

Perspectives on Social Work

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Perspectives on Social Work

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Thinking About Evidence-Based Practice? Manuel Zamora



Happy New Year! Congratulations on another successful year! Best wishes to Susan Mapp, former co-editor! Susan has joined the social work faculty at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania as an assistant professor and just successfully defended her dissertation.

As both a philosophy and a process, evidence-based practice appears to be an emerging paradigm of our future. While studying for my comprehensive exams, this thought consumed me as I sought answers to the question: How will the future shape social work policy, practice, and research?

Social work is influenced by global dynamics such as an aging population, increasing diversity, a need for interdisciplinary collaboration, a prolonged war effort leading to world-wide disdain toward Americans, and problems associated with a capricious, weakened economy that has eroded consumer confidence. I was unusually drawn to evidence-based practice, particularly when remembering a work experience of nearly a decade ago during my assignment as a uniformed patrol officer. I had responded to a call from a building manager that an irate maintenance worker was threatening her with a gun. Although the dispatcher tried to keep the manager on the telephone until my arrival, the manager dropped the phone when she was pistol-whipped. The only audible sounds were harrowing pleas from the manager to “leave me alone!”

On life-threatening calls, such as this disturbance, at least two police officers are assigned to respond. As I arrived, I noticed that the maintenance worker was exiting the office; however, I also noticed that one police officer was perpendicular to him and was walking alongside a wooden fence, soon to meet him face-to-face. Before a deadly consequence could occur, I yelled at the approaching officer, who ran away just as the gunman pointed the pistol at him and discharged five errant rounds.

At close distances, gunfights are often non-fatal, as combatants do a poor job of striking their intended target. In my opinion, the officer escaped a fatal injury because he provided a fast moving target to a surprised gunman. Most police officers will tell you that there is no duty to retreat before using deadly force, and use of force is a topic area in which officers receive much training. However, I had not, at that point, heard of any training that pertained to “retreating and shooting.” I was intuitively led to believe that if I were ever to be faced in a similar situation, I would not stand still. Running would be unusual, as the literature did not support this action.

Unfortunately, only a week passed before I was forced to test my theory. I was working at a bank when a masked robber entered and pointed a .357 Colt Python at the teller. Because the robber was focused on quickly approaching the teller, he did not notice I was seated in the lobby. As I ran toward the door, I discharged five rounds. He fired three times. I struck him three times and he missed altogether. During psychological evaluation, I researched the topic of close quarter combat and located anecdotal information on theories such as “lag time” and “exiting the kill zone.” I spoke with training instructors and searched for “best practices,” but information was scant. Did the “run and shoot” theory save my life? I believe it did.

In social work, evidence-based practice enables us to better empower people, reveals the efficacy of practices, and allows us to discover new ways to shape policy. It is now common for health care consumers to conduct Internet research on their concerns prior to meeting with

professionals. It is also common for practitioners to find “best practices” (whether randomized double-blind clinical trials or qualitative studies) to assist in rendering informed decisions. The philosophy of evidence-based practice has led critics of social work practice to place “authority” aside, and realize that social workers can be effective in empowering consumers to enhance their strengths and address their limitations. As collaborators involved in interdisciplinary research and practice, social workers and other service and helping professionals can now appeal to consumers by sharing, through “conscientious, explicit, and judicious (means)” the best “practice-related research findings” so the “client is involved as (an informed) participant” (Thyer, 2003; Gambrill, 1999b; in Encyclopedia of Social Work, 19th ed., 2003, p. 24 – 25). As the most visible part of Social Work, practice cannot be effective in its performance without appropriately weighing research and understanding the need to help shape policy. Evidence-Based Practice is one of the most promising approaches for social work practitioners. What do you think?

How can *Perspectives in Social Work* Best Contribute to Our Discipline?

Peter A. Kindle

The argument could be made that the profession of social work is approaching crisis. Disciplinary distinctiveness is challenged as masters-level psychologists and nurses extend their reach into community health settings. The occupational viability of social work is eroded by proliferation of educational programs, low salary structures, and questions concerning the quality of training. Research conducted by social workers seems to have minority status even in social work journals. While there seems to be little debate concerning the historical significance and the value base of the profession, there does not seem to be a consensus answer to the question, “What is social work?”

In my opinion, the most significant contribution that *Perspectives in Social Work* can make to the profession is to provide a formal forum for the next generation of social work scholars to explore and debate foundational questions regarding the profession in all its dimensions: theory, research, policy, and practice. Through a dialogic process, the journal will contribute to contemporary re-interpretations of the profession’s past, innovative praxis, and, perhaps, create new directions for future research.

Intellectual creativity may peak during the first decade of disciplinary study. To the extent that this is true, the journal can play a role in the profession by encouraging the doctoral students at GSSW to actively engage one another in discussion and debate. Like a campsite stew, the blending of our incipient and provisional viewpoints may prove to provide nutritious sustenance to ourselves and to the profession as we go forth as contributing scholars on graduation.

What Do I Have to Contribute?

I come late to social work, having spent half a lifetime working as a certified public accountant with a short side career in the ministry. To me, social work is primarily a social science, although one that is principally interdisciplinary and heavily praxis oriented. My personal interests lie in the philosophical foundations for our value choices, the interplay of quantitative and qualitative research that informs our theories, and the challenges inherent in attempting to infuse research into practice on a personal level and into policy on a national and international level. I doubt that anyone studies social work who does not want to make a difference in the lives of others. *Perspectives in Social Work* is one way that we can work together to accomplish this goal.

Aging in the 21st Century: Are Social Work Professionals Ready? **by Tristen K. Amador**

The aging population in the United States is rapidly increasing with an estimated 35 million people age 65 and older in 2000 and a projected estimate of 71 million people age 65 and older in 2030 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Estimates of the ever-changing older adult population are familiar among those in geriatrics and gerontology. The number of aged has also gained attention from individuals in other fields as well as the general population. This increased attention is encouraging to those of us promoting interest and awareness in the field of aging. More importantly, this increased attention is critical for social work professionals in all areas of specialization who will come into contact with older adults more and more each year. This interaction will take place in areas such as child welfare, mental health, and hospital social work to name a few.

Many social work professionals, practitioner and/or academician, do not want to work with older adults nor do they possess the knowledge and skills to do so. Unfortunately, we do not practice, teach or conduct research in a social work bubble where we get to choose our clients, students or subjects. We can choose a certain specialization such as children and families but we cannot be sure what age the child's parents will be or who is considered or included in a family. For example, there are 5.7 million grandparents who have grandchildren living in their households and 2.4 million are responsible for caring for their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). About 943,000 have been responsible for their grandchildren for over 5 years, 392,000 between 3 and 4 years, 584,000 between 1 and 2 years, and finally 549,000 under 1 year (U.S. Census Bureau). It is clear from statistics such as these that even social work professionals who never intended or wanted to work with older adults may have to at some point in their professional careers. Since it is not possible to avoid this population, I see an opportunity to gain additional competency in another area of specialization.

Direction to enhance professional competencies is given by the National Association of Social Workers in the Code of Ethics. The six core values in the Code of Ethics include: 1) service, 2) social justice, 3) dignity and worth of the person, 4) importance of human relationships, 5) integrity, and 6) competence (National Association of Social Workers, 1999). In addressing competence, the Code states, "social workers should practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise." Some would argue that their area of competence is children and families or another concentration or specialization area. However, I am arguing that areas currently overlap more than ever before and social workers must be responsible for developing and enhancing their "professional expertise" as the Code demands.

While opportunities and direction to enhance our professional competencies are important, I also see education in the field of aging as an obligation. Social workers take great pride, myself included, in the unique mission of the profession to enhance human well-being for those individuals oppressed and impoverished. The focus to fight social injustices and to ameliorate the lives of individuals within vulnerable populations is vastly different from other professions and sets us apart. Social workers work with individuals of all populations and backgrounds; advocating for individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, and age. Age includes those young and old and all of those individuals in between. I encourage social workers to obtain

education about older adults in order to fulfill the mission of alleviating poverty and oppression for all individuals.

Social work professionals must expand their chosen areas to include older adults in order to practice, teach, and conduct research in a competent, ethical manner. Again, developing a proficient knowledge base and skill level in the area of geriatric social work is an opportunity as well as an obligation to fulfill the core values within the Code of Ethics and the mission of the social work profession. I have no doubt that social work practitioners and academicians can accept this responsibility and make themselves competent in the area of aging. The social work profession has always been able to integrate new knowledge including theoretical frameworks, practice skills, teaching techniques, and research methodologies. Different practice, teaching, and research areas become more or less popular over time based on changes in individuals, families, groups, and society as a whole. Aging in the 21st century is one of these areas that is currently transforming and will influence practice, teaching, and research tremendously in the years to come. I urge social work professionals to embrace this change and equip themselves with the necessary tools to competently work with older adults.

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Explaining Corporate Greed: Revisiting Enron

Manuel Zamora



Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of modern corporations have received extraordinary attention recently with public scrutiny of unbelievable excesses. As the Securities and Exchange Commission enforces the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, a record number of indictments and convictions are meted to corporate icons. Once praised for their contributions to a robust global economy, many are now denigrated. Arriana Harrington, for example, refers to crooked CEOs as “pigs in a trough,” as she enumerates how they plundered billions (www.arrianaharrington.com, retrieved November 1, 2003).

Meanwhile, employees of once prosperous corporations, along with once onerous competitors, watch in bewilderment as their livelihoods are devoured by a self-sustaining culture of greed.

The Corporate Climate

“In the vast preponderance of business arenas . . . the rules of the game have changed radically” (Hambrick, Nadler & Tushman, 1998, p. xv). External forces or devilish rule-breaking on the part of new industry upstarts or mavericks challenge existing organizations. Change is dynamic. Surviving one transition simply means the corporation may become more postured to make it through the next one. Failure to adjust and change often leads to an organization’s demise (Shipman, 1999). Under the conditions of unrelenting turbulence, the few people at the top of a company make a difference to its competitiveness and vitality (Hambrick et al, 1998). Corporate landscapes are continuously wrenched by technological, geopolitical, competitive, and marketplace discontinuities – all requiring strategic choices and sweeping organizational transformations (Mothe & Paquet, 1996). To succeed, not only do the CEO, top management, and the Board of Directors need to be philosophically aligned, but they require a relationship with leaders of other institutions that have mutual goals. The most important forces facing the corporate environment are the emergence of global competition, new technology, and public policy (Hambrick et al, 1998).

The CEO is the leader of the organization responsible for envisioning, energizing, and enabling. The leader must build a skilled workforce, define reality, enshrine institutional values, articulate a vision, set the strategic path, demand performance, and empower the people (Bacharach & Lawler, 2000). The CEO must facilitate teamwork, understand forces propelling corporate coherence, create and exploit a set of core competencies, engage in environmental shifts, recognize global interdependence of the corporation’s activities and meet competitors in multiple product markets (Hambrick, 1998).

Enron’s History

Enron was formed in 1985 in a merger between Houston Natural Gas and InterNorth, a natural gas company based in Omaha, Nebraska. The \$2.4 billion deal was financed by junk-bond king Michael Milken. CEO Ken Lay immediately sold unproductive companies and purchased Tenneco’s natural gas liquids and petrochemical operations. As electricity markets began deregulating, Enron began its power marketing business (www.enron.com, retrieved November 28, 2002). Over the next 15 years, Enron grew to become the nation’s largest energy trading firm, engaging itself in electricity, oil, gas, and commodities from paper to metal. At its peak, Enron employed over 20,000 employees throughout the world. Revenues in 2000 totaled

\$100.8 billion. In 2001, Enron became the world's largest marketer of electricity and gas. Enron was named America's Most Innovative Company by Fortune 500 magazine for five consecutive years. In the energy core, Enron's electricity sales reached 590.2 million megawatt hours. Gas sales reached 28.3 billion cubic feet per day. The core operation areas were Enron Wholesale Services, which included commodities, financial and risk management services; Enron Energy Services, including integrated energy and facility management worldwide; and Enron Global Services, comprised of power, pipelines, and energy.

The Context

On August 15, 2001, Enron executive Sherron Watkins, wrote to Mr. Lay, "The spotlight will be on us I am incredibly nervous that we will implode in a wave of accounting scandals, conflicts of interest, and questionable deal-making" (House Energy and Commerce Committee Report, January 16, 2002). Mr. Lay reported on October 15, 2001, that bad cosmetics could result in adverse publicity and litigation, but no further investigation was needed" (Goldberg, 2002). The following day, Enron posted a third quarter earnings report that included a \$638 million third quarter loss and a \$1.2 billion reduction in share-holder equity (Goldberg, 2002). By December 2, 2001, Enron had filed the largest corporate bankruptcy in history. Immediately, stock prices fell, investor confidence dropped, employees were systematically terminated, and the energy industry was in disarray. Whereas Enron's stock prices reached \$90.56 per share in 2001, by the spring of 2002, shares plummeted to .25 per share, investors were in a lawsuit frenzy, and its stock was downgraded to junk-bond status.

Enron, once called innovative, and an aggressive mercenary in a cutthroat culture, was emasculated. Thousands of employees, investors, fund accounts, 401(k) plans, financial institutions, allied corporations and companies lost substantial investments (Goldberg, 2002). During the decade Enron built its empire, it created over 3,000 partnerships and affiliates (Duffy, 2002). Now, it created an exponential number of antagonists.

The Expectations

In a market economy, unceasing quests for higher profits will be temporarily satisfied by innovations (Gottheil, 1996). Because of the flexibility and adaptability that corporations must exhibit in adjusting to global forces, it is important for leaders to improve their corporation's bargaining position by building coalitions, making allowances, or by adjusting tactics. There is a profit and control motive, a need for divestitures, mergers and acquisitions. Despite this, leaders are expected to maintain integrity and positively influence the corporate culture.

Corporate stakeholders expect the corporation to grow and continue gaining status in the market economy. Its successful life is also linked within a political structure that requires the presence of power relations organized hierarchically and capable of penetrating every level of modern social organizations. Politics is about who gets what, when, and how. Within this structure, people are expected to become rational maximizers if they are to exist (Blalock, 1989). Therefore, actors must be aggressive.

The Problem

Enron's fall was catastrophic. Over 4,000 employees were terminated. Employees watched helplessly while the organization's leaders unloaded their shares but prevented them from selling theirs. For some, the drop in stock value amounted to hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses to pension and deferred compensation plans.

During this time, Mr. Lay sent emails and publicly stated he never felt better about prospects for the company. Mr. Lay, other executives, and prominent stockholders sold millions of shares, some of which had recently been assigned to them. While Enron was collapsing, Mr. Lay telephoned Vice President Cheney, Treasury Department Secretary Paul O'Neill; Commerce Department Secretary Don Evans; the White House Budget Coordinator, and Federal Chairman Alan Greenspan. No doubt, he was seeking assistance in stabilizing the economy to reduce the negative impact of Enron's problems.

It is estimated that the loss to employee pension plans exceeds \$400 million. The attention drawn to Enron also focused on accounting procedure manipulation by the accounting firm Arthur Anderson, who is alleged in a federal indictment to have obstructed justice by destroying reams of documentary evidence immediately after learning of pending Justice Department investigation. The investigation also identified several significant improprieties. For example, Enron paid no federal income tax in 2000, yet received \$278 million in rebates on tax breaks from stock options cashed in by many employees in top management.

Saving Grace: Alliances?

Ken Lay's call for help from several top-level government officials was not new. He had previously relied upon Governor George Bush to provide favorable perspectives on Enron's \$2 billion joint venture with Uzbekistan in 1999 and with electric deregulation in Texas (1998). Additionally, Lay had asked for assistance from Pennsylvania's former Governor Tom Ridge for electric deregulation. Finally, although it is not obvious that Arthur Anderson received information on the government's inquiry into Enron, Arthur Anderson attempted to obfuscate any truth by destroying records, possibly those involving the *Raptor* creation and transactions.

Enron's history reveals the extent to which politics is enmeshed in capitalism. Arguments have been presented that supply side economics does not increase economic activity, since the wealthy spend on luxury items and corporations merge or acquire other companies instead of contributing to the economy. In opposition, democratic socialism seeks to redistribute resources to inhibit structural inequality. The networks that exist between political allies result in collaboration. Although the potential for sanctions for inappropriate actions exist, there is a diminished threat due to the networks and knowledge of laws that the players propose. For example, the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 makes it more difficult for investors to prove culpability. Further, businesses are not wholly liable, but proportionately liable for misdeeds. The Act eliminates Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations liability for securities fraud. The Act also preempts state litigation.

Enron's alliances with the powerful elite are clear: In 2001, over \$2.1 million was given to 71 senators and 188 congressmen as political contributions. In *The Buying of the President* (1996 ed.) Enron's contributions made to Republican senator Phil Gramm were itemized: \$34,100 over a three-year period. His wife, Wendy, appointed to the Commodity Futures and Trading Commission, voted to deregulate energy in the United States. Within five weeks of resigning her post, she was hired to Enron's board of directors. Equally extreme was the "phony U. S. energy crisis with deep ties to the Bush family," (Dowbenko, 2001). As California's PG &E Corporation and Southern California Edison struggled under huge debt, they purchased electricity at higher wholesale rates than they could recoup under the retail rates they were allowed to charge. Ken Lay, the former energy advisor to President Bush, stated precap prices were not even a short-term solution. A cap would limit the prices wholesalers could charge utilities; however, in 1996, wholesale power prices were deregulated. Interestingly, the 1996 law

did not apply to retail rates. Therefore, California's rolling blackouts in 2001 were met with Enron's provision of energy at prices beginning at \$29 per megawatt hour (1999) and reaching \$525 per megawatt hour in 2001. President Bush refused to intervene. Additional alliances led to Enron contracts for energy and power plants in India, the Phillipines, Argentina, and Kuwait.

Analysis

In the 1985 movie, *Wall Street*, Michael Douglas played the role of Gordon Gekko, an aggressive executive who makes his money through manipulation and exploitation through trading on Wall Street. In his acceptance of insider information by Budd Fox, an aspiring broker, he communicates words of wisdom and survival, "Every battle is won before it's waged, that's Sun Tzu, The Art of War." In the end, the protégé, Fox, forces the sale of a competitor's stock, "All warfare is based on deception, If your enemy is superior, evade him; if he's angry, incite him; if equally matched, flee; if not, split and re-evaluate." At the end, Gekko is recorded on tape, explaining his use of insider information, in a government investigation.

Enron's executives appear to be similarly situated. Although Enron's stated values are communication, respect, integrity, and excellence, actions from the leadership core is contradictory. In its 2000 Annual Report, Enron reported that its size, experience and skills gave them an "enormous competitive advantage" (i.e. robust networks of strategic assets; unparalleled liquidity and market-making abilities; risk management skills; and innovative technology). Literature reviews indicate that the leadership core of Enron was enjoying unbelievable perks and benefits. Corporate Officers, for example, owned expensive cars, multiple homes, land, and other material wealth and exercised complete autonomy to create wealth and power for themselves, while neglecting the interests of their employees (Duffy, 2002).

Raptors



"In the 'Jurassic Park' movies, some of the bad dinosaurs that killed people were called *Raptors*. In the Enron case, the *Raptors* ate the company" (Yost, 2002). *Raptors* were complex illusions meant to counter losses in Enron's other investments. When some of the investments lost money and Enron's stock fell, the unstable *Raptors* had to be repeatedly restructured and recapitalized, which was accomplished with more Enron stock (Mason, 2002). The deals were structured with accountant assistance and approval of the board of directors and executive officers, including Ken Lay.

Raptors offset Enron's stock losses by keeping the losses off official records books under the illusion that they are external businesses who manage certain assets, such as power plants or equity stakes in other companies. "Enron should not have been allowed to use partnerships it funded to hedge against its own losses" (Fowler, 2002). "It's as absurd as asking the Titanic to stop and save its own drowning passengers" (McCullough, 2002). According to testimony offered by William Powers, Chairman of the Enron Special Investigation Committee, on February 12, 2002, Enron created Rhythms NetConnections, Avici Systems, and the New Power Company (its own spinoff) amidst energy deregulation. Under "market to market" accounting, Enron was allowed to record the increased value of those investments during the quarter in which the value grew. In quarters when the value dropped, Enron reported the big gains and tried to hedge against it by contracting with an outside party to accept the risk. Under a hedge, if the value of the investment goes down, the outside party is to take the loss. If it goes up, the outside party is paid the difference. William Powers wrote that Enron used *Raptors* to hedge with itself. The

partnership broke three basic assumptions of a hedge: true independence between the two parties, creditworthiness of the hedging partner and diverse assets backing the hedge. Since Enron stock was used to counter falling prices, not assets of an independent outside interest, the losses should not have been hidden (Yost, 2002).

The first *Raptor*, *Raptor I* (Talon LLC) was created in April 18, 2000, using \$30 million from LJM2 and \$500 million in stock and stock options from Enron. Talon was to take the opposite position from Enron on hedges on its risky investments. If the value of the investment went up, Enron would pay Talon, and if investment went down, Talon would pay Enron. Talon was considered a third party because of the LJM2 investment. Amazingly, an unwritten part of the deal with LJM2 stipulated that before Talon could begin to hedge for Enron, it was required to return \$30 million investment plus another \$11 million to LJM2. Enron ensured Talon had the money to pay that return to LJM2 by paying Talon \$41 million for the right to buy back its own stock at a fixed price. While Talon claimed to have a \$30 million investment in Talon, Enron was actually the only party with anything at risk (Deener, 2001).

The risk became insurmountable when the first investment, Avici Systems of Massachusetts, lost \$75 million. To continue offsetting losses, Enron created three more *Raptors* (*Raptor II*, Timberwolf; *Raptor III*, Porcupine; and *Raptor IV*, Bobcat)(Fowler, 2-11-02, Houston Chronicle). Enron’s investment in The New Power Company, a subsidiary expected to go public on October 5, 2000, epitomized the absurdity of Enron’s illusion. Porcupine’s main assets were options to buy shares of the New Power at a given price. If New Power’s price fell, so too would Porcupine’s ability to pay Enron a hedge against the falling price. After New Power’s initial public offering, prices fell. Enron was in trouble. With the help of Anderson and Associates, *Raptors II* and *IV* were used to gain credit and bail out *Raptors I* and *III*. In early 2001, Enron’s stock price continued to drop, making *Raptors* increasingly unstable. All four *Raptors* were again restructured, and issued a total of \$800 million in new Enron stock, creating the appearance they had sufficient assets to pay Enron for the hedges.

Relevant control of business

“Although Americans are assured of their political rights by a constitution that mandates a representative democracy, there is no corresponding document guaranteeing economic rights. Such a document would be undesirable because it would allow a government to interfere with the operations of [the] marketplace” (Karger & Stoesz, 2002, p. 6). Nonetheless, administrative state and federal laws and many organizations exist to restrain or control the effects of improper business transactions. For example, the Sherman Antitrust Act (1890) controls the illegal monopolization of trade, and the combination or conspiracy to restrain trade. The Clayton Antitrust Act (1914) outlaws specific anti-competitive practices. Tie-in contracts and interlocking directorates are illegal. Other regulatory and investigative arms include:

Agency	Responsibilities
Government Accounting office	May file suit to obtain testimony or records
Securities and Exchange Commission	Investigates accounting and commodity fraud
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Violations of federal laws and obstruction of justice
Department of labor	Pension and welfare benefit administration
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	Investigates monopoly and anti-trust allegations
Commodity and Futures Trading Commission	Investigates fraud, manipulation and improper influence to commodity markets
Financial Accounting Standards Board	Sets U. S. accounting rules
Committee on Education and Workforce	Regulates the Employee Retirement Income Security Act

Finally, external organizations may also become involved in influencing policy. Two examples include the National Resources Defense Council and Sierra Club, - environmental groups who seek to determine methods by which to control the destruction of Nature.

Implications for Social Work

The dynamics of this case reveal that the fight for social, economic, and political justice means preparing, educating, and strategizing by understanding and addressing the complex networks of relationships that exist between government, business, and powerful individuals that contributes to economic or social oppression. Because the global economy supposes the existence of complicated and long-reaching networks of stakeholders, lessons can be learned by studying how coalitions are created, how political action committees function, and how corporations achieve their status. Social Work researchers and policy analysts can increase knowledge of consumers by exposing abuses of power and inequality. Researchers can benefit Social Work practitioners and policy makers by identifying questionable corporate actions and empowering groups and classes of people who are vulnerable, relatively powerless, or likely to be victimized by oppressive policies and practices. This case study reveals the magnitude to which an organization can remain competitive, yet reach its demise when greed, wealth, and power overcome rational means.

Conclusion

Perhaps an appropriate perspective for Enron's life cycle is the one offered by Master Sun, "The Way means inducing people to have the same aim as the leadership, so that they will share death and share life, without fear of danger" (The Art of War, translated by Cleary, T. (1988). The testimony from Enron executives is paradoxical. The CEO possessed the leadership qualities necessary to enable Enron to fiercely compete with and maintain its competitive advantage. When competition and administrative rules became too troublesome, Enron resorted to inappropriate manipulation of the market and exploitation of stakeholders. Along with the extensive relationships and networking capabilities Enron shared with government, military, and corporate leaders, Enron executives relied upon its tendencies to sustain itself as a capitalist competitor on one hand, while functioning as an oligarchy and oligopoly on the other. The executives operated with one philosophy: The pleasure I gained is in controlling natural resources and world domination is good for me, even if it involves human consumption.

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With Magda Barini-Garcia and Amy Barkin of the HIV/AIDS Bureau and the U.S. Public Health Service

Perspectives on a Policy Internship Leslie Raneri

In summer 2003, I participated in an internship program through the Association of Schools of Public Health at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.hrsa.gov/>). The purpose of the internship program was to expose public health students to federal agencies and to allow them to interact with people in the public health workforce. I applied and was accepted to a placement in the Division of Training and Technical Assistance (DTTA) of the HIV/AIDS Bureau (HAB), which is one of the four bureaus of HRSA. The internship exposed me to a small part of the structure and operations of a federal agency.

Through the internship, I was able to learn more about how the federal government works, to meet people and attend projects in various parts of the government, and to improve my understanding of the importance of policy to practitioners. I was able to meet some very interesting and dynamic people through this process. The project officers with whom I worked most, CAPT Amy Barkin and LT Stacey Gooding, shared their experiences and perspectives of being in the Public Health Service and in the federal government over many years. I was also able to connect with people in other areas such as the Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and other parts of the HIV/AIDS Bureau. I gained greater appreciation for the role that project officers in federal agencies have in implementing and monitoring programs that make a difference on the local level.

Most of the work I did with my mentor Amy Barkin was related to HIV/AIDS training programs for healthcare providers working with American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. I spoke with many of the AIDS Education and Training Centers (AETCs) doing this important and innovative work and was able to get a better understanding of the training needs of healthcare providers. I was also able to work on an analysis of these training programs, which have been funded through the Minority AIDS Initiative. In attending broader HAB meetings, I obtained a glimpse of how experts in academic settings, community organizations, think tanks, the government, and many others are involved with developing and implementing policies and programs.

The internship program has had a great impact on my professional development because it gave me a broader perspective on future professional options. My primary future plans have been focused on social work research and education, however the federal internship opened up new options for other fellowships, internships, and careers in government policy and program settings. I gained understanding of the relational elements of coordinating federal

programs between the project officer and the university or community organization. Whether I work in an academic, research, or practice setting, I am more aware of how policies are made, programs are



Celebrating the 4th of July in DC with another ASPH intern

developed from the federal level, and how programs apply for and receive funding from the federal government.

Although selecting an internship that directly relates to your future goals is important, the two most important things I found in the internship experience were the sponsoring organization and the host agency. While in my internship, I interacted with interns from other sponsoring organizations who had a difficult experience due to organizational factors. If possible, it is helpful to talk with someone who has participated in the internship program to see how well it is administered. “Little things” like being paid on time, helpful interactions with program staff, and responsiveness to problematic internship situations can become big issues when they go wrong. Within the hosting agency, positive or negative overtones of staff, turnover and administrative upheaval, and stress due to pressure from above and below can dramatically affect the intern’s experience. Unfortunately, as in employment, these issues are not always apparent prior to immersion in the agency.

When looking for an internship, think carefully about the fit between your future goals and the internship and organizational purposes. Most of the federal agencies have internships and fellowships, as do many public policy think tanks and organizations. These can often be found through their websites or through search engines. One of the benefits of being a student is the opportunity to explore options briefly and to gain exposure to future contacts and possibilities. Don’t miss your chance!

Bookworm’s Corner

Peter A. Kindle

The Nature of Qualitative Evidence by Janice M. Morse, Janice M. Swanson, and Anton J. Kuzel (Eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

From philosophy of science to qualitative and then quantitative research methods, first year doctoral students confront the central question addressed in this edited collection – what is the value and nature of qualitative evidence? Since the Cochrane Collaboration adopted the hierarchical standards for the evaluation of evidence in 1993, it has become common in health care for qualitative research to be equated with mere opinion. This book attempts to challenge this trend.

It provides something of an insider’s perspective on the impact of Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) on qualitative researchers working within the health care field. In practice, EBM has favored randomized control trials and systematic reviews over all other forms of evidence (e.g – case studies, interviews, ethnographies, narratives, experience). By so doing, EBM has created a categorical dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative evidence, denying the essential dimensional correlation and interdependency that these research methodologies share. The first two chapters correct this error.

Contending that medicine is an *applied* science and therefore essentially pragmatic (i.e. – concerned with practical outcomes), the authors show how EBM violates the philosophical base of medicine (chapter 5), denies patients the right to evaluate evidence for themselves (chapter 3), and silences the voices of those receiving care (chapter 4). The best medicine will be ineffective without patients participating in their own care, and the inductive approach fundamental to

qualitative research may be the best means by which to insure that patient concerns are used to inform all aspects of health care delivery.

Chapters 7 and 8 tackle the challenge of validity and verification in qualitative research, facing quite directly the quantitative critique that qualitative evidence possesses neither. I cannot imagine a better short argument than what is presented in these chapters. Concluding chapters focus on community-based research (chapter 7), outcome studies (chapter 10), clinical practice (chapter 11), and the diffusion of research results (chapter 12).

In chapter 6, Sally Thorne (RN, PhD) concludes that, despite the distinct epistemological and historical traditions of differing scientific disciplines, only an interdisciplinary approach is capable of understanding and evaluating the human condition in all its complexity. I agree with her conclusions and recommend this book as a first step in that direction for social work students. If social work, like medicine, is an *applied* science, then we need to be enriched by the perspectives and arguments offered by these authors.

Surfers' Report

“Big picture” sites

Healthy People 2010, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/default.htm>
National Center for Health Statistics: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/>

Children's Health and Well-Being

Bright Futures: Guidelines and principles for best practices in working with children, adolescents, and families: <http://www.brightfutures.org/>
Annie E. Casey Foundation: A wealth of public policy, practice, and program information for child and family advocates: <http://www.aecf.org/>
Children at Risk: Houston/Texas County policy advocates for children and families: <http://www.childrenatrisk.org/>
Child Trends: Children's research organization: <http://www.childtrends.org/>
National Center for Children in Poverty: Research and policy analysis about children and families in poverty: <http://www.nccp.org/>
Family & Corrections Network: Information and links on families and the corrections system: <http://www.fcnetwork.org/>
Welfare Information Network: Comprehensive database of resource on welfare recipients, workforce development programs, and other programs and policies affecting low-income communities: <http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/win/>

Research, grants, data, and proposal writing

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research: <http://www.iaswresearch.org/>
IASWR resources for proposal writing, opportunities for doctoral dissertation, pre-doc, and post-doc opportunities: <http://www.charityadvantage.com/iaswr/TechnicalResources.asp>:
Institute for Women's Policy Research: <http://www.iwpr.org/>
National Dataset Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect: <http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/>
Community of Science: Grant, fellowship, internships and conference database: <http://www.cos.com/>

The Foundation Center: Grant database: <http://www.fdncenter.org/>
American Indian/Alaska Native Grant Support Center: Great site on grant writing that is designated for AI/AN HIV/AIDS services seeking grant assistance, but has many features that are applicable to designing other types of proposals: <http://ngsc.nnaapc.org/>

Especially for Graduate Students

Association for Support of Graduate Students

<http://www.asgs.org/>

Graduate School Survival Guide

<http://www-smi.stanford.edu/people/pratt/smi/advice.html>

How to be a good graduate student

<http://www.cs.indiana.edu/how.2b/how.2b.html>

University of Texas-Austin Center for Teaching Effectiveness

<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/>

Procrastination Research Group at Carleton University

<http://www.carleton.ca/~tpychyl/>

Eddie's Anti-Procrastination Site

<http://www.geocities.com/writethethesis/>

PhinishedD: support site for dissertation completion difficulties

<http://www.phinished.org/>

As people who depend on our ability to do research and write for our current and future careers, we need to pay attention to what our bodies are telling us about harm that we are doing, especially when using laptops, computer keyboards, and mice. Here are some helpful sites for prevention of repetitive strain injuries.

Yahoo Links for Repetitive Strain Injury:

http://dir.yahoo.com/Health/Diseases_and_Conditions/Repetitive_Strain_Disorder/

NIH Ergonomics at Work site: <http://www.nih.gov/od/ors/ds/ergonomics/index.html>

Computer Related Repetitive Strain Injury: <http://eeshop.unl.edu/rsi.html>

Harvard RSI site designed for students: <http://www.rsi.deas.harvard.edu/index.html>

Guidelines for Submission

In order to be considered for publication in Perspectives on Social Work, all submissions must meet the following criteria:

- The author must be a currently enrolled student in the doctoral program of the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston
- Only original work will be considered. It is acceptable to submit a piece that has been published elsewhere or is currently under consideration as long as it is that student's original work.
- Only electronic submissions are accepted. Submissions should be e-mailed as a Microsoft Word attachment to the following e-mail address: journal@sw.uh.edu
- Submission must contain an abstract of not more than 100 words.
- Submissions for the featured articles should be 5 – 7 pages in length with not less than one-inch margins and 12-point font. Submissions for book reviews may be 2-4 double-spaced pages. Submissions must be double-spaced.
- Submissions must meet APA guidelines (5th Edition) for text, tables, and references.

Feedback Guidelines

The editorial staff encourage thoughtful responses from readers focusing on scholarly debate and dialogue. Please send feedback to Journal@sw.uh.edu