Chapter 3
A Critical History of the Social Work Response to Social Justice

Abstract Social work has had a long concern for people experiencing different forms of social injustice. This chapter sets out the history of social work debates about knowledge concerned with the shape of the discipline and profession of social work and then traces a history of practice responses that give social work its distinctive form. Despite changes in contemporary conditions, since its beginnings, social work continues to adapt its focus to challenge forms of injustice, disadvantage and social conditions that impact the well-being of individuals, families, groups, communities and societies.

Introduction

The Problems of Presenting a History of Social Work

What does it mean to lay out a history of social work responses to social injustice? Would we be better served to, as Payne (2005) suggests, acknowledge that there is no such thing as a single 'social work' but instead there are various *social works?* Payne (2005, p. 6) makes a case that various *social works* have emerged since the nineteenth century and describes these as being based on a 'form of personal, family and community assistance … [that] because of the global influence of Western culture…has had an impact on welfare and social provision in other societies'. This description of social work is fairly general and nonspecific. And yet, Payne also suggests that any narrative of social work history must in some respects be multiple and necessarily bound to the context in which the particular organisation of *social work* has arisen.

Payne (2005) outlines a range of criticisms of social work history when it does not take this multiple stance. For example, such a history would more likely emphasise continuity over change, thereby making it possible to only 'honour the great and good' (Payne, 2005, p. 9). Such as history also assists in smoothing over differences, and provides a fairly Eurocentric and ultimately institutional and organisational account of the profession. This kind of history also makes it possible to claim a kind of

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universalism with regard to the mission, values and practices that have come to be inscribed as *social work.* An example of this is the way many historical treatments of social work as a profession mention social work as a set of practices for helping the poor and destitute in England leading to the emergence of Charity Organisation Societies (COS) (Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015; Cox & Pawar, 2013), somewhat despite these responses being located in a particular context.

Social work has taken root on every continent and is considered to be a global profession (Healy, 2012). How it has done so means there are local histories that cannot be captured here and this represents a dilemma. What history should we represent here? We have chosen to offer a history that is focused on the practices of social work rather than attempting to provide a single narrative. Considering the practices assists with seeing the relation between the activities of social work and knowledge *about* social work. We think this gives a picture of social work as an ongoing developing response to contingent social relations. Moreover, it encompasses the reality that *social work* is tied to contexts that are diverse and changing. This gives us an opportunity to also trace the various social work responses to social injustice as part of the account. So our guiding question has been: what are the social work *practices* in relation to social injustice?

We begin the chapter with a discussion of knowledge in social work and the various struggles over definition as a background to the second half of the chapter where we outline the various practices that we think have given social work its *form*. We hope that in doing so we can situate social work as one of a number of professional projects that emerged (Rose, 2008) as part of a 'regime of government that takes as its object 'the population' … [including] the health, welfare prosperity and happiness of the population' (Dean, 1999, p. 19). As Kessl (2009, p. 310) points out:

> social work was part of the design for a publicly organised normalisation process which became largely established institutionally and professionally at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth.

Much of this process of establishment involved developments and debates about knowledge in social work, so it is to this we now turn.

Knowledge and Social Work

Theorising about social conditions was part of the social work curriculum in early attempts to create a profession similar to medicine (Kendall, 2000). The relation between knowledge and the practical activities of the profession has been a long source of debate within social work (Hudson, 1997; Sheppard, 1998). Moreover, whether the problem of injustice was seen as that of individuals or social conditions also caused significant disagreement. Such disagreement is often traced back to the beginning of the social work profession and the different approaches to poverty and suffering between the COS and the Settlement House Movement (SHM) (Bamford, 2015; Chenoweth & McAuliffe, 2015).

Hicks (2016), in a recent conceptual review of contemporary theory in social work, points out that one of the most striking disagreements in social work about knowledge is the divide between positivist and interpretivist approaches to knowledge across the twentieth century. For positivists, the purpose of theory is to describe, explain and predict social phenomena. For those with an interpretivist approach to knowledge, the goal of knowledge is about understanding the meaning of phenomena and therefore it should be informed by an explicit emphasis on human knowing. This debate can take many forms but one that has come to dominate is the question of whether social work can be conceptualised as a *practical-moral* or *rational-technical* profession (Parton, 2000). First, practical-moral professions place an emphasis on knowledge built from practical activities. Such activities produce knowledge and skills that are based in experience. Knowledge generated in this way is also more likely to be passed on orally (Tsang, 2007). Hicks (2016, p. 404) suggests that practice wisdom and this oral culture in social work often results in theories generated *from* practice. These are often referred to as *practice theories* (Shannon & Young, 2004). Indeed, practice theories often become highly prized and are seen as 'authentic and unquestionable, to be prioritised over others' (Hicks, 2016, p. 404). Social work is often characterised as being a practical-moral profession because it has this orientation to experience.

In contrast, a rational-technical profession primarily uses knowledge drawn from a scientific paradigm and this knowledge is often, but not always, based in positivist methods (Parton, 2000). Knowledge, in this respect, tends to be formal, found in textbooks and 'takes the form of either hypothesis-testing or a methods application model' (Hicks, 2016, p. 406). Curnock and Hardiker (1979, cited in Hicks, 2016, p. 402) called theories developed outside social work practice as *theories of practice.* These theories are adapted into social work practice. An example of a theory of practice is attachment theory.

This division between *practice theory* and *theories of practice* is sometimes characterised as the difference between practice as an art versus practice as a science (Samson, 2014). The extent to which social work emphasises rational-technical knowledge or the practical-moral aspect will depend greatly on the trajectory of development of social work as a profession within particular national contexts. For instance, social work in the United States has long adopted scientific methods in social science associated with positivist methods, and as such, has had a stronger emphasis on the rational-technical side. In contrast, social work in Australia has emphasised the practical aspects of professional activity (Lawrence, 1975). In this way the adoption of practice theory and theories of practice, and by extension knowledge, will differ depending on the country of origin of the social work program (Cox & Pawar, 2013).

In reality, social work, in all contexts, will have elements of both the rational-technical and the practical-moral because the focus of social work is to be both a 'practice-based profession and an academic discipline' (International Federation of Social Workers, 2017) that 'promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people'. The last point is key to considering what practical, explanatory and scientific knowledge is more likely to find purchase in the social work knowledge toolkit. For example, Mary Richmond and

others combined a practice theory (casework) with knowledge from sociology and psychology resulting in a specific method of social work called *social casework* (Toikko, 1999). Further, Toikko makes the point that social casework incorporated significant sociological knowledge in its earliest iteration. Later, this mode of social work became more explicitly psychological through the influence of Virginia Robinson. Nevertheless, this model of social work activity was a very influential approach and was exported around the world as a method of social work (Mwansa, 2012; Queiro-Tajalli, 2012; Watkins & Lundy, 2012).

Social casework, and the various iterations it has undergone (for example, psychosocial model, functional model, problem-solving methods, behavioural model, task-centred work, and generalist practice), have been important to the development of theories for social change within social work. They have provided a base from which many descriptions of what is wrong with professional or 'traditional' social work could be made. Casework was also a part of establishing a technique of social work that worked for professionalisation purposes across the 1950s and 1960s (Burnham, 2011). A decade later it became a point of contrast that radical, then feminist, critical and structural social work theorists used in presenting alternative explanations and programs of action for social workers. The aim of such alternatives was to attack social disadvantage, inequality and exclusion at the level of *causes,* rather than merely addressing the effects of these conditions through charity or casework. Indeed, Howe (2009) points out that radical social work was the first wave to critique the incorporation of psychological knowledge into traditional casework methods. Traditional casework became to be seen as a band-aid measure that does little to address the conditions that lead to inequality, poverty and disadvantage. This critique spread throughout social work, leading to internal debates about the purpose and uses of social work generally in society.

These debates fed the development of practice theories such as anti-oppressive practice (Baines, 2007; Dominelli, 2002), radical and structural social work (Mullaly, 2007; Mullaly & Keating, 1991) and critical postmodern perspectives (Pease & Fook, 1999). While there are differences among these perspectives and practice theories, they share a common concern with the effects of social inequality and social structures and institutions that perpetuate racism, sexism, ableism, heteronormativity and class disadvantage. Informed by successive waves of critical social theory, these perspectives have provided many resources for social workers to engage in emancipatory practices. Indeed Mullaly and Keating (1991) point out the significant contribution of feminist analyses to the development of these social work perspectives, particularly where focussed on decoding of patriarchal and sexist relations to highlight how the personal and political are connected. Black feminists (Collins, 1990; Hooks, 1981) challenged many of the precepts of feminist theories and this has led to theorising that must have 'the ability to capture inequality and oppression within groups of women, and not only among women and men' (Mattson, 2014, p. 10). This approach has become known as intersectionality. As Day (1992) suggests 'issues of race, class and gender' are crucial to our understanding of how women social workers and service-users encounter each other.

Sometimes these critiques and debates centre on methods and practice. Sometimes they are about theory or knowledge and its use, or not, in practice (Parton, 2000; Pease, 1993). Sometimes the disagreement is about what counts as evidence (Sheldon, 1978; Sheldon & Macdonald, 2008), what 'good' practice is and how to achieve it, and, if desired, the pursuit of professional status (Flexner, 2001). All of the debates involve advocating for specific practice activities, often seen as more appropriate to the purposes of social work. Generally, these debates are sparked off by changes in the social conditions of social work and society itself.

In summary, social work has developed a range of theoretical resources for practice and has adapted theories from other disciplines to its purposes. These sources of knowledge are often contested, particularly in the area of addressing social suffering. Nevertheless, we can take these debates as a sign of on-going healthy growth as a discipline, and appropriate to the changing circumstances of social work and social conditions. Despite such disagreements, social work is united in its desire to promote social conditions that increase well-being and challenge injustice and disadvantage. In the next section, we describe five broad techniques (or practices) that have arisen across the history of social work. We see these as core responses to forms of injustice and disadvantage, but we acknowledge that the list is general and many specific techniques and practices are not captured here.

Social Work Techniques

The techniques presented here are somewhat ungrounded in specific theoretical ideas. Instead, we provide a description of them as productive techniques that have given form to the profession of *social work* over a long period. There are five main techniques in this description. These are *visiting*, *casework*, *group work*, *community organising* and *policy*. All of these techniques have been, and continue to be, important and productive in developing knowledge, skills and shaping the values and mission of social work. The establishment of organisations within welfare states contributed to the growth of social work as it conferred various forms of authority on the professional project for working with risky populations (Kessl, 2009). At the same time, these forms of authority also elicited resistance via a growing critique centred on delineating the mission and practices of social work and what it ought to be in relation to addressing social injustice (Rojek, Collins, & Peacock, 1988).

Given this, it is important to acknowledge that this description outlines the way in which social work developed out of the experiences and exchanges between the United Kingdom (UK), Europe and the United States (US). To do so is to place the development of social work within a specific Western Enlightenment tradition. This is uncomfortable because we agree with Gray (2005) when she discusses the dilemma of international social work as involving three trends. One trend seeks to universalise social work by finding common values and goals across contexts and supports the contention of social work as a global profession (Healy, 2012). A second trend is that of imperialism, where there is a dominant form of social work that is promoted at

the expense of local formations. The third trend describes efforts to Indigenise social work. Gray (2005, p. 231) suggests this:

> refers to the extent to which social work practice fits local contexts. Social work practice is, in turn, shaped by the extent to which local social, political, economic, historical and cultural factors, as well as local voices, mould and shape social work responses.

As mentioned in the introduction there are many possible histories of social work. Our goal is not to promote a dominant view of social work but instead to acknowledge the specificity of our account here. We have chosen to speak from our own context, a context that has a dominant view of social work largely inherited from the UK and US. Further, delineating the case this way is also not to legislate it as the only set of practices called *social work* that might be aimed at addressing social injustice. Our description does not preclude the need for other critical work that traces the history of social work practices developed under different regimes of government with different political arrangements and in different social conditions. We start with the earliest developing practice, that of visiting.

Visiting

Visiting of various kinds has been a long-term practice in social work. Initially, it grew from the processes of administering relief as a response to widespread poverty and destitution (Kendall, 2000; Young & Ashton, 1956). As Bamford (2015) suggests, the poor laws in the UK cast a long shadow over the development of social work. Whether it is prisons, slums, factories or workhouses (Young & Ashton, 1956) much early social work occurred through the attention of people, usually women, who paid visits to the poor, sick, elderly, infirm and incarcerated. Indeed, visiting 'was the chief organ of poor relief' in Germany, which was called the Elberfield Movement (Kendall, 2000, pp. 30–31). The model from Germany was well admired in the UK and in the US, and aspects of it shaped visiting in those contexts.

What is the activity of visiting like? Early in the formation of *social work,* in England at least, it took the form of collecting rents through the administration of housing for the poor (Kendall, 2000). It was called 'friendly visiting' and the emphasis was on administering to those less fortunate as part of developing a good character and/or contributing to the amelioration of suffering. Tannenbaum and Reisch (2001, p. 6) characterise these 'friendly visitors' as untrained proto-social workers saying they 'sought to help poor individuals through moral persuasion and personal example.' Nevertheless, visiting also involved building understanding about the circumstances of the people being visited and creating and maintaining relationships with them. Doing so often led to other practices and initiatives to address the need, such as establishing schools and other services for people in various slums and neighbourhoods. Burnham (2011) suggests that despite the orthodoxy that associates visiting primarily with COS the practice continued after the decline of these societies. It was largely supported via public sector institutions and authorities established as

'attitudes in the UK to poverty, crime and health changed and the state's role developed towards actively helping ameliorate distress' (Burnham, 2011, p. 9). Key aspects of successful visiting were the ability to show sympathy and care for the people with whom one was visiting, not least because the visitor was frequently of a different class to those being visited. An early example of visiting was described by Octavia Hill (Kendall, 2000) and it led to the establishment of training schools using Hill's approach.

In contemporary times, visiting has much the same form as it did in the past with one major exception. Visiting now is conducted within the auspice of an organisation or institution within the society with specific powers usually set down in legislation, policy and within formalised organisational processes and procedures (McDonald, Craik, Hawkins, & Williams, 2011). Visiting in some Australian states was patchy and dependent on the specific colonisation history of the state or colony. For example, in Melbourne visiting was associated with a COS, whereas in other colonies, early visiting and then later social work proper was more associated with Catholic orders and organisations setting up schools and refuges (McMahon, 2002). Visiting in South Australia, by contrast, started within the colonial government and was aimed at administering to the needs of newly arrived people on issues of housing, employment, illness and care for women and children (Dickey, 1986). In the early formation of social work, visiting was undertaken by volunteers and eventually knowledge of how to undertake the practice became formalised into training. This later became known as 'social work'. Burt (2008) suggests that:

> The Poor Law relieving officers, the friendly visitors of the Charity Organisation Society, the settlement workers of the settlement movement, the school attendance officers under the Education Act and the inspectors of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) were identified as the main roles from which social work evolved during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Visiting has had a range of purposes in the history of social work. It might be about helping poor people help themselves. This was to be undertaken primarily by paying attention to their moral character (Stayaert, 2013). Visiting was a core aspect of Thomas Chalmers' influential approach to helping the poor help themselves, which was predominant in the early formation of social work (Stayaert, 2014). Visiting was also conducted for the purposes of collecting social 'facts' (Shaw, 2015, p. 43). The social 'facts' gathered by visitors about poverty, the plight of women and children, prisoners, the aged and infirm, were utilised to create government responses in forms of legislation (for example, child protection legislation, various Social Security regimes) and policy. These 'social facts' also contributed to the creation of social scientific knowledge about the impact of economic conditions on individuals, families and communities, health conditions arising from urban density, social housing and poverty. Moreover, visiting social workers assisted with creating research methods for documenting the effects of a range of social problems such as mobility, poverty, migration, urban environments and unemployment (Shaw, 2015). Likewise, visiting played a significant role in the establishment of childcare and welfare services in Canada, an example outlined by Chambon, Johnstone, and Winckler (2011).

As mentioned previously, visits to people's homes still form a significant part of social work practice (Ferguson, 2009). There was another effect that came from this practice of visiting, which included an assessment of whether people could be given assistance at all. This investigation side of 'friendly visiting' was important to the early development of the technique of casework (Young & Ashton, 1956). The development of investigative techniques and assessment processes would be the focus of considerable debate about the role of visitors and the Charity Organisation Societies in England, in particular, (Kendall, 2000, p. 34). Moreover, the role of casework has been debated for almost the entirety of the professional project of social work.

Casework

Casework, or as Young and Ashton (1956, p. 98) call it in its earliest configuration, 'the organisation of charity', involved the application of a number of principles that were considered important to the administration of charity or relief amongst the poor, ill or destitute. The first is cooperation and this is seen as important to the overall relief effort, but also it was meant to be an aspect of the relationship between the visitor and the poor family or person. The second principle centred on whether the person or family was deserving of relief or assistance. Casework processes were designed to establish this aspect (Young & Ashton, 1956) and to ensure that if the family or person was deserving then the giving of relief would not induce demoralisation. The methods of casework included investigations that involve 'careful enquiry into the facts of the economic and social life of the family, its previous history, its friends and relations, and above all a clear understanding of the way the client himself (sic) thought he could be helped' (Young & Ashton, 1956, p. 103). These investigations formed the basis of discussion in regular meetings designed to ensure that the wisdom of more experienced *social workers* was included in deliberations about whether to assist. This debate about the purpose of home visiting and the needs of interviewing to establish *eligibility* for assistance established a long-standing ethos within social work that encounters between social workers and clients should be authorised (Kessl, 2009) and purposeful (Healy, 2014). Casework processes could also be taught and this led to the establishment of training and education in the conduct of social work that involved casework practice (Kendall, 2000). Also included in such training was the processes of interviewing and assessment (Kendall, 2000). Payne (2005) suggests that social casework could be seen as a key innovation that led to the establishment of social work as a profession, not least due to keeping systematic records. Burnham (2011, p. 14) agrees with Payne on this account suggesting that casework was part of 'the agitation for professionalisation … associated with the identification and refinement of a body of knowledge for social workers, each profession having to secure one [in order to] lay claim to professional status.'

While casework has undergone a number of iterations, the basics of it within social work have remained remarkably similar enough for it to be seen as a core social work practice. It is one that has been elaborated (Fook, 1990; Perlman, 1957), theorised (Cedersund, 1999), critiqued and transmitted to students and practitioners (Reid, 1977; Turner & Jaco, 1996). At its base, casework is a technique for fact-gathering, which may involve 'encounters between social workers and clients' (Jokinen, Juhila, & Poso, 1999, p. 8), and encounters with relevant others (family, friends, employers, other professionals) in order to build understanding of the circumstances and needs of the person or people at the centre of the 'case' work. The key site in which these practices are often transmitted to students is in field education. This makes casework practice the 'practical activity' (Bosquanet, 1903 cited in Kendall, 2000, p. 66) of the discipline of social work, which was designed:

> on the principle that, as practical work at once raises the questions of the theory and methods of relief, of the structure and basis of society, and the economic laws of the industrial world, so the course of study must combine these three departments and treat them simultaneously.

The three departments outlined by Bosquanet (1903, cited in Kendall, 2000, p. 67) include: (1) theories about society; (2) economic principles; and, (3) theories and methods of relief (casework processes). Kendall (2000, p. 67) recounts that theorising society included consideration of Hobbes' *Leviathan,* reading Plato's *Republic,* and engaging with Rousseau's *Social Contract*. Economic theory included John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy,* for example. Interestingly, in a recent chapter undertaking a census of social work Bachelor and Masters curriculums across the world, Barret-Herman (2012, p. 359) found that:

> 60 to 73 percent of the member schools [in the IASSW] require bachelor's-degree students to undertake a course or have course content in human behaviour and development; race, ethnicity, and cultural issues; and the ethics and values of social work as recommended by the Global Standards.

The impetus to recommend these kinds of topics for study represents the professional response to the internationalisation of the social work curriculum in a way that addresses significant cultural issues of social justice. When social work schools were established in the UK across the 1950s and 1960s many of the previous workers such as relieving officers, education and welfare officers, and health visitors were left out—the almoners, childcare workers and psychiatric social workers were included. This made the fit between casework, as imported from the US, a better fit in terms of method and it established a number of elite branches of social work that persist in some places today—hospital social work (almoner), mental health social work (psychiatric) and family and child protection social work (child welfare) (Burnham, 2011).

The other important statistic from this world census of social work schools is that some 81% of schools include social work theory and methods in their curricula (Barrett-Herman, 2012). It is worth noting that there is a significant psychological component in social work education today that was not apparent from early social work training documents. Rose (2008, p. 447) may be right in saying that

'psychology is a generous discipline' and social work has certainly made use of its knowledge. Casework was a key site for the adoption of early psychodynamic knowledge, humanistic and cognitive-behavioural psychological approaches. The adoption of 'psy' knowledge led to a number of debates and crises about the purposes of casework within the broad mission of social work with regard to social justice.

The link between COS, the establishment of social work schools for transmission of the techniques such as casework and visiting led to a 'vital divide' with consequences still felt today (Rojek et al., 1988, p. 19). This divide has led to ongoing contests over the shape of social work and its professional project. And despite attempts aimed at 'uniting in an effective demand for [more just] social conditions' (Addams, 1910, p. 68), each social work generation appears to have rehearsed a division between techniques aimed assisting individual and family functioning, and techniques aimed at broader social change (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Dominelli, 2002; Fook, 1993; Lundy, 2011; Mullaly, 2007; Pease & Nipperess, 2016; Rojek et al., 1988). We turn now to consider the third social work technique of group work.

Group Work

Dominelli (2008) makes the claim that group work has a long history in social work and may be traced back to Victorian England. Indeed, in Dominelli's view, group work is one of three methods that characterise social work generally. The other methods are community work and one-to-one casework. Group work began with the observation of the everyday life practices of groups observed by early social workers. Dominelli coined the term *groups in everyday life practices* (GELPs) to capture this dimension. In terms of addressing social justice, group work has long been part of the social work response. It has been part of a tradition of group solidarity based on mutual aid. The term mutual aid was first introduced to social work by William Schwartz and it broadly means 'people helping one another as they think things through' (Steinberg, 2014, p. 2). Trade unions, guilds, cooperatives, educational and recreational groups are examples of these early mutual aid groups. The mutual aid idea is often said to have emerged from the SHM and is often contrasted with the more individually oriented approach of the COS from this early period.

Indeed, according to Dominelli (2008, p. 477) the SHM 'created many resources for poor people'. These resources were rooted in a solidarity with people in the neighbourhood surrounding the various Settlement Houses. Jane Addams famously brought group work approaches to the United States with the establishment of Hull House. There were many other Settlement Houses established during this period including a number for supporting African Americans (Leighninger, 2012). Mutual aid work relies on the member to member interaction as the basis for the intervention itself, rather than the social worker being at the centre of the process. Steinberg (2014, p. 10) describes it this way:

> all theoretical fingers point to mutual aid as a cause and effect of social work with groups. As cause, mutual aid is why we use groups as a helping medium … As effect mutual aid is the result of our interventions – that is, what people experience as a result of having participated in a group … [however] it does not come automatically.

Group work as a modality requires three main elements if it is to be based on notions of mutual aid. One is it requires a communication process that promotes a member to member interaction that is non-directive. Second, it needs a climate of companionship and cooperation. Third, mutual aid groups need to have a purpose (Steinberg, 2014, pp. 10–12). Without an agreed-on purpose 'individual goal achievement takes centre stage and, as a result, the group simply becomes a context for *casework in a group* … instead of one for group work' (Steinberg, 2014, p. 13; emphasis original). Not all group work since these early beginnings has incorporated these elements. For example, some group work is directive and has more emphasis on the role of leaders. Different models of group work have emerged and some of the differences can be explained by the knowledge development trajectories over the last century.

Ragg (2008, p. 447) suggests that three main areas of knowledge development have been important to understanding this modality within social work. These are *sociotechnical systems*, the *recreation* and *group psychotherapy movements.* The sociotechnical systems movement emerged from studies of industrial work settings and later was used to understand groups and teams within organisations. The focus of work here was on how to democratise work systems by sharing decision-making and independence for the purpose of increasing productivity (Ragg, 2008). The recreational movement arose from observations by social workers involved in recreational youth groups and educational settings. According to Hansen (2011) group work was largely considered peripheral to core social work in the US, not least due to its early association with recreational organisations such as the Young Women's Christian Association. Grace L. Coyle was an influential advocate for group work in this context. It was increasingly taken into more mainstream social work agencies after the 1935 Annual Meeting of the National Council of Social Work in Montreal, following the inclusion of a set of papers at the meeting on group work (Hansen, 2011). Groups in this movement are seen as an important mechanism for supporting the belonging and settlement needs of particular groups within societies (Ragg, 2008).

In contrast, the psychotherapy movement has been influential in conceiving of group work as useful for dealing with psychological problems. In its early formation, it was largely based on ideas from psychoanalysis, however, this has changed somewhat with the advent of other psychological modalities such as interpersonal and cognitive-behavioural approaches. A key figure here is Wilfred Bion (1897–1979), a British psychoanalyst who applied these ideas to behaviour in groups. It was Bion, along with his colleague John Rickman, who pioneered groups as therapeutic communities during the Second World War as a way to address shell-shock (Glover, n.d.). Psychotherapy groups provided mechanisms for dealing with psychological experiences through their focus on individual and group dynamics. Leaders in these groups play specific roles to enable change using the dynamics that develop through the process. Ragg (2008, p. 449) suggests that:

> The convergence of these three movements provides social work with a rich foundation of group knowledge with multiple potential applications. Each movement provides a specific perspective on knowledge. Sociotechnical systems focus on promoting outcomes, group psychotherapy expands knowledge on member experiences, and the recreational approach advances our knowledge on working with the whole group.

This convergence has meant that social work has developed approaches to group work that operate for different needs within diverse settings (McMaster, 2016).

For example, Dominelli (2008, p. 480) describes five types of group. These are the GELP (mentioned previously), therapeutic, educational, community action-oriented, and identity-based social action groups. Dominelli (2008) considers these groups share some common characteristics; for example, all these types of groups offer opportunities for social bonding and change. However, there are also significant differences between them. For instance, therapeutic groups are more aimed at individual change than community-action oriented or identity-based groups, which are interested in structural change or are formed for the purpose of consciousness-raising about social issues affecting specific members or communities. When radical and structural social workers discuss programs for action they often call for collective action and group work is considered key to this approach (Leonard, 1975; Mullaly, 2007; Turbett, 2014). This brings our discussion to the practices of community organising and its relation to social work for social justice.

Community Organising

There are clear links between group work and community organising as these are considered to have common roots within the SHM (Bamford, 2015). Community organising can be seen as part of the history of social work response to poverty due to this link. The idea within the SHM was to enable university students to live and work amongst the poor in order to understand their circumstances. However, settlement houses did more than this because they developed local responses to need and they began to establish proto-social services. These early workers also continued to document the circumstances of the people in their neighbourhood and provided access to educational and social opportunities (Bamford, 2015; Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001). The focus of these settlement houses is widely considered to be different than that of COS due to their attention on environmental conditions and the collective nature of the practice. The other key difference is that people accessed the House, rather than house residents visiting the homes of locals. Bamford (2015) suggests that the emphasis on neighbourliness and finding common interests was a forerunner of community development. Community organising and community work are also associated with early women's movements in Australia (McMahon, 2002), social reform, self-help, education for workers, social pedagogy, trade unionism (Payne, 2005) and other forms of social development and radical movements for change (Mullaly, 2007).

Like social group work in the US context, it appears that social workers interested in practices of community organising had to argue for its place within the definition of social work (Pray, 1947). In the US context, community organising tends to be discussed as macro social work where social problems and issues are considered at the community, global and organisational levels (Brueggemann, 2002). In the UK, these collective approaches are called community work, and here too, there has been some debate about its place within social work. This became particularly keen during the Thatcher years and after the legal establishment of social work as a statutory profession (Healy, 2012, cited in Teater, 2014, p. 221). Notwithstanding this development, community work in the UK context is described as 'a set of approaches focused on understanding individuals as part of a community and on building the capacity of that community to address the social, economic or political challenges facing its members' (Teater, 2014). Much of the debate about the place of community work in social work more broadly has been driven in industrialised nations as they contend with the crisis in welfare provision (Ife, 2000). Community organising or macro approaches to social betterment have been important practices in contexts dealing with the effects of colonisation, because this has provided more opportunity for connection to Indigenous practices where the assumed social infrastructure embedded in European and US models of practice may be absent or inappropriate (Mwansa, 2012). A recent example is *Puente al Desarrollo*—A Bridge to Development in Costa Rico, which involves social workers who facilitate a process of community work. Cristian Rodríguez Barrantes says that in doing so 'Communities identify their own solutions. This brings people together and they think beyond normal services. They want programmes to end violence, community-wide empowerment charters for women and girls, drug prevention clinics and basic schooling for all generations. When people are given options, they take them' (cited in Truell, 2018, online).

Hardcastle, Powers and Wenocur (2004, cited in Fuchs, 2008, p. 489) make a case that a focus on community is essential for social work given its focus on people within environments. Fuchs draws attention to the fact that social workers—whether engaged in individually focused practice or at the community or societal level—are working for similar ends: to end suffering and improve well-being. Indeed, this is echoed in the IFSW commitment to assisting people within communities and environments (International Federation of Social Workers, 2017). We turn now to consider the role of policy and advocacy work as the fifth set of practices that characterise social work.

Policy and Advocacy

Alongside community organising and group work, policy and advocacy work also have a history in social work back from its early focus on responding to the issue of poverty. However, Kendall (2000, p. vii) suggests that early progenitors of 'social work' were interested in reform, not revolution:

> Christian socialism, with its general aim of brotherhood and mitigation of class differences, inspired Octavia Hill and other reformers of the second half of the [nineteenth] century … Even the more militant socialism of the Fabians held that reasonable and conciliatory measures … would in time bring about the social, economic, and political benefits of a socialist state.

In Kendall's view, the difference between the approach of the COS versus the Fabians, (such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb) turns on the role of legislation and state intervention in reforming social and economic conditions. COS adherents did not believe state intervention was necessary, preferring to focus their efforts with individuals and families (Kendall, 2000). In contrast, the Fabians had a vast influence on many people including William Beveridge, a resident of Toynbee Hall, and who would go on to become a key architect of the British Welfare system (Attar, n.d.). Kendall (2000) believes that while the Settlement House Movement (SHM) was influential in terms of the use of policy and advocacy, the COS was to hold sway for many years to come. Thus, policy and advocacy is closely related to the reformist tradition within social work and to community organising where it is understood as:

> redress[ing] the imbalance of social and economic power in society. Community organizers seek to mobilize disadvantaged citizens to recognize their shared oppression and take joint action to achieve a better deal for their communities. (Healy, 2012, cited in Teater, 2014, p. 224)

Kendall (2000) suggests that while Beatrice Webb was not seen as a supporter of the COS approach she had a definite influence on social work through her relationship with Edith Abbott, later Dean of the Chicago School of Social Service Administration. This school was the first to establish graduate education in social work and the curriculum had a focus on the economic and political forces that create poverty. From this rather auspicious beginning, policy and advocacy interventions waned somewhat in social work in the US as the profession became influenced by the advent of psychological approaches for addressing social functioning (Specht & Courtney, 1994). According to Ezell (2001), social work, especially in the US context, would remain this way for several decades.

Policy work and advocacy work has four main rationales according to Jansson (2003, p. 34). These are: to promote the values of social justice and fairness; to promote the well-being of clients and society; to act in opposition to processes and policies that run counter to social justice, fairness and overall societal and individual well-being; and, to challenge the 'composition of government so that legislators and decision-makers are more likely to advance values such as fairness and social justice, and promote the well-being of citizens' (Jansson, 2003, p. 34). This is, of course, in a national context, and much policy and advocacy work occurs at both the national and international level, at the community and at the organisational level.

Conclusion

In this chapter, our goal was to provide a brief history of the knowledge and practices of social work in response to social suffering and injustice. We have presented a case that social work knowledge has developed two main orientations to knowledge—one that is rational-technical and the other is along practical-moral lines—and concluded that, while there are differences between them, both remain relevant and important for informing contemporary social work practice. From the ration-technical, the social work profession is able to adapt theory and knowledge drawn from research and inquiry in other settings for social work purposes. The practical-moral offers us a store of practice wisdom and methods that have been through the trial and error process of social work practice. In this chapter, we have also outlined a range of social work practices that have developed for ameliorating and addressing social injustices of many kinds such as poverty, disadvantage, exclusion, oppression and domination. We acknowledge that these are drawn from a limited case and do not represent the full panoply of social work practices aimed at redressing social justice. Nevertheless, from the description of practices here—visiting, casework, group work, community organising, policy and advocacy—it is possible to conclude that social work has developed practices aimed at the whole spectrum from working with individuals to interventions with communities and societies. This should be heartening. Social injustice has many faces and occurs in many different configurations and the social work response has proved adaptable and responsive to the challenge.

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