

# 1



## Social Work Research and Evaluation: Foundations in Human Rights and Social Justice

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research-Based Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Behavior	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice Contexts	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage, Assess, Intervene, Evaluate

## BACKGROUND

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### Social Work and Its Scientific Roots

Social work has reached a significant developmental milestone in its professional identity as it collectively celebrates over a century of professional practice that targets individual and societal transformation (Poppo & Leighninger, 2007). Historically, social workers have used a combination of research and practice strategies to advocate for improved social conditions for underserved populations, such as the poor, immigrants, political refugees, child abuse victims, and criminal offenders (Day, 2008; Maschi, Bradley, & Ward, 2009). In fact, social workers' striving for "new possibilities" for humankind parallels the global social movement for human rights (United Nations [UN], 1994), particularly with the emphasis on the "intrinsic" value of *every* person, and the use of individual and group action to promote social justice as a form of "equitable social structures that provide people security and development while upholding their dignity" (International Federation of Social Work [IFSW], 1988, p. 1).

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*In pursuit of new possibilities and a better world, research and evaluation strategies for practice have been a common thread woven throughout social work history.*

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In pursuit of new possibilities and a better world, research and evaluation strategies for practice have been a common thread woven throughout social work history. Social work research and evaluation continue to evolve as a mechanism that gathers data that can be used toward enhancing well-being and socially just outcomes (Wronka, 2008). Since the beginning of the profession, research in the form of the scientific method has been used to understand individual and social problems and to guide, assess, and intervene with underserved populations, especially the poor (Zimbalist, 1977). In fact, the United Nations (1994) has made a distinct reference to social work as a human rights profession because of its long-standing commitment to well-being and justice. Research and evaluation are important aspects for helping the profession achieve its mission. According to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2008):

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote *human and community well-being*. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on *scientific inquiry*, social work's purpose is actualized through the *quest for social and economic justice*, the *prevention of conditions that limit human rights*, the *elimination of poverty*, and the *enhancement of the quality of life for all persons*. (p. 1)

### Definitions

Social workers need to be clear about the meaning of common terms. As noted earlier, scientific inquiry informs the profession's purposes. *Scientific inquiry* commonly refers to the process of gathering fact-based information in a systematic way. In social work, it refers to the process by which social workers ask questions, develop and carry out investigations, make hypotheses or predictions, gather evidence, and propose explanations or corroborate evidence (Gibbs & Gambrill, 1998). An essential component of scientific inquiry is critical thinking, which is the intellectually disciplined process of "actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection,

reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Fisher & Scriven, 1997, p. 1).

Research and evaluation comprise a central feature of social work practice that can foster and appraise the profession’s progress toward its mission (Wronka, 2008). Research and evaluation are important because they give social workers permission to be curious and creative, as well as systematic and thorough in their activities that involve assessment, prevention, and intervention efforts with individuals, families, and communities.

The term *research* generally refers to a systemic and thorough search or examination that involves the collection of data (Engel & Schutt, 2010). As a verb, *research* often refers to conducting an exhaustive investigation. The term *evaluation* often refers to the careful appraisal and study about the effectiveness of an intervention (Barker, 2003). The use of the scientific methods with the distinct purpose of generating information to apply to practice has historically made social work research and evaluation unique.

## Functions of Science and Research in Social Work

Although some aspects of social work practice are an art, science and research comprise an essential component of social work practice activities (Kirk & Reid, 2002). Reid (1997) articulated three major functions for social work practice. First, scientific perspectives and methods can provide a framework for practice activities and help obtain the best results possible. It is a way of thinking that offers strategies for action. According to Reid (1997):

Such an orientation calls for the use of concepts that are clearly tied to empirical events; the systematic collection of data; the cautious use of inference and the consideration of alternative explanations; the application when possible, of research-based knowledge, and the discriminating evaluation of the outcomes of one’s efforts. (p. 2040)

Second, research is an essential tool toward building knowledge that can be used for practice. Research can serve as a generative tool to develop and refine theories for practice and can be used to evaluate practice effectiveness. When knowledge is empirically grounded, it strengthens practice decisions.

Third, research serves a practical function for social workers in the field, to evaluate their own practice with individuals, agencies, or communities. It is common for social workers to conduct needs assessment, quality assurance, program and practice evaluation, productivity studies, and program evaluation. Data gathered for specific practice situations can be used to make practice decisions and actions.

The professional social work organization, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2010), underscores the diversity of social issues addressed in social work research and its benefits. Social work research targets an array of psychosocial problems; prevention and intervention efforts; and community, organizational, policy, and administrative concerns. Some areas of research for practice include research on mental health, child maltreatment, community violence, HIV/AIDS, juvenile delinquency, productive aging, substance abuse, and international community development. Other areas of research address risk and resilience, such as community violence, among individuals, families, groups, neighborhoods, and society to generate information that can be used to develop or refine practice. Other areas of research examine the effectiveness of service delivery and public policies, achieving

human and community well-being and social and economic justice. Moreover, these areas of research can be used to benefit stakeholders that include consumers, practitioners, policy makers, educators, and society.

## Research and Social Work's Core Values

Core professional values emphasized in contemporary practice, such as scientific inquiry, also can be traced throughout the profession's history. In fact, the CSWE emphasizes these core values in its Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAs) in which Policy 1.1 refers to values. The policy states that "service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and *scientific inquiry* are among the core values of social work. These values frame the profession's commitment to respect for all people and the quest for economic and social justice" (CSWE, 2008, p. 2).

An important component of social work practice has been its efforts in integrating scientific methods with the art of practice, particularly to understand the causes of poverty and give relief to the poor (Zimbalist, 1977). The integration of science with social work practice was first advanced in the late 1800s as part of the scientific philanthropy movement to address poverty (Orcutt, 1990), which was scientific research used as a mechanism to uncover the causes of poverty, to assess individual families, and to evaluate the effectiveness of social work efforts to assist the poor (Kirk & Reid, 2002).



### Professional Identity

#### *Critical Thinking Question:*

How do the core values of scientific inquiry and human rights and social justice help shape your personal professional identity and the profession as a collective?

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*Perhaps the profession's biggest developmental challenge has been integrating the passionate, action-oriented reformer with the compassionate counselor/helper, and the objective scientific observer.*

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## THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL WORK AND RESEARCH: EVIDENCE AND THE ALTRUISTIC IMAGINATION

As the social work profession moves forward into 21st-century practice, a clear understanding of its historical roots can be used to inform current practices, especially those related to the roles and functions of social work research and evaluation. A review of history reveals the birth of the profession based on humanitarianism during turbulent times in which poverty, discrimination, and political corruption were rampant, and two world wars were waged killing millions of world citizens.

In the late 19th century, a group of like-minded citizens banded together in the pursuit of humanistic ideals to help reinvent a better and more just world. Social workers actively used scientific methods, such as descriptive surveys and outcome studies, to achieve their aims of identifying adverse societal conditions or evaluating their practice. Significant progress in educational, practice, and policy reform was made using evidence that it was research that guided practice and practice that guided research. Table 1.1 provides a significant timeline of life events for social work, with an emphasis on research and evaluation milestones.

Perhaps the profession's biggest developmental challenge has been integrating the passionate, action-oriented reformer with the compassionate counselor/helper, the objective scientific observer within each individual social worker, and the collective profession. In the following review, social work history suggests that some of the most advanced achievements occurred

Dates	Social work research history
1800s	Rise of the Scientific Philanthropy Movement
1841	Dorothea Dix first advocates for conditions of mentally ill in prison
1884	National Conference on Charities and Corrections (NCCC)
1860s	Board of Charities and Corrections formed; Rise of Charity movement and friendly visitors and the settlement house movement (research, reform, and residence); Dorothea Dix continues to advocate mentally ill in prisons; creation of state hospitals
1865	American Social Science Association established; Organized by Franklin Sanborn, gen sec of MA Board of Charities
1878	National Conference of Charities and Corrections formed
1884	The settlement house, Toynbee Hall, in England established
1889	Jane Addams and Ellen Starr establish Hull House, the first settlement house in the United States
1890	U.S. Jacob Riis publishes <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> , photographic survey of how NY poor lived
1894	<i>American Charities: A Study of Philanthropy and Economics</i> A.G. Warner published—on mixed methods study on poverty
1895	“U.S. Hull House Maps and Papers” published, documenting problem of Chicago’s new immigrants
1897	“1897—The Influential Pittsburgh Survey Study” conducted by Charity workers. <i>The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study</i> —documented the trials of urban AA
1898	The City Wilderness Robert Wood’s-Boston-New Immigrants and Poverty
1899	Juvenile court is established in Chicago
1900–1920	Separation takes place between professional SW education and academic social sciences
1900	Educator Simon Patten coins the term <i>social worker</i> to describe friendly visitors and settlement house workers; Staggering youth statistics spur growth of child-saving movement; journals <i>Charities</i> and <i>Commons</i> published
1902	London—Charles Booth’s <i>The Life and Labour of the People of England</i> published
1906	School social work programs are established in New York and other U.S. cities, journals <i>Charities</i> and <i>Commons</i> are combined to become the journal <i>Charities and Commons</i>
1907–1916	Jane Addams publishes six books and numerous essays
1907	Russell Sage Foundation formed; Pittsburgh Study begins, establishes a department of surveys and exhibits, provides grants to establish social research in schools of social work
1909	Jane Addams—First woman to be elected president of the NCCC; Last American Social Science Association held
1912	U.S. Children’s Bureau established—Julia Lathrop of Hull House instrumental in data gathering, local and national; Robert Chapin’s report is published “The Standard of Living among Workingmen’s Families in NYC”

(continued)

**Table 1.1 Social Work Research History: Developmental Milestones (Continued)**

Dates	Social work research history
1915	Abraham Flexner's famous address "Is Social Work a Profession" at the 42nd annual session of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections
1917	NCCC now National Conference of Social Workers; Mary Richmond publishes social diagnosis
1919	School of Social work forms an association that later becomes CSWE
1920s	Sigmund Freud's theories gain prominence in social work; Sophie van Senden conducts research on youth in foster care through charity organization
1920	U.S.—Mary Richmond came up with first experimental code of ethics
1921	Tuft report on SW education; Mary Richmond receives honorary degree from Smith College for establishing the scientific base of SW
1922	Mary Richmond's <i>What Is Social Casework?</i> published
1923	Tufts (1923) published education and social work
1927	<i>Social Service Review Journal</i> is started by Abbott and Breckinbridge of Hull House
1928	The Milford Conference reports distinguished general and specific components of social work practice
1929	Growth of Freudian thought in social work casework to examine individual problems; Rise of diagnostic and functional schools of thought
1930	Functional school of social casework develops psychosocial approach; 1931 Conference of Social Work, Cabot's speech urges social workers to evaluate their practice
1931	Jane Addams receives the Nobel Peace Prize; Edith Abbott advocates for the use of scientific method in SW
1937	1937 SW Yearbook—distinction is made between social research and social work research
1938	Conference of Evian is held in response to Third Reich
1939	"The Lane Report"—text on community organizing builds on Lindeman's 1921 text; Cabot starts Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study focused on juvenile delinquency
1945	Emily Green Balch, SW reformer and SW educator, receives Nobel Peace Prize
1947	Landmark conference that distinguishes between social research and social work research; Social Work Research Group is established
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights is adopted, National Conference of Social Workers 1948
1949	Establishment of the Institute of Mental Health
1950s	Community Planning for Human Services-Community Level Research Project; research becomes centered in schools of social work; SW doctoral education programs grow
1951	SWRG begins to index social work research abstracts
1952	Council on Social Work Education forms after merging of educational organizations; French prepare an Approach to Measuring Results in Social Work, published to examine service effectiveness; SW schools include a research thesis in MSW programs

Dates	Social work research history
1955	Specialty section in NASW—Council on SW Research; National Association of Social Workers is formed when SW groups merged, including SWRG
1959	Boehm's (1959) Social Work Curriculum Study Project
1960s–1970s	Shift from social work research conducted in agencies to universities, expansion of SW doctoral education; Russell Sage is no longer a major funder of SW research
1960	NASW first Code of Ethics is established (one page); First SW Research text published, edited by Norman Polansky under auspices of NASW
	1961 legislation establishing the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth; Crime-funded community demonstration projects
1964	War on Poverty is launched and beginning of community action projects
1965	NASW publishes <i>Research and Abstracts</i>
1970s	Concerns about the bridge between research and practice grow in SW profession
1972	Fordham University Symposium reviews 13 direct service research projects from 1960s
1973	Fischer— <i>Is Social Case Work Effective?: A review is published; caused an ongoing debate about practice effectiveness</i>
1974	1974 reorganization of NASW; subsumes disparate SW organizations under one umbrella; NASW abolished special interest groups for one unified definition
1975	Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education-Social Work (GADE) is formed
1976	IFSW—adopts first international code of ethics
1977	Zimbalist publishes <i>Historic Themes and Landmarks in Social Welfare Research</i> ; NIMH funds research conference for CSWE to document gap between research and practice in MH
1978	NIMH funds research conference for NASW to document gap between research and practice in MH
1979	NASW Code of Ethics expand to 10-page document conduct provisions (1990 and 1993) Jayartne & Levy (1979) <i>Empirical Clinical Practice Model</i> published
1980s–	NIMH funding shifts from funding clinical practitioners to research on treatment
1981	Dinerman (1981) report—documents the disconnect between research and practice
1982	“1982 CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement”—integration of research in practice
1981	Heineman's <i>The Obsolete Scientific Imperative in SW Research</i> —ignites ongoing debate about research for practice
1984	CSWE accreditation requirement for practice-based research
1986	IFSW Code of Ethics is supplemented by a declaration of ethical principles; NIMH director authorizes the creation of task force on SW Research

(continued)

**Table 1.1 Social Work Research History: Developmental Milestones (Continued)**

Dates	Social work research history
1988	“1988 CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement”—curriculum should impart knowledge for practice and evaluate services
1990s	NIMH funds eight developing research centers; Rise of evidence-based practice in medicine followed by social work
1991	1991 report—“Task Force on SW Research,” supported by NIMH, published report, “Building SW Knowledge”
1993	Establishment of Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR)
1994	Society for Social Work Research is formed
1994	NASW establishes SW Research journal, founding of the Society for Social Work Research
1994	United Nations (1994) publishes “Human Rights and Social Work” manual
1996	1996 Code of Ethics by NASW; ANSWER is established—advocacy network for increased support for SW research
1998	A Report on Progress in the Development of Research Resources in Social Work (IASWR, 1998)
1999	Legislation is filed to establish a National Center for SW Research
2000	National Institute on Drug Abuse creates the SW Research Development Program and provides grants
2001	Ife (2001) publishes <i>Human Rights and Social Work</i>
2002	Kirk and Reid (2002) publish <i>Science and Social Work</i> , which critically appraises past efforts to make SW more scientific
2003	Reichert (2003) publishes <i>Social Work and Human Rights</i>
2004	IFSW and IASSW adopt new ethical document— <i>Ethics in SW: Statement of Principles</i>
2008	Wronka (2008) publishes <i>Social Justice and Human Rights</i>
2009	SWRnet is established; IASWR is disbanded
2010	<i>Journal of Society for Social Work Research</i> is established

when these three aspects of passion, compassion, and rationality were respected. Also, passionate debates among social workers resulted in new understanding of the roles and functions of research in social work.

### Evidence and the Altruistic Imagination

In the mid-19th century, many concerned citizens and volunteers began their humanitarian efforts to address growing social problems, particularly in urban America where poverty and substandard living and working conditions were rampant. They began to use a variety of research methods to understand and assist

disenfranchised populations, which included people with mental illness, the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, at-risk youth, and prisoners.

Perhaps one of the most notable 19th-century humanitarians who used research strategies for advocacy purposes was Dorothea Dix (Viney & Zorich, 1982). In the early 1840s, Dorothea Dix began her in-depth observation of the treatment of people with mental illness in jails and prisons. She used the findings of her observational notes to increase awareness of the inhumane treatment meted out behind closed correctional doors. She also used her findings to advocate for improved conditions for this population. The following excerpt is an appeal she made to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1845:

In illustration of my subject, I offer the following extracts from my Notebook and Journal. I found, near Boston, in the Jails and Asylums for the poor, a numerous class brought into unsuitable connection with criminals and the general mass of Paupers. I refer to Idiots and Insane persons, dwelling in circumstances not only adverse to their own physical and moral improvement, but productive of extreme disadvantages to all other persons brought into association with them.

As Dix has stated, her observational notes were a source of documented evidence of the mistreatment of the mentally ill. Her use of this data to persuade state legislatures and the media was quite fruitful. Dix is attributed with almost single handedly leading social reform efforts for the treatment of the mentally ill and the establishment of state hospitals for their institutional care, both nationally and abroad (Dix, 1975).

In the late 19th century, a growing number of concerned citizens joined the ranks of the charity and settlement house movements, volunteers (Day, 2008). In 1884, Toynbee Hall in England was established to address community problems including poverty and overcrowding. Inspired by this work, five years later in 1889, Jane Addams and Ellen Starr established Hull House in Chicago, Illinois. The success of their efforts has been attributed to three words that begin with *r*: *residence*, *research*, and *reform*. Residence was in the form of living in the midst of the community. Research involved quantitative and qualitative approaches that included community mapping and observational and interview data. Reform efforts included legislative advocacy at the local, state, federal, and international levels.

Other related but notable social reform efforts included public awareness efforts by the media. Jacob Riis (1890) was an innovative photojournalist of the New York City slums. In 1890, in his book *How the Other Half Lives*, Riis wrote about children in slums:

I counted the other day the little ones, up to ten years or so, in a Bayard Street tenement that for a yard has a triangular space in the centre with sides fourteen or fifteen feet long, just room enough for a row of ill-smelling closets at the base of the triangle and a hydrant at the apex. There was about as much light in this "yard" as in the average cellar. I gave up my self-imposed task in despair when I had counted one hundred and twenty-eight in forty families. (p. 58)

This photographic survey of how the New York poor lived was an eye-opener to many American citizens who were unaware of the substandard living conditions of the urban poor.

## Social Work and the Social Sciences: A Shifting Alliance

In the late 1800s, the rise of the scientific philanthropy movement and the use of the scientific method helped social scientists to understand and intervene with pressing social problems. These problems included mental health, political corruption, crime-ridden streets, juvenile delinquency, exploitative work conditions, and immigrants living in urban slums. Social scientists, from disciplines such as history, anthropology, political science, and psychology, banded together to help understand the nature of these pressing social problems. In 1865, an interdisciplinary collaboration of social scientists formed the American Social Science Association (ASSA) (forerunner of the American Sociological Association) (Broadhurst, 1971; Kirk & Reid, 2002).

The social problem-solving aims of the social scientists were consistent with members of state boards of charity organizations engaged in the field. Both parties also were eager to break away from the prevailing religious prescriptions for society's ills and instead adopt a rational-minded scientific method to understand and combat societal ills. A common ground between the charity organization members and social scientists was their shared concern over the wide-scale social problems and the need for social and legislative reforms. In 1874, Franklin Sanborn, who was the general of the Massachusetts Board of Charities, organized a historic meeting between state boards of charities members and the ASSA social scientists at their annual ASSA meeting (Austin, 2003; Zimbalist, 1977).

With these similar agendas, an organizational alliance was formed, and the social welfare group met under an ASSA special section, titled Social Economy. However, this union was short-lived (1874 to 1879). Although they shared common concerns over social problems, the charity board members and social scientists differed on the purpose and especially on the importance of the application of their research and evaluation findings.

Eventually, the charity board members found the social scientists' fixation with abstract social theory development limiting, especially when they were faced with practical management issues facing frontline practitioners (Broadhurst, 1971). A philosophical split seems to have occurred between scientific detachment and the pursuit of humanitarian ideals and passionate social change efforts. To address their specific aims, the state boards of charities started their own organization, the National Conference of Charities and Correction, in 1878. It included Charity Organization Societies (COS) and emphasized their agenda, which was the use of the scientific methods for practical applications. This system included philanthropic, nongovernmental social welfare organizations that focused on the problems of urban poverty and other social problems, such as orphaned and abandoned children, as well as a network of state-administered institutions, such as orphanages, mental institutions, and correctional institutions (Austin, 2003; Zimbalist, 1977).

The ASSA social scientists disbanded in 1909. Social scientists from their respective disciplines developed associations for their own specializations. The debate about the purpose of research eventually had a winner. As history has shown, the emphasis on objective theory building and knowledge building, often referred to as *social research*, and not its practical applications to address social problems, became the major focus of academic social science departments during the first half of the 20th century.

The gap in the field for more directly applied research and evaluation efforts was largely filled by members of the emerging social work profession.

The loosely knit group of charity workers and community volunteers became known as *social workers* when Simon Patten, a social work educator, coined the term in 1900. The profession wanted to move beyond pure armchair theorizing to compassion in action. However, it would be another 33 years before the profession's developmental milestones in which ownership of the unique features of research in social work took root. In 1933, the publication *Social Work Yearbook* included an article titled "Research in Social Work" (Hall, 1937). The author, Helen Jeter, wrote, "research in social work is inquiry into the techniques used by social workers in meeting certain human problems, whether these are individual or community-wide" (Jeter, 1933, p. 98). In addition to practice techniques, research involved the investigation of social needs and problems to which social work services actually or potentially apply (Zimbalist, 1977).

Similarly, in 1937, the *Social Work Yearbook* published another article that clearly distinguished "social work research" or "research in social work" from "social research" of other social sciences. Collective ownership of the research arm of practice was reiterated in 1947 when the landmark conference also articulated a clear distinction between social work research and social research.

## The Convergence of Research and Evaluation and Social Reform

Zimbalist (1977) identified six major themes in social work research history before 1980: research on the causes of poverty, measurement of the prevalence of poverty, the social survey movement, quantification indexes in social work, evaluative research on social service effectiveness, and study of the multiproblem family. Since that time, the rise of prevention and intervention research, emancipatory and empowerment methods, and community-based participatory action research methods have become part of the diverse repertoire of social work research techniques that foster the profession's mission.

Many of the late 19th-century social work research studies examined the causes and consequences of poverty. For example, in 1894, Amos Griswold Warner (1894) attempted to make social work its own scientific discipline and published the book *American Charities: A Study of Philanthropy and Economics*. Warner's social work used mixed methods research to explore common social work problems, such as poverty and social work practice methods. At the time, it was a definitive text in social work practice; however, it was critiqued by contemporaries for its methodological research limitations.

Also noteworthy are community-based research and evaluation efforts of the settlement house and charity movements during the first half of the 20th century. Ely's edited book *Hull House Maps and Papers*, published in 1895, included a compilation of research reports and other writings that documented the problems of Chicago's poor neighborhoods and the substandard conditions endured by new immigrants (Ely, 1895). Two years later, in 1897, charity workers conducted an influential study titled "The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study," which documented the poor living conditions experienced by many African American city residents.

Other research projects addressed the living conditions of immigrants in poverty and at-risk youth. In 1898, in Boston, Robert Wood's City Wilderness Study documented poverty conditions among new immigrants. Beginning in the 1920s, Sophie van Senden Theis conducted her landmark adoption research as a part

of the New York State Charities Aid Association. This large-scale outcome study sampled 910 children placed in foster homes between 1898 and 1922. In 1924, she published her findings in the book *How Foster Children Turn Out*. This study was the prototype for many later foster care outcome studies. Almost 20 years later, in 1939, Cabot started the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study, which focused on the causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency.

Although these early research studies have been scrutinized for their methods, they did serve an important development milestone for improving social work research studies and their application for improving service and social reform efforts.

An important aspect of the profession's development was fostering scholars or experts and leaders among its collective ranks to help improve practice. Journals also were an important mechanism to share knowledge among social workers. In 1900, the charity and settlement house movement published their own professional journals, *Charities* and *Commons*, respectively. In 1906, both journals were merged to become the *Charities and Commons* journal. In 1927, one of the most well-respected journals, the *Social Service Review*, was started by Abbott and Breckinbridge as part of the Chicago School of Philanthropy. In 1951, the Social Work Research Group (SWRG), which was a collective of social work researchers, began to index *Social Work Research* and *Abstracts*. In 1965, the NASW published *Research and Abstracts* (Austin, 2003; Graham, Al-Krenawi, & Bradshaw, 2000).

Combined leadership and scholarly contributions among social workers were also noteworthy. For example, between 1907 and 1915, Jane Addams published six books that addressed social problems of the time, including juvenile delinquency. Jane Addams is also noted as the first woman elected president of the National Council on Charities and Corrections (NCCC) in 1909. Perhaps her greatest achievement came from her international peace movement efforts, which earned her the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 (Elsthain, 2002).

Similarly, Mary Richmond also had an impressive number of achievements. In 1899, Richmond published *Friendly Visiting the Poor* in an attempt to systematize friendly visiting, which was often referred to at the time as *doing good*. Partially in response to the Flexner speech, which is detailed later in this chapter, Mary Richmond integrated the scientific methods in social work. In 1917, she published the seminal text *Social Diagnosis* and in 1922, she published *What Is Social Casework*. In 1921, Mary Richmond received an honorary degree from Smith College for establishing the scientific base of social work. She is also credited with drafting the first experimental code of ethics for social work (Agnew, 2002).

## Educational and Community Resources

Other important aspects of social work's professional development in the 19th century were the development of professional education and other resources. By 1906, school social work programs were established in New York and other major American cities (Leighninger, 2000). Around the same time, in 1907, the Russell Sage Foundation, a private philanthropic foundation, was formed and became an important funding source for social work until the 1950s (Kirk & Reid, 2002).

The Russell Sage Foundation was instrumental in social work research development through providing grants to establish a research arm in these newly formed schools of social work (Austin, 2003). These grants started the shift

from conducting research and evaluation in communities and agencies to schools of social work. The Russell Sage Foundation also provided funding for social workers to conduct the groundbreaking Pittsburgh Study, which provided descriptive information of the poor urban conditions that was used for Progress Era reforms. The foundation also established a department of surveys and exhibits for social work. The social survey movement was important to social work, so much so that the journal *Charities and Commons* changed its name to *Survey*. In fact, community survey and needs assessment can be traced back to the survey movement (Kirk & Reid, 2002).

There were also some notable situations in which social workers used research-based evidence to advocate for legislative change, community development, and the improvement of service provision during the first half of the 20th century. Child-saving movement advocates, such as Jane Addams, Julia Lathrop, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Edith Abbott, gathered statistics on at-risk youth, including delinquents (Breckinridge & Abbott, 1912). In 1900, the outcomes of these collective efforts resulted in the establishment of the juvenile court in Chicago. This model was later adopted nationally and internationally. In 1912, the U.S. Children's Bureau was established; Julia Lathrop was its first director. She was instrumental in data-gathering on children at the local and national levels. Robert Chapin also published the report "The Standard of Living Among Workingmen's Families in New York City," which brought attention to exploitative employment conditions and local reform efforts (Killian & Maschi, 2009; Platt, 1977).

Perhaps the most critical incident in this young profession's history was in 1915 when Abraham Flexner delivered his legendary keynote address titled "Is Social Work a Profession?" during the 42nd annual session of the NCCC (Kirk & Reid, 2002). Flexner, a young education reformer from New York, was well respected for his rigorous review and was instrumental in the reform of medical education. Although he noted his lack of competence to properly assess a profession with which he was not familiar, he did conclude that social work is "hardly eligible" for status as a profession (Flexner, 1915, p. 588). To attain status as a profession, social workers would need to clarify autonomous responsibility for their client outcomes, refine the goals or aims of their profession from being too broad to more specific, further develop academic training and a specialized knowledge base, and firmly establish a scientific body of knowledge. Although Flexner publicly admitted his limited experience with social work, his speech forever changed social work, particularly his critique of the lack of a scientific knowledge base (Austin, 1983; Kirk & Reid, 2002).

## **Toward a Separate but Collective Identity**

As the profession began to forge a professional identity, organizational alliances evolved and merged, and separated between the education, research, and practice factions of social work. In 1919, schools of social work formed an association that later became the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 1952 (Leighinger, 2000). The SWRG was established in 1948 in an effort to advance the growth of social work research (Graham et al., 2000). In 1948, the NCCC was renamed to the National Conference of Social Workers to underscore a professional social work identity. In 1955, the NASW was formed to merge disparate social work groups, including SWRG, into one unified organization. Under one umbrella, NASW specialty sections were formed, including a Council on Social Work Research. Another merger occurred in 1974 with the reorganization of the

NASW. The NASW merged the different social work organizations under one common umbrella. NASW abolished special interest groups to foster one unified definition (Orcutt, 1990). The pattern of convergence and divergence of social work's community, clinical, and research specializations suggests a profession struggling with how to best realize common goals and a unified identity among professionals with divergent interests and world views.

Efforts were made to further develop and coordinate professional education and the growth of a knowledge and scientific base of social work. In 1917, Mary Richmond published *Social Casework*, which advocated for the application of the scientific method to social work. In an attempt to draw from a knowledge base, in the 1920s, Freud's theories about examining individual problems gained prominence in social work (Deal, 2007). In the 1930s, the functional school of social casework applied a psychosocial approach to understanding and intervening in problems (Reid & Edwards, 2006). People such as Edith Abbott attempted to reinforce the accountability of the profession. In 1931, Abbott advocated for greater efforts to adopt the scientific method in social work. She asserted, "the failure in the past to apply scientific methods and scientific leadership to the needs of the poor has wasted the taxpayers' money and left behind a trail of good intentions and futile efforts" (Abbott, 1942, p. 5).

Echoing Abbott's plea, Richard B. Cabot made a keynote address at the Conference of Social Work in 1931. He critiqued social work for its lack of rigor in research studies. He urged his fellow social workers to move beyond mere assumptions of helping to gathering observable evidence that they had actually done so.

## Research and Practice Integration and Effectiveness

As the social work profession matured, around the 1950s, there was a shift from conducting social work research at agencies to conducting it at universities, and there was growing alarm about the lack of research and practice integration. Another significant milestone was the establishment of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in 1949. NIMH became the major funder of social work when the Russell Sage Foundation folded and social work funding ended. During the 1950s, there was a significant expansion of social work doctoral education to accommodate the need for PhD-level social workers. The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education-Social Work (GADE) was formed in 1975 to meet this demand.

In the 1970s, concerns about the effectiveness of social work and a growing chasm between research and practice grew louder. In 1972, a Fordham University Symposium reviewed 13 direct service research projects conducted in the 1960s and deemed or found them to be ineffective (Kirk & Reid, 2002). Similarly, in 1973, Joel Fischer (1973) published the article "Is Social Case Work Effective?" This classic piece continues to fuel the ongoing debate about practice effectiveness (Fischer, 1979, 2005).

There were efforts to address the concerns about service effectiveness and practice and research integration. In 1978, NIMH funded a research conference for NASW to document gaps between research and practice in mental health. One year later, Jayartne and Levy (1979) published *Empirical Clinical Practice Model* in an attempt to systematize the use of single-subject design research to evaluate practice.

Educational organizations, such as CSWE, echoed their support for the integration of research and practice. For example, in 1983, the CSWE

(1983) Curriculum Policy Statement emphasized the integration of research and practice. In 1988, the CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement was revised to indicate the curriculum should impart knowledge for practice and evaluation of services (Commission on Accreditation, 1988). Most recently, the 2008 CSWE (2008) accreditation standards advocate that social workers be competent in the use of research to inform practice and practice to inform research.

## Foundational Shifts

In the 1980s, research conducted at agencies almost completely shifted to university schools of social work. Also, the NIMH shifted from funding the training of social workers in mental health practice to funding research on the etiology of mental illness and intervention effectiveness.

Despite this growth, the direction of social work research was the subject of intense debate among academics and practitioners. In 1981, Martha Heineman called into question the logical empiricism for social work aims and argued that qualitative methods which drew data from the ground up were more suitable for the profession. In her 1981 article “The Social Work Research Imperative,” she argued:

In a misguided attempt to be scientific, social work has adopted an outmoded, overly restrictive paradigm of research. Methodological rather than substantive requirements determine the subject matter to be studied. As a result, important questions and valuable data go unresearched. (p. 1)

Despite philosophical debates about the nature of social work research, efforts to grow research infrastructure flourished, and targeted attempts to close the research-practice divide were made. In 1986, the NIMH director authorized the creation of the Task Force on Social Work Research (Graham et al., 2000). In the 1990s, NIMH funded eight developing research centers that were housed in schools of social work. In 1991, the task force published a report, “Building Social Work Knowledge.” One of the report’s recommendations resulted in the establishment of the Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) in 1993, and a self-standing organization called the Society for Social Work Research (SSWR) in 1994.

Two years later, in 1996, the group ANSWER was established as an advocacy network for increased support for social work research. In addition, in 2000, the National Institute on Drug Abuse created the Social Work Research Development Program and provided grants to social work researchers (Zlotnick, Biegel, & Solt, 2002; Zlotnick & Solt, 2006). NASW also reinforced the development of social work research in the 1990s, which included the establishment of the *Social Work Research* journal to disseminate social work knowledge.

## A Taste of Evidence-Based Medicine for Practice

Evidence-based practice (EBP) was first developed in the 1990s in medicine and became influential in social work (Strauss, Richardson, Glasziou, & Haynes, 2005). Sackett, Rosenberg, Gray, Haynes, and Richardson (1996) defined EBP as the “conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of the current best

evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients” (p. 2). The EBP movement has been steadily growing as a staple of social work practice efforts to enhance practice effectiveness (Rubin, 2008). EBP is reviewed in more detail in Chapter 3.

## Recent Developmental Milestones

More recent efforts to disseminate social work research have been achieved. IASWR was disbanded as of 2009 for achieving its aims. The establishment of SWRnet (Social Work Research Network) was launched in October 2009 to continue serving the social work research community by providing regular updates on funding opportunities, calls for papers, conference deadlines, and newly published research (<http://www.bu.edu/swrnet>).

In 2010, the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research* (JSSWR) was published. This journal represents a timely way to disseminate social work research in an open journal format (<http://www.jsswr.org>). *JSSWR* boasts an editorial review board that mentors authors by providing extensive detailed critiques and guidance in refining their manuscripts.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

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*Social work's enduring role in fostering human rights and social justice aims has distinguished it as a human rights profession.*

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As evidenced in the profession's history, social workers have been on the frontline of seeking solutions for a myriad of societal problems across the globe. Social work's enduring role in fostering human rights and social justice aims has distinguished it as a human rights profession (Healey, 2008). Social work's core ethical principles are consonant with human rights philosophy, such as honoring the “intrinsic value of every person,” and its use of individual and collective action to promote social justice in the form of “equitable social structures that provide people security and development while upholding their dignity” (International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 1988, p. 1).

Echoing this theme, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE, 2008) Educational Policy (2.1.5), dictates that social workers be competent in advancing human rights and social and economic justice to achieve social work aims, including the use of research and evaluation strategies. This policy states:

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination; advocate for human rights and social and economic justice; and engage in practices that advance social and economic justice. (CSWE, 2008, p. 15)

## Definitions: Human Rights and Social Justice

So what is meant by *human rights* and *social and economic justice*? And how are they related to research and evaluation? Human rights are generally described as inherent and necessary for human survival (Reichert, 2003). These rights are universal and belong to every person. Honoring the inherent dignity and worth of each person suggests that all people are deserving of respect and protection (UN, 1994). Human rights offer guiding principles or codified values, and laws, to best ensure a high quality of life for all persons (Wronka, 2008).

Human rights are based on civil and political rights; economic, social, and cultural rights; and collective or solidarity rights and are represented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Reichert, 2003; UN, 1948). Wronka (2008) described human rights as a set of guiding principles that are interdependent and have implications for macro, mezzo, and micro practice. Human rights also have been described as the “cornerstone or bedrock of social justice” (Wronka, 2008; p. 5). Human rights provide a global mechanism to pursue a socially just world.

*Social justice* consists of two essential terms, *social* and *justice*. The Latin root of the term *social* means “companion,” “ally,” and “associate.” Similarly, the definition of *social* refers to a situation involving allies or relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group, or the welfare of human beings as members of society (Reichert, 2003). The second term, *justice*, emphasizes the principles of fairness and equity, especially related to morals, ethical standards, or legal protections (Wronka, 2008). Wronka (2008) described social justice as a “struggle to unite friends, allies, and partners in fair and equitable practices” (p. 5).

Traditionally, social work has defined social justice as an ideal condition in which all individual citizens have equal rights, equality of opportunity, and equal access to social resources (UN, 1994). Similarly, *economic justice* is referred to as an ideal condition in which all individuals have access to the sociopolitical resources necessary to reach their full human potential (UN, 1994).

*Social justice* also refers to the obligations between individuals and society. These mutual obligations fall into three domains: legal justice, distributive justice, and commutative justice. *Legal justice* refers to what an individual owes to society. For example, every person should contribute their time or resources to a larger cause. In contrast, *distributive justice* refers to what a society owes a person. For example, governments and other social institutions should create conditions to ensure fair access to social, cultural, civil, and economic well-being in that all people receive adequate incomes above an agreed-upon threshold. *Commutative justice* refers to what people owe to one another (Humphries, 2008; Van Soest, 1995). For example, individuals must treat one another with dignity and respect.

## SOCIAL WORK AT THE INTERSECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS HISTORY

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The profession has also continued to develop amidst a world struggling with war, peace, and human rights. World War I (1914–1918) was quickly followed by the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime as well as Japanese Imperialism,

over which World War II was fought (1939–1945). For three decades of the 20th century the world witnessed two of the most destructive and wide-scale wars ever fought. The inhumane and cruel treatment inflicted by humans on other humans, particularly during World War II, seemed unfathomable. This treatment included the attempted extermination of Jews and other groups, such as homosexuals and persons with disabilities. The dropping of the atom bomb on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima transformed a seemingly harmless mushroom cloud into an unprecedented weapon of mass destruction that could wipe out large cities in a matter of minutes (Gilbert, 2004; Strachan, 2003).

From the ashes of war, most world citizens and their leaders were ready for a new approach to human rights in which dignity and respect for all humans were honored. World leaders sought new ways to address world problems, which included the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. With Eleanor Roosevelt at the helm, and in conjunction with the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was crafted and then ratified on December 10, 1948. The initial proclamation in the UDHR preamble continues to resound: “We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small” (UN, 1948, p. 1).

The UDHR authors crafted the declaration to be a relatively short, inspirational, and energizing document usable by common people. The UDHR consists of 30 articles that are often described by three generations of rights. The first generation of rights (articles 2–21) are referred to as *negative rights*, both civil and political. Generally, these are rights to standards of good behavior by governments or protection of the rule of law, including the right to life, to freedom from torture, to own property, and to limiting where government may intrude. The second generation of rights (articles 22–27) are often referred to as *positive rights* or economic, social, and cultural rights. These rights include the right to social security, the right to work, and the right to participate freely in cultural life. Third generation rights (articles 28–30) are collective or solidarity rights, such as everyone is entitled to a social and international order (Reichert, 2003; UN, 1948; Wronka, 2008).

Social workers have put forth their efforts to improve human rights in all three domains, particularly in the area of international peace. For example, social work leaders, such as Jane Addams and Emily Green Balch, were instrumental in international peace efforts and are internationally recognized for these efforts; they received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 and 1960, respectively (Ehrenreich, 1985; Elsthain, 2002).

In addition to the UDHR (UN, 1948), the United Nations has additional documents further delineating these rights and has also developed organizations or implementation mechanisms to help monitor countries’ adherence to them (UN, 1994). Wronka (2008) referred to the *Human Rights Triptych* as a triangle, with the UDHR at the center; other UN documents, such as declarations and conventions, which further elaborate upon the UDHR, on the right side; and implementation mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Council and other UN special commissions, on the left side.

The International Federation of Social Workers’ (1996) international policy on human rights delineated basic documents concerning human rights, which included instruments, covenants, and conventions that concern social

**Table 1.2 Human Rights Documents*****Basic global instruments for human rights are:***

1. Charter of the United Nations (1945)
2. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
3. The Covenants on Human Rights (1966)
  - a. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
  - b. International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
4. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
5. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979)
6. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)
7. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
8. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)

***These global instruments are reinforced by:***

1. The European Convention on Human Rights (1950)
2. The American Convention on Human Rights (1969)
3. The African Charter on Human Rights and Peoples Rights (1981)

***The covenants and conventions are supported by United Nations declarations:***

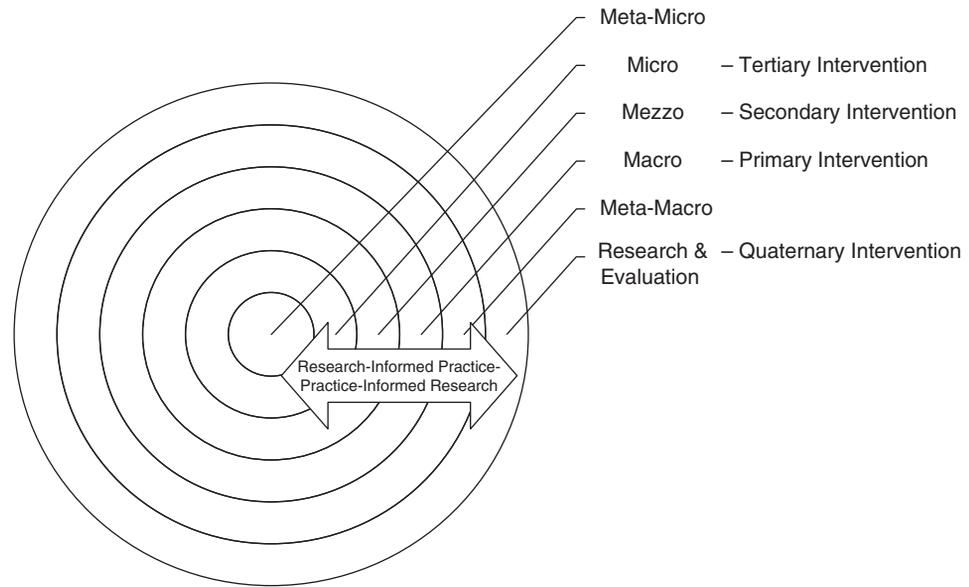
1. The Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971)
2. The Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts (1974)
3. The Elimination of All forms of Religious Intolerance (1981)
4. The Right to Development (1986)

Source: United Nations. (1994). *Human rights and social work: A manual for schools of social work and the social work profession*. Geneva: United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

workers. As outlined in Table 1.2, these include the UDHR, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Social workers should be aware of the documents relevant to their area of practice and/or research interests.

## **Advanced Generalist/Public Health Model to Human Rights and Social Justice**

In Wronka's (2008) Advanced Generalist/Public Health (AGPH) model, research and evaluation assume a pivotal and essential role (see Figure 1.1). Whereas the public health model articulates these levels of intervention, this model uses a



**Figure 1.1**

AGPH Model: Types of Interventions to Advance Human Rights and Social Justice

Source: Based on Wronka, J. (2010). *Human rights and social justice: Social action and service for the helping and health professions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

whole population approach through the lens of human rights and social justice aims, in which research and evaluation play a central role in achieving these aims. Although the demarcation across them is not always distinct, the model conceptualizes four levels of intervention designed to prevent or alleviate social problems: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary, which target macro, mezzo, micro, meta-micro, meta-macro, and research levels of intervention. Although research has its own level, it also informs all intervention levels. Interestingly, none of the levels offer a perfect solution and definitive answer to social problems. Therefore, interventions at all levels can best help achieve research and social action and/or service aims (Wronka, 2008).

### Macro and Meta-Macro Levels

In the AGPH model, the macro level is a target of primary intervention strategies because it targets a whole population, mostly on a national level, such as the total population of the United States. The purpose of primary intervention strategies is to prevent individuals from compromising their health and well-being (Wronka, 2008). An example of a primary intervention strategy is the development and implementation of a national campaign for substance abuse awareness. The even larger meta-macro level focuses on the international level, which acknowledges the global interconnectedness of people and places. An example of a global prevention initiative is a social media campaign that promotes the importance of universal education.

### Mezzo Levels

The mezzo level is the target of secondary intervention strategies among groups at risk. These strategies may involve interventions in high-risk environments such as crime-ridden neighborhoods. For example, a social worker can

develop a crime prevention program and monitor its effectiveness on outcomes such as neighborhood violence.

### Micro and Meta-Micro Levels

The micro level is the target of tertiary intervention strategies and symptomatic populations. Tertiary level interventions commonly entail clinical interventions on an individual level using one-on-one or group counseling. For example, a social worker employed at a nursing home may design and implement a reminiscence therapy group for older adults and monitor its effectiveness on the overall cognitive functioning of the group participants.

The meta-micro level also is the target of tertiary intervention strategies. However, not all problems require clinical intervention but rather can be effectively dealt with in everyday life with families and communities. Although clinical interventions help with problems, everyday life social connections, such as family, friends, and others, can have therapeutic benefits. For example, a conversation between a grandchild and a grandparent may have mutual beneficial effects on their social well-being.

### Research and Evaluation Level

In the AGPH model, research and evaluation are the methods used in quaternary intervention strategies. Findings from research and evaluation studies provide informed knowledge for prevention and intervention strategies across the other intervention levels. In turn, the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels influence the research questions to be asked and the methodologies used (Wronka, 2008).

## The Relationship between Human Rights, Social Justice, and Research

### Problem Formulation

As a quaternary intervention strategy, research and evaluation can be defined using a human rights and social justice framework. In fact, using a human rights and social justice framework, social workers may view a study as having two purposes, which include the purpose of the study for the particular problem under investigation and a higher purpose to advance human rights and social justice in that area.

Human rights scholars note that human rights documents, such as the UDHR, are a means of defining the research problem (Ife, 2001a, 2001b). Social workers can consult human rights documents to help clearly define their research problem and research questions.

Using a human rights framework, social workers also should consider the historical context in understanding the research problem. This includes closely examining the historical experiences of a minority population under investigation, such as the African American and Native American communities (Wronka, 2008).

On a micro and mezzo level, social workers can engage in research and evaluation by defining problems in their community settings. This includes conducting needs assessments to identify gaps in services, developing programs to fill those gaps, and evaluating the outcomes. Social workers can also engage in practice evaluation, including the use of EBPs, to ensure that the individuals and



### Human Rights and Justice

*Critical Thinking Question:*  
What are the pros and cons of using a human rights and social justice framework for social work research, including problem formulation and implications?

families served obtain the best services possible. Carefully monitoring interventions will assist social workers with modifying interventions as needed for an individual or family.

On a meta-macro or macro level, some research and evaluation projects may involve gathering information that can be used as a gauge for countries' progress on a host of human rights and social justice issues, including human and community well-being. For example, some researchers may conduct descriptive studies to determine the prevalence of human trafficking on a national and international level. Clearly identifying the problem can lead to potential solutions to stop illegal behavior and promote improved well-being among its victims.

Social workers can also use research for policy reform efforts by critically examining legal and public discourse and the extent to which they comply with human rights principles. For example, whereas the United States has political and civil rights as part of its legal system, there is a paucity of economic, social, and cultural rights in the United States in both federal and state constitutions. This area is ripe for exploration among social workers.

## Methods

After determining a research question, a social worker should choose the best available methods to answer that question. Social workers have a host of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods designs at their disposal for use in the field. These will be detailed in the remainder of this text; therefore, only a brief overview is provided here. Quantitative research, mostly using numeric data and large population samples, is a means of documenting the magnitude and severity of a problem among target populations.

Qualitative research methods, often using narrative data and smaller sample sizes, are an effective means of exploring relatively unknown areas and elevating the voices of subjugated groups, such as mental health consumers, so they are heard. Qualitative approaches also can provide a thick description of lived experiences of individuals, such as political refugees, holocaust survivors, or incarcerated offenders.

Mixed methods studies often offer the best of both the quantitative and qualitative worlds. They also can offer wide-scale comparative analysis of international policies on work conditions, family violence, or the well-being of children, adults, and/or older adults.

Alternative methodologies, such as community mapping, participatory action research, empowerment evaluation, and community-based participatory research, involve central stakeholders in partnerships with the researchers (e.g., Guitierrez, 2003; Hillier, 2007; Patton, 2002; Secret, Jordan, & Ford, 1999).

## The importance of knowledge of ethics

Using a human rights and social justice framework, social workers must carefully weigh protections for research participants with methods decisions that employ the most rigorous research designs possible. For example, social workers should be well aware of how the research ethics guidelines arose in response to international human rights abuses, especially the Nazi experiments conducted during World War II and the establishment of the Nuremberg Code, which outlined essential research ethics. As will be detailed in chapter 2, research ethics underscore participants' right to self-determination and voluntary participation, justice, and beneficence.

## Findings, Dissemination, and Action

Using a human rights and social justice framework, social workers should also consider the historical context of minorities when interpreting findings. To be consistent with this framework, it is imperative that social work research and evaluation efforts be shared. Social workers commonly communicate their research findings through writing and speaking. Getting the message out includes publishing reports and journal articles, giving public presentations, and using the media (Ife, 2001a; UN, 1994; Wronka, 2008).

Social workers should use language that can be understood by laypeople as well as scholars. Therefore, both their speech and writing should be clear and succinct and easy for readers to grasp. The use of effective oral and written communication also is an effective tool to move an audience to action. Aristotle's (350 B.C./2000) rhetoric for persuasion includes three forms: *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*.

The following example applies the three forms of rhetoric to a speech or oral presentation commonly used with practice and research activities.

*Ethos* represents a speaker's authority or honesty as to how he or she demands authority to speak on a topic. The speaker exerts a demeanor of sincerity and fair-mindedness and uses appropriate language, including vocabulary and grammar (Wisse, 1989).

*Logos* represents the use of logic, in the form of evidence and reason, to persuade an audience. For example, logos mostly describe the use of evidence to support an important point, such as the national statistics on children who were maltreated. The use of logic to persuade an audience might include the use of definitions, factual data and statistics, quotations, and/or informed opinions or citations from experts and authorities. The use of logos often supplements the speaker's *ethos* appeal as an authority to speak on a designated topic. The speaker also appeals to reason using established theories and/or cause-and-effect arguments (Wisse, 1989).

*Pathos*, on the other hand, represents an appeal to emotions. This emotional appeal can be in the form of passionate delivery, including the assertion that a topic is a human rights and social justice issue. Techniques for *pathos* include the use of vivid descriptions, emotionally charged language, emotional tone, and figurative or metaphorical language. The use of *pathos* is most effective when a speaker makes the connection with an underlying value, such as fairness and equity, and when it is coordinated with the character of *ethos* and logic of *logos* (Aristotle, 350 B.C./2000; Wisse, 1989).

These findings also should be put into action that is consistent with the professional value of social justice. Social workers are expected to engage in social action (NASW, 1999) as a part of their ethical commitment to the profession. Social work advocacy efforts can be done alone or in tandem with other stakeholders. This might include using research findings to advocate policy reform (Thomas & Mohan, 2007).

Social workers as collaborators for human rights also use sound research and evaluation findings for the purposes of action. The United Nations (1994) has recommended intervention strategies to help advance human rights that social workers can adapt. These intervention strategies include to

- ◆ work with local, regional, and national organizations to promote, develop, and implement needed changes in policy, planning, and programming on human rights issues,
- ◆ recognize and adapt existing services to maximize effectiveness,

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*Social workers as collaborators for human rights also use sound research and evaluation findings for the purposes of action.*

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- ◆ develop and involve appropriate and qualified leaders from the community to identify, plan, and implement needed services and advocacy efforts,
- ◆ develop self capacities of those disadvantaged in their human rights,
- ◆ organize previously unorganized disadvantaged groups for self-help,
- ◆ form alliances with like-minded social and political movements,
- ◆ develop mechanisms to enhance local and global awareness, including the use of mass media,
- ◆ fundraise for the cause,
- ◆ assess the impact of actions undertaken in collaboration with persons and groups affected and associated groups and organizations,
- ◆ document and disseminate information on human rights abuses, and
- ◆ promote legislation that benefits disadvantaged groups (UN, 1994).

The following interview excerpt illustrates the use of research and statistics for advocacy purposes. The interviewee is Marian Wright Edelman, president and founder of the Children’s Defense Fund (Goodman, 2007). During her interview with radio host Amy Goodman, she described her view for the expansion of children’s healthcare during a time when then President George W. Bush promised to veto a bill expanding the Children’s Health Insurance Program. Using child well-being data, she advocates for children’s rights to quality healthcare and the necessity for the government to act. Edelman made the following impassioned plea:



### Policy Practice

*Critical Thinking Question:*  
Use current or historical examples; how might the use of research for policy practice have a positive or negative effect on individuals, families, or communities?

We [the Children’s Defense Fund] believe that the richest nation on earth should not leave thirteen million children behind in poverty and nine million children behind without healthcare. 80% of our black and Latino children are unable to read and write in fourth grade; 60% of our white children are unable to read. And we believe that this is something that is going to be an Achilles’ heel of this nation. But the President of the United States simply appropriated—in our view, illegally—our trademarked slogan and then proceeded to use it as a fig leaf to hide policies that gave massive tax cuts to the rich at the expense of the poor, to widen the gap between rich and poor, to say he was going to do education while he put far more money into people who did not need it. And they refused to cease and desist. (Goodman, 2007, p. 1)

## Social Work Leaders—Researchers, Practitioners, and Advocates

This section highlights the leadership efforts of early social work leaders, such as Mary Richmond and Jane Addams, to integrate research with practice activities that ranged from the individual to community level (Addams, 1910; Richmond, 1917). At the individual level with social work casework, Mary Richmond (1917) advocated for the newly formed social work profession to integrate a scientific approach to understanding social problems and evaluating practice. In her 1917 book *Social Diagnosis*, Richmond urged social

workers to go beyond the assumption of “helping” to critically appraise whether in fact their interventions were helpful. On the opening page of her historic text, she asserted:

“Doing good” was the old phrase used for “social service.” It begged the question, as do the newer terms, “social work” and “social service”—unless society is really served. We should welcome, therefore, the evident desire of social workers to abandon their claims to respect based upon good intentions alone. (p. 1)

In her seminal text *Social Diagnosis*, Mary Richmond (1917) delineated the principles of casework and the use of the scientific method. Borrowing from the medical professional, Mary Richmond advocated for the use of scientific problem-solving method to make a “social diagnosis” (Richmond, 1917). To support hypotheses about individuals and families served, data were gathered in the field, which could then be tested by obtaining relevant evidence (Orcutt, 1990). Mary Richmond also was instrumental in establishing professional social work education and advocated for the inclusion of a field-based component to the academic curriculum (Colcard & Mann, 1930).

On the community level, Jane Addams was instrumental in social change efforts of which community-level research was an essential part (Linn, 2000). Her community practice activities included the establishment of the Hull House in Chicago (Addams, 1910). Hull House was a catalyst for the settlement house movement that served urban immigrant families in the United States (Day, 2008). In the classic text that was a compilation of writings by the residents of Hull House (Ely, 1895), *Hull-House Maps and Paper: A Presentation of Nationalities and Wages in a Contested District of Chicago*, research, including community mapping, generated essential data used in advocating for social reform. In this text Jane Addams contributed a piece in which she documented unfair labor practices and poverty. In her piece, the “Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement,” Jane Addams wrote:

No trades are so overcrowded as the sewing-trades; for the needle has ever been the refuge of the unskilled woman. The wages paid throughout the manufacture of clothing are less than those in any other trade. . . . The residents of Hull House have carefully investigated many cases, and are ready to assert that the Italian widow who finishes the cheapest goods, although she sews from six in the morning until eleven at night, can only get enough to keep her children clothed and fed; while for her rent and fuel she must always depend upon charity or the hospitality of her countrymen. (p. 186)

Additionally, other Hull House members, such as Julia Lathrop, Florence Kelly, and Ellen Gates Starr, also were instrumental in conducting community-level research and advocacy efforts. In Julia Lathrop’s (1895) book, in a chapter entitled “Cook County Charities,” she wrote:

As the study of these [community] maps reveals an overwhelming proportion of foreigners, and an average wage-rate so low as to render thrift, even if existed, an ineffective insurance against emergencies, we are led at once to inquire what happened when the power of self-help is lost. (p. 143)

Jane Addams and her colleagues at the Hull House worked collaboratively among themselves, and with other professionals, for social and political change at the national and international governmental levels. They successfully collaborated with other social workers and activists of their time on the reform of child labor laws, the establishment of a separate juvenile court system for delinquent youth, women's right to vote, and international peace (Ehrenreich, 1985; Platt, 1977). Some of these efforts were also noted internationally; for example, with Jane Addams's Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 (Linn, 2000).



### Research-Based Practice

#### *Critical Thinking Question:*

What factors facilitate or create barriers for research and practice integration among social workers?

## Furthering Research, Practice, and Advocacy Integration

As illustrated by past social work leaders, social work intervention successes consistently comprised an integrated approach to facilitating change. This integrated approach of research-practice-advocacy was part and parcel of individual practitioners or practitioners in collaboration with other interested stakeholders to work toward individual and social/political-level change. Historically, social workers have assisted individuals and families to improve their psychosocial functioning through casework and clinical practice. Additionally, they have combated unjust and unfair societal conditions through legal and policy advocacy, such as for women's and children's rights (Bartlett, 1958, 1970; Zimbalist, 1977).

Many social workers may be less aware of the historic role of scientific inquiry and its function in developing and improving practice and advocacy efforts at an individual, community, and societal level. In fact, students and practitioners often are initially drawn to the social work profession because of a strong desire to help others and/or to combat societal injustice and the unfair treatment of individuals or groups (Grobman, 2004, 2005; Le Croy, 2006; Limb & Organista, 2003). A host of social work activities, such as research, clinical practice, community organizing, program administration, and advocacy, can be viewed as a means to this end (Bogo, Raphael, & Roberts, 1993; Butler, 1990; D'Aprix, Dunlap, Able, & Edwards, 2004). In fact, progress toward social work's mission of promoting well-being and just outcomes appears to be most effective when research and practice aims are coordinated.

Social work students often embrace practice activities, such as clinical and community practice, but are unsure of the role of research and evaluation activities in the promotion of well-being, human rights, and social justice (Bogo et al., 1993; Butler, 1990; D'Aprix et al., 2004). In their social work educational experience, research coursework is often a new experience, and many students approach it with trepidation (Epstein, 1987; Maschi et al., 2007). However, evidence suggests that with increased exposure to the research and involvement in projects, the use of research and practice evaluation strategies becomes a seamless part of the social work students' and practitioners' knowledge, values, and skill set (Unrau & Grinnell, 2005).

This text is about the integration of research into professional practice and action. It is composed of a practice trinity of practitioner-researcher-activist. The term *trinity* is used to represent three closely related activities of practice, research, and activism in which the boundaries are often blurred. We refer to integration of these activities in combination of parts that work together well. When these activities are in alignment, great strides are made in advocating at

the individual and community levels for individual and social change. This integration must occur within individual practitioners, as well as the profession as a whole.

Professional social work organizations underscore the integration of research and practice to foster their missions (CSWE, 2002, 2008; NASW, 1996). Social work organizations, such as the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2008) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 1996), mandate that social workers should be proficient in using research and in evaluation skills. CSWE's (2008) most recent educational policy initiative deepens the commitment to research and practice integration. According to CSWE's accreditation standards, social work education programs must equip students to understand and use research and evaluation, knowledge, and skills (Education Policy 2.1.6). Thus, social work students must not only be prepared to use "practice experience to inform scientific inquiry" but also to use "research evidence to inform practice" (CSWE, 2008, p. 5). Social work students also must be educated to "critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions" (Educational Policy 2.1.10d; CSWE, 2008, p. 7).

Similarly, the NASW's (1996) Code of Ethics considers the integration of research and practice as part of social workers' ethical responsibility to the profession. Section 5.0.1 outlining principles related to the *Integrity of the Profession* clearly delineates that practicing with integrity includes conducting research and monitoring and evaluating policies, programs, and practice interventions. Additionally, social workers' ethical responsibilities also include keeping current with emerging social work knowledge and applying research evidence to professional practice as outlined in Section 5.02 on *Evaluation and Research* (NASW, 1996).

Despite these efforts, a residual tension remains among some social workers on how to integrate the objective scientific observer with the empathic counselor and passionate action-oriented reformer (Briar, Weissman, & Rubin, 1981; Flexner, 1915; Fraser, Jensen, & Lewis, 1993). This unresolved tension seems to impact social work students in their integration of a professional social work identity. It also is a source of tension among different specializations of social work practice, such as research, clinical practice, and community practice, in which misunderstanding may occur about the importance and relevance of these activities toward meeting the profession's mission to enhance well-being and social justice outcomes. This text will help social work students embrace the multifaceted aspects of social work, which include scientific inquiry, service, and activism. It will also provide the skills to integrate research into practice and to collaborate with other professionals in social work and other disciplines.

The EBP model used in social work and allied professions, such as medicine, is receiving a great deal of attention because it uses scientific methods and has scientific support for effectiveness. The EBP process assists practitioners with integrating preexisting scientific evidence with their practice experience on which to base their real-world practice decisions (Rubin, 2008). The EBP model is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

An ongoing assessment of research competence that can be used throughout the semester to monitor research-related confidence and anxiety about obtaining competence in research is provided in Table 1.3 and Figure 1.2. After reviewing single-subject design, students can use this weekly exercise to monitor their research learning experience.

**Table 1.3 Research Competence Assessment Survey and Graph: Research Anxiety and Confidence Single-Subject Design Project**

For this exercise, you will need to analyze your thoughts, feelings, and confidence about research. Directions: PLEASE COMPLETE ONE SURVEY PER WEEK (Preferably on the same day and at the same time). This assignment is ongoing throughout the semester. All students are expected to complete one survey per week for the semester.

Part 1. Using the following subjective rating scale (between 1 and 9) that measures research confidence class, (1 = not confident at all, 5 = somewhat confident, 9 = completely confident), please complete the following questions:

Week#: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

(please complete each week for sessions 1–15)

*Part A: How confident are you in*

- \_\_\_\_ A1. Formulating a research problem consistent with human rights and social justice?
- \_\_\_\_ A2. Gathering empirical literature relevant to my topic of interest?
- \_\_\_\_ A3. Adhering to ethical standards in conducting research?
- \_\_\_\_ A4. Conducting a research project?
- \_\_\_\_ A5. Using research to inform practice and practice to inform research?
- \_\_\_\_ A6. Analyzing results using quantitative and qualitative methods?
- \_\_\_\_ A7. Writing a research report?
- \_\_\_\_ A8. Analyzing the impact of a study's findings for social work practice?
- \_\_\_\_ A9. Analyzing the impact of a study's findings for social policy?
- \_\_\_\_ A10. Analyzing the impact of a study's findings for human rights and social justice?

\_\_\_\_\_ Part A Total Score (for questions 1–10) (*scores can range from 10 through 90*)

*Part AB. Anxiety Scale: Circle the number that best represents how anxious you feel about research.*

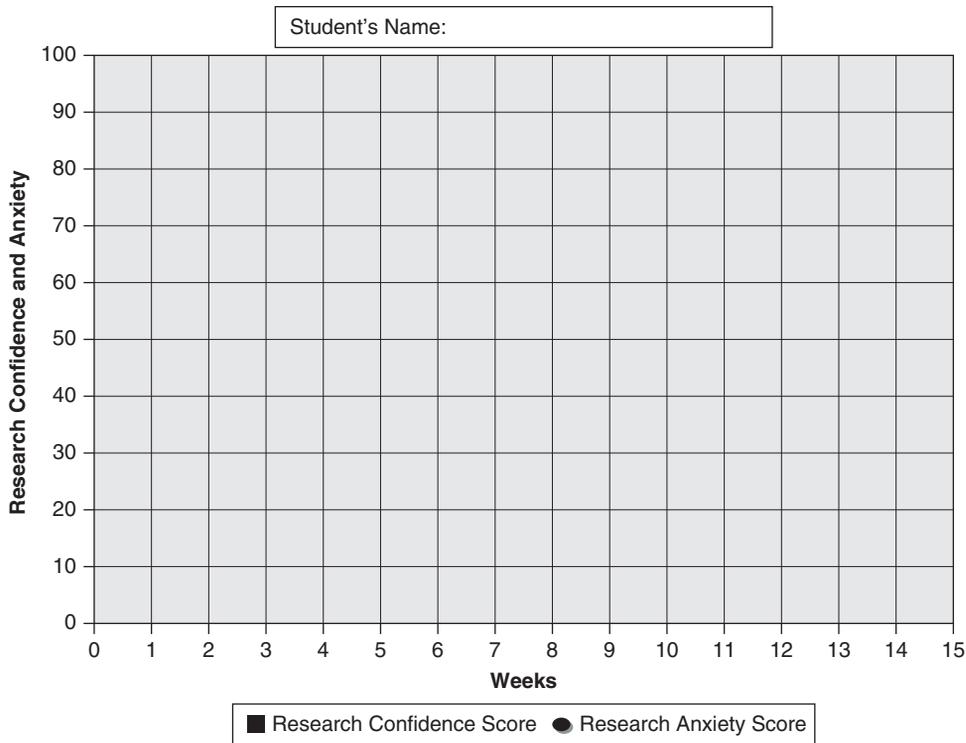
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
Not anxious at all				Moderately anxious					Extremely anxious

*Part B: Please answer these additional questions:*

- \_\_\_\_ B1. How many hours this week did you attend research class (or classes)?
- \_\_\_\_ B2. How many hours this week did you read research materials?
- \_\_\_\_ B3. How many hours this week did you conduct research?

\_\_\_\_\_ Part B Total Hours Per Week

11. Please write a paragraph on your thoughts and feelings about research this week.



**Figure 1.2**

Research Competence Assessment and Graph: Graphing Research Anxiety and Confidence  
 Based on the graphed results (and integrating your qualitative results where possible), briefly explain your experience with research related–anxiety and confidence before, during, and at the end of the semester. How (if at all) do you see your research-related anxiety and confidence related? Please explain.  
 Source: Maschi, T. (2010). *Research competence survey and graph*. New York: Fordham University Community Research and Evaluation Collaborative.

## SUMMARY

Research and evaluation strategies for practice have been a common thread woven throughout social work history as social workers pursue new possibilities and help create a better world. Since the beginning of the profession, research in the form of the scientific method has been used to understand individual and social problems and to guide, assess, and intervene with underserved populations, especially the poor (Zimbalist, 1977).

Social work has been touted as a human rights profession mostly based on a shared value system with human rights philosophies and the use of practices to enhance human and community well-being and fairness in society. From a human rights framework, social work research and evaluation are a quaternary intervention level and have an essential role in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Social workers’ knowledge of human rights philosophies and documents can be used to inform all phases of the research and evaluation process.

A review of social work history reveals a profession that has undergone a process of integrating scientific inquiry with humanistic values and passionate action. Social work research has periods of convergence and divergence

and tension with social work practice. The recognition of this creative tension is a first step in the process toward a peaceful and long-standing union. Eleanor Roosevelt (1958), in her speech to the UN Commission on Human Rights at the United Nations in New York on March 27, 1958, suggests where and how we might approach our practice contexts, both large and small, toward evidence-based reforms. She said:

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.

Log onto **www.mysocialworklab.com** and answer the following questions. (*If you did not receive an access code to MySocialWorkLab with this text and wish to purchase access online, please visit [www.mysocialworklab.com](http://www.mysocialworklab.com).*)

**1. Watch the professional identity video “Advocating for the Client.”** Using the chapter’s human rights

framework, determine the intervention level. How can research and evaluation inform the intervention?

**2. Watch the policy practice video “Participating in Policy Changes.”** After listening to the commentary, indicate how research and evaluation were used to promote human rights and social justice?

**PRACTICE TEST** The following questions will test your knowledge of the content found within this chapter. For additional assessment, including licensing-exam type questions on applying chapter content to practice, visit **MySocialWorkLab**.

- A social worker engaging in primary interventions social work research would most likely:
  - Target only select at-risk individuals
  - Be conducted in one neighborhood
  - Target the whole population, mostly on a national level
  - Not be conducted
- Scientific inquiry in social work’s history is best represented by:
  - Collective curiosity
  - Systematically gathering information
  - Gathering information and setting a goal for change
  - Regularly continually asking questions
- “Social work research” was first differentiated from “social science research” in which year?
  - 1910
  - 1925
  - 1937
  - 1948
- Jane Addams and the settlement house movement attributed their collective social change successes to:
  - Opening Hull House
  - Advocating at the legislative level
  - The rise of the charity movement
  - The three *r* strategies: residence, research, and reform
- On a scale of 0 to 10 (in which 0 = no confidence and 10 = complete confidence), rate your confidence about using research to inform practice and practice to inform research. Identify one strategy you can use to improve confidence.

**ASSESS YOUR COMPETENCE** Use the scale below to rate your current level of achievement on the following concepts or skills associated with each competency presented in the chapter:

1	2	3
I can accurately describe the concept or skill.	I can consistently identify the concept or skill when observing and analyzing practice activities.	I can competently implement the concept or skill in my own practice.

- \_\_\_\_\_ can demonstrate knowledge of social work research history.
- \_\_\_\_\_ can apply research or evaluation strategies that promote human rights and social and economic justice at different intervention levels.
- \_\_\_\_\_ can use scientific inquiry to inform social work practice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ can engage in policy practice that advances human rights and social justice.