

Chapter 2 Historical & Contemporary Influences on Macro Practice

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The need for social workers to be able to understand and practice in macro systems is based on both the history of the social work profession and the society in which it evolved. The effects of major social changes such as immigration, industrialization, and rapid population growth led to concentrations of people in large urban areas, where, for the first time, modern institutional structures, such as highly specialized organizations, began to arise. So, too, did modern problems of urban crime, unemployment, poverty, and blighted neighborhoods. Society's responses to these problems were affected by new ideologies. Social Darwinism provided a rationale for ignoring many of these problems (through the reasoning that people in need were weak and helping them would in turn weaken society) or to provide paternalistic and judgmental forms of assistance. However, services guided by progressivism and social justice concerns resulted in much more proactive helping efforts, such as the rise of the settlement houses.

Women at this time were not granted the right to vote or hold office, so one way women could participate in social change was through participation in COS and settlement houses. Over time, a need for social work education grew leading to the development of the New York School of Philanthropy in 1898, and the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy in 1907. Abraham Flexner declared social work to be a semi-profession, a term often used to describe female dominated careers.

The traditions of the COS agencies, with their emphasis on case-level practice, and the settlement houses, with their more community-oriented efforts, led to a dualistic professional model that continues today. Within this model, social workers must be able not only to perceive their clients as individuals with personal problems but also understand them as members of larger community systems, and they must be prepared to intervene at the community level as well.

In addition, social workers typically carry out their tasks from within formal organizations, and the structure of those organizations has much to do with the effectiveness of the tasks. Over time, human service organizations have tended to become more complex and more bureaucratized, meaning that they may be efficient but also rigid and unresponsive to clients. Other organizational trends such as privatization and the embrace of computers and information technology also present risks and opportunities for social workers. The acquisition of skills to bring about planned change within these environments may be a crucial factor in determining the social workers' ultimate effectiveness.

One recurring theme in this chapter was that understanding the development of modern macro systems and the social work profession requires knowing the history of oppressed and disadvantaged groups within society. Macro-level systems can either overcome or exacerbate institutionalized oppression, depending on how they are structured. For example, protections

supposedly guaranteed to African Americans and Hispanics through the Emancipation Proclamation and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo were undermined by other economic and social policies that worked to maintain historical oppression. Complex urban, industrial communities produced vast wealth during the past century, but this was not always shared by ethnic groups segregated (formally or informally) in ghettos or on reservations. Highly bureaucratized organizations became efficient at processing individual clients in standardized ways, but they did not consistently advance in their ability to meet individual needs or avoid practices that actively or passively discriminated against particular groups.

Traditional debates about whether social workers should pursue casework, group work, or community organization seem less important in light of these realities. Macro systems pervade all types of social work practice, and the ability to recognize and redirect their influence is critical to all social workers, regardless of their primary role.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will identify historical social conditions and ideologies leading to the establishment of social work as a profession.
- Students will discuss how professional social work education and practice developed during the 1900s.
- Students will describe issues faced by diverse and oppressed population groups.
- Students will identify contemporary challenges related to social work macro practice.
- Students will explain why change is so important to social work practice.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

1. Compare and contrast the origins of micro and macro social work practice. How is the history of micro and macro social work reflected in modern practice? What aspects of practice have changed?
2. Have students assess their understanding of the context within which professional social work emerged by completing the Check Your Understanding self-assessment in the eText. Let students discuss the points they found confusing or difficult to master.
3. According to the authors, how and when did community organization emerge as a legitimate social work practice?
4. What are some factors that forced agency administrators to acquire new skills?
5. What does Warren (1978) mean by the term, “loss of geographic relevance?” Discuss how this issue might influence social work practice.
6. Brager and Holloway (1978) identify three types of change that affect health and human service providers. Identify, discuss, and provide an example of each type of change.

SUGGESTED CHAPTER ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. A week prior to discussing this chapter, have students review newspaper headlines and stories. Instruct them to identify common themes or trends observed when reading through the newspapers. Ask students to bring a list of at least three identified themes or trends to discuss in class. During class, assign students to triads and have them discuss the trends

and select one to analyze using the Garvin and Cox (2001) framework. The triads should identify social conditions, ideological currents, and oppressed and disadvantaged populations that are associated with the selected trend. Each triad should be prepared to present their findings to the rest of the class.

2. Have students identify and discuss the conceptual frameworks of Social Darwinism, Manifest Destiny, Social Justice Movement, and Progressivism. Follow this discussion by asking the students to evaluate how each viewpoint may have supported and/or obstructed the human rights of historically oppressed and disadvantaged populations. Students should be prepared to provide rationales to support their conclusions.
3. Divide the class into seven groups. Instruct each group to prepare a mini-presentation on an assigned oppressed and disadvantaged group (pp. 40-48 in the textbook). The presentations should follow the framework presented by Garvin and Cox (2001). Each group will highlight the social conditions and ideological currents associated with the assigned oppressed and disadvantaged group. Groups should also be prepared to discuss possible interventions to alleviate identified social conditions.
4. Instruct students to identify a historical social work figure and prepare a brief report on how the individual influenced early social work practice. The report should also highlight the historical figure's involvement with social change efforts.
5. Guide a class discussion of the ways PRWORA may or may not espouse values similar to those of Social Darwinism. Have students discuss the evidence they use to support their personal conclusion.

ASSESSMENT FOR IN-CLASS USE

The following assessment has been created for instructors to administer for a Chapter Quiz or Exam. These are not the same items that are embedded in the Netting Enhanced eText (Pearson's eText platform), which contains formative assessment items. The assessment items below may be available for downloading as a TestGen, for generating or creating your own test. Go to www.pearsonhighered.com, search for the Netting book, then under Resources tab, you should find instructions for downloading the TestGen. This assessment may also be offered in a format for your learning management system (i.e., Blackboard, D2L, etc.). Please contact your local Pearson sales representative if you have questions. Visit <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/relocator>.

Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the BEST possible answer for each of the following.

- 1) As compared to the 1800s, people in society today are
 - A) more likely to be generalists than specialists in their jobs.
 - B) more likely to be self-sufficient in most ways.
 - C) more likely to be interdependent with other members of society.
 - D) less likely to live in a large city.

- 2) Which historical trend below is seen as important by the authors?

- A) Industrialization/urbanization
- B) Global warming and climate change
- C) The development of nuclear energy
- D) Petrochemical energy dependencies

3) Progressives are most likely to embrace the philosophy of

- A) Social Darwinism.
- B) Manifest Destiny.
- C) Egalitarianism.
- D) Industrial Capitalism.

4) The "Trail of Tears" was experienced by

- A) Native Americans.
- B) Latinos.
- C) African Americans.
- D) Asian Americans.

5) Which Supreme Court decision upheld segregation?

- A) *Dred Scott vs. Sandford*
- B) *Brown vs. Board of Education*
- C) *Plessy vs. Ferguson*
- D) *Roe vs. Wade*

6) According to the authors, which oppressed group below has often been the most hidden?

- A) Persons with Disabilities
- B) Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Trans-gendered
- C) Native Americans
- D) Asian Americans

7) "The Chinese Exclusion Act" prohibited

- A) marriage.
- B) immigration.
- C) citizenship.
- D) diplomatic relations.

8) Social casework, "friendly visitors", and micro-level interventions are historically attributable to

- A) the Charity Organization Societies.
- B) the Settlement House movement.
- C) Dorothea Dix and mental health.

D) the U.N. Declaration on Human Rights.

9) Which group below tended to support labor organization efforts?

- A) Charity Organization Society workers
- B) Settlement House workers
- C) Mental health professionals
- D) Social Casework managers

10) In his historic 1915 report, Abraham Flexner concluded that Social Work was a

- A) developed profession.
- B) semi-profession.
- C) voluntary avocation.
- D) religious calling.

11) One of the effects of the Great Depression was that

- A) many poor people became ineligible for government benefits.
- B) people recognized that poverty might be caused by a malfunctioning society.
- C) many social workers did not identify with the profession.
- D) the "Rank and File Movement" declined in popularity.

12) Which Supreme Court decision struck down "separate but equal" policies?

- A) *Dred Scott vs. Sandford*
- B) *Brown vs. Board of Education*
- C) *Plessy vs. Ferguson*
- D) *Roe vs. Wade*

13) "Maximum feasible participation" promoted

- A) more "Great Society" welfare programs.
- B) increased funding to state agencies.
- C) "New Deal" programs such as the WPA.
- D) citizen and recipient inputs into services.

14) The Elizabethan Poor Laws

- A) made the federal government responsible for funding services to poor people.
- B) adopted policies in the American colonies that were first developed in France.
- C) made services to the poor small-scale and locally based.
- D) sought to house poor people in large institutions.

15) A unique blend of managerial skills, knowledge of broader social problems and the means of addressing these problems are components of this model of administration.

- A) Problem-solving
- B) Fiscal accountability
- C) Client-driven
- D) Complexity management

16) According to the authors, one effect arising from the welfare reforms of the 1990s is that

- A) welfare caseloads have risen dramatically from earlier times.
- B) poverty rates in single-mother households have substantially risen.
- C) federal policies focused less on poverty prevention than on employment support.
- D) poverty rates among the poorest families have substantially dropped.

17) One of the trends that has affected many communities in recent decades is

- A) a decrease in the number of ways in which people define their "community."
- B) an increase in the number of most people's extra community affiliations.
- C) changes in the means by which people interact with others to form communities.
- D) an increase in the geographic relevance of most local communities.

18) Communications technologies are likely to have which effect on communities?

- A) Increased harmony between communities
- B) Heightened dependence on externalities
- C) Less interaction and more independence
- D) Increased autonomy and less information

19) "POS" is an abbreviation for

- A) purchase of services.
- B) privatization of services.
- C) planning of services.
- D) plummeting of services.

20) Political conservatives argue that _____ governments should tailor appropriate responses to local needs.

- A) local
- B) state
- C) federal
- D) progressive

21) Which ethnic group has the lowest per capita income and the highest rate of food insecurity?

- A) African Americans

- B) Latinos
- C) Asian Americans
- D) Native Americans

22) All of the following are criticisms made against privatization *except*

- A) POS Contracts are narrow, and focus on solving problems after the fact.
- B) Privatized organizations that rely on government contracts are vulnerable due to less diverse funding sources.
- C) Privatization can lead to inequitable access to services.
- D) Privatized organizations are slower to adopt new methods of service delivery.

23) On average, which population has the highest rate of alcohol abuse?

- A) Asian Americans
- B) African Americans
- C) Latinos
- D) Whites

24) The racial/ethnic group with the fastest growing population is

- A) Latinos.
- B) African Americans.
- C) Asian Americans.
- D) Native Americans.

25) According to the authors' research, women earn about how much in comparison with men?

- A) 60%
- B) 80%
- C) 88%
- D) 99%

Essay Questions

1. The authors identify four changes in historical social conditions that contributed to the development of social work. Identify the four changes and discuss how they were historically relevant to social work.
2. Compare and contrast the historical ideologies of Social Darwinism, Manifest Destiny, Social Justice Movement and Progressivism. How did the ideologies influence the oppression and advancement of disadvantaged populations? Provide examples to support your position.
3. What is the significance of the U.S. Supreme Court's Plessy v. Ferguson decision?
4. Compare and contrast the origins of micro and macro practice by identifying and discussing the following characteristics of each area of practice: forerunners, focus of practice, approaches to practice, influences from other disciplines and motivations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

- Finsterbushch, K. (2011). *Taking sides: Clashing views on social issues* (17th ed.). Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.
- Handler, J.F., & Hasenfeld, Y. (2007). *Blame welfare, ignore poverty and inequality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mansbridge, J.J., & Morris, A.D. (2002). *Oppositional consciousness: The subjective roots of social protest*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Journals

- Koerin, B. (2003). The settlement house tradition: Current trends and future concerns. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 30(2), 53-68.
- Littrell, J., Brooks, F., Ivery, J.M., & Ohmer, M.L. (2009). Inequality and its discontents. *Journal of Community Practice*, 17(1/2), 11-30.
- Scourfield, P. (2007). Social care and the modern citizen: client, consumer, service user, manager and entrepreneur. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 37(1), 107-122.
- Schoenwald, S. K., Chapman, J. E., Kelleher, K., Hoagwood, K. E., Landsverk, J., Stevens, J., ... & Rolls-Reutz, J. (2008). A survey of the infrastructure for children's mental health services: Implications for the implementation of empirically supported treatments (ESTs). *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 35(1-2). Pp: 84-97.
- Stuart, P.H. (1999). Linking clients and policy: Social work's distinctive contribution. *Social Work*, 44(4), 335-347.

Websites

Social Welfare Action Alliance.

- A national organization of progressive workers in social welfare, inspired by the advocacy of Bertha Capen Reynolds.

United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

- On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- **Chapter 2: Historical & Contemporary Influences on Macro Practice**

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- 1. C
- 2. A
- 3. C
- 4. A
- 5. C
- 6. B

- 7. B
- 8. A
- 9. B
- 10. B
- 11. B
- 12. B
- 13. D
- 14. C
- 15. C
- 16. C
- 17. B
- 18. B
- 19. A
- 20. A
- 21. B
- 22. D
- 23. A
- 24. A
- 25. B
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