Koyama &
Negotiation and fairness revolves around finding a healthy approach to resolving conflict. Compromise and acceptance of others’ differences defines this practice (Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, 2017).

**Benefits of a VSM.** The use of coercion and threats emerged as a prominent theme among shelter advocates who were employed at the shelter prior to the VSM. Advocates recognized the vulnerability that a “three strikes and you’re out” system creates for the shelter’s most vulnerable residents:

I think one of the things that I think, now looking back, that kind of made me nervous [was] just that there weren’t the rules so I was just worried about discriminatory practices. Like, you know, this person does this and they’ll work with them, but then this person does the same thing but because we don’t. Maybe peoples’ personalities clash and they didn’t have a good relationship with that client so we’re going to discharge them.

[The old way of doing things] was excluding the most marginalized, you know, those that didn’t act appropriately. And maybe it was because they had chemical dependency issues or they had some mental illness or they were just angry because they were in crisis and they didn’t treat staff appropriately.

Negotiation and fairness has been fostered through recognizing the constant presence of conflict inherent in a communal living situation and creating a healthy plan to address it. At the onset of the VSM, shelter administrators trained advocates in conflict resolution and conflict management techniques such as Nonviolent Communication and Motivational Interviewing to prepare them for a facilitative role in conflict management. Advocates recognized and, overall, appreciated this shift in how they now address conflict:

There was some fighting and arguing and… we had addressed it differently because before we – depending on how severe it was – would ask them to find other shelter. Um, and now we try to do, like, conflict resolution and things like that. So It’s pretty interesting. But, I think the hardest thing is getting both of them to cool down and actually come to the table and talk.

So instead of me walking around like the bailiff with the keys and stuff, I liked the mindset of, you know, we all bring different expertise. Even how I would facilitate the group, I’m like, ‘I’m not the expert. You guys have lived experience. You have friends and family so let’s come together and talk about this.’ I don’t like being the bad guy or
being the ones who enforce some of those rules that really, I didn’t think, were too necessary or productive or supportive to health and healings.

One advocate described a successful experience she had using the needs and feelings cards, an NVC tool, to help two residents work through their conflict:

They were both, like, pretty upset, but they were willing to sit down with me. So I was like, ‘Okay guys we’re going to [talk about] needs and feelings’ and they were like, ‘Ugh, we’re going to do what?’ But, once you start going through it, I think they started to realize, ‘Oh, wow!’ Like, being able to see it. Especially in writing, like, down in front of your face, ‘What do I need to solve this problem? What do I need to help me feel the way that I’m feeling? What do I need?’ So, we had some good conversation.

**Challenges of a VSM.** Shelter advocates struggle with conceptualizing the intersectional effects of oppression due to race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. This is another area requiring ongoing training, especially in light of the high staff turnover. One advocate reflected on this challenge:

It’s being able to have open conversations with people about race and oppression. That can be a difficult thing—finding the right people that are open to having those conversations. It’s so important because it’s like all of these things are so interconnected. It’s so important to understand, truly understand the populations that you’re serving. We serve a high percentage of Native American women and it’s so important to understand historical trauma and how that impacts today.

Application of skills such as Motivational Interviewing and Non-Violent Communication to resolve conflict also requires specialized training for shelter advocates. This is an ongoing challenge due to staff turnover. Hiring advocates who already possess these skills is further inhibited by the agency’s low pay range. One advocate observed:

We’ve gone through Motivational Interviewing training in the past. We had so much staff turnover that only one person is still here and [that’s] because we’re still not super high in our pay range. We are getting people that don’t necessarily have, you know, those skills already, so we’re having to train the staff after they get here. So communication is important because really it’s about building relationships and finding out from people what is it that is your goal.

Addressing institutional barriers to implementation is essential to the successful implementation of a VSM. Bringing pay scales and employee benefits into competitive ranges
has been a major focus of the shelter’s administrators throughout the rollout of the VSM. While progress has been made, the constant attention to hiring and training detracts from these efforts.

**Discussion & Implications**

**Summary of Findings**

“Everyone deserves to be safe without having to mop a floor” (shelter advocate, personal communication, 2017). A review of the literature suggests that, left unchecked, DV shelters are at risk of evolving to function like Erving Goffman’s (1961) Total Institution, controlling nearly every aspect of women’s lives through a system of rules, incentives, and punishments (Stark, 1994). This study revealed emergency shelter advocates’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of eliminating this system of rules, incentives, and punishments through the implementation of a Voluntary Services Model (VSM) in a shelter for women fleeing IPV. Results suggest that a VSM has the potential to counter the underpinnings of power and control in a shelter environment. While power and control may manifest in a shelter environment through intimidation, emotional abuse, social isolation, and coercion and threats, a VSM counters with approaches that empower women through non-threatening behavior, respect, trust and support, and negotiation and fairness. Shelter advocates’ perceptions of the benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM illuminate what a challenge it is to expel power and control from the shelter equation. Ultimately, in eliminating a system of rules and punishments, it is replaced with a system of “common sense” expectations of residents and preparation of direct support staff with skills in conflict resolution and relationship development.

**Benefits.** Within a total institution, women’s experiences become dictated by the requirements of the system rather than their own needs (Hartnett & Postus, 2010). The VSM counters this paralleling of an abusive relationship by eliminating the constant monitoring and
surveillance of residents through drug tests, mandatory meetings, and extensive rules. Services are grounded in the development of a relationship between residents and shelter advocates that recognizes that women fleeing IPV know what they need and how to keep themselves safe. This philosophical shift replaced advocates’ “shelter bailiff” role with one that proved to be empowering for shelter residents and advocates alike.

**Empowerment.** Shelter advocates expressed increased satisfaction and purpose in working with women fleeing IPV through a VSM. Satisfaction was heightened by the fact that advocates no longer were focused on catching residents behaving poorly but rather began building residents’ self-esteem by recognizing their strengths and capacities. Creating trust and support became a central tool for countering the social isolation that had been reinforced through abusive relationships. Ultimately, the VSM allowed for a shared understanding that all humans grow and evolve through experience (Bridges to Safety, 2016).

**Embracing new approaches.** Negotiation and fairness were fostered through the development of alternative approaches to providing shelter services. Common sense expectations of residents worked best when advocates were empowered with tools such as Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Non-Violent Communication (NVC) to manage conflicts that are inherent to communal living. Shelter advocates were bolstered by the effectiveness of these new approaches in creating meaningful conflict resolution.

**Challenges.** Because power and control is central to IPV, the resulting emotional and psychological trauma is difficult to overcome during a short shelter stay. While advocates recognized that relationships matter more than rules when healing from IPV, they also recognized the inherent barriers to forming such relationships with shelter residents. Some
residents became overwhelmed by the lack of rules and structure while others turned to chemical use to cope.

Many advocates struggled with the ambiguity that arose in the wake of the decision to eliminate shelter rules. Approaches to healing, parenting practices, and cleanliness expectations vary greatly among shelter staff and residents alike. Accepting and embracing these vast differences among shelter residents and advocates became vital to the effective implementation of the VSM.

The VSM requires a specialized training in working with women fleeing IPV. As a result, the nearly constant turnover of shelter advocates due to low pay and benefits emerged as a primary hindrance to implementing a VSM. Few shelter programs have the time or resources to continue offering intensive training sessions to new advocates on a regular basis. Newly hired shelter advocates in general struggle with conceptualizing the intersectional effects of oppression due to race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. Few have training in Motivational Interviewing and Non-Violent Communication practices and bringing them up-to-speed takes time and resources that are not readily available.

**Strengths and Limitations of Findings**

The current study sought to explore the benefits and challenges of implementing a VSM in an emergency shelter for women fleeing IPV. However, the results implicated an underlying and pervasive issue of power and control within a shelter environment that was largely unexplored in this study. While shelter advocates from just one small shelter in the upper Midwest were included in this study, limiting the population to eleven participants, 100% of the agency’s employees participated in this study. Findings are neither conclusive nor applicable to larger shelter settings and shelters in urban communities.
This study suggests that additional research is needed to examine the manifestations of power and control in a domestic violence shelter from the perspective of women fleeing IPV as well as agency employees and board members. Additional research is also required to develop evidence-based models for delivering emergency shelter services while meeting the intersectional needs of victims of IPV. This includes researching the effectiveness of strategies such as Motivational Interviewing, Non-Violent (Compassionate) Communication, chemical and mental health treatment, and a higher pay and benefits package for shelter advocates in sustaining an empowering practice for victim/survivors of IPV.

Conclusion

The women’s movement began with the goal that oppression against women, in its various forms, would one day cease. As is common with total institutions, the shelter environment inadvertently evolved to echo the very forms of power and control the movement fought against. Recognizing that power and control manifests in a shelter environment, the Voluntary Services Model introduces a framework for providing shelter services that encourages shelter providers to examine internalized facets of power and control and replace them with empowering practices.
References


Civic Engagement through Partnerships between Social Work Educators and Practitioners

Rebecca Hoffman

St. Catherine University – University of St. Thomas
Abstract

Historical models of civic engagement in social work practice have created the foundation for contemporary macro social work practice. However, few practitioners are aware of the political and economic contexts in which these models for civic engagement emerged. This presentation pinpoints the development of macro social work education through Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project in the 1950’s. It seeks to identify contemporary implications for civic engagement through partnerships between social work educators and practitioners.

Keywords: civic engagement, social work education, history of social work education
Presentation Abstract

The empowerment of people who are oppressed is rooted in the social work profession’s core values. Today, more than ever, civic engagement among social work professionals is crucial. This presentation examines the historical intersections of civic engagement and social work education from a lens of critical theory. Implications for contemporary engaged civic action with social work educators are explored.
Slide 1

Civic Engagement through Partnerships between Social Work Educators & Practitioners

REBECCA HOFFMAN, MSW, LISW
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF FIELD EDUCATION, BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY
DOCTORAL STUDENT, ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY - UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Slide 2

Our Learning Community

- Who am I?
- Who are you?
Slide 3

Workshop Objectives

- Identify historical models of civic engagement in social work practice;
- Identify political and economic contexts in which these models of civic engagement emerged;
- Pinpoint the development of macro social work education through the Council on Social Work Education’s Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project;
- Identify contemporary implications for civic engagement through partnerships between social work educators and practitioners.

Slide 4

A Critical Perspective

This presentation examines the historical intersections of civic engagement and social work education from a lens of critical theory.

- **Empowerment**: Standing alongside oppressed people & communities
- **Structural**: Political, economic, & social systems shape individual & community experiences
- **Dialogical**: Rich dialogue between service providers and community members
- **Transformation**: Commitment to reforming structures that perpetuate domination
Slide 5

The empowerment of people who are oppressed is rooted in the social work profession’s core values:

- Service
- Social justice
- Dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of human relationships
- Integrity
- Competence

Slide 6

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

GEORGE SANTAYANA
Historical Models of Civic Engagement

Social Group Work

- Interdisciplinary
- Social Reform-Oriented
- Collective Social Action
- Grounded in Social Relatedness & Human Attachment
- Emerged at the Turn-of-the-Century, 1900s
The work of the settlement houses embodied many of the principles that later informed social group work practice: the emphasis on social participation and association, democratic process, learning and growth, direct interaction among persons from diverse backgrounds, and the impact of social environment on persons.

Social Group Work

Social Group Workers

- Settlement House Workers
- Self-Help Groups
- Parks And Recreation Facilitators
- Educators
- Neighborhood Center Workers
- Labor Union Organizers
- Scouts
- Health Care Workers/Midwives
Slide 11

“...emphasis on the importance of building and sustaining relationships—with clients, constituents, and colleagues—based on principles of mutuality and collaboration rather than status hierarchy.”

REICH & GARVIN, 2016, p. 201

Socially Just Organizations

Slide 12

Some of the Social Reforms Enacted by Social Group Workers

- Kindergarten
- Old-Age Pensions
- Worker's Compensation
- Juvenile Courts
- Child Labor Laws
- Worker's Unions
- Minimum Wage
- Social Security Act
- Shephard-Towner Bill

Workers in a hosiery mill in Georgia (Hine, 1913)
Slide 14

Community Organizing Method

- Grounded in individualized casework theory (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001)
  - Engagement, Assessment, Intervention Planning, Action, Evaluation/Termination
- SOWK couldn’t agree on use of CO to redistribute wealth through legislative advocacy or to develop services within organizations (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001)
- Social Action and Community Organizing had separate organized sections within National Council on SOWK, 1935-45 (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001)
Community Organizing

- Emerged as a specific field of practice during WWI
- Borrowed some techniques from the settlement movement
- Focused on social planning, beginning in the 1920s
- Social survey became a major planning tool
- Began in schools of philanthropy, later graduate schools of social work
- Social workers were no longer engaging in reform efforts, but rather working with and within government institutions
- Viewed the client as a victim and social worker as the expert

Political & Economic Contexts of Macro Social Work Education

CIRCA 1900 - 1950
Slide 17

Rapid Growth of Urban Areas

Percentage of Total Population: Rural vs. Urban

- Rural
- Urban

Slide 18
Elite Men’s Clubs Dominated Business & Banking

- Created access to resources external to the firm
- Promoted a political and economic subculture of elite professionals
- Developed cohesion among elite bankers and investors through extracurricular activities
- Grounded in social activities that facilitated business transactions

Union Club of the City of New York on Park Avenue.

Four gentlemen play the course at Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, c. 1900.
The Russell Sage Foundation (1907)

- Over three decades, nearly $6 million in grants was directed towards social work organizations, associations, and planning efforts based in the Charity Organization Society’s casework model (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001).
- During this time no RSF funding was directed towards the social reform-oriented settlement movement, nor was funding from any other source (Wenocur & Reisch, 2001).
- Paradoxically, external to the social work profession, RSF became a foremost leader in the research of social welfare issues throughout the progressive era and beyond (Anderson, 2008).

Is Social Work a Profession? (1917)

- Keynote, 42nd Annual Charities & Corrections Conference in 1917
- Unlike law, medicine, and preaching social work is not a profession
- Had a profound impact on shaping social work as a “science” with an emphasis on individual casework
Slide 23

"...the social worker is at times perhaps somewhat too self-confident; social work has suffered to some extent from one of the vices associated with journalism, excessive facility in speech and in action..."

Abraham Flexner

Is Social Work a Profession?

Slide 24

"...is it not possible that part of the vast army of reaction is made up of those needlessly terrified by the occasionally reckless— and perhaps somewhat baseless— confidence of the reformer?"

Abraham Flexner
Slide 25

Social Diagnosis Published (1917)

- Authored by Mary Richmond, published in 1917 by the Russell Sage Foundation
- Case management methods book
- Propelled social work towards a more scientific approach and away from social reform

Slide 26

The Great Depression (1930s)

- Mainstream Social Workers: Widely endorsed and accepted the New Deal and its aspirations
  - Vs.
- Social Group Workers: Capitalism needed to be replaced altogether with a socialist form of public ownership of national resources
Rank and File Movement (1930s)

- Rank and Files as keenly aware that a mere $75 monthly paycheck separated them from their clients
- Discussion clubs
- Enacted a series of political actions on key civic issues including unemployment, low wages, poor working conditions, birth control, and civil rights issues including lynching
- Chicago’s Social Service Workers union became the first workers’ union to emerge from the collective action of discussion groups
- Unionization of relief workers soon followed in most urban centers throughout the country
Blacklisting

- Rank and File were attacked, demoted, fired, and blacklisted for their promotion of civil rights and domestic concerns over military action overseas
- "McCarthyism" as it came to be known, resulted in the suppression of political dissent and caused social workers to withdraw their union membership
- Union membership declined from 45,000 in 1945 to 12,000 by 1950
- By the mid-1950’s even the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) was assisting the FBI in “weeding out” suspected radicals from social welfare organizations.
- Over 150 college and university teachers, many of whom were social workers, were brought before investigating committees, 65 of whom lost their jobs as a result.
Historical Roots of Macro Social Work Education

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Community Organizing Curriculum Development Project (COCDP)

CSWE
Council on Social Work Education
1965-1969
Of little that is certain, I think that they [Ford Foundation] reached the conclusion that ‘social welfare is too important to be left to the social workers.’ (I paraphrase Clemenceau, not Yivisaker). With this, I cannot dissent. On the other hand, social workers are too important to be left out of social welfare.

Schwartz

Misogynistic Views of Gender Roles

...the dichotomy between enabler and expert as alternative roles of the community organization worker misses the point that the introduction of expert knowledge into a problem situation may be the most powerful enabling tool available in developing problem-solving capacities...

Jones and Lauffer, 1968

Role of Consumer Continued to be a Key Difference Between Community Organizing & Social Group Work
...demands for substantial change in political power and the redistribution of economic resources comes about only through the forces that are mobilized by change-oriented social movements...

Social Reform outside of the scope of social work?

...service programs are not a source from which one can reasonably expect to generate a social movement... [however], “it is very reasonable to expect that social movements will generate service programs”

Social Reform outside of the scope of social work?
Contemporary Implications for Civic Engagement

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PRACTITIONERS

Slide 40

Audience Question:

Who currently is engaged in a professional partnership with a faculty or administrator in a college or university?
Practice-informed research and research-informed practice requires partnerships between educators and practitioners.

Historical Connections Between Practice & Research

Jane Addams  
Nothing could be worse than the fact that one had given up too soon and left an unsolved effort that might have saved the world.  
— Jane Addams

John Dewey  
Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking. Learning naturally results.  
— John Dewey
Professional Development Plans

MN State faculty are contractually obligated to perform in five criteria:
1. Effective Teaching
2. Scholarly or Creative Achievement or Research
3. Evidence of Continuing Preparation and Study
4. Contribution to Student Growth and Development, and
5. Service to the University and Community

Criterion 2. Scholarly or creative achievement or research.

- This category supports one’s teaching
- Contributes to one’s special field of knowledge. The advancement of knowledge and education
- Calls for many kinds of scholarship/creative activity/research.
- Evidence of success in meeting this criterion may include, but is not limited to:
Slide 45

**Criterion 2: Scholarly or creative achievement or research.**

- Published works
- Works in progress
- Unpublished reports
- Other scholarly works
- Submitting and/or receiving patents
- Delivering presentations at professional meetings
- Applying for, writing, receiving and reporting on grants
- Presenting invited lectures
- Participating in panels and symposia
- Participating in policy analysis
- Participating on evaluation panels for research funding

Slide 46

**Criterion 2: Scholarly or creative achievement or research.**

- Abstracts
- Research briefs
- Letters to the editor published in disciplinary and professional journals
- Software and other technologically delivered academic products
- Consulting
- Conducting research projects
- Researching multiculturalism, anti-oppression, and/or inclusion topics
- Acceptance of grants and/or the faculty member's participation in a contract between the university and a third party
Slide 47

Criterion 5. Services to the University and Community

- Serving on and contributing to program, department, school/college, university, and committees and governance
- Mentoring colleagues and students
- Participating in and consulting with community organizations
- Providing community presentations and outreach
- Developing and supporting community partnerships

Slide 48

Minnesota State’s Campus Compact on Civic Engagement

- We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus—nearby and around the world
- We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good
- We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically
Minnesota State’s Campus Compact on Civic Engagement

- We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequities that threaten our democratic future.
- We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

...an opportunity for all campuses to maximize the impact of engagement for students, communities, and our shared world. We encourage all colleges and universities to move forward... in the spirit of launching new initiatives...improving existing efforts...emphasizing sustainable change

The Civic Action Plan development process is...
Opportunities: Campus Compact

- HandsOn Twin Cities
  Tracy Nielsen, Executive Director, tracy@handsontwincities.org, 612-379-6900 x 17
  Mission of mobilizing people to solve the most pressing challenges in our community through volunteerism. Working with Minnesota Campus Compact allows us to discover how we can better support the changing and evolving volunteer needs of our partners in higher education.

- HECUA (Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs)
  Andrew Williams, Executive Director, awilliams@hecua.org, 651-287-3315
  Of HECUA’s 11 programs around the world, four are based in the Twin Cities, working, just as Minnesota Campus Compact does, for opportunity and equity for Minnesota’s increasingly diverse population. Because of this overlap in mission and because of the overlap in membership—all of HECUA’s Minnesota member colleges are also Minnesota Campus Compact members—we hope to contribute to Campus Compact’s discussions on the integration of civic engagement and college curriculum. Of course, we have also chosen to become an affiliate to learn from those discussions, so that we can do our own work better.

- Minnesota Alliance With Youth
  Sarah Dixon, President & CEO, sdixon@mnyouth.net, 651-528-8589
  Minnesota Alliance With Youth works to ignite the spark in all young people in Minnesota to become actively engaged, develop strong voices, and acquire the skills needed for success in school, work, and life.

- Minnesota State
  Ron Anderson, Senior Vice Chancellor, ron.anderson@so.mnscu.edu, 651-201-1488

Opportunities: Practitioner Advisory Committees

- PAC’s exist to enhance and strengthen social work programs. This is accomplished by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and advice among community practitioners, faculty members, and students.
  Community practitioners:
  - Inform the Department of curricular needs pertinent to social services in the region
  - Apprise Department of suggestions and concerns relative to the work and function of students in Field Practicum placements
  - Suggest new areas of experimental and exploratory course work, research, training, and service projects
  - Such other functions as the Department or the committee deems pertinent to sound professional education

- Contact your closest social work program chair to express interest in serving on a PAC
Field Education

- Internship Opportunities
- Social Work
- Chemical Dependency
- Dual (SOWK and CD)