THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

PARTICIPATORY MANAGEMENT

IN

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES:

AN OVERVIEW AND BASIC MODEL

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

By

Herbert A. Crocker

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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Abstract

Social service agencies with which the writer has had experience have been largely based on Weber's bureaucratic model. This fact is at least partly responsible for several organizational shortcomings, in terms of quality of service to clients, and treatment of staff. The goal of the thesis was to develop an alternate model capable of ameliorating those shortcomings.

Several concepts were examined in order to develop a foundation for the different model: the etymological distinction between work and labour, probability theory as it applies to the social sciences, and logical positivism and the concept of verstehen theory as they apply to decision making and the accumulation of knowledge. Alienation and burnout and their "opposits" as they apply to agency staff, organizational citizenship, power and the types of compliance generated by its use were also found to be useful.

A case is made that an agency organized such that direct service staff have an important role in decision making would also be taking into account several other important considerations: burnout and turnover would be reduced because staff would have a wider variety of tasks to perform, and would have more aspects of work, as opposed to labour, in their jobs. Such a model would also take into account the limits of rationalism and the important role of values in decision making. It is posited that job satisfaction and service delivery would both improve if a participatory model were adopted.

A model, essentially of a collegial nature, but also with provision for client and community participation, is proposed as the best way of

taking the above considerations into account. The guiding principle is that decisions be made, whenever possible, by those staff most directly affected, because those staff have better information and a greater stake in making good decisions for themselves and their clients. Coordinating positions are rotated, so that all staff have an opportunity to perform some administrative functions.

Finally, there is an examination of problems such an organization might encounter, including tyranny of the group, false participation, high overhead and low productivity, and morale.

If you take a flat map
And move wooden blocks upon it strategically,
The thing looks well, the blocks behave as they should.
The science of war is moving live men like blocks.
And getting the blocks into place at a fixed moment.
But it takes time to mold your men into blocks
And flat maps turn into country where creeks and gullies
Hamper your wooden squares. They stick in the brush,
They are tired and rest, they straggle after ripe blackberries,
And you cannot lift them up in your hand and move them.
--A string of blocks curling smoothly around the left
Of another string of blocks and crunching it up--
It is all so clear in the maps, so clear in the mind,
But the orders are slow, the men in the blocks are slow
To move, when they start they take too long on the way--
The General loses his stars and the block-men die
In unstrategic defiance of martial law
Because still used to just being men, not block-parts.

From <u>John Brown's Body</u>

Stephen Vincent Benét

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Preface

What follows is not a dispassionate examination of an idea. It is the examination of an idea from a point of view. Although the idea has been considered carefully, and from several perspectives, it is still very much a point of view. In order to facilitate your understanding of this thesis, a brief account of its origins is in order.*

The topic was chosen as a result of my experiences as a line worker in a social service agency for almost a decade. After going back to university, and having completed the necessary coursework, all that remained between me and my degree was a thesis. I was able to arrange a part time position, working nights, in order to have enough time to write it. It turned out that although the pay was for a part time position, the workload was not. Efforts undertaken by staff of the agency to work with management to resolve the problem came to nothing. The final straw came in August, 1977. On one particularly hectic weekend, I worked continuously for a period of twenty-five hours, and had to come in for another five hours the next day to write reports. A request for monetary compensation was rejected. Several staff, including myself, ended up going outside the agency in an attempt to have the matter resolved. The County Court decision written by Jewers, C.C.J. (cited in chapter four), is one result of that effort, which, from my perspective, was successful. The administration thought otherwise, and, almost three years after it all began, three learned

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* For a theoretical justification of such an approach, see chapter four.

justices of the Manitoba Court of Appeal had occasion to unanimously agree with "... the learned trial judge that the plaintiffs are entitled to the benefits of The Employment Standards Act ..." (Huband, et al., 1980, p. 14).

My thesis was still not getting written, however. It was becoming increasingly clear that as long as I was working there, it never would. I requested a leave of absence, which was denied. I resigned. As a result of financial aid from my parents and my wife's parents, it was possible to work full time for several months on this thesis. There were still interruptions, however, now caused by the legal proceedings.

Grant Reid, my advisor, wisely suggested that a major consideration in the selection of a topic should be that it was interesting. This is the result. I hope it will be of interest to others, too. If it turns out that it is useful, it will have served its purpose.

My debts are numerous, and of several types. Foremost is that owed to Martha, my wife, and Jon and Chris, our children. Without their emotional support and encouragement this thesis would probably never have been completed. After that, it gets a bit less clear as to the proper order in which acknowledgements should be made, because all those listed below, whether by name or by category, played important roles in the development and completion of it. The contribution of Martha's parents, and my own, were more than just financial, and are especially appreciated. The same is true of Olive L. Crocker, in whose professional footsteps I have followed. Perhaps someday my shoes will fill the imprints more completely.

Numerous individuals from the School of Social Work have been of assistance over the years (this process took a bit longer than it was

supposed to). In addition to the current committee of Len Kaminski, Brad McKenzie, and Paul Phillips, whose assistance was invaluable, I owe a special debt to Grant Reid, who is at the present time hospitalized and therefore unable to continue as the main advisor. Without his suggestions I would still be wallowing out there somewhere around chapter three. I have also benefitted considerably from my association with Addie Penner, Joe Ryant, Bob Van der Krabben, Lois Emery, and Baird Poskanzer.

In addition, I want to thank my former co-workers, supervisors, and administrators for their respective roles in the development of this thesis. Their contributions have been many and varied.

Finally, a word of appreciation to my current employer is in order. Although that particular organization is not patterned after the model proposed here, it has recognized that its staff do have certain kinds of expertise, and makes use of it. Ultimately, it is the clients that benefit.

Responsibility for the ideas, and the errors, remains, of course, mine.

Sept. 11, 1980   Bert Crocker

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a means to an end: a proposed model for a more effective form of social service agency. The means themselves warrant some comment, however. Means for the achievement of almost any end carry with them certain assumptions regarding those means, quite apart from the ends themselves. It is sometimes possible to successfully avoid making those assumptions explicit, as, for example, is done when the optical system in the telescope used to look at the stars is taken as a given. There are times when it is not possible to do this, however. One of the most famous examples was provided by the initial Hawthorne studies, which proved conclusively that levels of illumination were not responsible for variations in production.[1] There is still disagreement over what was proved, however (Blumberg, 1973, pp. 14-46, and Carey, 1970, pp. 352-369).

Unanticipated consequences are not necessarily bad, although it is often assumed they must be. They are, by definition however, unanticipated, which makes planning difficult. On the other hand, if the premise is accepted that everything is connected in some way to everything else, and that it must all be dealt with explicitly, this thesis will never be completed. The attempts to resolve this dilemma have led to others, which in turn have led to still more dilemmas. This has suggested a format for some portions of the paper.

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[1] It had initially been assumed that the level of illumination was somehow responsible for the amount of production, and the experiments were undertaken merely to determine how large the effects were, and in which direction.

There is a further consideration regarding means which must be made explicit; what Lovejoy calls " . . . diverse kinds of metaphysical pathos" (1960, p. 11). Any word or term used to describe anything carries with it connotations that evoke a certain "mood or tone of feeling" in the mind of the person using or reading that term. There are four types. The first is the ". . . pathos of sheer obscurity, the loveliness of the incomprehensible . . ." (p. 11). This is an assumption that because the reader does not understand exactly what it means, it must be profound. The second is the ". . . pathos of the esoteric" (p. 11). This is the excitement and happiness sometimes felt when being initiated into the secrets of previously hidden mysteries. It is usually a sudden process, similar to the lifting of a veil or the making of a great leap of faith. The third is the ". . . monistic or pantheistic pathos" (p. 12). We have not yet discovered why, but people get more excited about the number "one" than any other number. It could be that it is an emotional reaction to getting away from problematic discontinuities which accompanies the realization that things which were previously kept separate in our minds are in some way merely different aspects of the same thing. Regardless of why, it remains true that ". . . when a monistic philosophy declares, or suggests, that one is oneself a part of the universal Oneness, a whole complex of obscure emotional responses is released" (p. 13). The fourth is the "voluntaristic" pathos, which is ". . . the response of our active and volitional nature, perhaps even, as the phrase goes, of our fighting blood, which is aroused by the character which is ascribed to the total

universe with which we feel ourselves consubstantial" (p. 13).[2] These have, as Lovejoy emphasized, very little to do with the scientific treatment of ideas. They have had a considerable impact on history, however.

This thesis is an attempt to consider several propositions apart from their metaphysical pathos aspects. Such a consideration is not an attempt to ignore the role of values, which are important when any aspects of social service agencies are being considered. Reactions to a theory or proposition can be based on the intellectual merits of the theory, on their lack, on the values on which the theory is built, and on the metaphysical pathos aspects. The latter could perhaps best be conceptualized as reactions to values. If these can be dealt with separately, it should be possible to deal with them more fruitfully.

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[2] "Consubstantial" is a metaphysician's term that means "unified".

CHAPTER ONE

Towards The Family of Man

There are several themes that reappear throughout this thesis. This chapter serves to lay some foundations for them, in order that their later development and application is anchored. Foundations are important, and in a time when so much is uncertain, there would appear to be value in setting out the extent of that uncertainty in order that a method of approaching it can be developed.

That process begins in this chapter. The concepts "work" and "labour", (there is a difference), and "faith" and "reason", (there are limits to both), are discussed, and their contributions to the prevailing western view of man are explored, on the premise that social service agencies, based as they are on public funding, cannot afford to exist in ignorance of those views.

Hannah Arendt has pointed out that many Indo-European languages make a distinction between what in English are termed "labour" and "work". These are words with different etymological roots and meanings, even though they are usually held to be synonymous today. The "... Greek language distinguishes between **ponein** and **ergazesthai**, the Latin between **laborare** and **facere** or **fabricari**, French between **travailler** and **ouvrer**, the German between **arbeiten** and **werken.**" In each case, the first in the pair connotes pain and trouble, and is also used to describe the process of giving birth (1958, p. 80). The two have in each case survived over many centuries, a result which is attributable to their differing connotations.

Labour is what is connected with producing perishables, such as food, in order to survive. Labour is usually difficult, is filled with repitition, just as life itself is cyclical, and is essentially private; it occurs in the household. These activities were essentially static for thousands of years, until the beginning of the industrial revolution.

Work refers to the process of making things of relative permanance; buildings, tools, other objects of use. It constitutes, collectively, that which sets us apart from the other animals. The products of work, used properly, do not disappear, although they might wear out with use (pp. 136-137). Perhaps the best opposition of these two terms was by Locke; "The labour of his body and the work of his hands . . ." (1823, pp. 353-54).

The role of work and labour cannot be considered in isolation from the role of thought in any attempt to understand how we came to have the world view we have. Thinking, by itself, like labour, never produces tangibles. Work, the production of goods, requires some degree of thought. A carpenter cannot make a table without some mental picture of what a table is. Thoughts cannot be recorded without first being remembered and then being written, a process which involves work. Thus, thought can be conceptualized as one aspect of a work process, or as being similar to labour, depending on whether it is recorded and on its subject. Thought in relation to a subject of lasting value would have aspects of work, if it were written down or otherwise recorded. Thought in relation to a subject more closely associated with labour could be conceptualized in terms of that labour (Arendt, 1958, pp. 90, 91, 301, 302).

Thought on a subject of lasting value which is not recorded or shared with anyone would not be characterized as being related to work or labour. This could be thought of as "stunned contemplation", in contrast to "systematic expostulation", and described what happened when a person would stand or sit, apparently thinking, without afterwards discussing it with anyone or recording it (pp. 300-304).

The inter-relationships among labour, work and thought over the last twenty-five hundred years are revealing. They help explain the dilemmas (which are at least in part conceptual dilemmas) that accompany social work today. In order to facilitate the examination, this set of inter-relationships has been divided into six categories. These are not airtight compartments, however.

1. Contemplation; the role of contemplation in life

2. The Nature of the world; is it revealed or knowable

3. The world as mortal or immortal

4. People as mortal or immortal:

    if they are immortal, is it individually or as a race

5. Immortality: is it achieved by acting or by dying

6. Is freedom from slavery or life more important

The Classical Era

The Greeks distinguished between stunned contemplation and systematic expostulation (p. 300-304). The Greek ideal was the former. Aristotle preferred the term "speculative reason" (Polities, 1333a). This ideal was embodied in Socrates, who would stand in a trance for hours; in at least two documented instances, for over a day, actively thinking a problem through. He never wrote a thing. Systematic

expostulation had a more utilitarian aspect to it, and was more easily transmitted.

Both forms of contemplation were thought to deal with aspects of a world "out there", which could be revealed to man, but not derived by him (Lovejoy, 1960, pp. 25-26, 37-38). A good example is the Cave Allegory in book VII of Plato's Republic, which tells the story of the man set free from his bonds returning to tell his companions still tied up in the cave that what they had been watching all their lives were merely shadows on the wall cast by the real events behind them (Bloom, 1968, pp. 193-96).[1]

Making a chair, for example, would have the effect of ruining the perfect hypothetical form of the chair that existed "out there" by reifying it (Arendt, pp. 301-303). It was obviously a necessity to have such imperfect representations in the world, but from the Greek perspective it was a mixed blessing. This contradiction partly accounted for the Greek disdain for both labour and work (Aristotle, 1277b - 1278a, and Arendt, pp. 12-13). The other aspect of Greek disdain for work was that by accepting employment one give up two of Westerman's freedoms (see chapter three, below).

The Greeks posited an immortal world (Arendt, p. 18).

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[1] For students of philosophy, it is worth noting at this point that it is with this allegory that Plato turned his contemporaries' view of the world around, for no necessary reason. Homer, in The Odyssey, when describing the descent of Odysseus into Hades (Book XI), describes the dead as pale, shadowy figures living underground with "strengthless heads", while it is the living who are out in the strong sunlight, the clear air, the fresh breeze (Butcher and Lang, 1928). Plato put the men in the cave, and the body became the shadow of the soul. Philosophers were to arbitrarily flip-flop concepts like this, at will, until the time of Galileo (Arendt, p. 292).

People were perceived as highly mortal. After death, spirits were shadowy figures going about aimlessly (see footnote two). The emphasis was on the individual, not on the race or collectivity. Odysseus was able to distinguish quite clearly and to recognize easily the spirits in Hades on his visit.

Immortality could only be obtained by heroic undertakings while alive (Arendt, p. 19). Politics was perceived as a particularly fertile area, in which, with a little help from the gods, it was possible for a man to make his mark (pp. 18-20, 314). It should be kept in mind that in this particular context, "immortality" is being used as synonomous with "fame".

Freedom was much more important than staying alive. The Greeks had a great deal of contempt for slaves, especially those captured in battle, because they had chosen to stay alive rather than kill themselves to avoid slavery (Arendt, p. 316). Aristotle found it necessary to attribute to slaves a "slavish nature" in order to account for this otherwise inexplicable behavior (Politics, 1254b).

The Pre Modern Era

In the pre Modern or early Christian era, stunned contemplation was abolished. Contemplation, if entered into at all, was directed towards the wonders of heaven and eternity (Arendt, p. 304). Thought was devoted to the here-after, and preparation for comprehension of the ultimate truths that would be revealed there was a legitimate pursuit. Labour was important insofar as staying alive was concerned (Arendt, p. 317). Work was a two-fold concept, consisting of the relatively mundane making of tools for use in labouring and for the provision of basic

needs on the one hand, while on the other, it was often engaged in as a sign of dedication to the greater glory of God. Most great sculpture and architecture had religious themes.

The world was held to be un-knowable: people should not and could not fathom the mysteries of the world or of the universe. If people wanted something to study, they should study something relatively simple, like mankind; people were deemed incapable of understanding the finer workings of the universe. Thus, we have Alexander Pope's famous lines from "An Essay on Man":

> Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
> The proper study of Mankind is Man.
> Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
> A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
> With too much knowlege for the Sceptic side,
> With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride, for
> He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,
> In doubt to deem himself a God, or Beast;
> In doubt his mind or body to prefer,
> Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
> Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
> Whether he thinks too little, or too much;
> (Davis, 1966, p. 250)[2]

Pope was a Catholic, and Catholics tended to take a stronger

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2 There is no disagreement among different, even contrasting interpretations of Pope's work that this is in fact an accurate summation of the prevailing spirit of the time. Edmunds regards Pope's "Essay on Man" as a mirror of its times, notable mainly for its originality of phrasing (1921, pp. 94-95). White takes the position that much of Pope's "Eassay on Man" is a knowledgeable foray into the issues of his day. His discussion ends with the conclusion that Pope's statements on the matter represent a carefully chosen middle ground from among the prevailing sentiments of the day (1970, p. 84). White cites other authors from the same period to bear this out, among them one John Norris who wrote in about 1697, "And yet is there anything more Absurd and Impertinent in this, than in the present Supposition, to have a Man, who has so great a Concern upon his Hands as the Preparing for Eternity, all busie and taken up with **Quadrants,** and **Telescopes, Furnaces, Syphons, and Air-Pumps?**" (p. 88) [Italics in original].

anti-intellectual and anti-scientific stand than did the Protestants of the day. Nevertheless, the government in England at that time was Protestant, and no harm came to Pope for his writings.

The world has held to be mortal. Catholic and Protestant alike agreed that the second coming was immanent.

People, on the other hand, were seen as having immortal souls, and immortality was achieved merely by an individual living out his life.

> For the Christian 'glad tidings' of the immortality of individual human life had reversed the ancient relationship between man and the world and promoted the most mortal thing, human life, to the position of immortality, which up to then the cosmos had held. (Arendt, p. 314)

Life was definitely more important than freedom from slavery. Suicide, the honourable Greek alternative to slavery, was now a worse crime than murder. The suicide, not the murderer, was refused a Christian burial (p. 316). The Greek contempt for the slave who had chosen life over freedom was now ridiculous (Arendt, p. 316).

The Modern Age

The modern age was slow to begin. It was only a partial reversal of the Christian era. In retrospect, it began when Galileo saw four moons circuling the planet Jupiter. The idea that the earth was not the center of the universe was already almost two thousand years old when Galileo published his observations, but the Church had been able to maintain, in the absence of the observational proof provided by Galileo's telescope, that Copernicus' theory was just a simpler way of computing planetary orbits; that it was a mere mathematical convenience, while reality was different. It is possible that the Church was, by

this time, hypersensitive about this question, because a supernovae, an exploding star so bright it could sometimes be seen even during the day, had been seen in 1572, in direct opposition to the Church's doctrine that the heavens were fixed, unchanging, and eternal. Whatever the reason for the hypersensitivity, Galileo paid dearly. He was arrested, tortured, and, even after he recanted in 1633, was put under house arrest until in 1642 he died, blind and broken. (In November of 1979, the Church began the process of revoking his excommunication, and though this writer has not confirmed it personally, a report has circulated that his book has been removed from the list of prohibited works.)[3]

Pure contemplation remained out of the question in the modern age, while thought was regarded as being closely connected to working (Arendt, p. 292).

The world came to be viewed as knowable through experiment; through thought and work. This led to much activity in the scientific world.

The question of whether the world was immortal or mortal became less important for doctrinal purposes, because it became a question the

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[3] In retrospect, it would seem that an easier course for Galileo would have been to follow the practice of Copernicus, who published posthumously. A dominican Friar, Giordano Bruno, was burned at the stake around 1580 for advocating Copernicus' theory and saying the universe had an infinite number of suns. Galileo must surely have known this. We must therefore acknowledge his courage as well as his contributions to knowledge.

answer to which could be determined by discovery.[4] Modern philosophers have debated at length over whether the world is even real (Arendt, p. 320).

The question of whether people are mortal or immortal is also open. This question becomes, in the Modern Age, intimately connected with that of how immortality is achieved; by living or by dying, and also with that of which is more important; freedom from slavery or staying alive. Concepts held to be truths were very few.

Limits to Faith

Descartes could find no way to prove that people exist on earth but to note that he experienced certain mental processes. "I doubt-hence I think, I think, - hence I am" (Fromm, 1955, p. 61). (Also see Sibley, 1970, p. 347, and Arendt, 1958, p. 273-80.) Given this amount of difficulty in proving that people exist, any proof of the existence of God became impossible, and people began to channel their efforts towards proving that God was good (Arendt, p. 281). With Pascal and Kierkegaard it became clear that there had to be a separation of reason and faith,

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[4] The answer to this question would be along two dimensions at the present time. If by "the world" one means the earth, the answer would be that the world could be immortal, if man himself refrains from the use of doomsday machines. If by "the world" one means the universe as a whole, the answer is not in yet. If there is enough matter in the universe, it will eventually cease expanding, contract and go through another "Big Bang", and the nature of the new universe will be determined by the ratio of photons to nuclear particles during the first few seconds (Weinberg, 1977, p. 44-100). If there isn't enough matter, the universe will expand indefinitely, and it may never pass out of existence, though life will, because of entropy. A corollary of one unified field theory is that matter spontaneously turns into light at an exceptionally slow rate. This is being tested at the present time in a salt mine beneath Lake Erie (Sulak, 1979). If it turns out to be true, the answer will be that the world and the universe are ultimately mortal.

and that faith was not knowable by reason, although reason could help illuminate aspects of faith once it was found. The adherence to a religion, therefore, had to become a personal matter. There are limits to faith, as Pascal noted wryly when he observed that the Church's condemnation of Galileo's heretical views did not prevent the earth from turning, and limits to reason (Hazelton, 1974, p. 112). The limits to reason will be discussed at the end of this chapter and in chapter four.

Pascal concluded that although it was not possible to use reason to prove the existence of God, it was possible to use reason to prove that belief was the best choice. To do this he applied the principles he had developed when he invented probability theory.[5] The result became known as Pascal's Wager, which is as follows: each person must decide whether or not to believe in God, for not to decide is in fact a decision. If a person decides to believe in God and acts accordingly, and if God exists, he will gain eternal blessedness. If a person decides to believe in God and God does not exist, he will gain damnation. If a person does not believe in God and God does not exist, he gains nothing and loses nothing. Given that the outcome lasts for eternity, the odds suggest belief (Baker, 1934, p. 132). Even coming from a man who was profoundly religeous, (he carried, sewn in his robe, a paper upon which he had written the details of his own encounter with God), this was a bit upsetting, and modern writers taking a pro-God

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[5] Pascal also did important work in geometry, and after proving that a vacuum could exist, contrary to the theological teachings of the day, he used the principles involved to invent the barometer. He also invented the world's first public transportation system, in Paris (Baker, 1934, and Patrick, Vol. 1, 1947).