

HOLISM IN SOCIAL WORK:  
THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF  
PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION ON PRACTICE METHODOLOGY

by

Kenneth Denis Richard

HOLISM IN SOCIAL WORK  
THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF  
PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION ON PRACTICE METHODOLOGY

BY

KENNETH DENIS RICHARD

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of  
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
of the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

© 1978

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this dissertation, to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this dissertation and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this dissertation.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the dissertation nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to Peter Hudson, principal advisor and personal friend without whose help this thesis could never have been written. Special thanks are also extended to Len Spearman who went well beyond his role in this effort. Finally, thanks go to Marvin Brodsky, Bob van der Krabben, Barry Trute, and all others who contributed their time and expertise towards the success of this venture.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a critical evaluation of the current man-in-environment perspective in social work. With specific reference to the concept of holism and the interpretive nature of systems theory, questions are raised regarding whether social work has moved beyond the reductionism of earlier thought. In a review of current theory and practice, it is concluded that the existence of the holistically oriented practitioner is in serious doubt. However, using the concept of HOLON in conjunction with references currently available, a paradigm for holistic practice is presented felt to address the man-in-environment perspective in its full intent.

Research is undertaken to determine the degree to which social workers are holistically oriented, and whether orientation impacts methodology in quantitative terms. Using conventional hypothesis testing it is found that holistic social workers have a broader interventive repertoire than their non-holistic counterparts. The implication of this and other findings are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
II. OVERVIEW	
THE MAN-IN-ENVIRONMENT PERSPECTIVE: A CRITIQUE . . . . .	5
A PARADIGM FOR HOLISTIC PRACTICE. . . . .	19
STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESIS . . . . .	31
III. METHODOLOGY	
THE HOLISM SCALE . . . . .	33
THE VIGNETTE . . . . .	37
PROCEDURE . . . . .	39
THE SUBJECTS . . . . .	41

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS	
SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS . . . . .	43
DISTRIBUTION OF MINDEDNESS SCORES . . .	46
DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVENTION SCORES . .	48
CORRELATION ANALYSIS . . . . .	52
TEST OF THE HYPOTHESIS: T-TEST . . . .	57
OTHER FINDINGS . . . . .	61
V. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	62
APPENDICES	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Sample Proportion by Agency . . . . .	41
2. Distribution of Respondents by Age . . . . .	43
3. Distribution of Respondents by Experience. . . . .	44
4. Distribution of Respondents by Education . . . . .	44
5. Distribution of Respondents by Year of Graduation . . . . .	45
6. Distribution of Respondents by Sex . . . . .	45
7. Distribution of Respondents by Psycho Dynamic Mindedness Scores. . . . .	47
8. Distribution of Respondents by Social Environmental Mindedness Scores. . . . .	47
9. Distribution of Respondents by Interactional/ Transactional Mindedness Scores. . . . .	47
10. Distribution of Respondents by Interventions Identified in Consideration of Agency Mandate . . . . .	49
11. Distribution of Respondents by Interventions Identified Without Consideration of Agency Mandate . . . . .	50
12. Distribution of Respondents by Total Interventions Identified. . . . .	51
13. Correlational Analysis: Mindedness Scores and Intervention Score. . . . .	53
14. Multiple Regression Analysis: ITM With PDM and SEM . . . . .	55
15. Test of Differences: Holistic, Non-holistic, and Mixed Groups On Intervention Score. . . . .	58

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

#### Statement of the Problem:

As a social worker engaged in child welfare in Winnipeg's "core" area it was often observed that, given the same presenting problem, as many different recommended courses of ameliorative action emerged as there were social workers involved in the case. In the case of the "multi problem" family, one expressing an array of symptoms consistent with that title, one social worker might express the need for family therapy, another the need for alcohol counselling of one or both parents, another the need for advocacy in order to obtain rights and services, and still another might identify a need not to intervene directly in the family system, but instead to channel activities towards broad social change. Upon reflecting on these observations one was struck not so much by the diversity of the identified treatments, but more so by the diverse perceptions of the problem implied by the recommended treatments. Over time it became clear that each social worker was not really responding to social "facts", but rather to what Leighton refers to as personal perceptions of social facts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leighton, Neil. "The Act of Understanding", British Journal of Social Work, Volume 3, No. 4, Winter 1973, p. 510.



"Most of the facts of social phenomena are not fixed data, they are only 'facts as perceived'. They will be perceived differently by participants, they may be perceived differently by the same participant at a different point of time. This characteristic would lead a pure scientist to discard them as data".<sup>1</sup>

This statement sheds some light on this author's observations. Given the same problem, social workers merely select out in accordance with their perceptions different "facts" deemed salient to that problem, and, in response to that process, identify different courses of ameliorative action. Further, it is not unreasonable to expect that social workers will limit their choice of interventive activities to those that are compatible with their perceptions of the facts. Hence, in the case of the multi problem family, different perceptions of the problem lead naturally to divergent recommendations as to providing solutions to that problem.

Both Leighton's views and this author's observation are seemingly at odds with the current "state of the art" in social work theory and practice and lead one to question a basic assumption underlying much of the current social work literature. That assumption is that social work has moved in evolutionary fashion from a plethora of uni-dimensional approaches, approaches characterized by their reduction of human behavior to single causal relationships, to one common approach based on a systemic analysis of human behavior. This common base, deemed the systems approach or the man-in-environment perspective, is thought to transcend

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 513.

the reductionism of previous frameworks to provide an orientation encompassing full consideration of the dynamic nature of man and his social environment. First elucidated in "A Working Definition of Social Work Practice" by NASW<sup>1</sup> and later enlarged and refined by Bartlett<sup>2</sup>, this approach provides a synthesis of "psychic" and "social" perceptions into one that speaks with equal force to all variables in the man-in-environment configuration. The orientation is felt to be one that demands a kind of disciplined subjectivity, one that takes no "sides" and one that places methods as dependent upon assessments based on systemic analysis of the presenting problem. Systemic analysis refers here to systems theory, a framework used to operationalize the man-in-environment perspective in practical terms.

The contradiction existent between this author's observations, Leighton's views, and the current stance of the profession is by now clearly obvious to the reader. If a true man-in-environment perspective is indeed operant within social work, then it would be expected that social workers, when confronted with the same client in the same situation, would share a similar perception of his problem

<sup>1</sup> Bartlett, H. M. "Working Definition of Social Work Practice", Social Work, Vol. 3, No. 2, April 1958, pp. 3-9.

<sup>2</sup> Bartlett, H. M. The Common Base of Social Work Practice (N.Y.: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1970).

and would likewise identify similar interventive activities consistent with that shared perception. That the man-in-environment perspective also implies that consideration be given a host of interactive variables, both psychic and social, would lead one to expect that the consensus on interventive activity would involve not just a single recommendation, but a number of interventive alternatives.

The expectations implied by the man-in-environment perspective and this author's observations in the field indicate a need for an examination of the issues raised. The following study will critically evaluate the current man-in-environment perspective in social work, focusing on the use of systems theory in the operationalization of that perspective. It will be sought to determine whether the new approach has in fact moved the profession beyond the narrowly focused perceptions evident in the more traditional theoretical frameworks. A paradigm for holistic social work practice will also be presented and research will be undertaken to investigate whether social workers holding a true man-in-environment perspective as represented by this holistic paradigm have any differential impact on social work practice. In reference again to the author's observations regarding social work and the multi problem family, it is hoped that the reader will find the holisitically oriented practitioner to be one who is most likely to recommend many interventive activities, ranging from counselling to broad social change, as the best and perhaps the only approach to problem amelioration.

## CHAPTER II

### Overview

#### A. The Man-In-Environment Perspective: A Critique

"The social work method is the responsible, conscious, disciplined use of self in a relationship with an individual or a collectivity. Through this relationship, the practitioner facilitates complementary interaction between the human unit and its ecological environment with a continuing awareness of the reciprocal effects of one upon the other. It facilitates change: (1) within the human unit in its structure and functioning, and in relation to its environment; (2) of the environment in its structure and functioning, and in its effect upon the human unit; (3) of both the human unit and the environment in their inter-action and exchange balance."<sup>1</sup>

Siporin's conceptualization indicates a distinct and perhaps dramatic shift from a methods based approach to social work practice to one that seeks, through a variety of methods, to balance the demands of the social environment and peoples' coping abilities within that environment. This approach, often referred to as the man-in-environment perspective, is considered by many to characterize the current "state of the art" in social work theory and practice.

The approach finds its grounding in the concept of "holism". "Holism" is defined as "the tendency in nature to form wholes that are more than the sum of the parts..."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Siporin, M. Introduction to Social Work Practice (N.Y.: MacMillan Co., 1975), p. 126

That this sentence means more than each individual word defined and that a family assumes more than a group of related individuals may exemplify this concept. The concept provides social work with a philosophical base that cuts across theory and practice boundaries to address the way in which the profession views mankind. The abstract nature of "holism" has been given substance and thus utility by the emergence and adoption of systems theory.

In systems theory, a system is defined as "a complex of elements or components directly or indirectly related in a causal network, such that each component is related to at least some others in a more or less stable way within a particular period of time"<sup>2</sup>. With particular reference to social work Grosser identifies a systems approach as one that sees human systems as having open flexible boundaries, a being in inter-action with other systems, as tending toward self-regulation, and as taking up physical and social space<sup>3</sup>. In essence, systems theory serves to reduce the abstract "whole is more than the sum of its parts" notion to a

<sup>1</sup> Fowler, H. and Fowler, F. (eds.) The Concise Oxford Dictionary, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964).

<sup>2</sup> Buckley, W. Sociology and Modern Systems Theory, (N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Grosser, S. "Educating the Holistic Social Worker: A Perspective and Approach for Practice", Canadian Journal of Social Work Education, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1975, p. 10.

conceptual tool that may activate an understanding of the relational nature of human behaviour and the social environment.

Questions as to the appropriateness of the term theory as it is applied to the social systems approach have been raised that may have considerable impact on its utility within social work. Theory, as defined by the New Oxford Dictionary, is "a systematic arrangement of facts with respect to some real or hypothetical laws"<sup>1</sup>. Given that knowledge of human behavior is most often bereft of empirical evidence and that assumptions as opposed to laws form the basis of systemic analysis it may be more appropriate to shelve the term theory and to search for an alternative. Olsen, in rejecting the notion of systems as theory, speaks of systems as an analytical model that is a "highly general, content free, conceptual framework within which any number of substantive theories...can be constructed"<sup>2</sup>. Being highly general, content free and open to theoretical interpretation allows the creative use of systemic analysis in looking at human behavior from individuals, to families, to communities, and to nations from the same conceptual framework.

<sup>1</sup> Fowler, H. and Fowler, F. (eds.), Op. Cit.

<sup>2</sup> Olsen, M. The Process of Social Organization (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 228.

However, more importantly and critical to the following discussion, it further allows that any analysis flowing from a systems approach can be colored by subjective interpretations based on the particular orientation of a given analyst.

This phenomena is aptly illustrated in sociologys struggle in defining a "basic unit" of social systems. Basic unit may be defined as that system which is used as a focal point in any systemic analysis. In reading sociological literature, it can be seen that far from being a neutral beginning for analysis, basic unit identification has resulted in the emergence of two polarized views, each having profound impact on social work theory and practice. One view, the macro-functional view, sees society in toto as the basic unit with individual behavior being seen as a function of society's needs and goals. The other, the social interactional view, chooses the smallest component of the system as the basic unit and thus views society as a function of the behaviors of individual persons. Analogous to these polarized views are such debates as "cause vs function", "nurture vs nature", and "social change vs social treatment".

With particular reference to social work theory and practice, the dynamics of "basic unit" identification as it relates to the man-in-environment perspective may be traced to two inter-related processes, one cognitive and

the other extrinsic to the individual. The cognitive component may be seen as a function of what Bisno refers to as the "system of orientation"<sup>1</sup>. A system of orientation is defined as "a web or complex of items of knowledge, attitudes, values, and norms of diverse sorts in terms of which a group, (or person), orients itself (or himself) to a situation (comprehends the situation and chooses appropriate courses of action)."<sup>2</sup> It can be seen to act as a synthesizing agent coloring and interpreting phenomena in a manner compatible with itself. Systems of orientation are distinctly personal in nature yet when one considers that social work lives in the real world it can be reasonably assumed that, particularly in relation to attitudes, values, and norms, it will be profoundly influenced by the environment with which it inter-acts. Goldstein, in his discussion on social learning and social change, illustrates the impact of cognition on goal setting which may be equally applicable to "basic unit" identification:

"....what each practitioner studies and evaluates is limited and governed by his own range of perceptions. These are guided by personal predelections, beliefs, identifications, and his own experiential history. It is a natural and inevitable tendency to filter out of one's

<sup>1</sup> Bisno, H. "A Theoretical Framework for Teaching Social Work Methods and Skills with Particular Reference to Undergraduate Social Welfare Education", Journal of Education for Social Work, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1969, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Gould, J. and Kolb, W. (eds.), A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1964), p. 713.



possible range of observations those factors which do not make sense or are not explainable in some way. Thus, each of us sees only what the boundries of our minds allow us to see".<sup>1</sup>

The extrinsic component may be traced to the agencies in which social workers are employed. Given that social service agencies operate under public and to some extent private auspices, it can be reasonably assumed that mandates will reflect societal definitions of the basic unit. With few exceptions, mandates have espoused an individualistic orientation reflecting the social interactional approach. That this approach is dominant is not surprising considering that society, in its direction to social agencies, ensures logically that it does not sow the seeds of its own distruction by adopting the alternate view of macro-functionalism. Thus mandates identify the "individual" or "family" as client and prescribe "treatment" geared toward modification of client behavior as the primary tool to be used in problem amelioration. The impact on social work practitioners of this extrinsic component may be well illustrated by re-phrasing Goldstein to state that "each of us may see only what the boundries of our agencies allow us to see".

In speaking of the "basic unit" and how the concept applies itself directly to social work it is perhaps more

<sup>1</sup> Goldstein, H. Social Work Practice, A Unitary Approach (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973, p. 157.

appropriate to use the term "focal system" as it appears more compatible with the active nature of social work than the static "basic unit" found in sociological texts. It will be argued that just as the designation of a "focal system" may be seen as a function of both cognitive and extrinsic processes, the very act of identification may serve to endanger true systemic analysis.

By way of introduction, the problem of "focal system" identification may be best explained by drawing an analogy to the photographer's use of "depth of field". Among photographers it is well known that to ensure that a single subject stands out in a crowded scene, the "depth of field", that is, that area in the photograph that is in sharp focus, should be limited. This has the effect of blurring foregrounds and backgrounds to make the subject seemingly dominate the photograph. Those viewing the photograph will thus be drawn to the intended subject but will have difficulty in seeing the total picture.

In similar fashion a social worker who focuses exclusively on the inter-actional dynamics of a family system in effect limits his "depth of field" and subsequently may fail to see the total picture. While he may think in systems terms unless he views the family as not only a system unto itself, but as a sub-system part of a larger system, he sabotages the essence of that framework. Unless he sees beyond the family as system and appreciates in his analysis

that interactions within a family can be a functional response to forces beyond the family, he may be speaking, despite whatever claims to the contrary, from something other than a systemic perspective.

The following will examine social work practice and theory with a view to determine the extent to which a systemic framework is utilized. Unless a given practitioner or theorist has overcome the difficulty of choosing a focal system without limiting "depth of field", it will be concluded that a systems perspective is not being used in accordance with its basic tenet--that a unit (focal system) is made up of parts to which it is a whole, the suprasystem, and, at the same time, is part of some larger whole of which it is a component, or sub-system. Thus, in process terms, social workers must be attentive to the transactional dynamics between specific sub-systems (individual, family) and the external social systems relevant to those sub-systems, as well as to the inter-actional dynamics within the sub-systems themselves.

While empirical research directly related to social work's utilization of a systemic framework is difficult, if not impossible, to locate, two studies have been reported that may be used to infer much needed information. Fisher,<sup>1</sup> in his highly controversial review of research into

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, J. "Is Casework Effective? A Review", Social Work, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1973, pp. 5-20.

the effectiveness of casework found that social workers, regardless of educational level, were equally ineffective in promoting change in client social functioning. The significance of these results was not so much in his findings but in the fact that the practitioners involved utilized casework methods that seemed to ignore any practical attention to transactional dynamics. This observation is attested not only by a glance at the methods used by the practitioners studied but by Fisher's statement that "it might be argued that the high rate of failure was merely an artifact of the general inability of caseworkers to help clients when other more powerful environmental forces hold sway".<sup>1</sup>

Grinnel and Kyte<sup>2</sup>, in a fairly recent study on the extent to which environmental modification was utilized by practitioners in a direct service agency found that the technique ranked 12th in its frequency of use and consumed only 3% of practice time. Considering the public welfare mandate of the agency studied the findings indicate that transactional dynamics, the very stuff of "environmental modification", are not considered salient in assessment and practice and thus adherence to a systems framework becomes highly questionable.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Grinnel, R. M. And Kyte, N. S. "Environmental Modification: A Study", Social Work, Vol. 20, No. 4, July 1975.

That practice can only stem from some theoretical base cannot be disputed and some light may be shed on these research results with consideration of theories in social work as they relate to the man-in-environment perspective. Galpers, in his analysis of current practice theory, takes issue with a number of theorists on their interpretation of the term "environment" and suggests critical shortcomings in the various approaches.<sup>1</sup> He argues that, common to many social work theorists, is an acceptance of the environment as a given with the result of producing superficial analysis that do not address transactional dynamics, specifically in the form of broad social forces, that have profound effects on the individual. He charges that social work theory operates from a conservative base that unconsciously serves to divert attention from the roots of social issues to the consideration of their surface manifestations as they are expressed in pathology. While environment is recognized, it is narrowly defined as family, residential community, peer group and the like. Social forces impinging through transactional relationships remain unacknowledged.

Galper's thesis is presented through consideration of a number of theorists. Hamilton, Perlman, Hollis, Briar and Millar, and Reed and Epstien are cited as

<sup>1</sup> Galpers, J. H. The Politics of Social Services (N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975).

exemplifying practice theory in social work that claims reference to a man-in-environment perspective. While recognizing that these theorists diverge in many ways and that some appear more progressive than others, Galpers points out that each one fails to move beyond consideration of the individual and his interactional network. When the impact of social forces is addressed, it is related not in the language of basic analysis but for the most part is couched in the language of the aberrant, implying individual responsibility for his situation. Viewing environment as restricted to what is accessible to immediate perception, and thus open to direct modification, misses perhaps the most salient features of many problem situations.

Galpers states:

"A...consequence of a superficial analysis of the forces influencing people is the failure to appreciate the extent to which the problems experienced by individuals are not only rooted in basic social processes, but are functional for social maintenance. When their functional social purposes are uncovered, the intrasigence and pervasiveness<sup>1</sup> of many problems are more easily explained".<sup>1</sup>

To secure his point Galpers identifies such behaviors as the creation of dominant-submissive relationships and the suppression of affect as functional to survival of and within the marketplace but as dysfunctional and ultimately destructive to a healthy family life.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

His analysis allows one to speculate on how a whole host of social work activity may be directed towards problem behaviors that may in fact be normal considering the social context of the client.

A true systemic view allows, even encourages, such speculation and a fresh approach to the man-in-environment perspective is begged by Galpers. In a single, succinct statement, however, the author dismisses the present approach when he informs that "the current caseWork version permits some accommodation to the unmistakable fact that people live in society without forcing caseWork into the uncomfortable position of challenge to that society"<sup>1</sup>.

The 70's have witnessed new attempts at explicating a man-in-environment perspective based on systemic analysis. Two notable approaches, that of Howard Goldstein<sup>2</sup> and that of Pincas and Minahan<sup>3</sup>, have gained considerable recognition in the field and are said to represent the furthest advances made to date. They are, however, not without their critics. Peter Leonard commends these authors for moving beyond the rather narrow views of earlier theorists and for providing an alternate approach to practice based on a

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Goldstein, H. Op. Cit.

<sup>3</sup> Pincas, A. and Minahan, A. Social Work Practice: Model and Method (Itasca: F. E. Peacock, 1973).

systems perspective.<sup>1</sup> He charges, however, that both approaches rest on naive and unacknowledged assumptions about the nature of society and that the role of broad social forces is effectively ignored. Like Galpers, Leonard views these theorists as considering at most the environmental manifestations of such forces and faults the authors for using the term "societal" in a monolithic manner. He sums his argument in stating that "their lack of class analysis of society reveals itself throughout their work and accounts for the poverty of their explanations at the macro-sociological level".<sup>2</sup>

Both Galpers and Leonard fail in their respective analysis to mention that while a man-in-environment perspective is attempted, however poorly, in those theories discussed, it is a perspective absent in many theoretical frameworks embraced by social workers. In many residential treatment institutions for example, theories that speak exclusively to the intra-psychic nature of human behavior still form the basis for treatment. Behavioral modification as both theory and practice appears to be making its mark on social work and contains within its approach no consideration for macro-influences on human behavior. In short, the tradition

<sup>1</sup> Leonard, P. "Towards a Paradigm for Radical Practice" in Radical Social Work, Bailey, R. and Brake, M. (eds.), (London: The Camelot Press, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52.



of eclecticism within social work allows the infusion of a host of theory and related practice that may or may not speak to the man-in-environment perspective.

Thus far, the concept of "holism" as expressed in the systems approach and as it may apply to social work has been explored. The implications of identifying a "basic unit" in social analysis has been addressed and the dynamics of the identification of the related "focal system" in social work was discussed. In addition, practice research and theory criticism was reviewed. From these considerations the following conclusions may be drawn. First, systems analysis provides but a conceptual framework within which a number of converging or diverging views may fit. Second, social workers, both in theory and in practice, are subject to forces from within (cognitive) and from without (extrinsic) in choosing their particular orientation to systems analysis. Third, that orientation most often chooses the individual as its "focal system" in analysis. Fourth, in choosing the smallest unit within social systems, social work often fails in both theory and practice to consider that unit as part as well as whole-- that is interactions take precedence over transactions of that unit with a total system. Finally, if, as according to Grosser, a systems perspective demands that "we see beyond what we are looking at"<sup>1</sup>, then social work has failed to use systems in its fullest and most creative sense.

<sup>1</sup> Grosser, S. Op. Cit., p. 15.

B. A Paradigm for Holistic Practice

It can well be argued that the current man-in-environment approach so criticized by Galpers and Leonard may represent a normative response on the part of the social work profession to the realities of 20th century society. It has been suggested that there are aspects of the broad social environment that are relatively fixed, static, and above all, impossible to change, particularly through efforts of a single, rather powerless, profession. That social work cannot change the dehumanizing nature of the assembly line nor impact in any real way those forces generating massive unemployment is seen by many as sufficient rationale for concentration on the improvement of individual coping abilities. It may also be argued that the fragmented and often contradictory nature of theory related to human behavior and the plethora of disciplines involved make it impossible to operationalize a systems approach that lends itself to actual social work practice. Such arguments (and there are more) have validity and utility but only for the purpose of generating professional introspection and discussion as opposed to their present function of stultifying productive thought.

The following section will present a paradigm for holistic practice--one that may be adopted by any practitioner short of one engaged in extreme specialization.

The paradigm will not ignore the existent realities of current social work practice but, more importantly, will provide a systemic approach compatible with those realities.

The most salient feature of this model, and one implied in the previous section, is the concept of the "HOLON". Koestler said that, like the god Janus, a "holon" faces two directions at once--inward toward its own parts, and outward toward the system of which it is a part<sup>1</sup>. What is central to this concept is that any client, be it individual, family, community, is by definition both a part and a whole. Holistic practice thus will demand that active attention be given a host of variables, both interactional and transactional in nature and including (1) broad social forces; (2) environmental manifestations of those forces; (3) interactional processes; (4) intra-psychic dynamics; (5) and finally, biological factors. Because a systemic view states that "no particular system is determinant, nor is system behavior determined at any one level, part or whole"<sup>2</sup>, a word about the assignment of relative weights of variables within the "holon" is warranted. By definition any attempts to prescribe relative

<sup>1</sup> Anderson, R. E. and Carter, I. E. Human Behavior and the Social Environment: A Social Systems Approach (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1974), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

weights of specific variables in problem generation amounts to reductionism, a process incompatible with holistic practice. This does not mean that direction cannot be provided the holistic practitioner (as will be shown as this paradigm develops) but it does mean that the practitioner will have "some reverence for the behavioral unknowables in man, and some respect for the unpredictable, unclassifiable, and unmeasurable"<sup>1</sup>.

In essence the concept of the "holon" requires that social workers cease reference to the blind subjectivity of reductionistic thought and instead develop a disciplined subjectivity, one based on conscious reference to and reflection on the concept of "holon". Once such discipline is achieved, it may be assured that a compatible practice will follow.

In the development of new approaches to practice that speak to the dynamic nature of "holon" no new or elaborate theory construction need be undertaken. It is suggested that, at the present time, social work has at its disposal sufficient expertise and related knowledge to realize the provision of sound direction to the holistically minded practitioner. Such direction will be attempted here through the marriage of Elliot Studt's concept of "task" and Hubert Bisno's elaboration on "methods".

<sup>1</sup> Grosser, S. Op. Cit., p. 8.

Studt<sup>1</sup>, in her conception of "task", presents social work with the means to break from reductionist notions resulting from faulty perceptions of "focal system" identification. She proposes that, in approaching any given problem, method not be held constant but that it assume the role of a dependent variable. "Task", that is "what must be done in a given situation" becomes the independent variable upon which any given method of intervention is based. The critical step in task formulation for a holistic practitioner is a disciplined adherence to problem analysis based on the concept of "holon" in its fullest sense. The systems principle of "equifinality" allows the creative use of diversified methods stemming from this approach by proposing that the same state may be reached by a variety of paths<sup>2</sup>. Thus, various interventive efforts, be they direct or indirect, conservative or radical, aimed at client adjustment or social revolution, may conclude with the same final effect on the individual client. To exemplify this consider a situation where truancy is the identified problem requiring social work input. Counselling geared

<sup>1</sup> Studt, E. "Social Work Theory and Implications for the Practice of Methods", Social Work Education Reporter, Vol. 16, June 1968, pp. 22-24, 43-46.

<sup>2</sup> Janchill, M. P. "Systems Concepts in Casework Theory and Practice", Social Casework, Vol. 50, No. 2, February 1969, p. 80.

toward motivating the truant to re-attend school may be the chosen course of action. Equally valid, however, might be facilitating changes in a school system viewed as insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of individual students. Both interventions differ remarkably yet both may conclude with the final effect of ensuring a particular client's regular school attendance.

The impact of this approach is such that there can be no more dismissal of clients "as poor candidates for therapy" unless of course the dismisser is in fact a therapist as opposed to a social worker. Unsuccessful therapy may indicate to the holistically orientated practitioner that the therapeutic role needs abandoning to be replaced by one addressing transactional issues affecting the client. Task formulation may also demand that social workers utilize methods not necessarily incorporated in job descriptions provided by their agencies. In the words of Ann Hartman "social workers may use these tools to think about the unthinkable--to gain a broader and more sophisticated view of their field of operation and of their professional responsibilities"<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Hartman, A. "To think about the unthinkable", Social Casework, Vol. 51, No. 8, October 1970, p. 470.

Studd's concept of "task" demands that holistically oriented practitioners be familiar with a complete battery of interventive methods that speak with equal force to the concept of "holon". Bisno<sup>1</sup>, in his explication of social work methods and Poskanzer<sup>2</sup>, in his elaboration on these methods, presents social work with an interventive repertoire quite compatible with task and flowing naturally from any analysis based on the concept of "holon".

A summary of these methods together with practical illustrations\* is presented as follows:

1. Adversary

The adversary method is used in situations in which the resolution of differences is attempted through efforts directed to foster the interests of one party over another. This method speaks primarily to transactional relationships in which a client is adversely affected by inequities and

<sup>1</sup> Bisno, H. "A Theoretical Framework for Teaching Social Work Methods and Skills, with Particular Reference to Undergraduate Social Welfare Education", Journal of Education for Social Work, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1969, pp. 5-17.

<sup>2</sup> Poskanzer, B. "Expansion of Bisno's Methods", Unpublished, University of Manitoba, September 1972, (Mimeographed).

\* In the examples presented, the nuclear family will be considered as "holon" thus transactional will refer to that component that "looks outward" and interactional to that component that "looks inward".

injustices in that relationship. This method may be exemplified by a worker's adoption of an advocacy role on behalf of clients being denied legislated rights, or moral rights, or goods and services.

2. Conciliatory

The conciliatory method is used in situations in which the resolution of differences is attempted through efforts directed at fostering commonality of purpose. This method speaks primarily to interactional relationships in which there is a commonality of interest within differences. This method may be exemplified in a worker's adoption of a therapist role to assist families experiencing difficulties through faulty communication or misunderstanding.

3. Developmental

The developmental method is used in situations in which the problem involves a lack of resources or a desire to mobilize those that exist. This method speaks primarily to transactional relationships whereby a system shows desire to ameliorate or where judgement indicates the need for the development of appropriate resources. This method may be exemplified in a worker who attempts to improve the functioning of other resources, or who assumes some responsibility in the development of alternate resources.

4. Facilitative-Instructional

The facilitative-instructional method is used in situations in which there is a need for new knowledge or where new



knowledge is given with sufficient elaboration of underlying premises and general applicability so that the intellectual knowledge and emotional understanding can be used in a variety of situations. This method speaks to both interactional and transactional relationships where there is a need for knowledge to perform a given task or where the enhancement of a collaborative relationship is required. A worker informing a client of available resources or alternative resources exemplifies this method. In addition, a worker acting as "conscientizer" may also exemplify this method with the worker seeking to develop critical consciousness in clients through an "educational process designed to develop praxis, that is, critical reflection on reality and subsequent action upon it"<sup>1</sup>. Based on the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Friere, conscientization may be viewed as a viable means to affect change in the broad social environment by working with individual clients.

##### 5. Knowledge Development and Testing

The knowledge development and testing method is used with the aim of developing an understanding of social work practice and service systems by expanding on the elements of practice, making them explicit, and subjecting them to verification. This method speaks primarily to transactional

<sup>1</sup> Leonard, P. Op. Cit., p. 54.

relationships between the service sector and client populations. A worker acting as an evaluator for his agency or an alternate resource in order to determine the effectiveness of a given service model would exemplify this method.

6. Restorative

The restorative method is used in situations where effort is required to return the client system to a previous level of social functioning. This method speaks to both interactional and transactional relationships and seeks to control or eliminate those factors acting to break down or impair social functioning. This method may be exemplified by a worker who acts as therapist to a couple expressing marital unhappiness or who acts as a linkage to the appropriate resource.

7. Regulatory

The regulatory method is used in situations where effort is required to control client activity so that they may live acceptably and productively within society. This method speaks to both interactional and transactional relationships in which client activity is deemed destructive to both himself and society. A worker assuming the role of child welfare, probation, or parole officer exemplifies this method.

8. Rule Making

The rule making method is used in situations where new policies require formulation or where old policies require

ammendment in order to alleviate problem situations or to enable maximal well being of individuals. This method speaks to transactional relationships where new or improved policies are required to create a more effective balance between peoples' needs and opportunities to meet those needs. A worker acting as a lobbyist within his agency to change policy or a worker forcing "class action" litigation to address grievances based on injustices, legal or moral, exemplifies this method.

9. Rule Implementing

The rule implementing method is used in situations in which efforts are directed at carrying out policies and programs. This method speaks primarily to transactional relationships in which a "modus operandi" is required to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. A worker who "cuts red tape", outreaches, and explains available service would exemplify this method.

Bisno's classification presents methods that can be utilized by all social workers short of those engaged in extreme specialization. His methods can be used singly or in combination, concurrently or sequentially, in dealing with a given problem area. Most important, however, is that it not only moves the worker beyond the reductionism of other approaches, it addresses the holistic issue with considerable force. Given the concept of "holon" as a

conceptual tool, and given Studt's concept of "task" as an approach to the utilization of this tool, and finally, given Bisno's "methods", the holistic social worker with a truly systemic frame of reference is indeed possible.

One final issue begs resolution prior to any realization of this paradigm. That issue may be phrased in a single question, that is, given that holistic practice forces the dismissal of reductionist notions, and given that it also demands consideration of a host of known and unknown interactive and transactive variables, on what then can a social worker base his practice? Schneiderman, in speaking to the principle of equilibrium in the man-in-environment perspective, provides some resolution to this issue.

"Achieving a balance in this relationship is not itself the ultimate goal of the social work profession. A qualitative consideration, introduced by the value commitment of the profession, mediates this process and determines the goals of professional intervention. Social workers are not, for example, simply in the professional business of improving the adjustment of people to their reality situations. No one ought to be permanently well adjusted to such conditions as living in a slum; having inadequate supplies of food, clothing, shelter, or medical care; or being the victim of punitive and restrictive public policies. Such conditions are inherently dehumanizing and pathological, and, consequently, demand change<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Schneiderman, L. "A Social Action Model for the Social Work Practitioner", Social Casework, Vol. 46, No. 8, October 1965, p. 490.

This statement speaks well to the ultimate value of social work, that is, "the maximum realization of each individual's potential for growth throughout his lifetime"<sup>1</sup>. It is suggested that this value commitment, with its emphasis on growth and potential, together with specific knowledge about human behavior and the social environment, is enough to provide sound direction to the holistically committed practitioner of social work.

<sup>1</sup> Bartlett, H. Op. Cit., p. 209.

C. Statement of the Hypothesis

The above discussion may be seen to have implicitly argued that holistic social workers, that is social workers whose orientations are compatible with the concept of "HOLON", are those social workers who will address problem situations in a manner measurably different from non-holistic social workers. It is felt that the holistic social worker possesses and utilizes a broader interventive repertoire than his non-holistic counterpart. This belief is made explicit by the following specific hypothesis.

"Holistically-oriented social workers, when confronted with an identical problem situation, will utilize a broader range of interventive activities than that utilized by non-holistic social workers".

This hypothesis forms the basis of the research undertaken and reported in the following section(s).

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### A. Introduction

In order to test the research hypothesis it was necessary to design a measuring instrument that was able both to identify the orientation of the respondents and to differentiate their repertoire of interventive activities. The first task, that of identifying orientations, was accomplished by eliciting responses to a scale measuring the degree to which orientation was compatible with the concept of "HOLON". The second task, that of differentiating interventive repertoires, was accomplished by formulating a casework problem in the form of a vignette and by eliciting a response to that problem such that the full range of interventive alternatives possessed and utilized by the respondent could be identified.

B. The Holism Scale

The holism scale was constructed by identifying three key dimensions within the concept of "holon", formulating items that spoke to these dimensions, and combining the items at random into a Lickert type scale. Subjects were directed to read each item and to respond to its content along a five point continuum representing strong agreement to strong disagreement.

The three key dimensions within the concept of "holon" were identified as "psycho dynamic mindedness", "social environmental mindedness", and "interactional/transactional mindedness".

The first dimension, "psycho dynamic mindedness", was borrowed from the work of Tabor and Vattano<sup>1</sup>. While specifically referring to that orientation that gives its major attention to intra-psycho factors as the prime determinant of human behavior, it also encompasses the consideration of biological and primary relational factors in its understanding of both individual and social problems.

The second dimension, "social environmental mindedness" is again borrowed from Taber and Vattano and refers to an orientation that gives major attention to social conditions

<sup>1</sup> Taber, M. and Vattano, A. "Clinical and Social Orientations in Social Work: An Empirical Study", Social Service Review, Vol. 44, No. 1, March 1970, pp. 34-43.



and considers such conditions as the primary determinant of human behavior. In this view, even such individual pathological conditions as psychosis might be interpreted as a function of social environmental factors.

The third dimension, "interactional/transactional mindedness", is coined by the author and refers to the recognition of the dynamic nature of those variables considered salient to dimensions one and two. This orientation in effect considers both psycho dynamic and social environmental variables and views the interactions and transactions within and of such variables as the primary determinant of human behavior. While dimensions one and two speak to an individual's objective identification of significant variables in any problem situation, the third speaks to that individual's subjective interpretation of the dynamic nature of those variables in both interactional and transactional fields.

In order to be considered holistically oriented a subject had to meet two specific requirements. One, he had to score about equally on the psycho dynamic and the social environmental dimensions. To do so indicates a recognition of all possible variables impacting a problem situation and is consistent with the requirements of the concept of the "holon". Unequal recognition represents reductionism, an orientation incompatible with holism.

Second, a subject had to score relatively high on the interactional/transactional dimension. Again this is compatible with the concept of the "holon" as a low score on this dimension indicates a lack of appreciation for the dynamic nature of those variables identified as salient to dimensions one and two. A subject that meets these requirements, that is, if he scores approximately equally on the sub-scales measuring "psycho dynamic" and "social environmental" mindedness while at the same time proving high in "interactional/transactional mindedness", is, for the purposes of this research, an holistically oriented social worker.

Issues of validity of the Holism scale were resolved in the following manner. First, the process of validation undertaken by Taber and Vattano and presented in Appendix II was deemed acceptable in relation to the psycho dynamic and social environmental sub-scales and second, that process was used to guide the validation process of the interactional/transactional sub-scale.

Regarding the "interactional/transactional mindedness" sub-scale, a pool of 60 items were formulated based on the author's professional experience, personal discussions with both academics and practicing social workers, and review of the literature. The items were then put to three faculty members of the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, for their scrutiny and screening. Of the

original 60 items, 12 were ultimately selected as measuring interactional/transactional mindedness and were included in the scale.

The final form of the holism scale included six items measuring psycho dynamic mindedness or PDM, six measuring social environmental mindedness or SEM, and twelve items measuring interactional/transactional mindedness or ITM. The items were placed in random order and comprised the first part of the research instrument.

C. The Vignette

The vignette was formulated for the purposes of portraying a typical presenting problem situation that might confront any frontline social work practitioner with casework responsibilities in the core area of Winnipeg. The vignette is basically a work of fiction and was somewhat influenced by the work of Ben Orcutt, particularly in relation to its format and style of presentation<sup>1</sup>. Content of the vignette was such that seven of the eight interventive activities outlined by Bisno were considered to be both reasonable and feasible interventive alternatives. No attempt was made to lead subjects in their choice of interventions. Instead, the vignette was formulated to be an objective and descriptive statement regarding a multi-problem family in need of professional help.

Subjects were asked to read the vignette carefully and to answer the following questions:

1. As a social worker representing your agency, what interventive activities would you consider appropriate in this situation?
2. Without considering your present agency's mandate, would you consider any additional interventive activities appropriate to this situation?

The second question was asked to ensure that subject responses represented the total number of interventions

<sup>1</sup> Orcutt, B. "Casework Intervention and the Problems of the Poor", Social Casework, Vol. 64, No. 2, February 1973, pp. 85-95.

considered to be appropriate to the situation, rather than the interventive alternatives influenced or suggested by their respective agencies through mandates and job descriptions. Subject response to both questions were thus considered as a single response and together were felt to provide the true measure of interventive activities deemed appropriate in response to the vignette.

The number of interventions identified by the subjects was operationally defined as the sum of the mutually exclusive activities given in response to the questions. Bisno's methods were used as a guide in determining exclusivity, specificity and variety of interventive activities. Subjects were scored on the quantity of interventive alternatives identified. Qualitative differences were recorded but had no bearing on a subject's score. By using an independent judge, the reliability of the scoring procedure was determined by re-scoring randomly selected questionnaires and a reliability quotient of .90 was achieved. The vignette and its accompanying questions formed the second part of the research instrument.

D. The Subjects

The subjects chosen for study consisted of 51 regularly employed social workers with casework responsibilities in the core area of Winnipeg. To be considered a candidate, a subject had to be employed and salaried as a social worker in accordance with their respective agencies definition of that role. Further, subjects had to carry full-time caseloads and do work of a problem solving nature directly with the recipients of service. Supervisory, administrative, clerical, and case aid staff were therefore not considered to be part of the sample population nor were any considered that did not meet the above criteria.

The agencies from which the sample population was drawn consisted of five of the largest direct service social agencies in Winnipeg. While their respective mandates expressed diverse sorts of service goals and related activities, a common bond between them was a broad commitment towards the amelioration of individual and social problems. Mandates expressed by the agencies sampled consisted of child welfare (Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg), child development (Child Guidance Clinic), corrections (Probation Services), and public welfare (Health and Social Development/City Public Welfare).

While all the agencies selected operated throughout the metropolitan area of Winnipeg and one throughout the province, only those social workers with casework responsibilities in the core area of the city were considered part of the subject pool. This was done for two reasons, one, data collection became more convenient and less time-consuming and two, subjects' cognizance of and experience with the kind of problem presented in the research vignette was assured.

E. Procedure

The administrations of the various agencies selected for study were approached and permission was granted to allow the research to be undertaken during regular office hours. From staff lists provided, eligibility for inclusion in the subject pool was determined in accordance with the selection criteria reported above. Because this selection process revealed grossly unequal representation by agency of social workers in the "core", a decision was made to proportion the sample population to ensure both that the underrepresented agencies were included in the sample and that the sample represented the realities of agency representation in the city's core. With the proportioned sample population determined, a random numbers chart provided the actual research sample. Table 1 illustrates the sample proportion by agency.

TABLE 1 SAMPLE PROPORTION BY AGENCY (N=51)

AGENCY	ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES	PROPORTION	SAMPLE SIZE
CPW	36	.300	16
CAS	40	.333	17
HSD	12	.100	5
PS	15	.125	6
CGC	17	.142	7
TOTALS:	120	100	51



Data was collected by contacting subjects individually and relating only that they had been randomly selected to participate in a private research study whose purpose was to find what relationships, if any, there were between social worker attitudes and social work practice. Subjects were told that their involvement was voluntary, that the questionnaires were anonymous, and that their participation was confidential. On receipt of consent to participate an appointment was set at the subject's convenience and the questionnaire was administered at their place of work. Subjects were asked to work alone and not collaborate. No time limit was given short of informing subjects that the average time for questionnaire completion approximated 30 minutes. Only one individual refused to participate in the research, giving a non-response rate of 2 percent.



## CHAPTER IV

### Data Analysis and Results

#### A. Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Variable

A population of 51 social workers participated in the study. The demographic distribution of the sample is presented as follows:

TABLE 2 BY AGE (N=51)

<u>AGE</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RELATIVE FREQUENCY</u>	<u>CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY</u>
20-25	14	29.5	29.2
26-30	11	21.6	52.1
31-35	8	15.8	68.8
36-40	2	3.9	72.9
41-45	4	7.9	81.3
46 >	9	17.7	100.0
MISSING	3	5.9	

As illustrated in Table 2, over fifty percent of social workers working in Winnipeg's core are under thirty years of age with the most populous group falling between the ages of twenty and twenty-five.

TABLE 3 BY EXPERIENCE (N=51)

EXPERIENCE	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
1-5 years	23	45.1	48.9
6-10 years	14	27.5	78.7
11-15 years	6	11.9	91.5
16 >	4	7.8	100.0
MISSING	4	7.8	

Closely tied to Table 2, Table 3 shows that almost 50 percent of subjects have less than five years of experience in the field and close to 80 percent have less than ten.

TABLE 4 BY EDUCATION (N=51)

EDUCATION	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Some Community College	2	3.9	4.2
Community College Grad.	5	9.8	14.6
Some University	6	11.8	27.1
BA	2	3.9	31.3
BSW	17	33.3	66.7
MA	3	5.9	72.9
MSW	13	25.5	100.0
MISSING	3	5.9	

Table 4 indicates that close to 60 percent of the subjects had had professional training in social work while the remainder represented a potpourri of arts degrees, community college certificates, and partial completions thereof.

TABLE 5 BY YEAR GRADUATED (N=51)

YEAR GRADUATED	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Before 1970	13	25.5	28.6
1970-1975	19	37.2	71.8
After 1975	14	27.5	100.0
MISSING	5	9.8	

Table 5 indicates that almost 65 percent of subjects either completed or left their post secondary schooling within the last seven years. Again these findings are consistent with data reported in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 6 BY SEX (N=51)

SEX	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
Male	22	43.1	45.8
Female	26	51.0	100.0
Missing	3	5.9	

Table 6 shows that the proportion of males and females among subjects was almost even with females outnumbering males by only 8 percent.

B. Distribution of "Mindedness" Scores:

The Holism scale consisted of three sub-scales each measuring the degree to which subjects were oriented towards the three key dimensions within the concept of holism. Two of these dimensions, notably "psycho dynamic mindedness" and "social environmental mindedness", had six items each within the measuring instrument with a possible range of scores of between six and thirty. Interactional/transactional mindedness had twelve items and as a result had a possible range of scores of between twelve and sixty.

In this study it was found that in reference to the PDM sub-scale, scores varied between 6 and 30 with a mean of 14.2 and a standard deviation of 5.06. Regarding SEM, scores varied from 9-28 with a mean of 18.3 and a standard deviation of 4.7. Finally, regarding ITM, scores varied from 30-60 with a mean of 45.9 and a standard deviation of 5.5.

Tables 7, 8, and 9 illustrate the distribution of scores along the above dimensions.

TABLE 7 PSYCHO DYNAMIC MINDEDNESS (N=51)

SCORE	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
6-12	21	41.2	41.2
13-18	25	49.0	90.2
19-24	3	5.8	96.1
25-30	2	3.9	100.0

TABLE 8 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL MINDEDNESS (N=51)

SCORE	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
6-12	9	17.6	17.6
13-18	16	31.4	49.0
19-24	23	45.1	94.1
25-30	3	5.9	100.0

TABLE 9 INTERACTIONAL/TRANSACTIONAL MINDEDNESS (N=51)

SCORE	N	FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
12-24	0	0.0	0.0
25-36	1	2.0	2.0
37-48	37	72.5	74.5
49-60	13	25.5	100.0

C. Distribution of Intervention Scores

Intervention scores were obtained by summing the number of different interventive activities identified in response to the two questions following the vignette. A content analysis based on Bisno's methods produced the intervention score. All but one of Bisno's methods were deemed both reasonable and feasible interventive alternatives, thus producing a possible range of scores of between 0 and 7. \*

In response to the first question, "As a social worker representing your agency, what interventive activities would you consider appropriate in this situation?", interventions identified varied from 1 to 5 with a mean of 3.1 and a standard deviation of 1.1. Table 10 illustrates the distribution of responses to this question.

\* Knowledge Development and Testing did not appear relevant nor did it surface in any subject's response to either question.

TABLE 10 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVENTIONS IDENTIFIED  
IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ONE (N=51)

N OF INTERVENTIONS	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
0	0	0.0	0.0
1	2	3.9	3.9
2	15	29.4	33.3
3	16	31.4	64.7
4	11	21.6	86.3
5	7	13.7	100.0
6	0	0.0	0.0
7	0	0.0	0.0

In response to the second question, "Without considering your present agency's mandate, would you consider any additional interventive activities appropriate to this situation?", interventions identified varied from 0 to 5 with a mean of 1.3 and a standard deviation of 1.2. Table 11 illustrates the distribution of responses to this question.



TABLE 11 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVENTIONS IDENTIFIED  
IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION TWO (N=51)

N OF INTERVENTIONS	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
0	16	31.4	31.4
1	16	31.4	62.7
2	11	21.6	84.3
3	6	11.8	96.1
4	1	2.0	98.0
5	1	2.0	100.0
6	0	0.0	0.0
7	0	0.0	0.0

The intervention score, that is that score obtained by summing the total number of different interventive activities given in response to questions one and two, varied from 1 to 7 with a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 1.17. Table 12 illustrates the distribution of intervention scores.

TABLE 12 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERVENTION SCORES (N=51)

N OF INTERVENTIONS	N	RELATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY
1	1	2.0	2.0
2	9	17.6	19.6
3	15	29.4	49.0
4	15	29.4	78.4
5	10	19.6	98.0
6	0	0.0	98.0
7	1	2.0	100.0

D. Correlation Analysis

A correlational analysis was performed to determine, one, what relationships, if any, there were between the three "mindedness" dimensions and the intervention score and, two, whether relationships could be identified between scores on the "mindedness" dimensions themselves.

Conceptually, a strong positive relationship was expected to emerge between ITM and the intervention score, while inverse relationships were expected between PDM and SEM and the intervention score. Because ITM is thought to represent the identification of the dynamic relationship between psycho dynamic and social environmental variables, it is natural to expect that an individual high in ITM would also be likely to use a broad repertoire of methods addressing both psycho dynamic and social environmental issues. Because PDM and SEM, in and of themselves represent reductionism, it is likewise expected that if relationships emerged, they would be inverse in nature indicating that high scores in these "mindedness" dimensions led to lower interventive repertoires. Finally, both PDM and SEM were expected to correlate with ITM for the obvious reason that ITM demands the identification of variables salient to both these dimensions.

TABLE 13 CORRELATIONS OF MINDEDNESS SCORES  
AND INTERVENTION SCORES

	INTERVENTION SCORE	PDM SCORE	SEM SCORE
INTERVENTION SCORE			
PDM SCORE	$r = -.208$ $p < .11$		
SEM SCORE	$r = .01$ $p < .45$	$r = -.047$ $p < .38$	
ITM SCORE	$r = .290$ $p < .02$	$r = -.322$ $p < .01$	$r = .178$ $p < .03$

As Table 13 indicates, ITM correlates significantly with the intervention score ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .02$ ) and PDM and SEM show no such relationship. It is important to note that these results maintain themselves even when first to fourth order demographic controls including age, sex, years of experience, and education are used in the analysis.\* While the ITM score and the intervention score are not strongly related, it is the only significant relationship emerging between "mindedness" and interventions. A subsequent regression analysis with the intervention score as the dependent variable and the three "mindedness" scores

\* Note that with age and years of experience, exact numbers forming an interval scale were used in the analysis. With education and sex, data was converted to interval for the purpose of analysis.

as independent variables supported these results. It was found that ITM has the greatest impact on the intervention score, accounting for 8 percent of the variance, while the addition of PDM and SEM increased the explained variance by only 2 percent.

While these results are generally inconclusive they are somewhat supportive of the research hypothesis. The main support is that the ITM score relates positively and significantly to the intervention score. Because ITM is the only "mindedness" dimension that is in and of itself compatible with holism as defined in Chapter II, it is encouraging to see this relationship emerge. However, that PDM and SEM are not related to the intervention score argues against the assumption that reductionism leads to a smaller interventive repertoire. More conclusive statements regarding the role of ITM, PDM, and SEM in determining or influencing methodology await further analysis.

Table 13 also shows that, as expected, PDM and SEM relate significantly to ITM. One relationship, notably PDM ( $r = -.322$ ,  $p < .01$ ) is inverse in nature while SEM ( $r = .178$ ,  $p < .03$ ) is not. Strength and direction of these relationships are inexplicable in conceptual terms and some consideration of ITM as a unidimensional variable independent of both PDM and SEM becomes warranted. Table 14 illustrates a regression analysis used to determine the impact of PDM and SEM on ITM.

TABLE 14. MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSISITM WITH PDM AND SEMDependent Variable - ITM

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	SIMPLE R	r <sup>2</sup>	RSQ CHANGE	BETA
PDM	-0.32210*	0.10375	0.10375	-0.33454
SEM	0.17844**	0.14332	0.03957	0.19932

\* p &lt; .01

\*\* p &lt; .03

As clearly shown in this summary table, ITM must be considered a "mindedness" in and of itself, separate and apart and only minimally influenced by both PDM and SEM. Together, PDM and SEM can account for 14 percent of the variance on ITM, leaving 86 percent of that variance unexplained.

Other findings of note were correlations that emerged between demographic variables and various scores achieved in the research questionnaire. Regarding ITM, relationships emerged between ITM scores and age ( $r = -.269$ ,  $p < .037$ ), year graduated ( $r = .377$ ,  $p < .005$ ), and education ( $r = .477$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In other words, younger, more recently graduated social workers with university training tended to score highest on the ITM sub-scale. Regarding PDM, an inverse

relationship emerged between PDM and education ( $r = -.487$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicating that less educated social workers were most likely to be psychodynamically minded. No relationships of any significance emerged between demographic variables and either SEM or intervention scores with the exception of SEM and education ( $r = .200$ ,  $p < .09$ ) which approached but did not achieve significance.

In summary, correlational analysis and subsequent regression analysis provided some support for the research hypothesis in that the only "mindedness" dimension compatible with holism, notable ITM, correlated positively and significantly with the intervention score. It is also of importance to note the emergence of ITM as a mindedness independent of both PDM and SEM. Such findings may indicate that ITM is in fact the most significant variable impacting interventive repertoires as opposed to precise combinations of PDM, SEM and ITM. In general, however, these results are inconclusive and tests of differences were required to either accept or reject the research hypothesis and to shed further light on the role played by ITM in impacting methodology.

E. T-Test

In order to undertake tests of differences both to test the research hypothesis and to determine the impact of ITM, three separate groups were formed in accordance with "mindedness" scores and combinations thereof. Group I, termed the holistic group, consisted of those subjects whose scores on the "mindedness" sub-scales reflected complete compatibility with the conceptualization and the operationalization of holism. These subjects scored high in ITM, and were roughly equal in PDM and SEM. Group II, termed the mixed group, consisted of those subjects whose scores reflected only partial compatibility with holism. While they scored high in ITM, their scores on the PDM and SEM sub-scales were unequal thus indicating a reductionistic tendency in their orientations. Group III, termed non-holistic, consisted of those subjects whose scores on the three "mindedness" sub-scales reflected complete incompatibility with holism. These subjects scored low on ITM while at the same time reflected reductionism in their PDM and SEM scores. Note that the median score in each mindedness dimension was used in determining whether a subject's score was high or low. Scores below the median were considered low and scores above considered high.



TABLE 15 T-TESTS OF GROUPS ONE, TWO, THREE

Dependent Variable - Intervention Score

GROUP	N	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	F. VALUE	2-TAIL PROB.	T. VALUE	2-TAIL PROB.
I (holistic)	9	4.33	1.658			(pooled)	
III (non-holistic)	25	3.40	1.040	2.54	0.07	1.96	0.05
<hr/>							
I (holistic)	9	4.33	1.658			(separate)	
II (mixed)	17	3.35	0.931	3.17	0.04	1.64	0.13
<hr/>							
II (mixed)	17	3.35	0.931			(pooled)	
III (non-holistic)	25	3.40	1.040	1.25	0.65	-0.15	0.88
<hr/>							

The research hypothesis;

"Holistically oriented social workers, when confronted with the identical problem situation, will utilize a broader range of interventive activities than that utilized by non-holistic social workers",

was tested by subjecting Group I (holistic) and Group III (non-holistic) to a T-TEST with the intervention score as the dependent variable.

As Table 15 indicates, a significant difference ( $T = 1.96$ ,  $p < .05$ ) emerged between Groups I and III in relation to their interventive repertoires. Given these results, the research hypothesis was accepted as true. Holistic social workers, when confronted with an identical problem situation, were able to identify one full interventive method more than their non-holistic counterparts. Given the significance level ( $p < .05$ ) we can infer that within the general population of social workers, the same phenomena is likely to take place.

To test the impact of ITM on methodology, Group II (mixed) was tested with Group I (holistic) and with Group III (non-holistic). It was thought that if the "mixed" group showed no significant difference from the "holistic" group at the same time as proving significantly different from the "non-holistic" group, then ITM would have to be considered the best predictor of methodology

in quantitative terms. However, if these findings did not emerge, the conceptual definition of holism could stand as the best predictor of methodology.

As Table 15 indicates, Group II (mixed) was not significantly different from Group I (holistic) but at the same time was also not significantly different from Group III (non-holistic). The table shows a trend that the "mixed" group is less different from the "non-holistic" group ( $T = -0.15$ ,  $p < 0.88$ ) than it is from the "holistic" group ( $T = 1.64$ ,  $p < .13$ ). Conclusions that may be drawn from these findings are that the "holistic" group represents a significantly different class by itself in relation to interventive repertoires while the "mixed" and the "non-holistic" groups appear to be similar in quantitative methodological terms.

F. Other Findings

Findings that may be of interest to the reader are the demographic characteristics of the holistic group. In the overall sample of 51 social workers, only 18 percent proved to be holistically oriented. This holistic group tended to be younger, averaging 29 years of age as compared with the overall sample age of 33. They also had less experience in the field, averaging 4.5 years in the field compared with the overall sample experience of 7 years. The holistic group was dominated by females who accounted for 75 percent of its make-up as compared to the female representation in the overall sample of 50 percent.

Of particular interest are the characteristics of the holistic group regarding education and year of graduation. The holistic group were all professionally trained social workers; 7 were BSW and 1 was MSW. Over 44 percent of this group had graduated in 1976, and all had graduated since 1972.

The above findings may indicate that the School of Social Work, University of Manitoba, is enjoying some success in its chosen mandate to graduate generic social workers with holistic orientations. One is, however, cautioned to temper such an interpretation by considering that 70 percent of the BSWs and 90 percent of the MSWs sampled were in fact not holistic in their orientations.

## CHAPTER V

### Study Conclusions and Discussion

It was suggested that the concept of holism in social work be considered as that orientation giving active attention to a host of interactive and transactive variables including; (1) broad social forces; (2) environmental manifestations of those forces; (3) interactive processes; (4) intra-psychic dynamics; and (4) biological factors. For research purposes the concept of holism was operationalized in the form of three sub-scales, two of these addressing separate variable clusters within the concept and the third addressing their dynamic nature. Subjects whose scores reflected an objective identification of all variables in the above configuration at the same time as reflecting a subjective appreciation of their dynamic nature were considered holistically oriented. It was hypothesized that holistic social workers would identify more interventive alternatives when confronted with an identical problem situation than would their non-holistic counterparts.

The hypothesis proved to be supported in accordance with conventional statistical procedures and tests. The significance level achieved ( $p < .05$ ) allows that the results may be generalized to the broad social work

population working in the "core" areas of large urban cities. The findings suggest that given any problem situation requiring social work intervention, an holistically oriented social worker can be expected to utilize more interventive alternatives than his non-holistic counterpart.

On the basis of these findings it can perhaps be argued that those agencies expressing broad mandates towards human problem amelioration are agencies best served by conscious employment of holistically oriented social workers. Such social workers, whose perspective allows that they see more in any presenting problem and who, in consequence of that perspective, do more in terms of interventive activity, are likely to be more effective than social workers with more reductionistic notions. While it is recognized that quantity of interventions does not imply quality, one may still reasonably assume that, given the "unknowables" in most presenting problems, the more interventions attempted the better the chances of effectively helping the client.

The results emerging from a correlational analysis of the data, specifically in reference to expectations regarding "mindedness" relationships and the role of education, merit some discussion. That PDM proved to correlate inversely with ITM ( $r = -.322, p < .01$ ) while

SEM proved positively correlated ( $r = .178$ ,  $p < .03$ ) remains a conceptual enigma. It was expected that reductionism, whether it be manifest in PDM or SEM, would correlate inversely with ITM. Given the positive direction of the SEM and ITM relationship, however, one must consider the precise interrelationships within the "mindedness" configuration to be more complex than originally thought. That SEM and ITM have a positive relationship may indicate that both these dimensions touch upon the same phenomena. One might speculate that the phenomena may be a "consciousness" that broad social forces, forces external to the individual and knit into the fabric of society, impact the individual in a very real and meaningful way.

Relationships emerging between the "mindedness" dimensions and education may shed further light on this discussion. First, PDM proved inversely correlated with education ( $r = -.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ) indicating that lesser trained social workers cling to the rather traditional view of social work as a sort of poor man's psychiatry, one treating human problems as the sole function of psychic maladjustment. Education, however, correlates close to significance with SEM ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .09$ ) and is strongly and significantly related to ITM ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .001$ ). That both SEM and ITM correlate with education at the same time as correlating positively among themselves

reinforces the notion that these "mindedness" dimensions are more similar in nature than was originally thought. Further, it appears that education plays a significant role in their emergence. Universities' tradition of social criticism coupled with social work schools' attempts to extricate themselves from the more traditional psychodynamic approaches may explain these results in part. More precise statements regarding "mindedness" relationships and the role of education in that dynamic await further investigation.

The above discussion notwithstanding, it remains important to note that only 27 percent of all professionally educated social workers (BSW or MSW) sampled proved to be holistically oriented. A full 40 percent proved reductionistic and the remaining 33 percent fell into the "mixed" group. These findings suggest that professional schools, particularly those expressing mandates to graduate social workers with holistic orientations, may do well to look at student orientations in the admission process. Given that the relationship between G.P.A. and professional competence has yet to be established and that admission interviews lack standardization and objectivity, schools might do well by utilizing an instrument designed to reveal the orientation of a given applicant. That a large percentage of supposedly holistic practitioners did not prove to be so despite their training may indicate the



inability of professional schools to impart orientation to students and gives cause for a priori selection of students based, in part, on the applicant's view of the world.

Considering the findings of the research a final word on the issue of validity is perhaps in order. It is recognized that the validation process, particularly that regarding the author's own ITM sub-scale and vignette, might leave some doubt as to the validity of the measuring instrument. It may be argued, however, that because variance emerged on all component scores and because many predictions as to their interrelationships were realized, the instrument "worked" and may thus be seen to have a high degree of pragmatic validity. This is especially true if one accepts the uni-dimensionality of the instrument's component parts. The correlation emerging between ITM and the intervention score is particularly noteworthy as it indicates predictive validity of those components as well as lending considerable support to the overall validity of the entire instrument.

Qualitative differences in interventive activities and their relationship to orientation, while considered to be beyond the scope of this research, are nonetheless critical areas of investigation needed to more fully understand the issues raised.\* In the content analysis

\* See APPENDIX IV for Qualitative Breakdown.

of responses to the research vignette it became obvious that social workers, no matter what their orientation, are primarily clinical in their approach to problem solving. For example, the "restorative" method, that is that method seeking to return the client to a previous level of functioning, was identified as appropriate by a full 100 percent of the subjects. In contrast, the "rule making" method, that is that method seeking to help the client by attempting to influence policy revision and formulation, was identified by only 7 percent of respondents and only 11 percent of the holistic group. Clearly an understanding of the dynamics of quantitative differences in interventive activity says little about the dynamics of qualitative choice in the matter. Considering that "holism" implies efforts towards social change as much as efforts towards client adjustment one would expect that holistic practitioners would far exceed that proportion identifying "rule making" as an important alternative. These findings may indicate a certain "lag" between orientation and the acting out of that orientation in practice terms. Questions regarding the critical factors and their relationships within the context of "what social workers think" and "what social workers do" are only partially answered by this study. More complete answers,

and perhaps more exact questions, await the expansion of research in this area.

In conclusion, one might venture to state that perhaps the present orientation of social work may best be gauged, not by scales and vignettes, but by looking at the problems ignored, both theoretically and practically, by the profession. Without dismissing the research contained in this study, it is suggested that anyone interested may take the orientational temperature of social work merely by observing what social workers do with poverty and all its correlates and consequences. That current theory and practice remains primarily concerned with intra-psychic and interpersonal phenomena says much. That poverty remains accepted as a condition of existence, fixed and beyond the scope of "treatment", says even more. It, in effect, denies the consciousness inherent in "holism". It denies that man is a function of his environment as much as that environment is a function of him. The research presented here does show the beginnings of the "consciousness" of holism but it also shows that traditional bridges from the past have not yet been burned. Until social work as a profession adopts that consciousness implied by holism one can expect little progress in the goal of the prevention of problems we are today attempting to treat.

APPENDIX I

- A. THE QUESTIONNAIRE
- B. IDENTIFICATION AND SCORING  
OF MINDEDNESS SUB-SCALES

A. QUESTIONNAIRE

. Orientations in Social Work

INSTRUCTIONS: Read each of the following statements and consider whether you agree or disagree. Circle a number from one through five to show your agreement or disagreement with each statement. Work rapidly. It is your opinion which is important. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. I strongly disagree.
2. I think I disagree.
3. I'm undecided.
4. I think I agree.
5. I strongly agree.

---

EXAMPLE: Strong agreement is indicated by the circle around 5.

Social work has an important contribution to make to society.      1   2   3   4   ⑤

---

. Individual and social problems cannot be understood if considered independent of each other.      1   2   3   4   5

---

. Even in cases where a person appears to act consciously and deliberately, it is difficult to hold him completely responsible for his actions.      1   2   3   4   5

---

. Case by case treatment can never make inroads on society's basic problems.      1   2   3   4   5

---

. Social workers should spend more time helping communities to accept the mentally ill rather than working with patients to adjust.      1   2   3   4   5

---

. Individual and social problems can hardly ever be traced to just one or two causes.      1   2   3   4   5

---

In order to properly assess any problem situation, social workers should see beyond what they are looking at.

1 2 3 4 5

Social workers can change society only through the medium of feelings and actions of the people who are social work clients.

1 2 3 4 5

Social workers should be more concerned with the impact of the environment on clients and less concerned with personality dynamics.

1 2 3 4 5

A family may best be described as an aggregation of individuals.

1 2 3 4 5

The highest goal of social casework should be to free the client from inner conflicts.

1 2 3 4 5

Community organization and casework are basically compatible and can work toward the same goals.

1 2 3 4 5

Developing expertise in one specific interventive technique is better than a working knowledge of a number of such techniques.

1 2 3 4 5

An individual's working environment will always have an impact on his family life.

1 2 3 4 5

In combating juvenile delinquency, social workers should work more with the neighbours and schools than with the delinquent's parents.

1 2 3 4 5

The kind of opportunity structure in which people find themselves is the central condition determining their behavior.

1 2 3 4 5

- 
- . The reason that delinquency and family breakdown are getting worse is that known treatment methods have never been given a chance on a large scale. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . If a child shows disturbance in a number of situations, then it is predictable that he will be disturbed in all situations. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . Social work should have more interests and goals in common with public health than with psychiatry. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . The term "interaction" should be primarily considered a description of family dynamics. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . The large social problems of today can best be understood when they are analyzed in terms of individual behavior dynamics. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . The prime goal of social work service to the unwed mother should be the discovery of the personality dynamics which led her to become pregnant. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . Environment should mean to social workers that which is open to immediate perception and direct modification. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . In the final analysis, an individual should be considered as master of his own fate. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
- . Effective help to any client depends on understanding of his unconscious motivations. 1 2 3 4 5
- 
-

. Practice in Social Work

STRUCTURE: The following vignette typifies a number of cases known to social workers with casework responsibilities in the "core" area of Winnipeg. Read the vignette carefully with a mind to answer the following questions.

As a social worker representing your agency, what interventive activities would you consider to be appropriate in this situation?

Without considering your present agency's mandate, would you consider any additional interventive activities appropriate to this situation?

Record your responses in the appropriate place following the vignette. Keep in mind that no analysis of this situation is requested, just the kinds of activities that would follow your analysis. Be brief and to the point and try to describe each interventive activity in a single sentence.

"Mrs. H., an obese, forty year old native mother of six children, was admitted to the Health Sciences Centre Detoxification Unit at the request of the Main Street Project. Prior to her admission, Mrs. H., who has a grade eight education, lived with her husband and children in a two bedroom apartment in a deteriorated building in Winnipeg's "core" area. The family is on welfare with Mrs. H. earning money occasionally at odd jobs. The family is managing only as their income provides only basic necessities.

In hospital, Mrs. H. was diagnosed as chronic schizophrenic, differentiated type with the illness being aggravated by alcohol use. She was hospitalized at the request of a M.S.P. worker who frequently found her "drunk" and wandering Main Street in a confused state". In hospital, Mrs. H. spoke of being unable to care for her children because she was "sick all the time" and "didn't have enough money anyway." Her child care was erratic and at times she could not feed, change, or train her two year old son. During these episodes, her fourteen year old daughter would remain home from school to carry out the child care responsibilities. Mrs. H. also refused, at times, to prepare her family's meals and often avoided sexual contact with her husband, fearing pregnancy. She expressed relief at being hospitalized and stated that "if things don't change, they'll take my kids away".



5. As a social worker representing your agency, what interventive activities would you consider appropriate in this situation?

5. Without considering your present agency's mandate, would you consider any additional interventive activities appropriate to this situation?

I. Personal Data

TE: Please circle the correct category or fill in the blank.  
The following information is needed for analysis of data.

. AGENCY to which you are affiliated.

1. Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg.
2. Child Guidance Clinic of Winnipeg.
3. Department of Health and Social Development.
4. City Public Welfare.
5. Other \_\_\_\_\_.

. YEARS of paid experience in social work or social welfare.

\_\_\_\_\_

. Highest level of education achieved.

0. Some high school.
1. High school graduate.
2. Some community college.
3. Community college graduate.
4. Some university.
5. B.A.
6. B.S.W.
7. M.A.
8. M.S.W.
9. \_\_\_\_\_.

. LAST year of attendance at an educational facility or year graduated \_\_\_\_\_.

. AGE at last birthday \_\_\_\_\_.

. SEX        MALE:        FEMALE:

B. IDENTIFICATION AND SCORING  
OF MINDEDNESS SUB-SCALES

Respondents were instructed to circle a number from one through five, to reflect their extent of agreement or disagreement with each item. Scores for each of the orientations were then determined by adding together the numbers circled for the appropriate items. Before adding up the scores, it was necessary to reverse certain of the items by subtracting the questionnaire response from 6. These items (9, 12, 17, 19, 22, and 23) were those where agreement represented a negative response to the orientation measured.

The item responses to be added together for each sub-scale score are listed as follows:

1. Psycho-dynamic Mindedness score sum of:  
7, 10, 16, 20, 21, 24
2. Social Environmental Mindedness score sum of:  
3, 4, 8, 14, 15, 18
3. Interaction Transaction Mindedness\* score sum of:  
1, 2, 5, 6, 9(r), 11, 12(r), 13,  
17(r), 19(r), 22(r), 23(r).

\* Before adding up these scores it is necessary to reverse certain items (indicated by (r) ) by subtracting the response from 6.

APPENDIX II

"THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE SCORES"

EXCERPT FROM A QUESTIONNAIRE METHOD FOR  
MEASURING CLINICAL AND SOCIAL ORIENTATIONS

BY MERLIN TABER.

June 3, 1977

Mr. Kenny Richard  
241 Canora St.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Dear Mr. Richard:

Let me apologize for permitting almost a month to go by before answering your letter. Professor Vattano and I were glad of your interest in our study and are glad to give you blanket permission to use any of our materials, items or procedures as you see fit.

I am enclosing a more detailed write up of the instrument and it's analysis in mimeograph form.

I am also sending along a copy of your letter and my response to Professor Vattano who is on sabbatical leave. He may feel like commenting or he may not since he is trying to get some publications written.

Your question about whether our findings mean social workers have an "holistic" orientation is a difficult one. I believe the answer is yes and that our findings suggest that there is not a negative relation between the various scales which we found. More generally, I would add that, in my opinion, social work is unique among the professions in having to consider the whole person and the whole situation. I interpret "situation" in social psychological terms.

It seems to me the problem with your study is showing that social workers "pay attention to everything" in their practice. How do you define an alternative to this proposition? How do you show the absence of "everything"?

Again, thank you for your interest and best wishes with your studies.

Sincerely,



Merlin Taber  
Professor

MAT/pjk  
encl

## 2.1 SOURCES OF 120 ITEMS

The study began as an effort to examine the possible existence and the nature of clinical and social orientations among social workers. Based on a review of the literature, correspondence, and conversations with faculty colleagues and practicing social workers, the following definitions were formulated:

The "clinical" orientation is a belief in the efficacy of individual treatment to improve social functioning and solve social problems: selection of psychiatric, psychological, and medical concepts and theories as being relevant to social work; and a high priority on providing direct services to individuals and groups who actively seek help.

The "social" orientation is a belief in the necessity for directing social change; attention to concepts and theories from social science; and a tendency to analyze clients as members of groups rather than as individuals.

A pool of 120 statements was collected to represent these two viewpoints. About one-third of these statements were taken directly, or in slightly paraphrased form, from the literature on social work. The writings of leading social workers were examined (e.g., W. Boehm, G. Brager, E. Burns, N. Cohen, J. Eaton, F. Hollis, H. Maas, H. Perlman, A. Wade) as well as authors from outside the field who have commented on the profession (e.g., J. Coleman, I. Josselyn, W. LaBarre, P. Tillich). In all, some 40 items in the original pool were derived from the writings of 23 different authors.

A second source of items for the original pool were professional and academic documents; reports of the NASW commission on social work practice, course syllabi, position papers on social and professional issues, and personal correspondence. About 25 items came from these professional, unpublished sources.

Third, approximately a dozen items were taken from questionnaires developed by other researchers for similar purposes. Through correspondence with Barbara Varley, Henry J. Meyer, and Erwin Epstein, we were able to obtain preliminary versions of questionnaire instruments under development, and borrowed several of the items.

Finally, another third or more of the items in the original pool of 120 were constructed by Professors Vattano and Taber, based on their professional experience and their review of the clinical-social controversy.

## 2.2 SCREENING OF ITEMS BY FACULTY MEMBERS

Twenty-four social work faculty members on three campuses rated each of the 120 items in relation to the definitions given above. Each item was rated as "clinical," "social," or "neither." Analysis of these ratings indicated that something over one-fourth of the 120 items were either ambiguous or irrelevant to the clinical-social definitions. As a result of that screening, 33 items were dropped from the pool.

## 2.3 SCREENING OF ITEMS FOR CONTENT AND FORM

The 87 items remaining in the pool after the faculty member screening were reduced to 62 by application of other criteria.

First, the content and the referents of each of the items was examined in relation to the "working definition" of social work practice which had been published a few years before by NASW. In the selection of items, it was insured that all of the five components in the working definition would be represented (value, purpose, sanction, knowledge, method).

Second, several items were eliminated because they nearly duplicated other items. Several items were dropped because they were either vague or contained a double question.

The remaining 62 items were arranged in questionnaire form (see Appendix 6.1) with a seven point agreement scale which permitted easy scoring, and the addition of a few questions about personal and professional characteristics of respondents.

## 2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS FROM NASW MEMBERS AND STUDENTS

The questionnaire was mailed to a systematic random sample of about 1500 NASW members taken from the Directory which was published in 1966. A total of 821 usable questionnaires were returned.

At the same time, the cooperation of other schools of social work was sought so that the questionnaires might be administered on several campuses over a period of several years. At this writing, 3,181 usable returns have been collected from graduate social work students on four campuses over a period of five years: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, University of Iowa, and Tulane University.

## 2.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS: STABLE STRUCTURE OF FIVE INTERPRETABLE SCALES

As a first step, "clinical" and "social" scores were constructed for each respondent by adding together the appropriate item responses. These scores were used to test the hypothesis that clinical and social orientations were on a continuum and were mutually opposed (see section 3.1 for results).

In order to further test the internal consistency of response patterns, and in order to obtain the best measures of professional orientations that were possible, both NASW and student returns were subjected to factor analysis. Factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied independently to the NASW returns and to returns from students who were at the end of their first year or were graduating from graduate school. Three significant observations emerged from the factor analysis.

First, levels of intercorrelations between items were relatively low (the highest were around .2). This fact, and the relatively modest commonalities indicated the presence of a great deal of either random error or irrelevance among the item responses. This observation indicated that responses to any one item or the response pattern of any one individual, should be interpreted with caution.

Second, it was observed that despite the fact that a great deal of the variance was not accounted for by the factor structure, the factor structure from independent analyses of the separate samples was very similar and in fact, virtually identical. The identity of the two factor structures (see appendix sections 6.3 and 6.4) was persuasive evidence that a stable structure of professional orientations was reflected in the patterns of responses.

Third, it was observed that the factor structure resulting from this analysis dictated some redefinition of the "clinical-social" duality. One of the three main factors was made up of "clinical" items but examination of the items indicated that a more exact name for this scale would be Varley's term, "psychodynamic-mindedness." The other two of the three main factors were largely made up of "social" items but again, examination of the items indicated clearly that two different dimensions of meaning were represented. Accordingly, these two factors were named "social action," and "social-environment-mindedness." Factor analysis also showed that the items having to do with title protection and private practice represented dimensions or orientations independent of the other three.

Beyond the first five factors, the groups of items did not show the same agreement between the two samples and also were not interpretable; therefore, they were not pursued.

The five attitude scores were used for further analysis and data-collection; it was concluded from the preliminary work that:

1. The original "clinical" and "social" scores had high face validity but low precision and were not unidimensional.
2. The five scores based on the factor analysis represented a pervasive, stable, and internally consistent structure of selected attitudes which were clear in meaning.
3. The five scores were worth further investigation; the substantive importance of the five attitudes (as against their empirical observability) could be determined only by studying change in the scores and relation



## 2.6 FACTOR SCORES AND ADDITIVE SCORES

Factor scores for each individual respondent, computed from the results of the factor analysis, are the most accurate representation of individual positions with respect to the factor structure. However, such factor scores are complex and expensive to compute, even with the use of computers. Therefore, the decision was made to employ scores derived from adding responses on those few items having the largest weighting on each of the factors. The resulting additive scores were presented in section 1.3. Agreement between the factor scores which employ all item responses, and the additive scores based on only a few items, was quite good. Correlations between factor scores and additive scores were determined for 427 student returns, University of Iowa:

Factor:	Correlation of Factor and Additive Scores:
Psychodynamic-Mindedness	.80
Social Action	.82
Social-Environment-Mindedness	.84
Title-Protection and Training	.84
Private Practice	.87

## 2.7 RELIABILITY OF SCORES

Twenty-nine social work graduate students in one class, spring 1966, completed questionnaires on two occasions about one month apart. For each student, a "clinical" score (29 items) and a "social" score (33 items) was computed for each administration. Correlation of the arrays of "clinical" scores over the two administrations of the test was .81; correlation of the "social" scores was .75.

After the factor analysis was completed and the five additive scores were established, another test-retest reliability check was performed. In the fall of 1970, 29 graduate social work students completed the questionnaire on two occasions, three weeks apart. Correlations of scores over the two administrations were as follows:

Factor:	Correlation of Scores, First and Second Administrations:
Psychodynamic-Mindedness	.75
Social Action	.71
Social-Environment-Mindedness	.78
Title-Protection and Training	.63
Private Practice	.22

APPENDIX III

BISNO'S METHODS

FIGURE II

THE METHODS AND TRANSACTIONAL SYSTEMS

METHODS

(Subsuming techniques and skills)

**ADVERSARY**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving articulation and resolution of conflicts of interests and commitments

**CONCILIATORY**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving the maximizing of associative processes

**DEVELOPMENTAL**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving the creating, mobilizing, and use of resources for purposes of development

**FACILITATIVE-INSTRUCTIONAL**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving teaching, supervision, etc.

**KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving research, evaluation, and dissemination of findings, data, programs and policies

**RESTORATIVE**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving the remedying and healing of impaired functioning

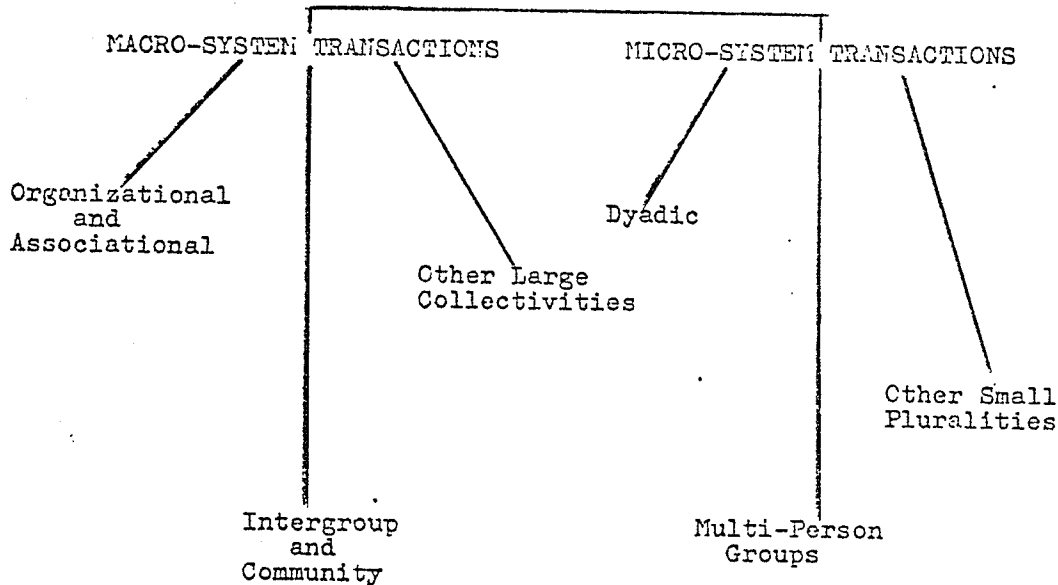
**REGULATORY**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving adherence to rules and norms

**RULE-IMPLEMENTING**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving the operationalizing and administering of laws, policies, and programs

**RULE-MAKING**  
Processes, techniques, and skills involving the making of policies, laws, and other rules

THE CLIENT AND OTHER RELEVANT TRANSACTIONAL SYSTEMS

(The social worker interacts with, and is part of, the transactional system)



APPENDIX IV

QUALITATIVE IDENTIFICATION OF  
METHODS BY GROUP

Qualitative Identification of Methods  
By Group (Percent)

METHOD	TOTAL	HOLISTIC	MIXED	NON-HOLISTIC
Regulatory	45	33	35	56
Restorative	100	100	100	100
Facilitative Instructional	68	77	70	64
Adversary Conciliatory	37	77	23	32
Developmental	58	66	52	60
Rule Implementing	37	66	41	24
Rule Making	8	11	11	4
	N=51	N=9	N=17	N=25

15. Grinnel, R. M. and Kyte, N. S. "Environmental Modification: A Study", Social Work, Vol. 20, No. 4, July 1975.
16. Grosser, S. "Educating the Holistic Social Worker: A Perspective and Approach for Practice", Canadian Journal of Social Work Education, Vol. 1, No. 2, Spring 1975, pp. 5-15.
17. Hartman, A. "To think about the unthinkable", Social Casework, Vol. 5, No. 8, October 1970, pp. 457-474.
18. Hearn, G. (ed.) The General Systems Approach: Contributions Toward an Holistic Conception of Social Work, (N.Y.: Council on Social Work Education, 1969).
19. Janchill, M. P. "Systems Concepts in Casework Theory and Practice", Social Casework, Vol. 50, No. 2, February 1969, pp. 74-82.
20. Koestler, A. and Smythies, V. Beyond Reeducationism: New Perspectives in the Life Sciences (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).
21. Kolstol, R. H. Introduction to Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1973).
22. Leighton, Neil. "The Act of Understanding", British Journal of Social Work, Vol. 3, No. 4, Winter 1973, pp. 507-524.
23. Leonard, P. "Towards a Paradigm for Radical Practice" in Radical Social Work, Bailey, R. and Brake, M. eds., (London: The Camelot Press, 1975).
24. Lewis, H. "Agology, Animation, Conscientization: Implications for Social Work Education in the U.S.A.", Journal of Education for Social Work, Vol. 9, No. 3, Fall 1973.
25. Mendes, R. H. "On Conservatism in Social Work", Unpublished, Brooklyn College, May 1964 (Mimeographed).
26. Nie, N. H. et al. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (N.Y.: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1975).
27. Olsen, M. The Process of Social Organization (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).
28. Oppenheim, A. N. Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1966).

29. Orcutt, B. A. "Casework Intervention and the Problems of the Poor", Social Casework, Vol. 64, No. 2, February 1973, pp. 85-95.
30. Pincas, A. and Minahan, A. Social Work Practice: Model and Method (Itasca: F. E. Peacock, 1973).
31. Poskanzer, B. "Expansion of Bisno's Methods", Unpublished, University of Manitoba, September 1972 (Mimeographed).
32. Roberts, R. W. and Nee, R. H. (eds.) Theories of Social Casework (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).
33. Schneiderman, L. "A Social Action Model for the Social Work Practitioner", Social Casework, Vol. 46, No. 8, October 1965, pp. 490-493.
34. Selltin, C., Johoda, M., Deutsch, M., and Cook, S. Research Methods in Social Relations (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966).
35. Siporin, M. Introduction to Social Work Practice (N.Y.: MacMillan Co., 1975).
36. Stein, S., Linn, M. and Furdon, J. "Predicting Social Work Student Performance", Journal of Education for Social Work, Vol. 10, No. 3, Fall 1974, pp. 85-92.
37. Studt, E. "Social Work Theory and Implications for the Practice of Methods", Social Work Education Reporter, Vol. 16, June 1968, pp. 22-24, 42-46.
38. Taber, M. and Vittano, A. "Clinical and Social Orientations in Social Work: An Empirical Study", Social Service Review, Vol. 44, No. 1, March 1970, pp. 34-43.
39. Taber, M. "A Questionnaire Method for Measuring Clinical and Social Orientations to Social Work", University of Illinois, 1976, (Mimeographed).