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The social work profession seeks different objectives and utilizes different methodologies and interventions in the countries in which it operates around the world. Furthermore, it operates within drastically different political, economic and cultural contexts. For these reasons, it is difficult to identify an ideal universal method of intervention. For approximately a century, social work practitioners and academicians have debated whether the profession should focus its efforts on providing charity and relief services or promoting socio-economic development and self-sufficiency. This article defines the concepts of charity and socio-economic development and analyzes the main dimensions of this debate in an effort to deepen our understanding of how to best promote the well-being of individuals and communities.

Key Words: Charity, social development, social work, social policy

Introduction

Social work is an academic discipline and a profession directly linked to social welfare and related social protection systems. For these reasons, as an applied social science, social work seeks to increase its body of knowledge while promoting social, economic and political changes. These efforts are guided by professional codes of ethics, and are reflected in the proposals and interventions put forth by national and international social work organizations. Furthermore, throughout its professional history, social work's commitment to social welfare has been evident by its focus on working with the poor, vulnerable and marginalized, and by intervening with individuals, families, groups, communities, and society as a whole (Zastrow, 2003).

Concerns over social integration, assimilation, poverty and other social ailments are not exclusive to social work, even though the values of altruism, generosity and compassion have been associated with our discipline since its very inception (Lubove, 1965). These values were also shared by other organizations that emerged at the same time as the Charity Organization Societies and the Settlement House Movement. Paul Harris, for instance, founded the Rotary Club in Chicago in 1905. This club promoted collaboration among professionals in an effort to respond to social problems. This included, among other things, helping to find a vaccination for polio. In 1917, Melvin Jones created (also in Chicago) the Lions Club, which focused its efforts on service to society. The creation of these organizations built on the previously stated values and the long tradition of Christian and non-Christian religions of helping the poor. Today, countless religious, professional and civic organizations collaborate in the promotion of social well-being (Davis, 2013).

In this special issue of the *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, authors join the debate surrounding "Charity versus Development" as it relates to the profession of social work. This special issue contains selected peer-reviewed papers presented at the eighth International Conference of the European Social Research Council on Latin America (CEISAL by its initials in Spanish) that took place from June 28 to July 1, 2016 in Salamanca, Spain. This issue contains research and conceptual articles as well as case analyses describing best practices presented at this international conference.

Charity, Development and Social Work

The debate related to charity and development as an empowerment approach has existed in the profession of social work for more than a hundred years. We briefly describe the debate and define key concepts in this section as a preamble to our discussion.

According to Midgley, (1995, p. 8), "Social development is a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with the dynamic process of economic development." Midgley (1997a, p. 86) also defines community development as an intervention that seeks to "foster development at the local level by involving people in a variety of economic, infrastructural, and social projects." Charity on the other hand, is defined as "generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering: aid given to those in need" Charity (n.d.).

Critics of charity or universal welfare assistance to the poor argue that such assistance is unnecessary and undesirable, that it weakens traditional institutions and destroys the recipients' desire and ability to provide for themselves (Mullaly, 2007, p. 85). The suggested implication is that ongoing charity or welfare assistance creates and perpetuates dependency. According to Mullaly (2007), conservatives oppose the existence of welfare systems that provide financial relief to the poor, while politicians that are more liberal support such systems in an attempt to counter the negative aspects of capitalism (pp. 89, 108). Midgley (1997b, pp. 14–15), in turn proposes social development as a viable alternative to "outdated consumption and maintenance oriented welfare programs." Sen (1999) warns us, however, that learning the difference between individual rights and capacities is necessary to understand the challenges presented by the process of social development.

We can also approach this debate from an angle that avoids the charity vs. development dichotomy (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Robbins, 2015). Recent research findings in the fields of biology and neurology strongly suggest that we, as human beings, have a basic inclination towards cooperation and altruism, which in turn are compatible with and necessary for our personal and social development. From a neurological perspective (Pfaff, 2015), as well as from a social work perspective (López-Pelaez, 2015),

strengthening our sense of altruism (the belief in or practice of disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others) is likely to increase our freedom instead of increasing our dependency. A strengthened sense of altruism should greatly enhance our personal and social functioning, and facilitate our collective efforts to improve our social well-being. We should not focus on charity or development as the defining element of social work's strategy and mission. Instead, we should adopt an approach that integrates relief services and development, as pertinent and needed. Such a strategy could enable us to take advantage of altruism as a motivator to any type of intervention and prepare us to better respond to the challenges presented by social welfare and the welfare state.

Given the challenges associated with finding common ground, Levinas (1993) recommends trying to understand the worldview of others as a strategy to help us reach agreements. Social research identifies altruism as a unifying element and requirement for our survival as a species in societies oriented towards competition, individualism and consumerism. It also proposes that cooperation must precede individuation. Reportedly, we must learn to coexist before we learn how to be different or apart from each other (Sennett, 2012). Cooperation is vital to our survival during our childhood as well as in our adult life, given that we cannot survive by ourselves. "The distribution of labor enables us to multiply our limited capacities" (Sennett, 2012, p. 107).

Cooperation is more than a social ability; it is a form of interaction that generates mutual benefits (Sennett, 2012). Cooperation, in turn, may be motivated by our sense of altruism, which is part of our cerebral structure and responds to our biological identity (Pfaff, 2015). Altruism and cooperation are directly linked to the notion of generosity, which seems to be the opposite of selfishness. Generosity has been defined as "the virtue or ability to provide resources to others freely and abundantly" (Smith & Davidson, 2014, p. 4). This virtue represents a vital human trait, not a specific or isolated donation or behavior. It is a virtue that implies regularity, repetition and consistency. Generosity is different from altruism in that generosity is compatible with self-interest while altruism is not. Generosity may express itself through providing financial assistance to others, serving as a volunteer, donating blood, providing loans and other support to family members, friends or organizations

(Smith & Davidson, 2014). Consistent with a deontological perspective, seeking the well-being of others is considered good in itself (Encyclopaedia Brittanica, 2017)

Generosity promotes well-being and represents a way of life and of relating to others. Societies with a tendency towards individualism tend to criticize generosity, while valuing behaviors centered on individual well-being. This may be due to their reductionist view of generosity and altruism and their ignoring the positive impact of generous and altruistic behaviors on individuals and on society. This proposition is not value free, just as social policies and the welfare state are not value free (López Peláez & Segado, 2016). Generosity and altruism change our perception of self and force us to place the well-being of others before our personal well-being. In such a context, others are often viewed as obstacles or simply as competitors. This societal tendency may get in the way of other dimensions of generosity which are often present in our daily living.

Smith and Davidson (2014) have identified two dimensions associated with the phenomenon of generosity. The first is that generous behaviors contribute to our own well-being, even if we focus on the well-being of others. The second is that lack of generosity and concern for others leads to greater dissatisfaction and ill feelings in us. Smith and Davidson's research findings suggest a positive association between generosity and the personal well-being of generous persons (Smith & Davidson, 2014, p. 9).

The previously stated findings supporting the association between altruism and generosity do not represent the sole justification for the existence of social work as a profession. We do not formulate social welfare policies or provide social services because these actions will make us feel better or because this is consistent with particular religious beliefs. We formulate and implement policies guided by the desire to help human beings take advantage of their citizens' rights (Northern Ireland Civil Service, 2017).

The existing tension between charity and development, between providing immediate relief to others and empowering them to help themselves, between efforts to solve social problems and strategies to empower people in need, perpetuate this complex debate in social work circles (López Pelaéz, 2012). The welfare state and the helping professions stem from our respect

for citizens' rights and our desire to respond to their demands for goods and services (Northern Ireland Civil Service, 2017). The profession does not exist simply because of compassion for individuals or the desire to be helpful. For these reasons, social service programs provided by public agencies should be evaluated to make sure they do not simply represent charitable or philanthropic efforts and that instead they have positive long-term impacts.

The tension between charity and socio-economic development has existed in the United States since the 1880s. This tension originated between the Charity Organization Societies (COS) and the Settlement House movements that paved the way for the emergence of social work as a profession. The COS movement emerged in 1877 emphasizing the provision of charity to individuals they considered to be morally worthy of such assistance (Trattner, 1989). Mary Richmond founded this movement with the primary intervention strategy of sending friendly visitors to the homes of the poor to assess their level of need and worthiness for assistance through a method called scientific philanthropy. Jane Addams originated the Settlement House movement in the 1880s (Trattner, 1989). The primary goal of this movement was to help mostly European immigrants become part of the mainstream of American society. Their primary focus was to teach English to new immigrants and provide them with marketable skills that would enable them to obtain gainful employment. The movement also worked to eliminate laws that prevented the progress of the immigrants. The COS movement has been considered highly moralistic and reportedly discriminated against those that needed their services the most. The Settlement House movement, on the other hand, was criticized for discriminating against poor persons who were not European immigrants (Trattner, 1989), given that Native-Americans, African-Americans and Hispanics were not able to access their services.

For approximately a century, the social work profession in the United States has maintained a charity-development dualism. The type of practice of social workers in the United States today clearly shows the philosophical and ideological divide between supporters of charity and direct practice with individuals and families, and supporters of a macro and developmental approach. According to NASW (2013), approximately 93% of the 140,000 social workers in the country possess a clinical or direct

practice license. This means that the majority of social workers are primarily devoted to providing direct services to individuals and families. In the United States, direct social work practice usually takes the form of counseling, case management and/or provision of relief services. A very small percentage of social workers in the country engage primarily in administration, community practice, socio-economic development, or social policy practice (NASW, 2013).

Development and Charity: Social Work Perspectives

Various factors and conditions have shaped our discipline and profession since its inception. While democracy and citizenship rights have led us to view individuals as subjects and masters of their own history, socio-economic inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and vulnerability have demanded macro or collective approaches to intervention. In response to these conditions, the first social workers responded to lack of democracy and vulnerability through scientific approaches, which in turn gave origin to our profession (Tannenbaum & Reisch, 2001).

As an applied social and behavioral science, social work seeks to respond to a multitude of social problems which are sources of great distress. Our relevance and legitimacy as a profession stem from the applied nature of our work and our constant efforts to find practical solutions to pressing social problems (Morales & Sheafor, 2004). To this end, social work aims at forming helping professionals and empowering citizens to act as such. Given our professional objectives, social work needs to rely on theories that validly describe, explain and predict social phenomena. Social work theories must have clear practice applications.

Social work research and teaching seek to promote critical thinking and form professionals capable of responding to pathology and dysfunction in the world. Social work professionals must confront old and new challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Our ability to anticipate and build a new future depends on the evaluation of our past and present, our constraints and possibilities, our individual and collective inertia, and our willingness to bring about change.

The future of the social sciences and social work, in particular, depends on our desire and commitment to increase our body of knowledge, respond to chaos, treat pathologies,

alleviate pain, and ameliorate injustice and inequality. For this reason, social work requires knowledge to guide our action, increase professionalization and transform living conditions. Consistent with these premises, the articles in this special issue ponder various dimensions of the charity versus development social work debate. Articles two to five are empirical and qualitative in nature. Articles six to nine are conceptual and present propositions that could be tested in future research. The last three articles are case analyses.

The qualitative article "Common Law, Charity and Human Rights as Responses to the Socio-Economic Crisis in Galicia, Spain" recognizes the need for government assistance to the poor and the unemployed in the form of housing and other relief services while asserting that this type of assistance is not sufficient to significantly change their condition. In addition to providing goods and services, the article proposes a focus on human rights and policies aimed at promoting the socio-economic development of poor persons and communities.

The article "Maximization vs. Inclusion as a Value Conflict in Development Work" is qualitative and is based on an international mixed methods research project. It proposes a model for addressing ethical issues in development work. It also recommends an approach to development that could improve the relationship between policy makers, development professionals, and participants in development programs.

The article "Use of Technology, Pedagogical Approaches and Intercultural Competence in Development" relies on mixed research methods. Its authors part from the premise that education is key to social and economic development. The article describes a unique cultural immersion course provided to social work students in the City of Chicago that included the use of technology, pedagogical approaches and intercultural education to increase levels of cultural competence.

The authors of "The Debate on Minimum Income in Spain: Charity, Development or Citizen Right?" conducted a qualitative study among a group of social workers in Spain. According to social workers interviewed for this study, they should primarily be agents for social change as opposed to agents for stability and social control. They view minimum income systems as a form of charity and a means for social control. As

an alternative, they propose family protection policies aimed at reducing social exclusion and vulnerability.

In "Class Activist Lens for Teaching about Poverty," the authors propose a conceptual framework and model. They recommend a teaching and practice model aiming to equip students to understand poverty from a class perspective. The goal of the action component of the proposed model is to politicize practice, enable us to become allies with the poor, resist injustice, and promote social and economic development.

The authors of "International Service-Learning Trips: a Framework for Developing Cross-Cultural Competence" propose that students would benefit more from active involvement in needs assessments, appreciative inquiry, program design, program implementation, and evaluation of grassroots sustainable development efforts than from engaging in charitable endeavors. They explain how international exposure and well-crafted international service learning trips can assist in developing cross-cultural competence and the empowerment of individuals and communities to generate social change. The proposed model is consistent with best practices implemented during several international service learning trips and study tours. The framework is based on a human rights and sustainable development approach.

In "Knowledge Transfer for Full Citizenship: The Educational Model of Innovation in Social Work," the authors describe various academic and professional experiences and propose a model for education transfer and innovation in social work. The article builds on the notion that increased information and knowledge are essential prerequisites for the development of all aspects of modern societies. To this end, social work is encouraged to maintain and improve channels of communication and knowledge transfer in academia and in professional practice.

The article "Global Interdependence and its Effects on Social Work Education in the United States" proposes a rights-based development model as opposed to a charity-based approach. It provides a rationale for implementing a global perspective in social work education while identifying sustainable development as consistent with social work values and mission. The article discusses the implications of online/distance education for international social work practice. It discusses the implications

of globalization and global interdependence for social work theory, policy, and practice, while stressing the need to incorporate these into field education.

The article "The Importance of Social Work in the Latin American Association Movement of People Affected by Low Prevalence Diseases" represents a case analysis of the Latin American rare diseases association movement. The article does not make direct or explicit reference to the concepts of charity or development, nevertheless, empowerment and development are implicit throughout the document. It emphasizes the need for a multifaceted strategy to tackle rare diseases through prevention, planning, and primary care. Such strategy should incorporate research, public health plans, defense of social and health rights, reliance on civic associations, and coordination between government agencies and representatives of civil society. Finally, the article highlights the key role that social workers play in the rare diseases association movement in Latin America.

In the article "Assisting the Most Vulnerable Populations in the Regions of La Rioja and the Maghreb: The Human Rights-Based Approach and Social Work," the authors applied a case-analysis methodology to interventions sponsored by the European Union and by UNICEF to combat poverty in the Spanish region of La Rioja, Spain. One of the interventions involves many universities from Spain and northern Africa. Many residents of La Rioja migrated there from the Maghreb region of northern Africa and represent one of the region's most vulnerable groups. In these two cases, the Human Rights Based Approach represents a significant strategy for promoting people's autonomy and an effective way of fighting inequality, discriminatory practices and unjust power relations.

Finally, the article "Social Work and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities in Mexico: Hidden Barriers" analyzes the progress made towards the goal of full inclusion of persons with disabilities into Mexican society. Reportedly, Mexico has made significant progress in the development of programs for people with disabilities. Nevertheless, in spite of the considerable progress made, there are still invisible or hidden barriers the country needs to overcome. The social integration of persons with disabilities is seen as an indicator of the country's level of social development

Conclusion

The various articles presented during the symposium *Charity vs. Development: What should be the mission and strategy of the social work profession?,* have made evident our need to reinvent social work to more effectively respond to emerging problems and needs (Featherstone, 2011). Furthermore, social work as a profession and a discipline should continue to be supported by quality standards, planning, intervention and scientific evaluation.

According to López-Peláez (2012), our profession faces multiple challenges. First, it must reformulate social welfare policies and redefine social work practice consistent with the socio-cultural, political and economic context of the 21st century. It must also respond to the demands of citizenship through new rights, services and entitlements. Furthermore, social work as a profession must redefine itself in order to survive in a highly bureaucratic context in which government transfers responsibility for social welfare to volunteer organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Lastly, the profession should promote quality higher education for social workers. Many countries do not offer social work university degrees, while other countries only provide social workers with technical or paraprofessional education (Garber, 1997). In contrast, universities in other countries like the United States and Spain offer bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees in social work.

The case of Spain shows that our profession has become more and more bureaucratic. The limited number of social workers in the country are forced to devote the bulk of their time and efforts to charity and relief efforts. This leaves them with little or no time to seek significant social, political, or economic change. To complicate matters, available resources for social welfare have been diminishing, when in the past ever-increasing resources was the norm. Spain is currently facing times of human service retrenchment and austerity. This is having a direct impact on professional social workers who work for private or public organizations which are forced to restructure and reorganize in an effort to maintain predetermined levels of service.

The challenges faced by our profession in the United States include the increasing number of persons who live by themselves, greater social exclusion, and the precarious living conditions of a

significant segment of the population. These circumstances strongly suggest the need to concentrate our efforts on promoting the self-sufficiency and socio-economic development of individuals and communities, consistent with the concept of citizens' rights.

In the end, acknowledging the humanity of others will enable us to evolve from charity to the promotion of human rights. Our goal should not only be to solve problems but to empower individuals, groups and communities to take control of their lives. We must overcome false dichotomies such as "charity vs. development" and develop new theories, methodologies and practice interventions that will enable us to improve the living conditions for all.

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