Instructor’s Manual: Chapter 2

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# Learning Objectives for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

**After reading this chapter, you should be able to**  
1. Recognize the forces shaping the American social welfare system and social policy.  
2. Identify the historical relevance of major social welfare programs that assist people in need.  
3. Describe the relationship between social welfare policy and the social work profession.  
4. Explain why social welfare policies that address people’s immediate needs are inadequate for promoting social justice.

# Lecture Notes for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

The history of the social work profession is intertwined with the history of social policy development. Political, social and economic forces have a strong impact on policy development. Approaches to social welfare have changed over the past few centuries of American life, and the social work profession has evolved alongside those changes. However, despite improvements in many realms of life, the problems to which social welfare responds have remained. Social welfare policies to address people’s immediate needs are generally inadequate for promoting social justice.

**Social Welfare**

Social Welfare includes the array of governmental programs, services and institutions designed to maintain the stability and well-being of society. It involves the allocation of resources such as money, personnel and expertise.

**Social Welfare Policy** – An individual’s political, social, religious and economic ideologies impact how that person thinks about policy issues. In the United States, social welfare policies are generally intended to provide a **safety net** for citizens, services that protect the person from spiraling downward economically or socially and hitting bottom. Eligibility for “safety net” services depends on meeting specific criteria, or **means testing**. Means testing is assessing whether the individual or family possesses the means to do without a particular kind of help. Social welfare policy determines who is eligible for services, describes how services will be delivered, outlines the duration of services, and indicates how intervention outcomes will be evaluated and measured.

* **Conservative and Liberal Ideologies** - People with **conservative** political leaningstend to favor personal responsibility for one’s own well-being over any form of government support or federally sponsored relief. The underlying premise is that people in the top echelon of society have worked hard, made smart choices, and earned their lot in life. Similarly, people in distress have caused their own problems and should “pull themselves up by their own bootstraps”. **Liberals** typically support a more robust safety net for poor people, one that attempts to address social issues through moderate or incremental forms of social intervention and change. Liberals generally want to help distribute more wealth and resources to people toward the lower end of the nation’s socioeconomic structure.
* **Social Control** - policies and practices that are designed to regulate people and increase conformity and compliance in their behavior. The involvement of social workers in the policy arena helps our society address individual needs and confront social control—and perhaps shift or redistribute economic and political power so that the poor and vulnerable can better help themselves.

**Social Justice** - effort to protect human rights and to provide for human needs like housing, food, education and health care for everyone, particularly for those in greatest need. The goal of social justice is what motivates social workers to be advocates. Some goals of advocacy may include:

* Fairness: all citizens have the right to access resources and opportunities
* Equality: people all have human rights without regard to race, gender, economic or educational status, or other distinguishing features
* Freedom: People share the need for independent thought and a sense of security
* Service: The most needy of any society require the most commitment
* Nonviolence: a peaceful approachto collaboration, mediation or negotiation is more respectful of others’ rights than any form of violence.

**The Intertwined History of Social Welfare Policy and Social Work**

**Colonial America: 1607–1783** – The colonists incorporated the concept of **mutual aid,** which was the concept that it was the community’s responsibility to provide assistance when an individual experienced a hardship like a disease or a home burning. The poor laws of Colonial America were similar to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, and included a distinction between the **deserving poor** and the **non-deserving** **poor.** The deserving poor included orphan children, elderly individuals, and people with debilitating physical conditions, who could not provide for themselves through no fault of their own. The non-deserving poor were able-bodied vagrants or drunkards, judged as lazy and unwilling to work for a living. There was also the concept of **outdoor relief**, whichprovided assistance to the deserving poor in their own home and community, and **indoor relief,** which provided assistance in institutions where the non-deserving poor were sent to work.

**Origins of Social Advocacy: The 1800s** – During the 1800s, the U.S. population expanded westward. **Orphan trains** transported more than more than 120,000 children, who were often abandoned and alone, from urban centers to 45 states across the country as well as Canada and Mexico. This is considered the beginning of the foster care concept in the United States. **Dorothea Dix**, was a social activist who lobbied state and federal governments in the mid-1800s to create asylums for those who were mentally ill, especially those who had no other homes. Additional activism by social workers included the advancement of the rights of children, workers, women, the elderly, and racial and sexual minorities.

**Progressive Era: 1890–1920** - The end of the 1800s was characterized by an increase in immigrants and a shift from agriculture to urbanization. There was a greater awareness of the need for social reform.

* **Charity Organization Societies** - focused on the individual factors related to poverty such as alcoholism, poor work habits, and inadequate money management. A **friendly visitor** was assigned to the family and asked to conduct regular home visits. Friendly visitors would attempt to address individual character flaws and encourage clients to gain independence and live a moral life. These visitors were the forerunners of professional social workers.
* **Settlement Movement** - turned attention on the environmental factors associated with poverty. In 1889, Jane Addams, along with Ellen Gates Starr, founded **Hull House** in a poor Chicago neighborhood where immigrants lived in overcrowded conditions. Services included day care for children, a club for working women, lectures and cultural programs, and a meeting place for neighborhood political groups.
* **Early Social Work Training** - Mary Richmond of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Charity Organization Society, along with Edward T. Devine of the New York COS, were early leaders in training social workers. In 1898, Devine established and directed the New York School of Philanthropy, which eventually became the Columbia School of Social Work, America’s first school of social work. In 1917 Mary Richmond wrote the first social work book, *Social Diagnosis,* whichintroduced a methodology and common body of knowledge for the practice of social work. Importantly, Richmond embraced assessment and understanding of human relations, social situations and surroundings, neighborhood conditions, and economic realities.

**World War I Era: 1914–1918** – Social workers shifted their professional attention from “cause” to “function” – from a concern with politics to a concern with the efficient day-to-day administration of a social welfare bureaucracy. The turn toward the “function” of social work gave rise to an expansion of practice settings for the profession, to include private family welfare agencies (as most charity organizations were now called), hospitals, schools, mental health facilities, guidance centers and children’s aid societies.

**The Great Depression: 1929–Early 1940s** – Following the stock market crash, Social workers rekindled the “cause” orientation that had been abandoned in the 1920s and lobbied the government to provide an adequate standard of living for all Americans. President Roosevelt’s New Deal, a large federal relief program for the needy, included unemployment insurance and a Social Security system to deal with the financial insecurity experienced by older persons, dependent children, and individuals with physical challenges. Harry Hopkins, a social worker, was appointed head of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). The Social Security Act of 1935 widely expanded welfare activities and advanced services and programs for poor persons. It helped to prevent destitution and dependency.

**World War II Era: 1939–1945** – During World War II there was near full employment for most Americans, so during this time issues of poverty were not on the national agenda or in the forefront of the social work. The Depression and the New Deal had lasting effects on the social work profession. There were new jobs for social workers, a deeper understanding of human needs in urban and rural areas, and a renewed interest in reform efforts. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) formed in 1955, helping to unite the profession through guidelines and a code of ethics that defined roles and responsibilities associated with social work practice.

**America’s War on Poverty: 1960–1967** - The Civil Rights movement educated Americans on the extent of prejudice and discrimination in our society and its costs. Other movements formed to protest the Vietnam War, as well as rights for women, people with physical and mental challenges, gay people, and people of color. President John Kennedy’s New Frontier and President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society programs instituted a variety of new social welfare initiatives, including Head Start, a program providing preschool education for disadvantaged children; Medicaid, health care for the poor; Medicare, health care for older persons; and Food Stamps, a food purchasing program for needy people.

**Reaganomics: 1981–1989** - The Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, beat the incumbent President Carter with a conservative platform that emphasized individual responsibility for one’s own problems rather than the reform of existing systems for social welfare. Reagan embraced “**trickledown economics**” – the idea that reducing the tax obligations of the rich would stimulate them to spend more on the consumption of goods and services. In theory, the prosperity of the rich would “trickle down” to middle class and poorer Americans via the creation of new industries and jobs. There was, however, nothing to prevent the rich from simply holding onto their profits, purchasing existing enterprises, or investing in enterprises overseas. The conservative approach continued with President George W.H. Bush’s “**Million Points of Light**” campaign, where communities were expected to develop and often privately fund services and programs to address local needs. However, impoverished communities had few resources to dedicate to such points of light.

**9/11 and Beyond: 2000–Present** - The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism, and the Global War on Terror took precedence over social welfare initiatives. In 2010 the Affordable Care Act expands the role of the federal government, improves access to affordable health coverage, and reforms insurance company practices. Coverage for mental and behavioral health is included. Social workers help people navigate the new systems of health care to insure proper coverage and benefits.

**The Limitations of Social Welfare** - Although social reforms have made a difference to millions of Americans, they sometimes fail to meet stated or ideal goals. Most of the social services that target young and old age categories are crisis interventions rather than prevention (e.g. Temporary Aid to Needy Families and Social Security Act). The social welfare system does little to move working class and poor people from their current socio-economic class – low social mobility remains. There are communities that continue to experience persistent poverty and social inequality, especially where there are people of color. The history of social welfare policy suggests the need to address the root causes of social, economic and political inequality. The 1963 March on Washington, followed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, demonstrated that organizing people and taking united action can change the course of a nation.

# Key Concepts for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

conservative

deserving poor

liberal

means testing

nondeserving poor

safety net

social control

social justice

social welfare

social welfare policy

# Case Study for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

Sandeep is a social worker at a Department of Social Services in a small southern town. His social work practice involves establishing people’s eligibility for a food stamp program, formally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Enrollment in the program has increased over the last year due to an increase in unemployment and an overall sluggish economy. The average monthly benefit is approximately $133.19.

Sandeep doesn’t know the history of the nation’s food stamp program. He’s interested in when and why the program was created, how eligibility criteria were established, and how the formula for monthly benefit is determined. Even more pressing, Sandeep wants to advocate against proposed cuts in the SNAP.

1. How would you assist Sandeep in locating the information he’s interested in knowing?
2. How does a general understanding of the nation’s social welfare system guide your thinking about the SNAP and proposed budget reductions?
3. What are some ways that Sandeep would advocate against proposed cuts in the SNAP? Where would he concentrate his efforts?
4. What information would be most helpful for Sandeep to gather in order to make his case?
5. How much is your family’s monthly grocery bill? What would $133.19 per month cover in your community?

# Discussion Questions for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

Discussion Question #1

Do you think there’s any merit to the idea of social control? Are there ways in which the programs we have in place to assist the poor actually serve to keep them in poverty?

Discussion Question #2

Do you know what political ideology you most align with? How good of an understanding do you have of what the different parties stand for? Would it be useful to have more information and publicity given to the so-called “third parties” like the Green Party, the Libertarian Party, or the Constitution Party?

Discussion Question #3

In what ways do the concepts of “deserving poor” and “undeserving poor” continue to exist today? Whom does society consider to deserve welfare benefits, and whom do they see as unworthy?

Discussion Question #4

It can often be emotionally difficult to apply for welfare benefits. Ideally, what do you think it should be like for people to apply for welfare benefits? Are there other rights to which you are legally entitled that often make people who access them feel ashamed?

# Chapter Exercises for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

1. Learn more about various political parties and their stances on social welfare by going to their websites. In addition to the Democratic and Republican parties, seek information about the Libertarian Party, the Green Party, the Progressive Party, the Constitution Party, or others that run candidates in your locale. Focusing on the issue of social welfare, locate the parties on a spectrum from most liberal to most conservative.

2. Read an editorial from one of the nation’s leading newspapers or news websites. What political perspective does the editorial reflect, and how did you reach this conclusion?

3. Role-play a situation in which you must ask for public assistance. How did you feel

about being in need and asking for help?

4. Review Exhibit 2.1, the social work and social welfare policy timeline, and select one

landmark event. Read about the time period and list the relevant political situation,

environmental factors, human needs, and social justice issues of the time.

5. Choose a social welfare service available in your community. Gather the history of this

agency. In what ways does its history compare to what you read in this chapter?

# Class Activities for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

**Class activity #1**

Break the class into groups. Tell them that each group has been given a vacant island on which to establish a new independent country, and it is up to them to establish what they consider to be appropriate social welfare policies. They are not under the constraints of U.S. law—creativity is encouraged! For the purposes of this activity, have them assume that the island will house about 5,000 residents and will experience a poverty rate of about 10%.

What programs would they put in place to help the poor of their nation? How would those programs be funded? Would they take a more conservative or liberal approach? How would the success of these programs be measured or determined? Have the groups share their approaches with the class.

**Class activity #2**

Have the class stand up and scatter around the room. Label one side of the room “agree” (write on the chalkboard/whiteboard or put up a sign on one wall) and label the other side of the room “disagree.” Tell the students you will be reading a series of statements and you would like them to move to a place in the room that reflects how they feel about the statement. If they strongly agree, they should move far to the “agree” side of the room. If they somewhat agree, they may move halfway between the middle of the room and the “disagree” wall. After everyone has decided where to stand, ask for volunteers to explain why they are standing where they are.

Statements

1. People have a good understanding of what social workers do.
2. Poor people who receive welfare benefits are generally too lazy to work.
3. The Affordable Care Act is a positive thing for our society.
4. I expect Social Security to be available to me when I retire.
5. Families who are on welfare should not get more benefits if more children are born into the family while they are on welfare.
6. Social welfare may hurt its recipients as much as it endeavors to help them, by preventing them from pulling themselves out of poverty.

Feel free to add your own based on class discussions or comments you may have received from students.

**Class activity #3**

Have the class split up into discussion groups. Ask them to discuss the positive and negative aspects of these different social welfare plans. What would the potential consequences of the policies be?

1. The government establishes a poverty line. Everyone who falls below that line gets paid however much it takes to get them to that line. That is, if one family falls $2,000 short of the poverty line for a family their size one year, the government pays them $2,000 at the end of the year. If a family falls $10,000 short, the government pays them $10,000 at the end of the year.
2. The government eliminates income tax for people whose income falls below the poverty line, allowing them to keep their entire paycheck. However, once they begin making enough that they are no longer in poverty, they must pay income tax at the appropriate rate.
3. The government pays for people who are unemployed over one year to get free tuition to a job training program or vocational school of their choice in an effort to make them more employable.
4. People who pay into Social Security for at least five years before losing their jobs are allowed to take money out of their future Social Security benefits once their unemployment checks run out. For each month of benefits they take now, they would have to delay their retirement one month once they reach retirement age. They would be allowed to do this for up to two years.

# Video and Multimedia Links for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

#### Video Clips

* [Profile of JaneAddams](http://video.about.com/history1900s/Profile-of-Jane-Addams.htm)   
  A brief look at the life of the Hull House founder and Nobel Peace Prize winner.
* [FDR’s Social Security Speech](https://archive.org/details/fdrbig)   
  President Roosevelt’s speech upon signing the Social Security Act into law.
* [LBJ’s War on Poverty](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3AuStymweQ)   
  President Lyndon B. Johnson declares War on Poverty during his State of the Union Address.

#### Audio Clips

* [Hull House Closes](http://llnw.wbez.org/segment/audio/2012-January/2012-01-27/1-27-hull-house.mp3)   
  Hull House staffers react with surprise to the closing of the legendary agency in 2012.
* [Will the Affordable Care Act Get More Popular?](http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=156689006&m=156688999)   
  Melissa Block speaks with political scientist Lawrence Jacobs of the University of Minnesota about the history of public opinion toward the extension of government social programs including Social Security and Medicare.

# Web Resources for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

* [The ACA Explained](http://www.npr.org/series/231423897/the-affordable-care-act-explained/)   
  A wide variety of articles aimed at explaining the nuances of the Affordable Care Act
* [Conservative/Liberal Continuum Quiz](http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-typology/)   
  A quiz that can help your students find where they land on the conservative-liberal continuum.
* [NAACP History](http://www.naacp.org/pages/naacp-history)   
  A look at the century-plus history of the NAACP, from W.E.B. Du Bois to Benjamin Todd Jealous.

# SAGE Journal Articles for Chapter 2: The History of Social Work

[**SAGE Journal User Guide**](http://www.uk.sagepub.com/sageEdge/orvis3e/files/SJ-userguide.pdf)

Article 1.

[Healy, L. M. (2008). Exploring the history of social work as a human rights profession. International Social Work, 51(6), 735-748](http://isw.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/51/6/735?ijkey=ZMtDuc1JN8WRA&keytype=ref&siteid=spisw). doi:10.1177/0020872808095247

This article explores how social workers have been involved in the development of human rights frameworks and policies and argues for increased engagement with human rights perspectives in keeping with the stated mission of the profession.

#### Questions:

1. Provide a basic definition of human rights, and describe the three generations of rights outlined in the article.
2. Describe how social work pioneers (such as Jane Addams and Bertha Reynolds) integrated human rights into the early years of social work.
3. What does the author mean when suggesting that social workers have generally paid more attention to “human needs” rather than “human rights”?
4. What are the greatest possibilities for integrating a human rights perspective into contemporary social work?

Article 2.

[Hounmenou, C. (2012). Black settlement houses and oppositional consciousness. Journal of Black Studies, 43(6), 646-666](http://jbs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/43/6/646?ijkey=wwJWsp6uqhiq.&keytype=ref&siteid=spjbs). doi:10.1177/0021934712441203

This article examines how the context for African American settlement houses—specifically, the extent that they were autonomous from dominant society—shaped the nature of resistance by Black female leaders at the time and contributed to subsequent organizing and social movements.

#### Questions:

1. What was the role of “oppositional consciousness” in the development and operation of Black Settlement Houses?
2. What social and political conditions contributed to the growth of settlement houses led by African American women?  List three factors that led to the growth of these institutions.
3. What does the author suggest about the effect of autonomy on the operation of Black settlements? Specifically, (a) define what is meant by autonomy in this context, and (b) explain how different levels of autonomy changed the settlement’s relationship to the community.
4. What were the unique features of Black Settlement Houses as compared to their mainstream white counterparts?