

Is Social Work a Profession?
A 21st Century Answer to a 20th Century Question:
Futurist paper presented to the 100th anniversary of the
Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW)

Presented by a former student of the author
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Richard Ramsay – 1988 (Unpublished Paper)

I am honored to be your keynote speaker on the occasion of CASW's centennial celebrations. First, let me put to rest any concerns about my intentions. All of you, I presume, are well aware of Abraham Flexner's now infamous speech delivered to a national conference of social workers in the United States slightly more than a century ago. His 20th Century answer to a similar question was a clear, No. My answer, not to keep you in any suspense, is a clear, Yes. I come, as an insider, to praise and congratulate, not to condemn or question the status of our profession. My presentation will attempt to trace the events and developments of social work, both before and after Flexner's answer that brought us to this very positive conclusion as we enter the second quarter of the 21st Century.

In its first 60 years, CASW and others like it world-round, had negative critics in abundance. In fact, negativism, fragmentation and an embarrassing lack of unity characterized the profession. I need only to remind you that in 1986, membership in CASW numbered slightly less than 10,000, which represented approximately one-third of the estimated 30,000 practicing social workers in Canada. Forty years later, our profession is able to boast remarkable success. We are effective and, we are united! The fact that I am speaking to an association that is now 100,000 strong, representing over 80% of Canada's practicing social workers, is certainly proof of that. We can now boast a real "critical disturbance" effect, meaning that our national and provincial presence across this vast country is now large enough to permit and sustain a pattern-like web of mostly non-linear influence. I am here, also, to applaud the real progress that has happened in our world since the turn of the century and, in particular, to acknowledge the contribution of social work to the now realizable option of planetary survival and a decent quality life for all citizens world-round.

As I drove here this fine July morning, I was struck by the sun's reflection on the magnificent stylized tetrahedral sculpture in front of the exquisite clear span structure of this beautifully constructed convention centre. The sculpture is a monument to the cohesive social functioning of all citizens of the world, and of course to you and I, it represents nature's universal coordinate system that our profession adopted as its common organizing framework just before the turn of the century. On the way in as I admired this wonderful Naturdome, I paused to smell the flowers, no longer tainted with acid rain. I took comfort in knowing that threats of resource depletion and nuclear devastation no longer hover around our heads. Large planetary regions of food shortages, poverty and human desperation, world-round are largely behind us. We human beings are finally headed in the direction of achieving our terrestrial purpose. Humankind is beginning to truly fulfill its local information gathering and problem-solving function of maintaining the integrity of eternally regenerative processes in Universe, so clearly described to us through the experiential work of Buckminster Fuller from the 1930s to the 1980s.

The fact that social workers no longer doubt their professional status has freed us to stand along side others in a collective effort to discover and maintain regenerative processes around the world. In North America, as we know, the profession of social work is barely into its second century. The history of social work has been marked by uncertainties about professional identity and anxieties about the status of social work as a legitimate profession. Social workers struggled for years to define the profession and develop a common conceptual framework that could 'house' the core elements of the definition. We were looking for a framework and key components that could conceptually describe the following concerns:

- 1. the social purpose and domain of the work we do;
- 2. a unified paradigm for the broadbase practice orientations of our profession;
- 3. a systematic structure for the multiple methods we use in practice and;
- 4. a domain of self-understanding to hone our development as effective social work practitioners.

A successful conclusion to this search emerged in the 1990s, when nature's fundamental coordinate system, discovered some years earlier by Buckminster Fuller, was accepted world-round as the profession's common practice framework. Fuller, as most now know, was one of America's most ordinary-extraordinary citizens, whose scientific discoveries and technological contributions greatly advanced the peaceful and constructive co-existive options that are now pervasive in all countries and among all peoples around the world. To capitalize on our current successes and also to remind us of valued lessons in our past, it is timely to re-examine some of the early developments that led to the emergence of social work as the profession that we know today. I have organized my remarks into a four-part presentation, in keeping with the minimum number of elements in the natural systems framework (which I will talk more about later).

Societal Developments: The Evolution of Social Welfare and Social Work Perspectives

Early History

In this section, I will deal with the part of history that Alvin Tofler, the well-known 20th century futurist, called the First Wave (Tofler, 1981). I will not deal with the Stone Age era of this wave, but instead, will concentrate on its two more recent phases, the Tribal Community and the Agricultural Society. In the next section, I will address the Industrial Civilization phase of his Second Wave.

Thompson (1972) in speculating about the transformations of cultures discovered a four-part structure that seemed to universally account for values and conflicts in human institutions, and also seemed to accurately depict the holistic nature of reality. In the Tribal Community, this model of four provides us with a way of understanding the structure of a primary human group in a food-gathering community aimed primarily at the survival of its members. This group consisted of a Headman, the leader and the equal of the men he must hunt with. There was the Hunter, known for his physical strength, grace and speed. The third member was the Shaman, the craftsman and the magician, when they had need of this assistance. The fourth was the Clown, the joker who made fun of the seriousness and strengths of the other three. These were not just four ordinary men. The members of these early food-gathering groups were men who worked closely together in coordinated pursuit. As a group they had a special set of interlocking and complementary qualities. Together they formed a "stable hunting group in which all their skills were balanced" (pp. 105-108). In these primary human groups, there appeared to be a true unity of well being in which all the complementary and opposing forces seemed to be dynamically integrated. From our modern day planetary perspective, it is interesting to note that Thompson described the four-part structure of hunter behavior in men, but omitted any reference to any kind of similar structure in the consolidator behavior of women in these tribal communities. Nor, of course, did he describe a holistic structure involving the partnership structure of men and women. When economic surpluses appeared, the early tribal community societies began the

transformation process from food-gathering communities to becoming much larger food-producing societies. What emerged was the Agriculture Society of Tofler's First Wave. The complementarity of the primary group structure gave way to the development of specializations that served to increase the distance between those with different roles. Relationships were no longer immediate, but intermediate. The structure of primary human group relations changed from individuals to institutions. The unity of primary groups changed to a multiplicity of human groups. The Agriculture Society was the beginning of modern civilization. In this social transformation, the Headman evolved into the institution of the State, the Shaman into the institution of Religion, the Hunter into the Military and the Clown into the institution of Art. Social distance between the institutions increased, role differentiation became marked and value differences were accentuated. The expansion into an agricultural society and its concomitant growth into an urban society brought about conditions of increased conflict and the maintenance of stability, more or less, at the same time. The institutions of this new form of collective society had to evolve special values about caring for individuals. History has recorded numerous attempts by different agricultural societies to deal with individual and social problems through various form of charitable behaviors to others. Some of the earliest attitudes about charity are found in Hammurabi's code of justice in Babylonian times, in Jewish beliefs about what God expected from them, and in records of Christ's teachings. Unconditional charity toward individuals in times of hardship was the requirement or general expectation in all cases. A form of universal access to charity seemed to be operative in these First Wave cultures.

When Christianity was legalized by the Roman emperor, Constantine (313 AD), the Church (Religion) was sanctioned to use donated funds to aid the poor (Barker, 1987). Eight hundred years later, the Roman church declared that the rich had a legal and moral obligation to support the poor. Although charitable attitudes and behaviors were expected of the rich, there were no edicts suggesting a major redistribution of wealth to bring the poor up to the living standards of the rich. The earlier beliefs in the universality of charitable expectations were beginning to erode. In their place, we saw the emergence of class and caste systems, and the beginnings of discriminatory welfare classes. The institutions of society were beginning to adopt values that divided individuals into the "privileged few" (the rich) and two types of conditionally deserving masses, the "worthy" and the "unworthy" poor.

Pre-Industrialization

During the feudal system, which began in Western Europe as far back as the 5th century and lasted well into the 14th century, the provision of social welfare services was tied to the functional interrelationships between landlords and their subordinate serfs. The main institutions of society assumed no major responsibility for the individual and social well being of its members. Although individual freedoms were virtually nonexistent during the time of the feudal system, the lord's household or the local parish generally provided individuals and families with the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, and care in times of sickness and old age (Turner, J, 1986, p. 51). Rudimentary social security was guaranteed. The bubonic plague in the 1300s, killing nearly one-third of the population of Europe, brought an abrupt change to the quasi benevolence of the feudal system's social security system. The consequences of the Plague caused major changes to the non-institutional way charity was viewed and administered. Labor shortages forced the State to intervene. Laws were passed to compel all able-bodied men to accept employment from any one willing to hire them. Alms to able-bodied beggars were forbidden. This event, along with the transformation from an agricultural society to a industrial civilization, brought about a social condition wherein the basic staples of life could no longer be guaranteed

by the food producers. The serf was removed from his bondage to the land. Individual freedoms were promised and basic social security was lost. Problems of dependence, however, were given low priority, leaving only the Church to look after charity. The State, in general, was happy to accept this arrangement, which gave the institution of Religion the role of administering to the poor and disadvantaged. Religion's role in charitable acts was severely eroded when England's Henry VIII broke with the Roman Church in the 16 century (Turner, p. 52). The wealth of the Church was confiscated by the State leaving it without means to carry out its charity and relief roles. Reluctantly, the State was forced to take greater responsibility for dependency problems. A plan for state organized relief was first introduced by a Spaniard in northern Europe. This plan had several elements connected to current social welfare services. It proposed registration of the poor (a forerunner of 20th century central registries, information clearinghouses, and special case registries). Private funds should be raised to help the poor (the principle behind United Way and other voluntary fund raising campaigns). Employment should be created for the able-bodied poor (earliest beginnings of work for relief, workfare, and subsidized job creation schemes that were still evident late in the 20th century) (Barker, p. 181). These proposals eventually culminated in a set of policies, later formalized into the series of English Poor Laws of the late 16 and early 17th centuries. The Poor Laws empowered local justices to license the poor and handicapped, enabling them to beg for a living; established classification systems for different types of poor; restricted fund raising to local jurisdictions; legislated the State's responsibility for some role in caring for the poor; established apprenticeship programs for children; formed workhouses for the poor; and proscribed harsh treatment for the able-bodied poor (Barker, p. 183). The punitive attitudes inherent in these conditional provision policies were entrenched by reforms to the Elizabethan Poor Law in the 1800s. The denigrating principles of "less eligibility" and "perception of need" were imbedded in society's attitudes toward the poor and the less able during this period. Social policies of the day required that the amount of social assistance for people in need had to leave them in a condition that was "less than" the lowest-paid laborer who was not receiving relief. Need was determined on the basis of how those alleged to be in need were viewed by others.

The Plymouth colonists introduced the Poor Law principles to the New World in the 17th century. Centuries later, we were still dividing the poor and unfortunate into dichotomous groups. Those who fell upon hard times through no fault of their own were favorably looked upon as the "deserving" sick, disabled, widows, orphans and thrifty aged. Others who experienced similar hard time were blamed for the situation they were in and negatively viewed as "undeserving" offenders, unmarried mothers, vagrants, unemployed, and the aged without savings.

The Poor Law policies evolved before and during the emergence of the Industrial Revolution in eighteenth century England. This revolution marked the final transformation of an agricultural society into an industrial culture. The Agricultural Society's institutions of State, Religion, Military and Art were transforming to Industrial Civilization's corresponding corporate systems of Government, Education, Industry and Media (Thompson, pp. 125-127). The church lost its dominant ideological power to the new emerging universities. The institution of religion in pre-industrialized society became the industrial institution of education. The scientific discoveries of Copernicus (dismissal of the flat-earth theory), dating back to the 16th century, Galileo (empirical support of Copernicus' work) and Newton (laws of gravity) sharpened the value differences and increased the conflicts between religion and education (i.e. science). Art changed to become the Media institution and took on a new prominence. The literary specialists of the day became the new priests of secular society. From a Marxian point of view, in a society of corporate systems, the alienation of the individual is extreme (Thompson, p. 127).

The Roots of Social Work

The roots of social welfare services and the discipline of social work are easily traced to those who fought against the harsh attitudes and policies of Industrial Civilization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Reform workers in England supported a theory of humanitarianism that considered persons to be in need outside of their control. These reformers worked for the abolition of illiteracy, preventable diseases, sweated labor, slums and overcrowding, unemployment and poverty (Younghusband, 1964, pp. 23-26). Parallel to the development of a social reform movement in England was the establishment of Charity Organization Societies (COS). These societies introduced the policy of doing detailed investigation studies of individual cases in distress (pp. 23-26). Volunteers were recruited to befriend applicants, make individual assessments, and help correct their problems (this was the earliest form of a three part systematic method of intervention model: befriend, assess and correct). Out of these movements it was shown that "pauper conditions make paupers and that social reform, education and personal service, based on a belief in the goodness and the strengths in human nature, can cure some social ills that ruin individual lives" (pp. 23-26). Unfortunately, mistaken moral judgments about the "worthiness" and "unworthiness" of those less able remained prevalent throughout the industrialization of the Western world. Two influential, but inaccurate 17th and 18th century theories had reinforced these attitudes. One was the Malthusian theory supported by supposedly irrefutable empirical evidence of "a fundamental inadequacy of life support on our planet (meaning that poverty and misery for millions of human beings must be accepted as normal and unavoidable)" (Fuller, 1981, p. 169). Economic data from around the world led Malthus, an economist with the British East India Company, to the conclusion that people were multiplying their numbers faster than they were producing goods to supply their needs. This theory coincided with the second one, the Darwinian theory of evolution and the hypothesis that evolution was based on the survival of the fittest (Fuller, 1963, p.70). Malthus's data seemed to validate Darwin's theory as a scientific law. The influence of these theories was fuelled by Herbert Spencer's thesis that "survival of the fittest" should apply to human society; that poverty was part of natural selection; and therefore, he contended that helping the poor would only serve to make them lazy and non-industrious (Barker, p. 185). Spencer's philosophy was easily supported by followers of the Protestant Ethic (arising out of the theological doctrines of Calvin and Luther), which had gained influence throughout England, parts of Europe and in the North American colonies. Followers of the Protestant Ethic believed in self-discipline, frugality and hard work, and encouraged all who would listen to disapprove of those who were dependent on others. These attitudes relied heavily on the belief that one's right to human existence and heavenly reward was predicated on the requirement of "earning a living" in order to qualify. Out of these theories and philosophies emerged an elitist principle of "you or me" - survival for the privileged few, which became the mainspring of world political policy and action. Humans in all regions of the world exploited and abused the rights of other humans in often unscrupulous efforts (as found in sexism, racism, nationalism) to legitimize themselves as deserving members of the privileged few. Ideologies competed with ideologies to dominate the societal norms of human social functioning (as found between capitalism, socialism, and communism). Military armaments dominated human strategies to gain the ultimate edge over others. Independence and self-reliance were expected at individual and societal levels. Failure to achieve these expectations was seen as evidence of moral bankruptcy, singly and collectively. Despite this moral certainty approach, rational inquiry based theories in which events outside of individual responsibilities explained the cause of poverty was gradually gaining some prominence. From England, we saw the rise of "new liberalism." The Fabian movement brought out the need for social legislation to protect men, women and children against the harsh laissez-faire policies of industrialization. The call for these kinds of social changes were also part of the social gospel movement, a combination of

religious and social ferment that took a collectivist approach to society (Bellamy & Irving, 1986, p. 31-34).

In Canada, the same philosophical differences were evident in early efforts to provide for the less able. Humanitarian groups in Quebec in the middle of eighteenth century established centers for the relief of the poor that was early evidence of a growing social responsibility toward the worthy poor by colonial society (Turner, p. 53). Nova Scotia, on the other hand, adopted the English Poor Laws much earlier in the same century. When the British North America Act (1867) was passed in the following century, social welfare responsibilities were assigned to the provinces. However, the general welfare of citizens was not seen as a major function of government responsibility, provincially or federally. In fact, in keeping with the principles of the Poor Laws, the higher level governments obliged municipalities to look after the poor; an obligation that wasn't changed until well into the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Reform Foundations of the 20th Century

By the turn of the last century, a number of reform activities were in place or evolving which occupied most of the social reform efforts throughout the greater part of the whole century. In 1795, the Speemhamland system was introduced which established the "poverty line" as a benchmark for determining who were living below minimally accepted standards. The idea was to be helpful by making it possible for workers to be eligible for subsidization whenever their wages dipped below the poverty line. The price of bread and the number of dependents in the worker's family determined the line. Over the years, our 20th century colleagues engaged in many studies and debates around the issues of subsidizing the working poor, establishing minimum wages for all employees, and providing a guaranteed annual income for all members of society, regardless of their capacity or ability to "earn-a-living." However, there was never a serious effort by any level of government policy to establish a "quality of life" line and support it as a matter of prudent social policy.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, feminists in America convened to declare the goal of equal rights for women. These women set down the philosophy and objectives of the women's movement, including suffrage, equal opportunities in education and jobs, and legal rights. Social workers were fully supportive of this movement, but their practice commitment to feminist methods and reforms was not well defined or articulated until well into the 1980s. The progress toward equal rights for women was disappointingly slow. In Canada, for example, it wasn't until 1929 with the famous ruling in the Persons Case that women were recognized under law as meeting the definition of a person.

The first sign of social welfare being other than a local government responsibility was established in 1883 when Chancellor Bismarck of a newly united Germany introduced the first national health insurance system. The legislation establishing this system became a model for social security programs world-around during the last century. The National Insurances Act of Great Britain introduced in 1911 was the first to follow Bismarck's lead, providing a national health and compensation program paid for by tripartite contributions from workers, employers and the public.

At the turn of the last century, consumer's leagues were established, first in England and then in North America. Their aim was to obtain better conditions in the work environment and safer products for the public. Social worker-lawyer, Florence Kelly of America, led the first successful

campaign to abolish child labor practices and to achieve minimum wages and shorter working hours.

Social Work Developments: The Emergence of an Organized Profession

The discipline of social work emerged with a dual-purpose philosophy that was fostered by conflicting social welfare perspectives in previous centuries. The duality of these perspectives was identified as the need for specialized attention to social reform of the environment and the provision of individualized personal social services. In the early development of the profession and emergence of formal social welfare organizations, the comprehensive and interconnected nature of this duality was never fully explored or firmly rooted into a broad-based philosophical domain and practice orientation. Instead, the fundamental separateness of independent entities that underlies the concept of duality produced a divisive dichotomy between those who supported individual change and those who supported social reform methods.

Charity Organization Societies and Settlement Houses

Believers in moral certainty felt that "poverty could be avoided by anyone who really wanted to" (Carniol, 1986, p. 25) and that it was the low moral values of individuals which caused them to be poor. A strong follower of this belief was Mary Richmond. She was a pioneer charity worker involved in the early development of Charity Organization Services in North America. These organizations were founded in England by believers in voluntary philanthropy, before they crossed the Atlantic, locating first in Buffalo, N.Y. and eventually into Canada, where they were established as Associated Charities (Drover, 1985, p. 1724). COS organizations, run predominantly by volunteers, coordinated various charities in attempts to abolish public relief and replace the chaotic organization of almsgiving with a more scientific administration of charity. The objective was to achieve social harmony (the emphasis being on improved social functioning of the poor) "from the mutual respect that would develop as the well-to-do initiated reciprocal relations of friendship with poor families" (Lewis, 1977, p. 97). Dependency problems were to be cured by personal rehabilitation of the poor, not by distribution of relief. The leaders of these organizations advocated a thorough investigation and study of the character of each applicant for charity. The investigation of a family was completed by a COS "agent" (usually a man) and then assigned a "family visitor" (usually a woman). Lewis states, "It was expected that the relationship of friendly visitor to family would be one of 'honest, simple friendship' and would provide a basis for the task of 'uplifting' the family" (p.99). This arrangement was grounded in the theory that the superior position of the visitor was the key to the relationship. Essentially, COS agents and volunteer tried to weed out those with fraudulent intentions and to keep the amount of material assistance provided to a minimum. In place of material relief, they would offer moral guidance to the poor. The preventative side of these organizations and an emphasis on social reform surfaced near the end of the 19th century. Despite their firm beliefs that moral defects were the cause of poverty, COS workers couldn't deny the evidence of families with good moral character being overwhelmed by inescapable social environment problems beyond their control.

Followers of the rational inquiry school believed social reform could be achieved by convincing politicians through quantitative research that the cause of dependency problems was socially rooted and could be relieved through environmental improvements. This type of reform work, which began in Victorian England, became known as the Settlement Movement. The original idea was to preserve "human and spiritual values in an age of urbanization and industrialization"

(Davis, 1977, p. 1266). The original settlements were called "university settlements" because the movement was founded on the idea of university men living in the worst parishes of London. Jane Addams was the most noted American social work pioneer associated with this movement. She and her partner, Ellen Gates Starr, fashioned the famous Hull House in Chicago after Toynbee Hall in London. They believed that people lived in poverty because of their social conditions, not because they were lazy and lacking in moral character. With the influx of large numbers of ethnic group immigration to North America at the turn of the last century, settlement houses had difficulty promoting a stable neighborhood spirit akin to their British predecessors. Social research and reform became the priority concern compared to the cohesive neighbor priority in England. Nonetheless, Settlement houses were organized with the requirement that their volunteers had to take up residence in a poor section of a city. They were known as "live-in-neighbors" in contrast to the friendly visitors of the COS movement. Another important contrast was obvious. COS groups directed their work to the poor and unemployed. Settlement house supporters believed that it was best to work with the working class above the poverty line. These early settlement houses were exciting places for volunteers from the educated classes as clubs, classes, and lectures for all ages were ongoing, as well as, regular "dinner table" meetings with visiting writers or politicians or planning sessions for upcoming reform campaigns.

Social work's Mission

Social work has always dealt with problems of dependency (Popple 1985, p. 573), although, the social worker today is well aware of the great variance in service/treatment approaches that emerged over the years. The earliest social workers were philanthropic volunteers, but by the beginning of the 20th century, there was a growing awareness of the wide scope of dependency problems and a realization that the social functioning work of these volunteers was fulfilling a fundamental need in society. The concept of socialization was evolving as central to the mission of social work. Socialization work involved a process by which humans in different life stages of development learn to participate in the organized social contexts of their lives, over time (Specht, 1988, p. 49).

The Rise of Professionalism

The orientation struggle, described earlier, between individual rehabilitation and social reform continued into the 20th century as charity and settlement work shifted from a base of voluntary philanthropy, largely associated with the institution of religion, to scientific philanthropy, which was becoming closely associated with the institution of education. Philanthropy came from an early Greek word that meant "acts of love for mankind" and was institutionalized in the Greek city-states (Barker, p.181). Workers from both forms of philanthropy struggled with issues of how to conceptualize and define this rapidly spreading vocation as a full fledged profession. The need for a common conceptual framework to embrace the practice orientation dichotomy was evident early on, but not fully recognized for many years. An over reliance on sociological theories of professionalization (Popple, p. 352) delayed, if not prevented, social workers from seeing the need for a common organizing framework. They did agree on one thing: voluntary philanthropy had to be replaced by scientific philanthropy.

Now, it may seem unfathomable to think that these early-applied philanthropists once treated the individual separate from his/her environment, but they did. Simon Patten first coined the title social worker, presumably tied to the emerging notion of socialization work, in 1900. Patten

applied the concept to both the friendly visitors of COS and the live-in-neighbors of settlement houses (Barker, p. 186). This prompted a major dispute with Mary Richmond over the issue of whether social workers should be social reform advocates or primarily engaged in delivering individualized social services. A ten year long debate finally erupted between Addams and Richmond in the second decade of the century, which clearly illuminated the depth of the individual-reform dichotomy in social work (Franklin, 1986, pp. 505-525). These were probably the two most influential women in the North American history of the profession, yet their influence on the profession has largely been described or analyzed in separate literature. In the 1987 Encyclopedia of Social Work, for example, there is no mention of the other in their respective biographies. Franklin is one of the few, if not the only, scholar of social work history to compare and contrast the legacy of these two diametrically opposed figures. Addams was from a family of means; Richmond was an orphan. Addams was one of the first generation of college-educated women; Richmond had high school education and a secretarial background. Addams was a pacifist and a leader in the peace movement; Richmond supported American involvement in the first Great War and developed services to aid military families. Addams engaged in partisan politics; Richmond was nonpartisan. Addams promoted social democracy and the amelioration of poverty; Richmond promoted the art of differential treatment. Addams stressed the need for research competence; Richmond emphasized technical competence and systematic procedures. Addams saw social work as a form of sociology; Richmond saw it more as a form of psychology. Addams is credited with enhancing the profession's role as the 'conscience of society', but overlooked for her contributions to scientific research in social work; Richmond is credited with giving social work professional legitimacy, but overrated for her scientific contributions. Addams was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her opposition to the war; Richmond, ironically, received an honorary master's degree in social work for her work in developing the scientific basis of social work. Between 1910 and 1921, these two traded leadership positions in the National Conference of Charities and Corrections (NCCC), later renamed the National Conference of Social Work. Despite their common interests in scientific philanthropy and service to others, they were antagonistic to each other to the extent that Richmond saw environmental reform as an interfering distraction from the work of perfecting casework techniques. This divergence of perspectives on the profession was to persevere for over 80 years.

Educational Roots

The pioneers of our profession were mostly independent women who eventually sought payment for their services so they could "earn a living" in their chosen occupation. Formal education for social workers was advocated for, and begun in the 1890s, influenced by Mary Richmond and others. Richmond called for a school of applied philanthropy for the training of charity workers, people who functioned as "friendly visitors" or "caseworkers". At that time, the socialization work of these pioneers did not have a professional name. Between 1890 and 1915 volunteer "friendly visitors" changed to paid "caseworkers" of COSs, and apprenticeship training shifted to academic training with an emphasis on a systematic and orderly approach to "applied philanthropy" (Austin, 1983, pp. 357-377). The structure of social work education, well established by 1912, had become two-year programs with two kinds of educational approaches. The East Coast New York School of Applied Philanthropy founded in 1904 (and now well known as the Columbia School of Social Work) was based on a vocational approach, with the objective of preparing individuals to be "caseworkers" first and "social investigators" second. This school with a strong emphasis on practice wisdom and fieldwork experience was supported by Mary Richmond, who resisted the idea of training programs becoming fully integrated into the

institution of education (i.e. the universities). In the Midwest, the Social Science Centre for Practical Training in Philanthropic and Social Work started in 1903, changed to the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy and eventually merged with the University of Chicago in 1920 to become the School of Social Service Administration. This school, representing the academic approach to social work education and supported by Jane Addams and her links to the British settlement house movement, had an academic curriculum based on social theory with an analytical and reform orientation. The University of Toronto School of Social Services founded in 1914, was Canada's first school of social work. Now the Faculty of Social Work, it developed a curriculum that tried to balance, within a Canadian context, the British focus on the theory of social work and social organization and the East Coast American focus on practical social work methods (Hurl, 1983). As an aside, it is interesting to remember that research courses were a regular part of the early curricula in Canada, but shortly thereafter removed. The demise of research courses may have cut social work from one of its strongest links to social reform since the community survey method, used by neighborhood workers in group work and recreation-based settlement houses, provided most of the data base for social reform actions. At the end of the first two decades of the century social work education was practice-driven with social agencies sponsoring most of the training schools for social workers. In the late twenties, the Chicago school was the only strong advocate for an education-driven program. They based their approach on three principles of education: commitment to public welfare, graduate professional training based on strong undergraduate (liberal arts) study, and advancement of the field through student and faculty research (Diner, 1977, p. 10).

Legitimizing the Profession

With the rapid developments that occurred at the turn of the last century, it was important for social work to be recognized as a legitimate profession. A milestone event (or millstone, depending on your judgment) happened in 1915 when Abraham Flexner was asked to address the NCCC (an association of COS and Settlement House organizations that had a common interest in scientific philanthropy) on the topic, "Is Social Work a Profession?" Flexner, at the time, was America's most influential expert on professional education, in particular medical education. When Flexner pronounced that social work did not fill all the traits of a profession and therefore was not an "established" profession, his diagnosis was accepted by the majority of social workers (Austin, 1983, p. 364). He developed the classic statement of sociological traits to define a profession:

- 1. It must engage in intellectual operations involving individual responsibility;
- 2. Derive its knowledge from science and learning;
- 3. Apply its knowledge with techniques that are educationally communicable;
- 4. Be self organized; and
- 5. Operate from altruistic motivations (Popple, 1985, pp. 560-567).

Flexner concluded that social work was an intellectual activity with a mediating function that linked individuals with social functioning problems to helpful resources. Although it had the

basic characteristics of a profession, it did not fulfill all the criteria. Social welfare issues were too broad to be addressed by one professional body; moreover, he stated that social work lacked an exclusive knowledge base and framework, and did not have a distinctive scientific method to address the complexity of these issues. From that time forward, social workers tried to establish their discipline according to the professional trait model set out by Flexner. Other than the knowledge that his speech is heralded as an important turning point in our history, most social workers in this or the last century had no idea of who he was, or why this non-social worker was invited to address a national conference of social workers. Very few knew that he authored *The Flexner Report* in 1910, a highly critical evaluation of medical education in both the United States and Canada that was the critical catalyst to move the profession of medicine from an apprenticeship system to a recognized discipline within a university (Blisshen, 1965). In other words, the influence of Flexner's report assisted in transforming medicine from the remaining vestiges of its shaman role in tribal communities to its pure and applied science role in an industrial civilization. Even fewer realized that his report brought about a uniform type medical school in which the basic sciences were taught in the first two years and the last two years concentrated on clinical training. What has been a source of curiosity for many years is our knowledge that Richmond capitalized on his trait criticisms of social work to write *Social Diagnosis*. However, very little is known as to why she rejected his university model for professional education and remained in support of the field agency apprenticeship model. Also, it seems somewhat ironic that the two plus two baccalaureate programs in social work, which blossomed in the 1970s, were carbon copies of his medical education model. Was Richmond guilty of self-serving interpretations? Should we now honor Flexner for the legacy of his education model?

The task of shaping our profession according to the trait model proved to be impossible to achieve, largely, because social work by its very nature is diverse in its functions, and one method or technique could not fit every function. The preoccupation with Flexner's method criterion led to an identity crisis among practicing social workers that left them wandering in search of professional recognition and legitimacy for more than half of the last century. According to Austin (1983), perhaps the greatest impact on the social work profession was Flexner's belief that a profession must have "a technique capable of communication through an orderly and highly specialized educational discipline" (p. 368). Flexner (1915) claimed that "the occupations of social work are so numerous and diverse that no compact, purposefully organized education discipline is feasible" (p. 585). Mary Richmond's scientific casework method, documented in her classic text, *Social Diagnosis* (1917), supplied the young profession's first authoritative answer to his criticism. Casework emerged as the professional technique of social work that arguably could be taught in formalized social work education settings. Richmond reasoned that the criteria for a profession could be met if the discipline's domain was narrowed to deal strictly with individual casework.

Dominance of Method-Skills Models

Fields of Practice: Casework specialties quickly emerged and by the 1920s there were several clinically oriented fields of practice: child welfare, family, psychiatric, medical, and school social work. In America, the first of three major professional organizations emerged out of this method bias in social work. The first organization of social workers was formed in 1917 and in 1921 became the American Association of Social Workers, largely made up of caseworkers. The first organization of specialty social workers, The American Association of Hospital Social Workers, was formed in 1918 (renamed the American Association of Medical Social Workers in 1939).

These groups were followed some years later by two other major specialty organizations, the American Association of Group Workers in 1946, organized earlier as a study group, and the Association for the Study of Community Organization, also in 1946 (Gilbert, Miller & Specht, 1980). Some of you may remember the American Council of Social Work Education did not accept community organization as a recognized practice method until 1962. Until then students could study community organization, but they had to be educated first in methods and skills of social casework or group work. This was the case in spite of the Lane Report on the field of community organization that was published in 1939. This report provided a systematic and comprehensive in support of the community practice method that included a clear description of the roles, activities and methods of community organization based on the pioneer texts of Lindeman's, *The Community* (1921) and Steiner's, *Community Organization* (1931). A social work research group was formed in the late 1940s, but it never evolved to an organized association of specialty social workers. Social workers in administration did not form any type of national group or organization, although Mary Parker Follet's posthumous text, *Dynamic Administration* (1940) was published and became an major influence in the field of social welfare administration.

The Americans, as you may recall, did not have a single integrated professional association until the amalgamation in 1955 of several associations (seven in all) into the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Canadian social workers did not experience the same kind of specialization differentiation in their professional association developments. A single national association, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) was founded in 1926 and operated with a network of chapters across the country for almost fifty years (Gowanlock, 1984). In 1975, it was reorganized into a federated structure of eleven organizational members: ten provincial and one territorial associations.

Generic Social Case Work: Despite the prominence of social case work dominated fields of practice early in our history, the need for a distinctive, but common, communicable technique was not overlooked. Leading executives and board members in the social casework field met for the first Milford Conference in 1923. At their meeting in 1925, a committee was formed and asked to prepare a report on several important questions, one of which was "What is generic social case work?" (Milford Conference, 1929, p. 7). Their report, completed three years later, concluded that social casework was a definite entity and that the method differences in the separate fields of practice were primarily descriptive rather than substantive. Generic social casework was defined as the common field; specialty forms of social casework were merely incidental. Although their definition identified the generic foundation of casework, it reinforced the method model as the core professional technique in social work. Apart from the unfortunate reinforcement of a specialty method identity, which was to dominate the profession until the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the report was rich with historical information that could be linked to the profession's search for a common organizing framework. The report contains some of the earliest references to the concept of norms in human life and human relationships. Norms were concepts of desirable social activities that influenced the way people lived and the way social workers practiced. Social workers were concerned with social functioning activities that were, or could be, impaired by one or more deviations from accepted standards of normal social life. There was an inference that social workers should endorse norms that are flexible and subject to differences in definition, and work toward formulating a philosophy of social case work that was grounded in normative and socialization concepts. The report also introduced the concept of "community resources" as effective relationships outside the immediate field of social casework and its particular focus on the individual that may impair a person's capacity to organize his/her own social functioning activities. Examples listed included, churches, industry, insurance societies, public departments, social legislation, agencies for education, recreation, law

enforcement, and the promotion of social and health work. The report went on to identify the social agency as a critical component in the practice framework of a social worker and pointed out that social casework was almost universally carried on through the medium of organizations that heavily influenced the type of social work that could be practiced. A final subject of importance to our review of 20th century social work was the strong emphasis on the future growth of social casework being dependent upon it developing a scientific character. The report stressed that "research of the social caseworker should go beyond the discussing of data and principles necessary for the discharge of his own immediate function. It should aim to throw light upon deep-seated factors in social life which lead to difficulties of adjustment between the individual and his social environment" (p. 42). The committee completed its work with a growing conviction that there was unity in the whole field of social casework (notice that they did not use the generic term social work) regardless of its specific applications.

Theoretical Foundations: The profession was still searching for a scientific theory to ground a common conceptual framework, when Freud and his work was introduced to North America in 1910 by G. Stanley Hall. His psychodynamic theories pertaining to the cognitive, emotional and volitional mental processes that consciously or unconsciously motivate human behavior provided an integrated and coherent theoretical framework for understanding human development and behavior. These processes which were thought to be the product of a four part interplay between one's genetic and biological heritage; the sociocultural milieu, both past and present realities; their perceptual abilities and distortions; and their unique experiences and memories blended well with the addition of the word "personality" in Richmond's second publication in 1922, *What is Social Casework?*. As Austin (1983) pointed out, "the usefulness of Freudian theory for fulfilling one of the requirements of the Flexner myth is reflected in the rapid adoption of Freudian principles as a fundamental component in social work curricula" (p. 370).

Methods of Practice: In the 1930s, the "diagnostic" school of practice, based on Freudian theory and Richmond's casework methodology, and her new concern for personality change, met its first real challenge from the Rankian based "functional" school (Robinson, 1930; Taft, 1937). Robinson published the first comprehensive text to integrate social and psychodynamic concepts, *A Changing Psychology in Social Casework*. Whereas the diagnostic school had been grounded in a medical model approach (study, diagnose and treat individual problems in their social context), the functional school tied itself to agency function. Proponents of the functional school saw the problem as part of one's relationship with others and directed its treatment strategies to changing patterns of relating to others. Robinson's work was one of the earliest efforts to, at least implicitly, recognize social work as a discipline that had a systemic world view (domain); that it was an organized occupation; and that it had an identifiable orderly sequenced helping process. Around the same time Grace Coyle published the first comprehensive text on social group work, *Social Processes in Organized Groups* (1930).

The limitations of method specialties became evident during the Great Depression. Because of its dominant allegiance to clinically oriented social case work, the discipline was not organized to meet the needs of large masses during the Depression, who were poor and less able through no fault of their own. While professional social work could offer expert therapeutic techniques, clients now had social welfare needs on a large scale and needed advocacy, brokerage, administrative and planning services. Furthermore, while the organized profession tended to operate from private agencies and clinics and practice specialty methods, the need was for massive new programs in public agencies. As result, divisions in the profession were further exacerbated. After the Depression, a new breed of general practice social workers were employed

mostly in public agencies, implementing public welfare programs sanctioned by new social security legislation.

Canada's first entry into the social security field, for example, was in 1927 with the introduction of subsidized payments for an old-age pension program for needy citizens over the age of 70 years based on a strict and often humiliating means test (Guest, 1985, p. 1723). Its first attempt at welfare state legislation was taken in 1935 with the passage of a national unemployment scheme by the federal government, in spite of the lack of its constitutional authority to do so (Turner, p. 55). This legislation was eventually ruled unconstitutional in 1937. It took until 1940 for an amendment to the BNA act that cleared the way for a national unemployment insurance act. The Atlantic Charter of 1941, a historical meeting during the early part of the second Great War between the British Prime Minister Churchill and Roosevelt, the American President, formulated, as one of its agreements, the citizen's right to social security (Turner, 1986, p. 56). The agreement also acknowledged that provisions had to be made in the post-war world to cover dependency difficulties of individuals and families that were beyond their capacity to handle. In 1942, the Beveridge Report was issued in England recommending an integrated social security system that would give cradle-to-grave economic protection for its citizens. A year later, the Marsh Report was released in Canada. This report, prepared by Leonard Marsh, a leading social work educator, established many of the guidelines for Canada's social welfare system that developed over the last half of the century.

Many of the workers employed to implement the public programs were not specifically trained in social work, others had undergraduate degrees instead of graduate degrees in social work, which up until then had been seen as the mark of a "professional" in keeping with Flexner's criteria. The accrediting body for social workers, The American Association of Schools of Social Work, for example, had declared as of 1939 that the accreditation standard would be a 2-year MSW degree program. Logically, it followed that the MSW degree was declared the minimum requirement to be considered a professional social worker (Barker, p. 189).

After World War II, mainstream social workers, supporting Flexner's criteria for a profession, regained control of the profession (Poppo, 1985, p. 565). Their goal was to perfect one educationally communicable technique (method) as the key to a common knowledge and skill base for the profession. However, specialties continued to grow and by the 1950s the profession, supported by the Boehm "Social Work Education Curriculum Study" (CSWE, 1959), laid claim to a broad-base orientation that recognized five methods: casework, group work, community organization, administration, and research. This pattern of specialized methodologies was a departure from the dominance of casework, but it failed miserably as a way to find common ground in the profession. This necessitated a new basis for conceptualizing the common elements of the profession. The adherents of diagnostic and functional schools began to merge and lose their separate identities; their combined approaches took on a psychosocial orientation. Two major texts were published, Perlman's *Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process* (1957) and Hollis's *Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy* (1965) that represented attempts to unify the disparate elements of systematic methods in social work. Systemic views of the domain of social work were emerging, but not fully conceptualized into working models.

Redefining the Common Base of Social Work

Up to the mid-century point, social work had been evolving as a profession based on its efforts to adhere to the method approach of those disciplines generally recognized as a science. Wilber

(1984) reminded us that science could be defined any way we liked as long as we were consistent. He pointed out, however, that there should be a clear distinction between method of science and the domain of science. He informed us that "the method of science refers to the ways or means that whatever we call science manages to gather facts, data, or information, and manages to confirm or refute propositions vis a vis that data (p. 12). In this sense, method is the way any science manages to gather knowledge. Method refers to the epistemology - the way knowledge is investigated critically - of science. In its simplest form, "scientific method involves those knowledge-claims open to experiential validation or refutation" (p. 13). Method, correctly so, has nothing to do with the domain or objects of the scientific method. On the other hand, he stated that "domain . . . simply refers to the types of events or phenomena that become, or can become, objects of investigation by whatever it is we mean by science (p. 12). Domain refers to the philosophical way science views the nature of reality. According to Wilber, if there is a way to test a knowledge-claim by experiential validation or refutation, then that knowledge can properly be called "scientific" (p. 13). Wilber's work made it clear that any endeavor could be a science as long its objects of investigation (domain) and its methods of investigation (scientific method) were open to experiential tests. The difference between a science and a non-science is the dividing line between "testable and non-testable (or merely dogmatic pronouncements, the former being exposed to confirmation/refutation based on open experience, the latter being based on evidence no more substantial than the 'because-I-tell-so' variety" (p.13).

Richmond had recognized the comprehensive "man in his environment" domain of applied philanthropy (social work), but it was others who kept the "interaction of person and environment" objects of investigation alive over the years. First, by Gordon Hamilton (1940), who defined "person-in-situation" in an organismic context in the 1930s and Bertha Reynolds (1930), who saw social work in a "between client and community context". Its' relevance to social work finally received formal recognition in the NASW "Working Definition on Social Work Practice" (1958), chaired by Harriet Bartlett, and the next year in the Boehm Curriculum Study (CSWE, 1959). The person-in-environment domain of social work was later reaffirmed in two special issues of Social Work on conceptual frameworks in 1977 and 1981. The importance of having a domain perspective - an ontological framework for our profession- was not widely communicated to the profession until Bartlett (1970) and Meyer (1970) included a domain context for the purpose of social work as major component of what Bartlett defined as the "common base" of social work. The common base had a social functioning focus, a professional orientation, and a methodological intervention repertoire. Bartlett stressed that social work required an area of central concern, common to the entire profession, practical in terms of attainable knowledge and sufficiently distinctive that it did not duplicate what other professions were doing (p.86). Boehm's study had asserted that the goal of social work should be the enhancement of social functioning wherever need was either individually or socially perceived. Social functioning was defined as "those activities considered essential for performance of the several roles which each individual, by virtue of his membership in social groups, is called upon to carry out" (Dinerman, 1984, p. 7). Like the Boehm study, Bartlett declared the social functioning interactions where individuals and their social environments meet as the central focus of the profession. Practically, this meant the target of change focus of social work was orientated to the relationship between the coping abilities of individuals, singly or in groups, and the environmental demands on them. This orientation, according to Bartlett, required social workers to have a comprehensive broadbased understanding of their profession before becoming committed to or engaged in a specific/specialized practice method. The method framework of the common base had to be general enough to accommodate a wide repertoire of direct and indirect intervention strategies. By formally recognizing the two main components of a science, method and domain, social work was now in the position to be appropriately recognized as the "science of social work".

New Professionalization Models: In the 1950s and 1960s, new sociological models for defining professions emerged. The "process model" instead of emphasizing the need for specialized skills and one common body of theoretical knowledge, followed an approach that had occupations in society distributed along a developmental continuum (Poppo, 1985 p. 562). Using this model, social work seemed to fit the classification of a professional occupation. The "power model" also developed to classify occupations as professions was used by social workers to defend their status as a profession because they had carved out a place in society and purported to have control over the nature of their professional work (p. 562). The trait model of Flexner was revised by Greenwood (1957), and used by social workers to defend their claim that social work was a legitimate profession. To be considered a profession required evidence, which social workers argued they met. They claimed to have a systematic body of knowledge (i.e. scientific method), authority, functional specificity, community sanction, a code of ethics and an integrated set of norms. However, it has to be strongly noted that these claims made absolutely no reference to the inclusion of a systemic body of knowledge (i.e. scientific domain).

The 1960s and early 1970s were times of great social upheaval and social work was criticized from both inside and outside its professional boundaries. Richan and Mendelson (1973) made the point that in its rush to professionalize, "social work - with its emphasis on the development of knowledge and skills in dealing with social problems, and with its highly organized agencies for the delivery of needed service - has so very little to do with the poor today" (p. 6). There was widespread criticism of the validity of social work workers focussing on individual treatment and neglecting the area of social reform. It was as if the very professional recognition that social workers had tried so hard to achieve during the profession's first 60 to 70 years was to be its very undoing. As a result of the political and social turmoil's of the 60s, social work education expanded to include more community planning and political action courses. Freudian influenced clinical social casework became somewhat less important, but remained the dominant method in social work education and practice settings.

Summary

With this historical overview of societal and professional developments, I hope I have adequately refreshed your knowledge of the roots of our profession up to the 1960s. The first sixty years reflected a constant tension between the dichotomous roots of our declared social purpose: causes of social problems versus treatment of victims (Diner, 1977, p. 2). In addition, there were sub tensions within each purpose area. Those on the social problem/environment side struggled with the respective merits of scholarly objectivity and social advocacy. On the treatment side, debates ensued around a individual psyche or social environment centered practice. Other debates occurred about the knowledge base: social work versus social welfare. The social work advocates argued the need for focussed knowledge to perform the actual tasks of social work practice; the social welfare advocates argued for a base that encompassed all knowledge and all practice relevant to human well being. These individual-reform struggles carried on throughout the 1960s, into the 1970s and well into the 1980s. In the meantime, the discipline in its quest for legitimate recognition as a profession continued to search for a way to re-structure the conceptual foundations of the profession, but didn't make much headway. Although not widely recognized, it seemed apparent to some that the conceptual foundations might have to be found in an area that to date had not been explored by social workers.

I will now review some of the developments that lead to the discovery of nature's fundamental coordinate system as a unifying framework to conceptually ground the scientific domain of social

work, its broad base professional paradigm and multiple methods of practice. By 1980, Leighninger was warning us that we would be unable to achieve or maintain a unique position as a profession if we failed to develop a core professional identity based on a combination of:

- a) a common approach to problem analysis,
- b) a recognized heritage, and
- c) a shared repertoire of very basic skills” (1980, p. 10).

A few years earlier, Chambers (1977) had reminded us of the importance of our historical roots, "social work, like every profession must be possessed by a sense of history or else drift without tradition or purpose".

Unifying Developments in Social Work: A mid-century paradigm shift

Some of the key issues of social work, which had been identified as early as the 1950s were still being debated in the 1980s. The main issues were:

- 1. Defining the domain of social work;
- 2. Establishing the professional paradigm of social work;
- 3. Determining methods of social work; and
- 4. Establishing a common conceptual base for the profession, world-round.

The issues of domain and professional legitimization were addressed by Popple (1986). His thesis was social problems, whether they arise within micro or macro systems, were problems of dependency. Dependency defined in the Popple context was said to be "a state of being in which people cannot accomplish daily living tasks or life aspirations with their own resources, skills and knowledge" (cited in Ramsay, 1986, p. 51). Examples of dependency problems could be seen everywhere. Changes which resulted from the transition to an industrialized urban society created social conditions where individuals were without resources that they once depended on, such as the family, church and manual labor; it became the responsibility of society to respond to the dependency problems that ensued. Popple's proposition was that society, forced to find a rational way of addressing dependency problems, looked for an appropriate occupation to meet the need. As the rudiments of a philanthropic occupation were already evolving, a contract of sorts was agreed on between it and society in general. That occupation became identified as social work and its central mission was directed to the socialization processes between people and their environments. In essence, the domain of social work became the social assignment of managing dependency. Popple claimed that all efforts to limit or narrow the domain to fit specified methods of practice led to nothing more than the profession paying attention to fewer social functioning problems; the widespread social problem manifestations of dependency remained larger than life.

Popple also addressed our determined search to become a recognized "profession" (p. 573). This search probably rose out of the initial questions that gave rise to the sociology of professions:

- 1) to what extent can professional occupations be regarded as a unique product of the division of labor in society, and
- 2) do professions perform a special role in industrial society, economic, political or social? (Johnson, 1972, p. 10).

The search for recognition was based on the traditional assumption that there are some essential quality(s) that distinguish professions from other occupations. Durkheim, for example, Johnson said, saw professions as occupational membership communities with high moral standards that would reverse the break-up of social order in industrial societies and serve as a positive force in social development. Others went further and claimed professions were to be distinguished from other occupations by their "altruism" that is expressed in terms of a service orientation (p. 12-13). Professionalism was identified as those occupational activities that were not concerned with self-interest, but with the welfare of the people being served. Popple was not a proponent of sociological models of a profession; in fact, he saw the concept of profession to be little more than an occupational group's need for power and prestige. If social work has to be defined, he claimed "it should be defined as a federated profession - a group of different occupational specialities unified into one profession by a common social assignment" (p. 574). In summary, Popple gave social workers a new way of looking at both domain and the profession. Those who accepted the logic of his thesis realized the challenge ahead. They recognized the tremendous scope of social work's domain; dependency was everywhere. They knew that to tackle the social assignment of managing dependency, the profession would need a common framework from which to begin; one that was foundational, flexible, procedurally systematic, and, above all, holistic and systemic in perspective. They also understood that to stand as a profession in its own right, social work had to define the legitimate problems and methods of research and practice for succeeding generations of practitioners. Kuhn (1970) informed us that for all new sciences to be societally recognized they had to share two essential characteristics:

- 1) their achievements had to be sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity, and
- 2) it had to be sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the redefined group of practitioners to resolve (p. 10).

Accomplishments that share these two characteristics, Kuhn referred to as "paradigms" of like-minded groups. He used this concept to refer to actual scientific practices that provide models from which develop coherent traditions of scientific research. By mid-century, social work had achieved these two characteristics even though it had invested most of its attention to the development of scientific methods of practice. Study of the social work paradigm provided the means to prepare students for membership in the professional community of social work that they would later practice. The importance of a common paradigm is seen in minimal disagreement over fundamentals from those who learn the bases of their field from the same conceptual models. Kuhn's work also showed us that workers (researchers or practitioners) whose work is based on a shared paradigm are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice. The commitment to a particular professional community and the apparent consensus this produces are prerequisites for the genesis and continuation of a specific practice tradition.

Unifying Theories

Since the late 1950s, the social work search for an organizing framework to accommodate the common domain, paradigm and method of social work relied primarily on models derived from general systems and ecological systems perspectives.

General Systems Theory: This theory came from the work of Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, a great biologist, who believed the survival of a system depended upon the exchange of energy and information between an organism and its environment. He discovered that there were

comprehensive system behaviors in nature unpredicted by the behaviors of the systems' components, a phenomenon known to scientists as synergy (Fuller, 1963, p. 69). A system was defined simply as a "set of elements standing in interaction" (1967: 115). According to Stein (1974), "Systems theory gives social work the conceptual tools to explain long-standing notions and to guide and give direction to social work practice" (p. 31). Since the person-situation/person-in-environment domain was basic to social work, the interconnections and relationships between the person and his environment were easily understood in the context of open system theory. Several general systems principles have been helpful in the social and applied sciences to distinguish identity characteristics of a system: boundary (which indicates completeness), structure (which establishes form), hierarchy (outlines the division of labor), transactional nature (depicts the interrelationship patterns), and time (establishes the temporal status). Other principles served to explain the operational characteristics of a system: input (incoming information), throughput (information processing), output (end result information and consequences), feedback (cycled information) and entropy (natural tendency toward disintegration). Additional principles were helpful in understanding the internal characteristics of a system: steady state (a free-floating balance), homeostasis (a fixed or predetermined balance), differentiation (awareness of others), nonsummativity (sum of the parts does not equal or explain the whole), and reciprocity (two way information exchanges). Two other principles helped explain the trajectory or path characteristics of a system: equifinality (different routes to the same outcome) and multifinality (one method produces different outcomes). When they were first introduced, systems theories were seen as the answer to a holistic conception of social work, the development of social work "generalists", and a unified theory of social work (Stein, 1974. p. 33).

Hearn (1958, 1969) was the first to use systems theory to find a common conceptual model for social work. His model and those that followed after from other social work theorists and educators were frequently criticized, however, for several shortcomings. First, systems models were acknowledged for the rich insight that could be obtained about the domain of social work (the person-in-environment life space of others), but they failed to provide "how to do it" methods for practitioners. Second, the language of systems was too mechanistic and nonhuman. Third, the concepts, in order to encompass a vast and diverse range of phenomena, were highly abstract and therefore, difficult to apply at a practical level (Germain, 1979, pp 6-7). General systems was also criticized for its alleged failure to eliminate differential, hierarchical power imbalances between member units of a system (Carniol, 1986). Perhaps its greatest criticism, one that Von Bertalanffy acknowledged, was its lack of objective employment (Fuller, 1963, p. 69). In other words, the principles could not be translated into physical models or artifacts for illustration, teaching or practice purposes.

Eco-Systems Theory: The ecological perspective, which is a form of general systems theory, came from biology and dealt with the adaptive fit between living organisms and their environment. Ecological practitioners were trained to focus on the interface between systems or systems' elements (Meyer, 1983). They were, and still are, concerned with the relationships between organisms that a person with a primary focus on a specific element in a system would be inclined to miss. In social work, this meant that the primary focus of the profession was on social functioning in a person-in-environment domain. Adaptive fit coming from an ecological framework was characterized by an interdependent process, which mediated the inside system of the person, singly or in groups, and the outside systems of its environment. The elements in an ecological system are constantly affecting and being affected by each other. The reciprocity between elements is constantly shaping, creating and adapting their relationship to each other. The ecologically minded social worker had to assess all the elements in the total person-in-environment terrain. This set up an expectation that they may require a general and/or specific knowledge of these elements and their relationships, ranging from individual or group self

awareness, dynamics of intimate personal relationships, influence of cultural beliefs and customs, to the policies and mandates of organized social services agencies. The ecosystems informed social worker was expected to work at multiple interfaces of the transacting elements. The ecological (systemic) perspective (Meyer, 1983; Germain, 1979), which is different from an ecological (systematic) model (Germain and Gitterman, 1980), provides a common framework for a cognitive understanding of the person-in-environment domain of social work, regardless of the applied method used. This perspective, according to Germain (1979), is concerned with the growth, development, and potentialities of human beings and with the properties of environments that support or fail to support the expression of human potential (p. 7-8). The ecological perspective, like the general systems perspective, was limited. It had not been used as an organizing framework for understanding the broad-base orientation of the profession, or for understanding the operative processes of a method driven intervention. The ecosystems theory also failed to provide an objective framework for interrelationships to be concretely configured in other than a two point linear system or in a three point triangular system. Ecosystems knowledge provided no help in knowing how to construct conceptual frameworks that could show the interrelationship patterns of a holistic system or answer the question of how many components were necessary to have a constellation of components that would constitute a whole system.

Natural Systems Theory: In the 1980s, Ramsay (1986) identified a third systems perspective; the natural systems discoveries of R. Buckminster Fuller (1963, 1969, 1975, 1979, 1981, 1982). Fuller had discovered a universal coordinate system, which he named "synergetics" that cut across and underpinned all scientific disciplines. Synergetics is a triangular and tetrahedral system that employs 60-degree coordination, which is nature's way of physically packing elements together (1975, pp. 22-23). Synergetics rejects all axioms as "self-evident"; every thing must be experientially verifiable. Fuller's discovery was based on the empirical findings of physicists who found that nature is always most economical and therefore did not function according to man's 90-degree angle (x y z axis) coordinate system (Fuller, 1969, p. 95). Nature's way was to use very economical and fundamental 60-degree coordination, best illustrated by Van't Hoff's "proof of the tetrahedral configuration of carbon, the combining master of organic chemistry" (p. 100-101). In chemistry, it was discovered that tetrahedral systems chemically bonded in different ways. When single bonded together by one vertex, they form a very flexible linkage. Double bonding is a hinge-like linkage, still flexible but more compact. Triple bonding is rigid, lacking flexibility but capable of differentiation. Quadra bonding is enmeshed, lacking flexibility and differentialness.

Fuller's synergetic coordinate system proved to be the unifying framework that social workers had been searching for. For the first time social workers could conceptually organize all the different components -domain, paradigm and method- in the common base of their profession. Synergetics is the exploratory approach of starting with the whole (Fuller, 1975, p. 13). It is based on a generalized principle of synergy that the behaviors of whole systems are unpredicted by the behavior of their parts taken separately. A corollary of synergy is that once you start dealing with the known behavior of the whole and the known behavior of some of the parts, you will quite possibly be able to discover the presence of other parts and their behaviors (pp. 9 & 12). Humans have used this approach to make rare discoveries. The Greeks discovered the law of the triangle: the sum of the inside angles is always 180 degrees. This law was later expanded to include the outside angles as well so that we now know that the sum of the outside angles is always 900 degrees. Thus the known behavior of the whole and the known behavior of any part may give you a clue to the behavior of the other parts. Newton's concept of gravity also provided him with an understanding of the behavior of the whole, which led to the discovery of two planets previously unknown. The strategy of a synergic approach is radically different from the traditional strategies of differentiating out parts of a system to study their behaviors in isolation

from the whole system.

Constructing a Common Conceptual Framework

Holism: In constructing the common conceptual framework, Ramsay integrated our historical developments. He borrowed from the insights and previous work of several social workers before him. They realized that a conceptual framework had to encompass all possible interrelationships in several different components of the discipline for it to be able to address broad and complex problems (Bartlett, 1970; Meyer, 1970; Goldstein, 1973; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; Middleman & Goldberg, 1974; Siporin, 1975; Compton & Galaway, 1975; Shulman, 1979; Anderson, 1981; O'Neil, 1985). These developers all shared the belief that the domain of social work should not focus solely on the individual or on the environment, but had to focus on the interdependence of the two. They all believed that one had to "see" the many interrelationships involved, whether they were associated with a individual problem, a group problem, or one of even larger scope. They knew that problems did not exist in a vacuum. To start with a whole picture, social workers needed to see how every element in a system can affect every other element. A systems perspective, they argued, let social workers connect multiple variables to their cases, and at the same time see the possibility of a wide range of intervention methods and skills. As Meyer so often used to state, "it is more professionally accountable to see cases in their true complexity, and then to select the appropriate methods and skills" (Meyer, 1983, p.27).

Science of Social Work: The natural systems perspective, combined with selected characteristics of general systems and ecological perspectives, served as a conceptual framework for constructing and "seeing" the common base of social work in its entirety. Using this perspective Ramsay found a way to objectively employ systems theory in social work. He did this almost twenty-five years after Von Bertalanffy and Fuller were brought together on several panels at a World Affairs Conference in 1963 and agreed that they had discovered the same natural coordinate system through completely different circumstances (Fuller, 1963, p. 69). This practical application of systems theory turned out to be a big breakthrough in establishing social work as a legitimate science-profession. Science as referred to earlier could be defined any way one wished as long as consistency was present. Sir Arthur Eddington, one of the great theoretical physicists in the first half of the 20th century, defined science simply as "the conscientious attempt to set in order the facts of experience" (Fuller, 1976, p. 7). A similar definition was provided by the highly acclaimed Viennese physicist, Ernst Mach who said "Physics is experience arranged in the most economical order" (Fuller, p. 7). Mach's definition incorporated the discoveries of physicists that nature always works in the most economical way possible. These definitions were used by Ramsay to define "social work as the conscientious attempt to set the facts of experience in the most economical socialization order." Working from this understanding of science, social work was recognized as part of "design science" (Gabel, 1979), a new paradigm for viewing our world that emerged out of Fuller's work. Gabel explained that "design science sees the environment and the human condition as being ever improvable . . . [which] involves understanding the critical interrelated nature of our problems and their global scope; the inability of present, locally focussed planning methods to deal effectively with these problems; and new systematic alternative approaches for recognizing, resolving, and preventing our present and anticipated problems through the development of artifacts" (pp.10-11). We learned that design science unlike "pure" science that often claims to be value-free is value-laden. Design involves the structuring of environments in preferred directions; where we want to go is determined by our values (Gabel, p. 11). Most importantly for social work, Gabel pointed out that:

One of the underlying tenets of design science is that we are all in 'this' together; 'this' being the Earth, humanity, and our innumerable problems. Problems are all interconnected just as is our ecology. Problems are parts; design science seeks to deal with wholes, with systems. The method of design science is one of always starting with the whole and working toward the particular (p. 11).

We also learned that the parameters of social work, as a design science, could be objectified. This is done by using the natural systems framework to establish coherent models of practice and practitioner domains, professional paradigm and intervention methods.

System Empiricism: Fuller provided empirical evidence that there is no known experience that is less than a system. A system is the simplest experience any human can have and it must always have insiderness and outsiderness. Only after there are four events/elements of an experience can we have insiderness and outsiderness differentiating guide points. Identification of a system begins first with the discovery of self or of "otherness." A living system begins with awareness. If there is no otherness there can be no awareness. If there is no insiderness and outsiderness, there can be no life or thought. Systems, Fuller proved to us, always divide all the universe into three principle parts (Fuller and Dil, 1983):

- 1. The system itself;
- 2. All the universe otherness outside the system - macrocosms; and
- 3. All the otherness inside the system - microcosms.

The above listed divisions, also as discovered by Fuller, can be expanded into several zones of micro and macro relevancy. These are:

- a) the clearly irrelevant,
- b) the twilight (could be) relevant, and
- c) the clearly relevant elements of the system itself.

Thought systems, for example, consist only of clearly relevant considerations. Therefore, they have micro- and macro-relevant limits. There are some experiences too small or of too high a frequency to be considered. Other experiences are too large and too infrequent to be considered.

A system does not exist unless it has boundary and structure. Fuller empirically discovered the simplest whole system experience of the universe to be geometrically tetrahedral; a unique system-defining set of interdependent and related parts/components consisting of four (4) elements, four (4) faces, and six (6) connecting linear interrelationships. A tetrahedral system (natural system) is nature's minimum "set of elements standing in interaction" that constitutes a whole experience. Anything less than a tetrahedron is not whole. A tetrahedral system provided us with a topologically-systemic way of thinking; a geometric way of thinking in which basic properties of the system were invariant (did not change) when undergoing transformations. It was a thought system that could be programmed within the human mind, or systemically programmed into a computer. Users of this system could be taught to recognize, quantify, qualify and evaluate any topological discrepancies, in the elements and interrelationships of a system, however, the system was limited to only giving answers to specific system questions. It could answer: "Which is the most advantageous way - this way or that way?" after all relevant information was known or gathered. Like all other systems perspectives before it, the tetrahedral system could not answer professional judgment, "What do I do?" questions, but it did bring social workers closer to understanding roles and functions in the social assignment management of dependency.

Man's Function in the Universe: After he discovered nature's coordinate system, Fuller asked himself the question, "Did man have a particular function in the universe and if he did what might it be?" From the astronomers, he found evidence that indicated an expanding universe, supported "by the law of entropy or increase of random elements which must ever fill more space" (Fuller, 1969, p. 145). Empirical evidence told him that unique behaviors were usually countered by opposite behaviors of some kind; therefore, he concluded that an expanding universe would have a concurrently contracting universe. He found proof of this in the discovery that our planet earth serves as a contracting agent in universe. Earth like the sun is not radiant. Our planet receives energy from the sun, but doesn't lose it at the same rate; therefore, we are a collecting or concentrating center, possibly one of thousands like us in universe. This sets the conditions for ecological balance to become operative at the surface of the earth. He found that all species in biological systems are genetically and environmentally programmed to alter their environment, which in turn alters the species behaviors (p. 146). Thus he correctly concluded that biological life on earth is antientropic. "Earth is acting as an antientropic [syntropic] center as may all planets in universe" (p. 146). Of all the antientropic/syntropic species, none compares with brain-directed humans. Humankind constantly differentiates and sorts out their experiences in their thoughts. As a consequence we are always rearranging our environments so that we may eat, be clean, move about and communicate with others in more orderly, swifter and satisfying ways. Through the work of Penfield, a well known Canadian neurologist, humankind discovered that it is much easier to explain all the data in the memory banks of the brain if we assume the existence of the "mind" than if we assume only the existence of the brain. From this, Fuller helped us understand the function of the mind in relation to generalizations in science. The scientific meaning of generalization is precise: "the discovery and statement of a principle that holds true without exception" (p. 147). We were shown experimentally that tension is never independent of compression. They only coexist. He showed us proof of many other coexistent behaviors that resulted in the well-known generalization "that there is a plurality of coexistent behaviors in nature which are the complementary behaviors" (p. 147). He, also, showed us that functions only coexist with other functions, which led to a further generalization that "unity is plural and at minimum two" (p.147). What is meant by the mind as opposed to the brain, he concluded, is man's ability to generalize. The ability to generalize, also, gives humankind the tendency to moralize from semi- or axiom based generalizations. The ability to generalize allows us to orderly simplify enormous amounts of special case experiences. The mind searches for the patterns between experiences to help us accomplish things with fewer and fewer words. This orderly simplification is exactly opposite of entropy and the Law of the Increase of the Random Element. It is the decrease of the random element. Fuller gave us evidence of the mind being the most advanced phase of antientropy/syntropy in universe; therefore, he concluded: "man's mind and his generalizations, which weigh nothing, operate at the most exquisite stage of universe contraction. Metaphysics balances physics. The physical portion of universe expands entropically. The metaphysical contracts antientropically" (p. 147).

This explanation of the mind was later supported independently when Norbert Weiner, a renowned mathematician and communications scientist, published that "Man is the ultimate antientropy." From this Fuller declared that the function of man in universe had been discovered: "Man seems essential to the complementary functioning of universe." Therefore, he concluded the probability of humanity annihilating itself and thus eliminating the antientropic function from universe is approximately zero (p. 150). This is not to say that humankind on earth may not destroy itself; it simply means that there are probably thousands other planets like us in universe with humans living on them. What is important is for all humankind to consciously behave in a manner that will protect our function in universe and thereby contribute to the maintenance of an eternally regenerative universe. It should be our goal to ensure an adequate standard of living support for all humanity and rid ourselves of political systems and self-serving ideologies that

protect the privileged few and exploit the poor and less able. Fuller was a strong advocate of a world-around living policy that would "make it possible for anybody and everybody in the human family to enjoy total earth without any human interfering with any other human and without any human gaining advantage at the expense of another" (1981, p. 169). Fuller was against the accumulation of "material wealth", which he believed to be self-serving and Malthusian. He argued for the dominance of "real" wealth, defined as "organized human capability and know-how to employ planetary assets and energy to provide protection, comfort, nurturing, developmental opportunities minimum restraints, and an increasing range and depth of experience for human lives" (p. 199). We should seek these outcomes because, as Fuller experimentally demonstrated, that although there is nothing in our human experiences that shows when there is not enough to go around, it is logical to expect humans to fight to the death, because they are going to die anyway. There is however logic in thinking that when there is enough to go around humans will not even think of fighting.

Social Work's Common Conceptual Framework: Four-Part Holism

Once it became clear that the minimum coordinate system of the universe was tetrahedral, the natural systems perspective was quickly adapted to the design science of social work. It served as a common conceptual framework to organize the different, but interconnected components of social work into a minimum of four interbondable models:

- 1) domain of practice (the person-in-environment area of social work);
- 2) paradigm of the profession (broad based orientation and nature of the profession);
- 3) methods of practice (social work's combined art and science methods of helping); and
- 4) domain of practitioner (the practitioner's person-in-environment similar in nature to the domain of practice).

The Domain of Practice component conceptually objectified the person-in-environment, social assignment domain of social work. The broadbased generalist-specialist paradigm of the profession was conceptually presented by the Paradigm of the Professional component. The framework for developing and understanding the disciplined use of self as a professional "tool" was conceptualized by the Domain of Practitioner component. And, the common structure and systematic process of the general scientific method of social work that had to accommodate a broad range of intervention modes was conceptualized by the Methods of Practice component.

Domain of Practice

This component was introduced to the profession after remarkable transitions had occurred in society from the time the profession first emerged just before the turn of the 20th century. At that time, people lived in a society where 90% resided in rural settings and grew their own food, a good standard of living was limited to the privileged few, and life expectancy was not high (Fuller and Dil, 1983). By the 1980s, over half of all humanity enjoyed a standard of living superior to any group in 1900, life expectancies had doubled, and most of the rural dwellers had moved into towns and cities, hoping for employment and a better life. The urban settings were not equipped to meet these needs. During the last two decades of the century, a further transition occurred. Big cities, instead of being centers for the production, marketing and distribution of physical goods, were transforming into centers for metaphysical exchanges of knowledge and ideas. Physical production was moving outside the cities. Our society had "entered upon the

greatest revolution in the history of humanity" (Fuller and Dil, 1983, p. 212). Society, on a global basis, was going to experience a bloody revolution in which everybody would lose, or it was going to experience a "technological design science-revolution" in which all humanity (not just 50%) would be elevated to higher standards of living than any had ever experienced before. People, world around, were beginning to fully comprehend that "the function of mankind is to think, to discover and use principles. . . . [and] to serve as local universe information harvesters and a local universe problem solvers" (Fuller and Dil, p. 212-213) to help maintain the "integrity of eternal regeneration of the universe" (p. 220).

The Domain of Practice component was developed out of the above-described context as a guide for social work in its central area of concern: the person-in-environment (PIE) interactions among people, singly or in groups. Charlotte Towle was one of the pioneers in social work who recognized the kinds of common human needs that are or form part of the essential elements of the PIE interactions among people. These are physical welfare, opportunity for emotional and intellectual growth, relationships with others, and provisions for spiritual need (Johnson, 1986, p. 9). The structure of the Domain of Practice component was developed primarily from the minimum structure requirements of a natural system, but incorporated general systems characteristics and the adaptive fit focus of the ecological perspective. Use of the model helped social workers learn to visualize, understand, and assess the person-in-environment social assignment domain of the profession synergetically (the study of whole behaviors/experiences), instead of energetically (the study of differentiated behaviors/experiences). Social workers were finally able to "see" that the central focus of their work was on a complex pattern of linear and non-linear interrelationships between people and their environmental surroundings. Social work was a relationship-centered design science-profession.

Person-in-environment elements and their transactional interrelationships can be depicted as an identifiable whole system, which has the minimum elements (4) and interrelationships (6) of a natural whole system. For the system to be "alive", each element must have the capacity to be aware of its other parts/elements. The otherness characteristics of the model are conceptually defined as two kinds: single otherness, which refers to the person-side of the systems and plural otherness, which refers to the environment-side (both physical and metaphysical) of the system.

"Single otherness" or self system in the model includes several different size units - individual or a group of people, in a family, community, organization, nation-state or global village - depending on the scale of the self system being studied, observed or worked with. This concept was initially identified in social work as the "particularization of the individual" in which social caseworkers were to deal with the normal life and activities and their deviations with reference to individual functioning (Milford Conference, 1929, p. 20). This concept has been elaborated in this model to mean the particularization of different size self-systems. Single otherness systems have awareness of their own presence (which means that an individual, for example, is part of his own environment) as well as awareness of other environmental surroundings/demands. Individual life, singly or in a group, is supported at two levels: physical and metaphysical. Physical includes all that is experienced through the senses and coordinated through the brain. The brain, made up of physical atoms and molecules, operates entirely inside the physical skull to coordinate "information that is being fed in from the outside the skull by the senses - smelling, touching, hearing and seeing" (Fuller and Dil, 1983, p. 71). Metaphysical includes only what is experienced cognitively and is processed through the mind. Minds are entirely metaphysical and "from time to time, discover relationships . . . that cannot be smelled, touched, seen or heard" (p. 71). Only the mind is capable of finding the true interrelationships of our experiences. Individual human

development over the course of a life cycle structurally includes the interrelationships between four single otherness components: physical, cognitive, emotional and spiritual.

Contacts with and between elements in the PIE system are physical; the cognitive focus on transactional patterns within or between systems is metaphysical. Self-units can tune-in to inside self-information or tune-out (not the same as tune-off) to outside self-information with their singular or collective senses of sight, touch, smell and hearing. The individual/group meanings and relationships attached to what they sense is a function of the mind(s) and its stored memory bank of all past and present experiences.

Plural otherness in the component includes all the environments of the self-system. The environment elements of a self-system are plural and always different from that of the next moment and from that of every other self-systems. Environments can be semi-similar and overlapping for a person or group of persons, but never identical. Plural otherness and single otherness combine to form a whole system that also can tune-in to its inside information or tune-out to other domain of practice PIE systems. The plural otherness experiences of central concern to social work in this model are three essential environment elements: validator otherness, resource otherness and personal otherness.

The "validator otherness" element defines multisource system values, beliefs, ideologies, customs, traditions, norms, laws, policies and procedures that are strong enough to regulate, control, socialize, shape or otherwise validate the behavior and responses of the other elements. The concept validator comes from the word valid, which means something that can be based on evidence that is supported, accepted and convincing. A validator then is something that validates, ratifies or confirms. The early identification of norms, in The Milford Conference Report, as an important component of the philosophy of social case work is now integrated as one of the four core elements of the domain of practice.

Widespread allegiance to national laws, cultural customs, religious doctrines or family and organizational rules are examples of centralized validators that members of these societal structures have agreed to follow. Doctrines of free speech, assembly and worship are examples of more flexible, decentralized validators that allow for diversified and controversial exchanges among members of a societal system. This element anchors all of the interdependent experiences in a societal system, yet it was an ignored component of the domain framework for many years. In NASW's second issue on conceptual frameworks, Souflee (1981, p. 90), a social worker in a Chicano Training Center, was the only critic of the revised "Working Statement on the Purpose of Social Work" to suggest that the definition of environment be broadened to include the cultural environment. He argued that "In a pluralist society, the cultural and social systems are interactional entities, held together by the dynamics of interdependence." Souflee was concerned that the profession was ignoring a significant part of the environment which influences whether the opportunities and resources for the realization of potential and aspirations of people, singularly or collectively, are available and adequate. The importance of fundamental values in culture was recognized in later years as a critical component of holism in social work.

The "personal otherness" element defines informal social support experiences that are intimately or closely related to a self-system. The concept of personal comes from the word person and is an adjective that pertains to or concerns a particular person. Personal otherness refers to those special relationships that belong to, or are defined as part of a single otherness self system. When entities from these two elements are joined, they form primary interrelationships of emotional and personal support grounded in common values, interests, goals or aspirations. Spousal and intimate

friend relationships, family and kin networks, community twinning, and international treaties between nations with common interests, geographic, economic, political or others, are examples of personal otherness relationships among different sized self systems.

The "resource otherness" element defines a wide range of formal and informal socioeconomic support opportunities, resources and services that can sustain, enhance or impede growth and development in different size self and personal other systems. The concept resource refers to those experiences which can be resorted to for aid or support, or something that can be drawn on. The community resources factor described in the Milford Conference Report recognized the importance of including this concept as a core component of human life and human relationships. In the domain of practice component, they include all of the society-wide institutional structures that should be in place that will maximize the social welfare and social development potential of all biological and socially organized systems. Friends, acquaintances, neighborhood networks, mutual-aid and social support services, economic resources, political institutions, social welfare programs and a host of other society sanctioned, government and non-government, resource systems are examples of different types of resource otherness that constitute part of the environment of self and personal other elements. Renewable and nonrenewable natural resources are included as part of the resources otherness element.

The structure of the Domain of Practice provides a systemic way for a social worker to focus on, understand, and assess the interdependent transactional patterns of any PIE life system both before and after a particular method of intervention is selected. Social workers using this model to guide their work must be educationally prepared to focus on a minimum of six different transactional interrelationship patterns between four essential system elements. In fact, the natural systems discovery of Fuller led him to discover a simple equation, $r = (n^2 - n)/2$ - where n equals the number of experiences and r the minimum number of relationships (Fuller, 1969, p. 73). Social workers have been using the equation ever since they learned to use it for identifying the minimum number of relationships in a life system according to any sum of quantifiable experiences. Once the relationships were quantitatively identified, social workers have been better able to help the people they serve assess them in terms of the quality of their strengths and weaknesses and to rank order them in terms of priorities. The profession of social work was assigned the responsibility of understanding a wide range of possible professional activities in situations where one or more interrelationships between self-system coping patterns and environmental demands had impaired the ability of these system units to successfully function as interdependent members of their society. This component provided the focal point for social workers to conceptually understand that they are assigned to do work in a person-in-environment context. It also clarified for them that the central focus of their profession, as Bartlett had earlier asserted, is "directed primarily to what goes on between people and environment through the exchange between them" (1970:116). The component tied the broad base of the profession together and embraced person-in-environment (PIE) in a geometrical organizing framework which required that they were always and only viewed together.

Paradigm of the Profession

Regardless of how a profession is legitimated in our society, the hallmark of any profession is practice. This means the ability to do something with a high degree of skill in a context that requires practitioners always to be above self-interest motives, and at all times to have the welfare of his/her clients and others that they serve as their primary interest. The importance of practice to a profession can be best understood by making a distinction between the concepts of praxis and

practice. "Praxis is what everybody knows how to do and does in a society. Practice consists of a special system of actions unique to and institutionally vested in a professional role; it occurs when social behavior is drawn from the general behavior or the society and segregated into a professional preserve (Rein and White, 1981, p. 4). Although a lot of social work centers around some fairly common praxis activities, social workers are expected to have practice knowledge about human development processes, institutional resource systems, enabling and social control features of social policy and legislation, and individual and social reform intervention techniques. The profession's knowledge for practice is expected to be internally consistent with change theories that direct the differential application of roles and skills by competent practitioners, who act under the guidance of a codified set of values and ethics. Professional knowledge is not discovered outside the profession by context-free knowledge creating scholars and scientists; instead, it is contained in practice, although much of it is unrealized and unarticulated (Martin & White, p. 35). Bringing the knowledge of practice to the surface is the function of systematic studies that can produce generalized information and problem-solving results, available for use in unique human situations. Professions in general receive societal sanctions for practitioners to operate through some combination of completing a prescribed program of studies; proving a minimum level of competence in an examination(s); meeting the regulatory requirements of state registration, licensing or certification; or adhering to employment expectations by government or non-government organizations authorized to offer certain services. In addition professions are generally organized into some form of professional organization for the purpose of increasing the level of individual practitioner performance, ensuring a minimum public service standard of competence by practitioners, and to protect the members right to practice their profession. Professions generally include different levels of practice from the general practitioner to the advanced specialist, all of who seek the right from society to practice autonomously and to have the means to be self-regulated. In some professions the rights of professional autonomy are not fully awarded and its professional members must function under some form of bureaucratic control. The culture of a profession is steeped in values that control the feelings and actions of practitioners toward their clients and others. The value base of the profession is formalized into an ethical code - a statement of what professionals ought to do when they enter the life system of another person for the purpose of offering a professional service. The value base is many ways like a "calling" for social workers; it gives them the motivation to keep the moral and humane wellsprings of their work alive and active. It helps them visualize a whole picture that is larger than themselves to which they can contribute in their own individual way. As Gustafson (1982) so aptly said, "a 'calling' without professionalization is bumbling, ineffective, and even dangerous. A profession with out a calling, however has no taps of moral and humane rootage to keep motivation alive, to keep human sensitivities and sensibilities alert, and to nourish a proper sense of self-fulfillment" (p. 514). In social work, the presence of organized bodies of knowledge, regulatory requirements for practice, organized professional associations, comprehensive codes of ethics and a sense of calling did not provide the profession with a common framework for accommodating the range and depth of practice among its members.

The development of the professional model was an attempt to identify a framework - a new paradigm- that was conceptually different from the traditional method paradigm, but similar to the PIE domain model in its ability to organize the whole of social work's practice activities in a systemic way. The professional model provided social workers with the ability to do what Rein and White recommended in the 1980s, and that is to "enlarge the notion of context to include not only the client's situation but the agency itself and more broadly the institutional setting of practice" (p. 37). Ramsay's common conceptual model provided a paradigm for different specialty and occupational interests in social work to be interconnected as a unified whole for the purpose of meeting the social assignment responsibilities of the profession. A natural systems perspective was used to identify the broad-base of social work and the range of generalist-

specialist approaches that are used by social workers when dealing with complex dependency problems in a PIE life system. The specific constructs for a comprehensive common whole model were first introduced by Pincus and Minahan (1973), who established a set of criteria that would account for the paradigm similarities in the knowledge, values and skills of traditional method models. Their criteria is summarized below:

- 1. social work must recognize and work with the connections between dichotomous practice elements;
- 2. social workers have tasks to perform and relationships to maintain with a variety of people;
- 3. social workers have to work with and through many different sizes and types of systems;
- 4. social work is not based on any one substantive theoretical orientation; and
- 5. the skills, tasks and activities of social work must be defined in specific terms (vi-vii).

Based on these criteria, they introduced the beginnings of a PIE model, but never advanced the model beyond identifying the central experiences (informal, formal and societal) of a resources element, and the goal seeking outcome experiences of the self-element (life tasks, life aspirations and alleviation of distress). Their major contribution was toward the establishment of a unifying professional practice paradigm for all social workers. The structural elements of a tetrahedral system, although not identified as such, were classified and divided into four subsystems: change agent, client, target and action.

The "change agent system" concept came from our general knowledge that every citizen is a change-agent of society because every citizen makes a difference to the society in which he/she participates (Halmos, 1978, p. 19). Social work involves those citizens who are specifically prepared and have societal assigned responsibilities to change either systemic situations in societies at large, or the personalities of individuals, one by one. When the systemic and individual change responsibilities were polarized in social work and forced to face each they were frequently judged to distinctly different and ideologically incompatible. Halmos argued that they did not have to be seen in conflict, but instead in equilibration because the co-presence of disparities is common place in nature. His greatest concern was to prevent advocates of equilibration from trying to "hybridize" or "fuse" systemic and individual change strategies into one.

The change-agent element in the paradigm of the profession component was adopted from earlier work on planned change (Lippit, Watson & Westley, 1958). Social workers were seen as dual-purpose change agents in the human service professions, who were sanctioned to deal with social functioning dependency issues and to provide planned change interventions for the betterment of social functioning. Although social workers work perform a variety of roles and work in wide ranging person-in-environment situations and have obtained considerable changes in the direction of professional autonomy and self-regulatory status, there have been few changes in the organizational settings of their work, over the years. Not unlike the social caseworkers of the 1920s, social workers still are primarily employees of organized programs and services, although self-employed private practitioners have increased substantially, in several parts/elements of North America, over the last fifty years. Part of the clearly relevant zone in the change agent system is the particular setting that employs the social worker. The mandate and function(s) of the employing organization usually determines the generalist-specialist responsibilities of the practitioner, the nature of the work, the type of technologies that are acceptable and the division of labor levels of social work service that will be offered.

"Client system", also, adapted from Lippit et al was originally used to identify any expected beneficiary of services from a change agent. Pincus and Minahan defined beneficiary more narrowly to mean client systems of different sizes and types that ask for or need some kind of social functioning assistance and engage (or, are engaged by) a social worker by way of an explicit contract or agreement. Clients according to Pincus and Minahan could be classified by a practitioner, depending on the presence or absence of an explicit contract, as "real" or "potential" clients regardless of the formal status they are given by the employing organization. Depending on the contractual state, the information-problem solving exchanges occurring between social workers and their clients may be conducted in a relationship context of collaboration, negotiation or conflict.

The "target system" element was adopted from other works. These works identified specific entities - singly or collectively - that required some form of influence/persuasion to move or act in a certain way if the goals of the social work helping agreement were to be achieved (Burns & Glasser, 1963; Kramer & Specht, 1969, and Brager, 1968). This system also identifies some of the non-client specialty interests of social work. Concerned families, for example, may need specialized persuasion and support to foster homeless children. A community resource may require the influence of a social worker highly skilled in advocacy strategies for it to be convinced of the need to cease identified discriminatory practices. The employing organization of a social worker may need the persuasion of social policy and planning expertise to change outdated program policies.

The "action system" element was borrowed from Warren (1963) and broadened to identify the variety of people - individuals, groups or organizations - and "team" arrangements that social workers are involved with directly or indirectly to achieve desired outcomes of their planned change efforts. This system includes the different individuals, groups or organizations - networks of "bottom-up" coordinated or "top-down" integrated services - that work cooperatively toward a desired planned change outcome. The action system is another area for non-client specialty work for social workers who are assigned responsibilities to help action systems develop and maintain quality controlled services to clients. For example, a foster parent association may need skilled consultations, specialized continuing education opportunities, and innovative social support networks; a multidisciplinary team of community workers may need advanced level staff development programs and skilled system maintenance services for their work with urban renewal communities.

Pincus and Minahan used the general systems perspective in a non-specific way as an organizing framework for their generic practice model. Their model helped social workers of the 1970s and 80s recognize that people who ask for (or are assigned to receive) help with social functioning problems are not necessarily the major focus of attention. It helped practitioners realize that the size and type of helping system cannot be predetermined. It helped them understand the purpose of social change activities, including those directed at the change agent system; and learn how to choose different relationship stances, roles, functions, and tasks that were beneficial at a practical level. Their model was limited because it was not based on a coordinate system that could organize the subsystem elements of the model into a systemic whole or constellation of interconnected elements. The common whole model eliminated this limitation by specifically using a natural systems artifact as the organizing framework for their practice model. Each element has its own zones of relevancy (clear, possible and none) to help social workers assess the need for, and their own ability to, provide generalist-specialist, client-non client and/or direct-indirect services. In developing the Common Whole of Social Work model, Ramsay used the tetrahedral framework to show the flexible single bonding relationship between PIE systems of

the Domain of Practice and different practice approaches of the Professional Model. The flexibility of single bonding illustrates how the primary focus of the social worker can be changed or rotated depending on the person-in-environment experiences to be worked with and the change agent roles adopted and the practice approaches selected by the social worker. At no time is the social worker in danger of hybridizing the unifying purpose responsibilities of his/her profession. A bond at the client/self vertexes depicts the action of the social worker engaging with others to provide direct client services, like casework, group work or community work, to a specified unit size such as an individual, family, or community group. Each time the social worker changes his/her interrelationship focus or changes the unit of attention to a different part of the PIE system, the intersystem connections are rotated to reflect the change in role, function or relationship stance that might be required. When the bonding rotation shifts to the target/resource vertexes this depicts a shift that changes direct client service work by the social worker change agent to indirect functions. This includes functions like advocating policy changes or providing requested information to a needed resource system such as self-help membership group or a statutory social welfare service. The variations in the bonding links can be used to model how social workers can provide a client with individual change oriented counseling services during one time period and in a different time period engage in environmental change activities to provide better opportunities, resources or services for the same client.

Like the Domain of Practice, social workers that used the Paradigm of the Profession component quickly learned to work in the enlarged context of their profession. They are now quick to recognize, understand and focus on a minimum of six different linear-nonlinear interrelationship possibilities of professional practice. They accepted that the range of practice roles expected of professional social workers may require them to engage in functional tasks and activities associated with any of the four practice elements. Generalist social workers would have to work with and between all of the system elements. A generalist worker might begin his/her day providing direct casework services to a family client system, followed by lobbying a political resource for better neighborhood housing on behalf of the client. They then finish the day consulting with a single parenting mutual-aid support group who are preparing a brief to city council on needed improvements in day-care services. Specialist practitioners, on the other hand, learned to concentrate their values, knowledge and skills more narrowly into roles and practice abilities associated with one subsystem, for example, a clinician, social planner, policy developer, community organizer, administrator, researcher, staff developer, supervisor, and so on. Together, these two components gave social workers the ability to obtain "whole picture" information on systemic interrelationships and to answer questions about what would make a better functioning PIE system or which practice alternatives/options might be preferred to bring about a better social functioning pattern in the PIE system. These components did not provide answers for social workers in how to conduct themselves in the intervention processes of a selected method of practice.

Domain of Practitioner

Like the clients and others that social workers work with in the Domain of Practice, the practitioners, individually or in teams, have their own person-in-environment interactions that affect their professional use of self in practice situations. In addition to dealing with the whole system nature of the social units they are working with, social workers must have a whole system awareness of their own person-in-environment elements. The professional use of self in practice places a high demand on social workers to be able to rise above their own personal needs and give priority to the needs of others. The ability to use themselves in the dynamics of the

intervention is considered a major tool in the helping endeavor. By using a practitioner component version of Domain of Practice, the social worker is quickly able to identify self issues, validator other, personal other and resource other interrelationships that can strengthen or inhibit his/her ability to work with the domain of clients and others. The practitioner is also able to work through the method processes in a mutually respectful interchange.

Methods of Practice

To provide general guidance in the systematic methods of professional practice, Ramsay used the tetrahedral framework to develop a Methods of Practice component as a foundation method guide for all practice. Dating back to the earliest forms of charity organization methods, Flexner's allegations that social work was not a full fledged profession because it lacked a communicable technique, and Richmond's two publications, *Social Diagnosis* and *What is Social Casework?*, social work's search for a professional identity has been dominated by method speciality approaches to practice. At varying times during the last century, method has been defined in some form as an orderly systematic set of procedures for attaining an object or goal. More specifically, method in the scientific sense, is defined as a way of "gaining knowledge whereby hypotheses are tested (instrumentally or experimentally) by reference to experience ('data') that is potentially public, or open to repetition (confirmation or refutation) by peers" (Wilber, 1984, p. 13). Method has also been referred to as the "how to do it" part of social work, the all important purposeful, planned process through which practical tasks and activities are reciprocally accomplished between client and social worker and most important case specific goals are achieved. Method has predominantly been seen as providing the primary framework for social workers to put their knowledge, values, and skills of social work into action. Apart from being divided into separate and distinct kinds of methods, namely the traditional methods of social casework, social group work, and community organization, Richmond, and most of the methodology specialists that came after her, were deeply interested in the component parts of systematic processes. In retrospect, it is interesting to note that the phases, stages or steps, which is what the component parts invariably got labeled, were seldom determined from an experiential basis. The number of phases ranged anywhere from a minimum of three (for example, charity organization society's befriend, assess and correct; Richmond's (1917) study, diagnose and treat; Compton and Galaway's (1979) contact, implementation and evaluation; or Shulman's (1979) beginning, work and ending) up to seven or nine phases. A quick content analysis, however, will show that regardless of the number of phases used, they all dealt in some way with the sequential activities described by O'Neil (1985) as engagement, data collection, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and termination. Although all the methods models were divided into some type of sequential part system, the authors always qualified their position by stressing the need for flexibility in applying the steps. They warned practitioners against a mechanistic application, and encouraged them to understand process as a cyclic motion that allows for a wide variety of actions within and between the sequential phases.

Ramsay's method component was an attempt to find a systematic organizing framework that was experientially grounded that could be interconnected with the other three components. His criteria for a unifying framework required a model that provided the profession with the necessary infrastructures to apply its knowledge, values, and skills systemically as well as systematically. It had to account for both the physical and metaphysical work that social workers do with separate person-environment entities, between interrelationships, and amongst holistic patterns of interrelationships. Nature's fundamental coordinate system was selected because it met these criteria. When the three upright faces of a tetrahedron are laid down flat, they form a two-

dimensional four triangle geometrical structure. The triangle elements of this structure can be rearranged to form a systematic model that has either three or four visible phases aligned in sequence. A three-phase model requires a simple folding of the top triangle element on to its mirror image below. A four-phase model requires the top triangle to be flipped to the right and located at the end of the third element. These method elements are then used to provide a process frame for a systematic sequence of intra- and intersystem transactions between a social worker(s) and others that moves through space and time toward a desired problem-solving/solution outcome. The triangular elements in the Methods component represent the general nature of the systematic focus in each phase of the process. Each phase will have a combination of "open" and "closed" focus tasks and responsibilities that must be accomplished in some order depending on the selected method or modality of practice being used. The models are designed to accommodate a pluralistic knowledge base, a variety of scientific theories, different scientific methodologies, and a range of intuitive and empirically grounded or evidence-based intervention skills.

The structural elements of a three-phase model are divided into the phases of Engagement, Assessment and Intervention. Each phase requires the accomplishment of two major focus tasks and operational responsibilities: connect and localize; expand and compress; individualize and disconnect. Related to other clinical-like method models, these focus tasks cover the full range of tuning-in, establishing rapport, initial contracting, starting-where-the-client-is-at, identifying problems/themes of concern, rank ordering priorities, partializing problems, data collecting, exploring for clarity, social history taking, analyzing data, assessing, summarizing, planning, individualizing, specializing, terminating, evaluating, referring and follow-up. In the four-phase component, Evaluation is identified as a separate phase. The major focus tasks and operational responsibilities are: review and conclude. These tasks cover the activities of outcome evaluation, process and role reviews, follow-up, formal descriptive or explanatory studies, analysis and conclusions, reporting and generalizing. The process phases of other major methods in social work - social group work and community organization - are easily accommodated in either a three-phase or a four-phase general method component.

For social workers interested in research, and who wanted to reinforce our historical ties to a scientific base, or who wanted to combine practice and research in a contemporary practitioner-researcher model, a revised model with three different phase names was depicted: Proposal, Methodology, and Results. The focus tasks and operational responsibilities were review and identify; collect and analyze; generalize and report. These six (6) tasks correspond quite closely to the nine (9) steps in Polansky's paradigm of scientific methodology. A researchable problem is identified (conceptualization), the logic by which conclusions will be drawn (study design) is determined. The potential subjects are identified (sampling design), instruments for data collection are borrowed or created (method of data collection), data is collected (study execution), and data is analyzed quantitatively or qualitatively (analysis of results). The results are then compared with the problem that was identified (conclusions), larger implications are inferred (generalizations), and the study is summarized into a report (dissemination) (Skidmore, 1988, p. 134). This model incorporates previously reported procedural requirements of science dealing with observation, measurement, theory, and division of labor and scope, and the generic practitioner/researcher problem-solving phases of problem identification, generation of alternatives and selection of strategies for problem solution, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of findings (Grinnell, 1988, p.16).

Although, field education has long been an integral part of social work education, there have been few attempts to understand both the systemic and systematic components of this experience in a student's education. In the 1980s, Schneck was one of the first to intuitively design a holistic

model of integrated field education that was linked to tetrahedral principles (1987, pp 6-8). His model was based on five principles: synchrony, harmony, congruence, contingency, and reciprocity (the mutuality of experiential exchanges between the other four). Based on these principles, he designed a systemic model incorporating the major content components in the field experience: ideological, conceptual, emotional, and behavioral, with individual/group teaching learning activities suggested for the integration of learning (p. 8). The content requirements of field education were achieved over four major process stages: integration/engagement, problem solving, intervention/change, and stabilization/disengagement. The similarities of these two models to nature's tetrahedral coordinate system are obvious and compelling.

The systemic depiction of the practice, professional and practitioner components can be overlaid on the systematic depiction of the method component to illustrate the intersystem bonding of the four components, and to graphically portray the coexistence of both the systemic and systematic in social work practice. The social worker and client (or others) are located on separate spherical/elliptical pathways that represent the nature of their converging-diverging interrelationships over time and at various points in the method process. The transactional problem-solving exchanges of these four components ordinarily requires the presence of two or more persons and their respective pluralistic environments that can come together in a variety of unit sizes, and be involved in a range of role experiences for social functioning purposes. Ordinarily, at the point of contact, the PIE constellation pathway is in some type of alleged or thought to be dysfunctioning state and the assistance of a social worker is voluntarily sought or requested from some sort of referral resource in the client's life system. The process is activated by the quality of the worker-client relationship exchanges between each other that produces a forward or backward movement in the method framework that is perpendicular to the axis of their relationship. In this way, the joint problem-solving efforts of the social worker and the client will generate synergic progress (whole systems outcomes unpredicted by the behavior of any of their parts before they come together, and which could not be accomplished by any of the parts separately) toward a desired outcome. The social worker's pathway is expected to be on the "upswing" and in a positive functioning state in an effort to quickly and effectively engage the two pathways in a mutually acceptable relationship. The functional pathways are spherical lines that become interdependently linked until their purpose for being together ends. At the point of termination, a converse relationship should be present. The life system circumstances of the client should be functionally on the "upswing" representing a function state that is separating from the social worker and moving successfully into sustainable interdependent relationships within their own life system. The social worker's function should be on the "down swing", allowing separation from the client, and moving away from active involvement in the client's life system. In a dysfunctional sense, the social worker may experience termination anxieties, exhaustion and/or burnout from one or a combination of work responsibilities. Practice inside each model is guided by the social worker's adherence to the acknowledged purpose, focus, sanctions, values, ethics, functions, methods, roles, specialty techniques and interpersonal communication skills of the profession.

Why Did We Adopt a Holistic Systems Perspective?

It was Ramsay's belief that a framework that included all four components would provide the best training for an effective social worker. He recognized that a common organizing framework must be broad and comprehensive, and the time necessary to teach the details of an unifying conceptual framework would limit the time available to deal with students' interest in different theories and specialized methods of practice. To minimize this problem, social work education curricula

adopted the tetrahedral system as their common conceptual framework and made instruction about the framework an introductory course requirement for all students. This paved the way for students to concentrate in other courses on scientific theories, unique methods and the scientific basis of research in social work. The important point that Ramsay seemed to be making was that with a sound knowledge and understanding of a common organizing framework, every social worker, whether they chose to be a generalist or specialist, would have the ability to see dependency problems from similar systemic and systematic perspectives. Such an approach would, therefore, remove the blinders that have historically prevented practitioners from seeing social work in its entirety. In addition, it would provide the profession with the much-needed unified identity that it spent most of the last century searching for.

So there you have it . . . Richmond gave us the systematic method and Addams brought to fore our responsibilities as the conscience of society. Boehm brought us back to our interface focus and Bartlett carried the torch for us to find the common base of social work. Pincus and Minahan gave us the criteria to develop a model for professional practice and O'Neil helped us develop a general method model. Austin exorcised us from the ghost of Flexner and Pople led us to a new way of looking at the purpose or societal assignment given to social work. And, Ramsay ended our search for a unifying conceptual framework – a common whole of social work - that would embrace all parts of the profession and still leave us with a discipline that was clearly greater than the sum of all of its parts. However, support for all of these developments did not happen out of thin air.

Changing Social Contexts: Many other changes were ongoing within the profession that led all members on a world scale to ultimately accept that nature's fundamental coordinate system was as common to our profession as it was to every other discipline and profession. As mentioned earlier, the integration in America of professional association factions into one national association (NASW) led to a working definition of social work in 1958 that was acceptable to large numbers of social workers in different specialties. In 1982 at Brighton England, a world-around definition was unanimously approved by the forty-four national members of the International Federation of Social Workers, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Several national associations including Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands, Spain, and the United States participated in preparing the background information for this historic agreement. Canada, represented by Ramsay, and two representatives from the chairing country, Spain, had the special honor of preparing and bringing the final draft to the Federation's General Meeting for approval (Ramsay, 1984). In that agreement, the dual purpose of social work [acceptance of a unifying purpose was not on the table in 1982] was reaffirmed as was our commitment to an egalitarian, humanitarian, and scientific philosophy. Practice directed at interactions and transactions between people and their environment as the central focus of the profession was endorsed and the nature of general and specialized practice approaches was clarified. Global functions, common to social workers all over the world, were confirmed. It was quite obvious that this agreement emphasized the concept of interdependence. For there to be large scale acceptance of the definition by grass- roots social workers around the world, there had to be a conceptual framework that clearly captured the interactional pluralism of our profession. In the same year, Silberman, founder of the only private foundation with primary interest in social welfare manpower development, was asked to speak his mind to an elite group interested in the advancement of doctoral education in social work (Silberman, 1982). First, he put forth his views on society's survival; our future depends upon creating a synergism between financial and human resources (p.2). Social work had an important role to play in reaching this goal, but Silberman was blunt about it having to define itself in concrete terms acceptable to both the public and the profession, and doing it in terms that were understandable and defensible. His proposal was to define social work "as mediating professionally between people, however grouped or labeled, and

their environments, however defined, for the benefit of both" (p.5). Strange as it may seem, it was the mediating function that Flexner rejected as a characteristic of a profession almost 70 years earlier. Now it was being argued that social work could no longer afford to work for, or on one side of linear relationships; members of the profession could not do work for one side at the expense of the other, they had to work for the benefit of both.

Regulatory Developments: Efforts in North America to codify our values and standards of practice date back to the 1920s and 30s. Early codes were simple straightforward declarations of beliefs about appropriate practice ethics. Self-regulatory status was also sought. The first law regulating social work in North America was passed in Puerto Rico in 1934. Nothing further developed in this regard until NASW produced a model-licensing act in the 1970s. Once this was done substantial strides were made in having some form of legislative regulation, mostly certification and title protection, in more than half the states of the nation. In Canada, by the end of the 1960s, all provincial governments, except Ontario and Prince Edward Island, had enacted self-regulatory control of title legislation for social workers. Ontario and Prince Edward Island got their legislative statutes just before the end of the century. These acts that initially provided for voluntary registration were all upgraded to acts requiring mandatory registration by the end of the century. Major revisions to the Canadian and American codes took place between the 1970s and 80s. NASW 's first comprehensive code was introduced in 1960 and has undergone several major revisions since, all of which must be approved its Delegate Assembly, which meets every two years. CASW embarked on its first major revision in 1975, which was completed and approved in part at its national Annual Meeting in 1977. The draft document submitted for approval was prepared by members of the Alberta Association of Social Workers and modeled after recent revisions to the American and Canadian Bar Associations' Codes of Professional Conduct. It consisted of three sections - Preamble, Declaration, and Commentary; the Commentary being the most elaborate and detailed with many of its provisions based on Canadian case law. Only the Preamble and Declaration was approved at the national level; the Commentary was sent on to the provincial and territorial associations for ratification or amendment to fit the regulatory requirements in their jurisdictions. Few provincial associations took the necessary steps to approve the Commentary for their own use. A second revision took place between 1982 and 1983, coordinated by Ramsay and involving large numbers across the country who provided comments and revisions to many drafts (Gowanlock, 1984). This revision benefited from the 1979 revision of the NASW code, the IFSW international definition, and it included the thrust of Silberman's recommendations in its definition of social work. The Board of Directors approved all sections in June 1983 and by August of 1984 the document had been endorsed or accepted by all member associations of CASW. Canadian social workers had their first comprehensive federation approved Code of Ethics. These Codes spelled out a clear set of minimum standards for practice. In almost all of the declaration statements and accompanying commentary, we saw the need for an interdependent approach to seeing and resolving problems.

Without going into one of the Codes in its entirety, let me give you an example to illustrate my point about the need for an interdependent approach. One of the standards declares that a social worker must be competent in the performance of the services and functions undertaken on behalf of the client. The commentary for this standard states that a social worker must recognize there are times when a client problem is beyond his/her particular skill level to resolve. When one views a client system in the context of the natural systems model, it becomes more readily apparent when this occurs. In addition, when social workers are trained to see all problems from a systems perspective and are able to recognize the complexity of the professional domain, they are less likely to be threatened by other professionals impinging on their "territory." This, after all, is what a system is . . . the combining of all efforts toward an effective resolution. This is

synergy in action. The commentary under the same standard goes on to state that a social worker must have:

. . . knowledge and understanding of human development and functioning, cultural and environmental factors affecting human life and the patterns of social interactions contributing to the interdependence of human behavior (CASW Code of Ethics, 1983). Once again, the emphasis is on interdependence. The authors of the Code were not seeing person and environment as polarized entities, but as mutually interdependent.

Let's pause for a moment and take a closer look at some of the characteristics of the social work profession. This should further illustrate some of the lessons of our history and point to why the acceptance of the empirically grounded natural systems perspective gave social work the common conceptual framework it had been searching for:

Value Base: The value base of social work is two fold. Social workers believe in the integrity and well being of all individuals in society and adhere to basic beliefs of equality for all. Secondly, social workers believe that society, as a whole, has an obligation to respect the inherent dignity of individuals through the provision of opportunities, resources and services to promote the same.

The instrumental values required to manifest these basic values were classified by Biestek (1957) into: individualization, recognition of individual need to express feelings, controlled emotional involvement, acceptance, non-judgmental attitude, client self-determination, and confidentiality (p.17). Pincus and Minahan (1973) dedicated a whole chapter to the differentiation between primary and instrumental values, and knowledge. We all recognize how easily the two can be confused which can often bring the process of problem solving to its knees. When social workers were able to "eye the interrelationships" within their own societal life system, with knowledge being one of their resource otherness, it became much easier for them to "see" the clear difference between values (part of their validator otherness) and knowledge they possessed.

Consider another aspect of values. As we are all aware, the social worker is often faced with clients who, for whatever reason, have touched a sensitive nerve in our belief system. Perhaps you might have a personal issue with rape or child molesting, for example. In such a case, it is essential to see the individual within a larger systems framework and to recognize how interrelationships within that person's own PIE system could have been dysfunctional, thereby contributing to the present problem. In essence, the natural systems model gives us a way of adhering to the basic beliefs about human integrity that led us to social work initially. There is, on the other hand, potential for a social worker who is pursuing a narrow specialist approach to ignore the basic values of social work; specialists run the risk of "tunnel vision", which may tend to weaken their adherence to the basic values of the profession.

Purpose: The purpose of social work follows naturally from its value base, addressing the need for both individual and social change. The CASW Code of Ethics, for example, clearly states that change goals must be for the benefit of both. Once again, we see that the individual and society are not viewed in isolation; they are recognized as interdependent, each acting and reacting with the other. How could one possibly see how and where this interdependence occurs without have a broad systems perspective? As the natural systems perspective indicates, with its person-in-environment Domain of Practice, social work is a broad orientation profession. So, a common whole practice framework is important to all workers whether they remain "generalists" or become "specialists" in their social work careers. In either case, the natural systems framework gives them a starting point. Both generalists and specialists must be aware of all the

interrelationships in their client's life as well as all the relationships their own life. They also need to remain cognizant of their professional paradigm and how it frames an awareness of how their practice options are conducted in relation to other elements of the common whole framework.

Sanctions of Practice: When we review the spectrum of how the practice of social work is sanctioned, we are immediately struck by the need for flexible pathways toward desired goals and outcomes. In spite of voluntary self-regulatory legislation being in place since the 1960s, most social workers in Canada showed little interest in the sanction of voluntary registration until we entered the 21st century. At the same time, they denied their laissez-faire beliefs. However, once the Code of Ethics was accepted nation-wide in the 1980s, social workers have stood for standards of excellence in their work. Our work, as we know, is also sanctioned by legislation, policies of employing organizations and, above all, by the needs and aspirations of the people that you serve and the clients that you work with. Therefore, it was essential to have at our disposal a variety of ways to help with social functioning problem solving; the systems characteristic of equifinality made this possible for us. Moreover, our systems perspective had to have models that were flexible enough to accommodate multiple roles, methods and functions within the context of the profession's purpose, focus and values.

Now that we have reviewed some of the internal characteristics of our profession which led us to natural systems as our conceptual framework, let's turn for moment to some of the outside/external factors in our own country that affected our choice of a common organizing framework.

Political and Economic Environments: Disparity and diversity are the two words that best describe the external factors which contributed to our choice of a natural systems framework. Drover (1984) documented this and described the prevalence of disparity and diversity in Canada, geographically, politically and economically. We are highly urbanized, but inspired by a pioneer past. We are closely linked to the British crown, but 60% of the country are non-Anglo-Saxon. We are the world's smallest large nation, but over 89% of our land mass is uninhabited, and we are one of the richer countries of the world, but report large numbers of people living below poverty lines (p. 6). The complexities of these matters are compounded given that the political and economic systems in Canada have always been extremely interdependent. We live in a federated state, which was a creation of the provinces instead of the other way around. Powers between the federal and provincial governments are distributed on a "shared" and "exclusive" basis. Exclusively the federal government holds exclusively the provincial government's hold some social welfare powers and others. Taxation, however, is under exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government. You can imagine the disparity and confusion that these powers created. The infrastructure for a relationship of healthy interdependence between the two levels of government was in place. However, it was not until the Rowell-Sioris Commission in 1937 on Dominion-Provincial Relations paved the way for the federal government to take over responsibilities for welfare needs (unemployment) in return for rights to levy necessary duties and taxes (Turner J, p. 55).

Crisis in the Welfare State: As political ideologies of the 1980s moved in the direction of neo-conservatism, the Welfare State was criticized for depending too heavily on government and society in general. It was, therefore, not surprising to see major cutbacks in both federal and provincial funding of social welfare programs at the first hint of a fiscal crisis at both federal and provincial levels. The resulting nation-wide restraints on social welfare expenditures brought to fore the need to find creative and flexible means to approach mounting social problems. Earlier in this presentation, I introduced the concept of synergy . . . summing the strengths of linked parts

and getting more strength than the sum of the parts, or in other words how to get more for less. You can imagine, therefore, how the natural systems framework came to the aid of the Canadian welfare state during those years of cutback management. It is interesting, but not surprising, that it took this fiscal crisis before natural systems began to receive the recognition it deserved. Kuhn, way back in the 1960s, discovered that a crisis "requires a discipline to dismantle the existing model of activities and to replace it with another" (Franklin, 1986; Kuhn, 1970). Others both before and after him reflected similar views. John Stuart Mill, a well-known philosopher and economist in the 19th century said, "no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought." Betty Bumpers, founder of Peace Links in 1988, conveyed the same message. She said, "we have to develop a new way of thinking, appreciating our differences, and working out ways to live with each other. We must re-structure our way of thinking and learn to co-exist or we will die together." These messages all referred to the need for a major paradigm shift. Even more interesting is that Fuller, who as we know discovered nature's coordinate system, once said that every consideration of his inventions and developments by others occurred in emergencies (1969, p. 335). If he could speak to us today, he would undoubtedly tell us that humankind's innate mind capacity to problem-solve worked to prevent the destruction of the society's welfare system . . . his concept of antientropy in action.

The Welfare State was in crisis in more ways than one. Drover, then President of CASW and two of his Executive Committee members, secretary Ramsay and past president Gayle James, presented a CASW brief to the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (Drover, 1983. pp. 141-144). They presented social workers' concerns about the social cancer of bureaucracy-run social services programs. In addition to documenting the problems of overly bureaucratic administrations in terms of inequalities, lack of flexibility and, ultimately, the promotion of nation-wide distrust of the Welfare State, they offered a possible solution. Their solution was one that would restore the trust of Canadians in their social welfare system and provide for a greater sense of community solidarity. CASW's recommendations were based on European models of bipartite and tripartite administration of social services. These models had been successful in resolving social welfare problems in other countries, based on finding sources closer to home to administer services . . . sources such as the workplace. It was then recognized that if bipartite and tripartite models would work, then surely a "tetrapartite" model with the stability of four components would work even better. It wasn't long before employee pensions, for example, were being handled through workplace cooperation between the employer, management, labor and the recipient. Improvements occurred in the administration of social and income security benefits with renegotiated agreements between federal, provincial, municipal governments and non-government organizations. The Canada Assistance Plan, already in place for over twenty years, was not difficult to amend to accommodate tetrapartite administration of services. These positive changes helped Canada move from the outmoded goals of a Welfare State, associated with bureaucracy, centralization, regulation and control to our more modern Welfare Society, in which citizens feel they have some influence over their own individual well-being (Drover, 1983, p. 143).

Discussion

All of the factors I have reviewed for you were extremely influential in the birth of the natural systems organizing framework, as we know it today. Its introduction did not mean the demise of specializations, but it did mean that every social worker was first a social worker . . . everybody worked from a common conceptual framework.

The common whole framework and its tetrahedral models first took shape for me when I did my undergraduate practicum at a shelter for battered women. I was there to assist women with their relationships and I was able to use the systems models to clearly visualize all of the interrelationships involved. With the Domain of Practice component, I was able to recognize how the values that these women held were instrumental in convincing them to remain in destructive relationships. Their personal otherness experiences almost always involved the abusive mate. Assisting a woman to mend or break this relationship was rarely easy. However, if I hadn't had a model that helped me visualize the complexity of her interrelationships, my efforts would have been almost pointless. Resource opportunities and services for these women were scarce, but through the use of the common whole components, I was able to better understand and find the ways to best tap the resources that did exist. I even began to carry with me a homemade construction of a tetrahedron made out of knitting needles and rubber balls. When I could show the women, by simply disconnecting one or two of the supporting needles of the structure, how the rest of the system became less stable, they were better able to understand the dynamics of their relationship-centered crises.

The Paradigm of the Profession component allowed me to keep my finger on the pulse of progress of each individual and family system that I worked with. I was able to make decisions about who had to be targeted in order to achieve the best results for my clients. This made my heavy caseload much more manageable. To this day, I cannot recall any real disadvantage to the use of the common whole model in that particular practicum setting.

Widespread acceptance of the natural systems grounded common whole of social work framework has been a long, hard and slow process; social workers respond to new developments with the same degree of hesitancy and caution as ordinary citizens. For a long time many colleague social workers believed that systems theories (GST and ecological systems in the beginning) were too idealistic, that they didn't address the practical day-to-day issues of social work. To this criticism, I ask you to review some of Fuller's original concepts and his urging that we accept ambiguity while searching for the truth. How can anyone define what is "too idealistic" when Fuller and others have shown that "life continually alters the environment and the altered environment in turn alters the potentials, realities, and challenges of life" (Fuller, 1981, p. 130). Fuller's concept of precession also presents a good argument against the cries of idealism. Precession refers to the "integrated effect of bodies in motion upon other bodies in motion" (cited in Ramsay, 1984, p. 15). His concept of synergy (or ephemerization - doing more for less) illustrates how a combination of experiences can turn out far stronger than their combined/summed strengths. The old axiom that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link was proven to be wrong and very misleading. We now know that when the parts of a chain, for example, the separate tensile strength of iron, chromium, nickel and other minor constituent parts in the chrome-nickel-steel used in jet engines) are summed, the total is far less than the actual strength of the whole system. Whatever you call the affect, precession or synergy, the end result is more for less. Can we really claim the practical outcomes of these combinations, idealistic? I call it foolish to ignore empirically proven systems generalizations. Our practice experiences reinforce these truths. We know that results achieved by working through the natural systems perspective can be far more profound than initially anticipated and it is not until systems experiences are combined that one can even begin to predict what the outcome might be.

Another argument against the use of systems models was that they were too general and abstract, lacking specific guides for intervention. We now know the opposite to be true. Natural systems frameworks demand the formation of such a detailed whole picture that we are able to decide

which interventions are appropriate for our clients. However, I must admit that we haven't as yet produced a model that will tell the social worker exactly what to do or how to do it. And, I not sure such a goal is worth pursuing. The argument that they are too abstract was also wrong. It would be difficult to convince this audience who automatically have a mental picture of the chemical bonding effect of one tetrahedron balanced gracefully joined with another that these models are too abstract. Abstract these models are not!

One of the biggest slams against systems theories was their lack of sensitivity to deal with destructive power differentials within society. Cloward and Fox Piven said,

The systems theory approach invites social workers to view clients as "interacting" with a variety of "systems" in which we should ostensibly "intervene". We learn that inmates "interact" with prisons; . . . that recipients "interact" with welfare departments; . . . that slum and ghetto dwellers "interact" with urban renewal authorities. But most clients do not "interact" with these systems, they are oppressed by them (cited in Carniol, 1987, p. 40).

It was also argued that systems theories were not able to accommodate radical, fundamental change in society. Instead, we were accused of changing only specific subsystems in our society, and only those subsystems that would maintain the status quo. It was even suggested that by teaching systems theories our schools of social work would just be "turning out people who will be able to fit well into the social agencies . . . [and be able] to carry out assignments with a minimum of conflict and dissatisfaction" (Carniol, 1987, p. 32).

Concluding Remarks

Well, no doubt these were legitimate concerns, but . . . I wish the critics could see us now. We did create fundamental changes in the political, social and economic structures of our society and we did it with our common whole model grounded to a natural system-organizing framework. We live in a society where economic planners and social planners are no longer designing programs at the expense of the other. The economic and social forces are in-sync for the first time in history. We have moved away from the mind restricting social control policies of "blind" punishment for all those who make mistakes. We have discovered the growth limitations in the anti-mistake-making laws and customs identified by Fuller in the last century (Fuller & Dil, 1983, pp. 129-130). We are rapidly beginning to transcend the "blood clotting" restrictive policies of sovereign nation-states and are finding ourselves being integrated into one world pattern. We no longer think charitably of underdeveloped nations that need help and superior rich ones that must help them. We are well on the way of providing abundant life support and accommodation for all humans, a world-around goal related exam, Fuller predicted, midway through the last century, that had to be passed if our human civilization was to survive into the twenty-first century. In fact, I would hazard to say that these optimistic changes have occurred because of our understanding and application of nature's fundamental coordinate system. The combined efforts of all professions and scientific disciplines using their discipline-relevant natural coordinate system models and design-science technologies have allowed our society to identify and work with the human life elements and human relationships that needed to be changed to create the egalitarian society that we now live in. And, not surprisingly, after making the necessary radical changes, we still live in a societal structure that consists of four elements and six fundamental interrelationships - the foundation basis of our natural systems framework.

In spite of our remarkable advances in the last forty years, we cannot lose sight of the lessons from history. Like the constant vigilance we have waged against the return of fatality guaranteed epidemic diseases, we must prevent pockets of inadequacy from occurring that would again incite people to the logic of fighting to the death. We must continue to promote the logic of an egalitarian society and the benefits of elevating the bottom and all others to the highest standard of living world-around that humankind has ever experienced, in place of the bloodletting illogic of pulling down the privileged few. We must not only learn from the lessons of mistakes in our past, but also model after the examples set by our predecessors. In spite of our somewhat troubled past, one of our past presidents reminded us forty years ago of social work's many faces in Canada (James, 1986, pp. 410-411). It is the past dean of a school of social work and the president of a provincial association of social workers representing Canadian social workers before a House of Commons Select Committee. It is a deputy minister social worker lobbying for alcohol consumption revenues to be invested in the support of dependent spouses affected by the abuse of alcohol. It is the military social worker bargaining with the commanding officer for a sergeant and his family with a retarded child to be transferred, on compassionate grounds, to an area with appropriate services for the child. It is the social workers in northern Canada who pack survival gear in the winter as they make their appointed rounds. All of these colleagues were trying to give their best to themselves and to their country. As frankly summed by Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., they knew that their purpose was "to hammer out as compact and solid a piece of work as one can, to try to make it first rate, and to leave it unadvertised" (cited in James, p. 411).

The natural systems framework took humankind a long time to discover. Few people know that Fuller, convinced of his personal unworthiness, stood on the shore of Lake Michigan contemplating the option of suicide, almost a century ago. Like Fuller, all of humankind was on the brink of destroying itself and the Planet Earth that we live on for almost all the last half of the 20th century. Fortunately, just as Fuller finally found some insight into the "rightness" of his human function, our profession and others have discovered the "rightness" of our collective local problem-solving functions in the universe. Let me close this rather extended account of lessons from our history with the words of an ordinary artist from the last century:

- Evolution provides answers as to where we are going; a future prediction based on previous phenomena.
- The universe contains systems, systems contain patterns.
- The purpose of the mind is to locate these patterns and to seek the inherent potential for new systems of thought and behavior (artist, Agnes Denes, d.n.k).

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