

Radicalising Roles for Africa's Development: Some Evolving Practice Issues *

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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a criticism of modernisation and dependency schools of thought which have retarded the ability of social work to contribute in a meaningful way to the solution of Africa's many problems. A move from a residual to a radical paradigm is urged, reflecting five key dimensions which together offer a blueprint for a way forward. Radical developmental social work of an interdisciplinary nature, guided by informed, forward-thinking professionals and grounded in African realities may be the only answer if the profession is to survive into the next century. Perhaps only then will the social workers be able to produce a practice that meets Africa's requirements and one that deals effectively with the major concerns faced by the African peoples.

Introduction

To create and to translate knowledge from sociology and anthropology into prescriptions that can be applied to Africa's development efforts is problematic. This is doubly so when the task is attempted by an applied discipline. Yet, this is the fact that must be accomplished by the professionals of social work, a field that draws extensively and eclectically from the social sciences to derive its knowledge base. Its practice requires theoretical models as explanatory tools and for some of its interventions. But there is increasing evidence that the approaches adopted so far have proved inadequate to propel social work into the development activity of African nations. Rather, it continues to be regarded as marginal, if not ignored altogether, as an instrumentality for change and development in the Region.

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The literature from African and other Third World policy-makers and social science educators suggest that modernisation theories have largely guided their national development programmes. This may reflect an uncritical acceptance by the social scientists of perceptions formulated in the west. For a cataloguing of some of the more familiar problems of Africa - eg, rural and urban poverty, famines, resource scarcities, lack of opportunities for work, education and health care in addition to ethnic conflicts, wars, corruption and indebtedness - reflect not so much modernisation but conditions of underdevelopment which, it is held here, tend to perpetuate Africa's dependence on western solutions.

Moreover, the modernisation framework for social work's involvement in development may have been a deficient guide because it has overshadowed due consideration of why such conditions of underdevelopment and dependancy persist. African social work literature has neglected this latter theoretical framework almost completely. Below, the need is argued for structuring a practice that takes seriously the implications of Africa's dependency vis-a-vis the industrialised nations.

It is assumed that this factor ties social work to approaches having the effect of nibbling away at the fringe of major problems without making an impact on the lives of Africa's masses. It may lie behind the preoccupation by the profession with relative minutiae, eg with individual destitutes while the majority must cope with poverty and oppression, with the few orphans when millions of children die of malnutrition or disease, with the young juvenile delinquent although no solution is offered to the problems of hundreds of school leavers. Neither the modernisation nor the dependency paradigm alone provides sufficient direction for the change required. Highlighting the dearth of attention given by the profession to a critical alternative explanation of the conditions that social work should attend is, firstly, to pose the question: why has the profession in Africa accepted a western definition of what constitutes social work when its ensuing concerns seems so incongruous with the more glaring problem of the region? It is to provide the springboard, secondly, to propose that a more radicalised social work be established if social work in Africa is to become more developmental.

An explanation is provided at the outset of the way the term radicalisation is being used here. The underlying concern is whether the historical, inherited social work model, with a preoccupation with problems rather than change, can actually foster a differing mode of intervening. If the answer is in the negative despite efforts at modernisation, then in light of Africa's underdevelopment, breaking through to new models rather than tinkering with old ones would seem the more preferred way ahead. This necessitates a radicalisation that is little evident hitherto on the African social work scene.

This first section of the paper, therefore, proposes a potential framework to developmental social work. The paradigm assumes that designing for growth and positive planned change is the essential dynamic of development. This has implications for Africa's social work which currently serves basically maintenance and control functions.

Radicalisation for development functions, on the other hand, implies that social work be flexible in order to determine the most satisfactory modus operandi for the situation at hand. This proposition leads to a consideration of a second major issue concerning the evolving of social work roles for development, that is, practice leadership. As the gatekeepers to changes, the leaders - administrators, policy-makers, educators - have the task of designing and restructuring the profession. Radicalising practice therefore must encompass, if not begin with, the leadership of the profession, as in other spheres.

Radicalisation — an an interdisciplinary function

Education, it is generally conceded, is essential to development. However, there is a sense in which education may be viewed as being anti-developmental. That is when education, cast in the western, British model, actually functions to frustrate a commitment to Africa's development. Barkun (1972) in a study of University students in Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda, showed that the education received socialised graduates to technocratic, implementor roles rather than to roles for development. They were conservers of the status quo more than agents of change. As the brain-power upon which Africa pinned much of its hopes for progress, the adversion of the educated elite to taking the risks that change and development imply thus represents a major dilemma. The dilemma that Barkun has identified suggests that practice issues are of impact beyond the single applied discipline of social work.

Sociologists and anthropologists may take refuge in the argument that their mandate is the academic study of man and society rather than an attempt at ameliorating harmful conditions. Some questions might, therefore, suffice to raise the issue of application, or practice, to the prominence it deserves. Where do the social science graduates produced by Africa's universities get jobs upon graduation? Is it not largely in the same bureaucracies of the public and private sectors? Do they not carry the same titles, have the same conditions of services and execute the same roles as those entering from the applied fields? It is argued that the paradigms adopted by social work, specifically, have confined it to a practice deemed inadequate. It is not possible that theories and tools proposed by the sociologists and anthropologists in terms of affecting real change and development are equally of little or no

impact? The deficiencies might actually be concealed because those disciplines are not put to the acid test, ie application to concrete situations. Social work should not be seen in isolation from the other social science disciplines for another reason. Its distinct identity, in other words, does not lie in the fact of its having no similarities in content and emphases. Like sociology, it must be concerned with root causes, development issues, and the functioning of social structures and institutions. The shared concerns do not cause social work to become applied sociology. What distinguishes it - no matter the particular emphases of practice - is that social work remains committed to concrete intervention into human systems so as to enhance social functioning. What is at issue in this paper is the question: who should define that distinctive identity? Should it be the African professionals from their perception of their realities? Or is there but **one** social work, and that fashioned after the western world view? To consider the former possibility is to dare to be radical. One of the aims of this paper is to challenge the members of the profession itself to redefine its identity and its mandate. Clearly, then, both the non-applied and the applied social scientists have a stake in exploring the issues that bear on the utilisation of paradigms for developmental roles. Further, it is in the interest of both to fashion a model that will in the broadest sense radicalise social work, since from its practice much about the efficacy of the application of sociological and anthropological theories can be learned.

An outline of the prevailing model

That delineating roles appropriate to development requires radicalisation suggests that in some of its essential attributes social work as it is now practiced in Africa is deficient. A synoptic view of the profession will bear this intimation out. A residual model of social work has been adopted which focuses upon the coping mechanisms of people. The targets are the marginal groups - the handicapped, the delinquents, the orphaned, the others disadvantaged in (and often by) the system in terms of income, shelter, food, and other basic needs. There is, thus, a concern with pathology, treatment, and adjustment. Baddu (1984) argues that this remedial approach to intervention is the 'soft face' of social control, deflecting deprived groups from taking radical action to remedy their situation.

Current social work practice shows more serious limitations, still. Strategies that emphasise direct services have inevitably meant predominantly individualised activities. This scale of operation is at the bottom of, if not wholly perpetuates, the criticised inappropriate forms. And as individualised efforts, it relegates the profession to the periphery of planned change activity. These small scale change efforts - even the community development village level models - are rarely integrated into larger, national schemes. Thus, social policy formulation, planning and evaluation are perceived to be tasks beyond

the capacity of the profession. Social workers are therefore assigned to roles as implementers of the policies and plans shaped outside the profession.

Further, social work has made no marked attempt, in terms of a new conceptualisation of its mandate, to better direct practice through the turbulent political, economic, social and cultural changes besetting Africa to date. Rather, in clinging to the traditional model, the profession appears to avoid issues inherent to development such as productivity, changing gender roles, people's participation, resource sufficiency, rural development.²

In arguing for the universality of certain social work values through an advocacy of a generic model, the historical paradigm subtly downgrades values such as communism, spiritualism, etc, which undergird African social organisation. In effect, it removes them altogether from serious consideration as principles for guiding practice. A predetermination of those skills that must be applied, for the limited range of problems selected as the purview of the profession, and the marginalised clientele chosen, all which combine to give social work its unique character, implicitly limits modifications that can be made. In taking on a mandate assigned from outside the region, African social work indeed conforms to the conditions defined by Midgley (1981) as 'professional imperialism'

With the above description of the prevailing model, it is now possible to explain in what sense the radicalising of the intervention behaviours, or roles, of African social work professionals, is being suggested.

The concept

Radicalisation, according to the dictionary usage, refers to a disposition to make a marked departure from the usual or the traditional, to make extreme changes in existing views, behaviours, conditions, or institutions. It is this general dictionary meaning, in the first instance, that is referred to here. By pointing to the substantial drawbacks inherent in the residual professional model, there is the imperative that African social work finds a way from the slavish replication of inherited forms. Therefore, to radicalise roles for practice is to evolve a new, more dynamic paradigm.

Doing so begins with a reconsideration of the profession's mandate. To radicalise roles is to prescribe behaviours that directly address the conditions of Africa, not those pervading elsewhere. And this intent should be embodied in the conceptualisation of social work's mandate. That is, given the underdevelopment alluded to, the profession should declare that it exists to champion the welfare of the majority of the people and to exercise those functions that their empowerment and the development of their societies require. It is to actively repudiate as its primary domain of operation the dysfunctioning elements of Africa's populations. Its mandate should dictate a

future and change orientation, rather than one that constrains it to maintaining systems. Such a mandate, in essence, reverses a long-standing order of priority in social work functioning — from remedial, preventive, and developmental functions to development, prevention and remedy as proposed by the United Nations Conference of Ministers in 1968 (UN 68). Establishing clearly what it is that the profession exists to do or be would make choosing alternative, viable models less problematic.

The political implications of changing mandates and/or strategies from the residual model are, I have argued elsewhere, Ankrah 1984, issues that social workers have chosen to ignore. They have taken refuge in the assumption that change to more appropriate practice could best be achieved by working through the departments in which they are employed. Those conditions under which change is likely to occur, if at all, are indicated below. In essence, it requires radicalising roles at levels of both practice and leadership.

The modernisation approach: a failed attempt

To identify the flaws in contemporary social work in Africa and the Third World is to imply a dissatisfaction with the status quo. Some western writers have examined the potential of social science theories to resolve the dilemma posed by ineffective social tools in the light of the Third World's enormous problems. Midgley (1984), for example, analyses the major tenets of three development paradigms. He questions whether due consideration is given to the social welfare implications of these models for developing countries. Interest here is only in the modernisation and dependency models he discusses.

The modernisation approach, he shows, takes the view that underdevelopment, such as is found in much of Africa, reflects the original condition of backwardness of developing nations. This state of affairs is marked by the presence of traditional economic and social institutions. Consanguine relationships, people predisposed towards apathy, primitive modes of production, and unscientific, non-futuristic cultures are prevalent. These reinforce each other to keep social systems at low standards of existence. Advocates of this position suggest that to foster development, the impediments to modernisation must be removed. Progress, which is evolutionary, requires the creation of liberal, democratic organisations to replace authoritarian, oppressive, political systems. It necessitates the diffusion of modern technologies and ideas into the developing nations. Change must take place at the local level so that conditions foster the mobilisation of capital and other resources needed to further development.

The welfare view of the modernisation paradigm, Midgley concludes, is that it comes as a result of economic growth. Consequently, market forces

should be used to meet social needs. The governments should intervene with a narrow range of problems, and only then when these cannot be dealt with effectively by the private sector⁴. Midgely notes that this pattern depicts the sporadic, piecemeal, pragmatic way welfare was handled in and since the colonial era. An earlier work of mine observed that the privatisation of social work and social welfare in Africa, noticeably in arrangements with the voluntary agencies, tended to create more problems for development than they solve. (Ankrah 1979). Modernisation theory has led to the incremental expansion of the social welfare services in the developing countries, both before and after independence. Implicit in the social science writings on the subject of creating modern, political, social, and cultural institutions, Midgely argues, finally, are policies that advocated, eg, population programmes to reduce fertility, community development aimed at changing traditional habits, and the creation of democratic institutions at the local level. (Midgely 1984).

Unless the point be obscured, let it be noted here that the underlying paradigm of modernisation theory is capitalism. There is no intended challenge to that system except to make it work more effectively in line with its established tenets. The assumption, then, is that economic and social development is an inevitable consequence and will ultimately solve problems that concern social policy-makers and implementers.

Several social work theorists have advocated prescriptions for the Third World that put them clearly in the modernisation school. Khinduka (1971) urges Third World social workers to adopt a socio-economic model of practice. Such a model would transform the profession, moving it from a preoccupation with therapeutic needs of the few to champion science and technology, advocate land reform, plead the need for institutional change, advance plans and proposals designed, in a word, to accelerate socio-economic development. Austin (1970) defines social work and social welfare as "specialised areas of activity that would contribute directly to total national planning for social and economic development."

Andargatchew (1973) analysing trends in social work education from the 1960's shows that the modernisation perception undergirds thinking in Africa as well. This is revealed in what was set out as tasks for the professional:

The role of the African social worker is to facilitate the forward movement arising from social change by enabling people to participate fully and effectively in changes which otherwise might pass them by.

Presumably, people would be moving forward from their backwardness as underdeveloped people. Since social workers would assist governments to enact and implement "progressive" legislation and policies, they would

therefore need a deep knowledge of the behavioural and social sciences. These new assignments, reinforced by a thorough preparation in the social sciences, would equip professionals to play substantial roles in processes of modernisation. The underlying assumption, *inter alia*, was that development, or progress, would occur and that social work through social welfare and community development should play a part.

Now more than two decades have passed curricula have been revised to show a heightened emphasis on the social sciences. They include subjects leading towards skills in social policy formulation, planning, administration and research, etc and yet social work is still in a search for appropriate paradigms and strategies. The prescriptions offered through the modernisation approach do not appear to have achieved the desired effect this applied social science intended.

The dependency paradigm

A number of social scientists have come to quite different conclusions about development possibilities in the Third World⁵. For them the so-called 'backwardness' of developing countries is not an original state at all. Instead, the social and economic problems that plague many of these nations are consequences of European imperialism and capitalist penetration. The transfer of wealth that began in the fifteenth century led to the impoverishment of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Being systematically underdeveloped by the flow of resources to metropolitan centres, the Third World became incredibly dependent on the industrialised nations - economically, socially, politically, and culturally. The development of Africa and other regions, those holding the dependency perception maintain, can only come about by 'de-linking', or severing, the exploitive links that tie nations to the western centres of capitalism. Yet others doubt that development is possible at all whilst capitalism is the major economic model of the world's economy.

The implication for social policies and, *inter alia*, for social work in the Third World is the continued replication of inappropriate western models because of dependency, eg on resources, technology, and ideas.

African social scientists have added a number of insights to the dependency debate. Amin, Rodney and Mazrui⁶ to name but a few, put Africa squarely in the camp of the underdeveloped regions. Observing that the continent is of the richest in the world, the paradox of the widespread poverty of its people is described by Mazrui (1980) as "a situation of anomalous underdevelopment". He argues that this condition can be explained substantially by the nature of Africa's economic interaction with the western world across times.

The implications of the dependency framework for social policy formulation, and by inference, for social work practice, have begun to be considered. Some writers suggest that many of the Third world's social problems can be traced directly to conditions of underdevelopment and dependency. Doyal and Penell (1984) link some communicable disease to this, while Navarro (1984) attempts to show that the maldistribution of health facilities and the brain-drain of medical personnel from the poorer regions can be accounted for in the same way. The resource scarcity is explained, states Bruggess (1984) by the transfer of resources that could sustain a high level of provision locally.

A similar perception, that a direct link exists between a state of dependency and the nature of social services, is seen in Nyirenda's (1975) case study of social planning in Zambia. He identifies what he calls "foreign recipies" and "borrowed tools" to mean the expertise and models from industrialised countries that skew social planning and implementation away from the social organisation of Zambians. But he does not relate these situations to the prevailing political economy. On the other hand, my study of social work in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia (Ankrah, 1984) takes the political economy as the starting point. Several facts of practice and education are examined. These were expected to differ, given the impact of the capitalist, socialist, and humanist ideological contexts of the three countries respectively. The research was not designed to prove that underdevelopment and dependency lay at the bottom of the professional responses reported. Nevertheless, the study did confirm the existence of a number of social-political features that argued the continuance of forms bedded not as much in backwardness as in dependent relationships. Among these features were the persistence of residual patterns of practice, a slant in social policies towards the economic-growth model of development, and a conservative bias in education.

The voices urging the Third World to make a break with the historical residual model of social work, in summary, have increased in number and intensity over the years. If the professionals in this applied field have not derived other paradigms or have not acted on their collective, accumulated wisdom, it may well reflect a context hardly facilitating change and developemnt. Dependency theorists contend just such an effect. Therefore, formulating alternatives would seem an even more urgent matter for Africa and the Third World than for the industrialised countries where such attention is being given currently to this issue.⁷

The dimensions of a radicalising approach

The assumption is being made that a dynamic social work model in Africa can be operationalised, despite the limitations of the context. An emerging issue is to define the features of a model or models germane to African conditions.

Clearly, approaches that replace the residual pattern will evolve over time and will need to be a result of experimentation as well as experimental discoveries. Efficacy will need to be demonstrated. That is, the model will have to take into full consideration Africa's underdevelopment. The proposition proffered here is therefore tentative. It is intended to provide a framework for thinking, social work educators in particular can test these ideas in the design of research projects. Fieldwork could prove another valuable tool for explaining ways to refine and to implement them. Much will depend, finally, on the degree to which educators and administrators of practice reduce the gap that characteristically exists between the field and the institutions. It is hoped, moreover, that a wider range of disciplines, including the sociologists and anthropologists, are drawn into the search for a new social work paradigm for Africa. Five dimensions can be identified which should interact mutually to inform radicalised roles. It is to a discussion of these dimensions that attention is now turned.

A macrodetermination dimension

In the first place, practice must be perceived as macrodeterministic. The UN Conference of Ministers of Social Welfare 1968, in calling for a move from a remedial to a developmental stance, recognised that the socio-economic problems and needs of the Third World were of the scale that only correspondingly broad approaches would suffice. The dimension requires that social work be responsive to the totality of conditions and circumstances touching the lives of the masses.

The injunction that social work became macro-deterministic does not imply a mechanical determinism. Instead, it is to argue for greater flexibility. The determining, dictating factor would be the needs of Africa's masses. With a perspective to serve the majority, social work's choice of problems with which to deal, and the needs to which to respond, as well as the methods of approach, could then conform to Africa's culture as well as to its environment. For both of these give clues as to how to proceed. Both point strongly towards actions determined by a concern for large scale.

Note could be taken in pursuit of radicalised social work roles, therefore, of the continued impact of the extended family, of still adhered to clan obligations, of the prevalence of mutual aid societies and the persistence of traditional patterns in agricultural production units in some African countries. With regard to the latter of these four forms, a base for modifying practice with groups can be found, for example, though the study of traditional work units such as the Wang Ties of Uganda (Mamdani, 1984).

Both intrinsically as well as extrinsically, then, an holistic model would inform all of the activities, programmes and services of social work. For

example, the macro-determinist conceptualisation should guide strategies so that, for example needs of the extended family are fitted into village development programmes. The needs of the handicapped are provided for by productivity schemes. The women's groups are integrated into the cooperative movement. The profession therefore selects that knowledge and those skills that would equip it with the capacity to intervene in those areas of broad-based development such as health, housing, and production. It would play a role in efforts at social integration through mobilisation of people and resources. Direct services, intended to help marginal groups at micro-levels of implementation, would be developed within this larger framework.

Development strategies of African governments, despite the pressures of western capitalist powers to reprivitise the socio-economic systems, still aim to raise living standards of the majority of their populations. Yet to date, this holistic conceptualisation for the whole practice has not evolved significant empirical forms to match the expectations of governments.⁸ Social investment programmes such as education, nutrition, and cooperatives must claim the attention of social workers in Africa, or the profession will lack any credibility or sanction to be more self-actualising. This writer takes exception, therefore to Hardiman and Midgely and other western thinkers who would confine social work for the Third World mostly to the disadvantaged. They argue that there are other professions which can exercise macro-functions better. It is such perceptions as these through the 'expertise' imported into Africa that accounts for social work's present lack of strategies and roles beyond the micro-level.

Social design dimension

Secondly, radicalising roles for development requires that social work be perceived as having what can be termed a 'social design' dimension. Imbrongo (1985), defined it as "a process of design in which emerging human and social needs are anticipated and the means necessary to their realisation are prescribed."⁹ A social system design, according to him, is "the arrangement of, and processes of arranging and re-arranging the human, social and technical resources to accomplish community objectives". Implicit in his definitions is the possibility of creative thought and action to be applied to development problems. The profession would respond practically to propose those alternatives that ensure that social development goals are met. This is in contrast to a proclivity to react in social work. A concern with designing desired conditions moves the profession to invent, to innovate, to experiment with new programme ideas, to combine old traditional African forms of provisions and problem-solving with new approaches.

Concern for child welfare, for example, could be expressed in terms of family development whereby children's rights and their participation in decision-making would be encouraged. Much of Africa's poverty can be

accounted for by rural household underdevelopment. That is, with men away in pursuit of jobs and insufficient funds to support two households, it is quite frequently the rural household that suffers. Designing roles for broad social development could mean focusing first on the development of the rural family. This could mean educating the woman left in the rural areas, helping her to gain competence in management of her funds and selling crops. She could be helped to deal with her problems of loneliness, or of rearing children with little input from the husband. The novelty of traditional self-help and community development methods seems to have worn off, yet the need for mobilisation of the rural population is still acute. The move from residual to radical social work implies that the profession can command those skills that convey to governments, policy designers and other disciplines efficacy at societal levels. Designing mobilisation strategies, for example through village councils or women's groups, that take into account changes in the political and economic spheres and the need of the masses for new perceptions of reality would concomitantly change the image and nature of social work.

Social work then, in accepting a social design conceptualisation of social development, would have greatly added manoeuvrability, as the foregoing possibilities indicate.

Social designing, in summary, undergirded by a macro-deterministic perception, permits social work to incorporate whole social systems in the determination of developmental goals and the means to attain them. It would require that social work serves coordination functions. The profession would be engaged in the creation of those organisations and institutions needed, but now lacking, on the African scene.

Moreover, the profession could more readily discover and promote appropriate roles. For its end would not be to 'facilitate' what is, but to 'create' what needs to be. It could even redesign itself.

The change dimension

Radicalisation for roles in development means purposely engineering change. Change is perceived by the model discussed here as a growth-producing process. Yet, social work can point to little evidence that the systems helped, eg, juvenile delinquents, orphans, the mentally ill, etc, have sustained growth over time. It is possible that since a conceptualisation of practice has not emphasised this dimension, the profession knows little about how to operationalise it; that is, how to plan, initiate, implement and to sustain change (1982). It would appear experientially that the lack is as apparent at micro as at macro levels of implementation.

The problems to operationalising growth are several. There is need for some measure of consensus within the profession as to the structural and

institutional social changes it will commit its efforts to in a given African context. Is it for participatory democracy, expanded social services, social justices and human rights? The means to galvanise professionals so as to arrive at a consensus and to act in concert is itself problematic. This is due to the dearth of associations and the fragmentation within social work in Africa. There is, too, a need to understand the obstacles to change as well as factors in the change process. Much of the knowledge required here must be derived from the sociologists and anthropologists. Both can inform practice as to how to produce growth at macro-levels. Other disciplines, such as psychology, can assist with insights on dealing with change and resistance at the individual and group levels within society.

Change as a growth producing process suggests a model of practice that: discovers procedures for helping people and communities to be more change-conscious and more change-competent. In expectations, for example, that rural people are slow to act on the changes recommended, social work would experiment with methods of reaching out to stimulate people to change. Having done so — and this is the area of greatest weakness — radicalised change-oriented practice would be designed to help social systems to acquire the skills needed to go beyond the minimum first steps. This would enable them to act positively in future situations requiring change. As social work serves to stimulate self-actualisation at the individual or family levels, for example, human systems become accumulatively more flexible, spontaneous, expectant, and willing to try other changes. Social work in Africa can draw on viable networks of relationships, extended families, clans, village groupings, etc, to create and to promote the cooperative atmosphere that enables other more positive steps towards change to be taken.

Lack of professional motivation to change may, in fact, lie at the heart of social work's fixation at the residual stage of development! As part of Africa's educate elite, social workers can be counted among those who rule. Change involves risk at the personnel level, no matter what Africa's conditions cry out for it. Implementation of this dimension within an African derived paradigm would be a function of change oriented education and a radicalised professional leadership, this latter is the concern of the last section of this paper.

The futuristic dimension

Social work that will empower people to change will need to effect a fourth dimension. It will need to instill a futuristic outlook among its members. To be future-orientated is, as suggested above, to anticipate what human needs will be and what conditions will ensure that these are met. This necessitates interest beyond the moment, beyond the 'new' reality. There must be a capacity to project thinking into the unknown. (This is, of course, greatly

aided by the use of computers, a distant possibility in social work organisations in most of Africa). Futuristic thinking provides the needed latitude to consider the most applicable methodology. Therefore, the 'borrowed' residual methods, eg, casework, can be exchanged for indigenous forms because those which will work efficaciously can be forecast.

The profession, no less than politicians and populations in general, may have little consciousness of being in control of those resources essential to realistic goal-setting necessary to chart future courses for social systems. Social work professionals may have succumbed to the fatalism than is inevitable if a dependency perception is to be accepted unequivocally. However, some basic questions can be asked: Should there be first material resources, or the ideas, plans and the concrete strategies tht match a vision of a better future? The new paradigm, then, must encourage planning and goal-setting for the future that is desired.

A broad-based education introduced in the 1960's has resulted in the inclusion in social work education, especially at the graduate levels, of knowledge and skills for planning, policy development, and evaluation. Failure to fully integrate those into thinking and implementation of practice may be traced to the insufficient support given by the educational institutions to funding fieldwork (Ankrah, 1984).

To be disinclined toward looking ahead may also be accounted for by the realisation that, for the vast majority of Africans, life, or survival, is very precarious in terms of securing such basic human needs as food, housing, and health. Therefore, the element of hope is conceived here as integral to futuristic thinking. Professional social workers must be able to convey to interdisciplinary colleagues, to leaders, and to the people that the future belongs to those who seize it. Against every odd, positive changes can come where there is a fundamental belief that there is a future to work toward. Otherwise, there can be no pulling together of the people with the profession to work for their own betterment. Such is the essence of development. In the end, perhaps the most important question social work can ask itself is this: Is its vision for the African peoples satisfied by the status quo?

The political will dimension

Undergirding the four dimensions above is that of the political will. This writer takes the view that fundamental to a restructuring of social work is the need for professionals to come to terms with the political systems existing in their respective countries. While Andargatchew (1973) urges awareness in order to time practice interventions, from the silence of the literature in the region it is clear that there is an avoidance of politicians.¹⁰ And this functions to prevent the development of viable political strategies.

Several reasons are given for this behaviour. Politicians are perceived to be unreliable accomplices who work not for the masses, but for their own ends. They tend to use professionals. They are not impartial; they actively and subjectively seek narrow, personal goals. Others are believed to be bought by the external capitalist interests. The problem may not relate totally to the flaws of the politicians, however. Khinduka (1971) has noted that the social work profession has tended to select the 'soft options' of consensus rather than confrontation. The issue then, is not that professionals should 'rub shoulders' with politicians. They are not being told to keep in step with every new regime that gains power. Rather, recognition needs to be given to this fact: at the base of all other power that thwarts or is at the disposal of the profession for change is political power, both foreign and local. As is the case in much of Africa, it is paradoxical that in avoiding active engagement with the political arena, social work professionals become as powerless as those 'victims' whose cause residual social work exists to champion.

To radicalise roles, therefore, is to go beyond indifference and the fear of what 'basically' could appear to those not involved with the system as raw, untamed power. It requires the conscious forging of political linkage. These links must be sought out, cultivated and directed toward the profession's goals and vision. Politicians, for example, may be little concerned with the 'widows and the orphans'. But they could be persuaded to take note of, for example, the 90 per cent of other women who can be mobilised through income generating groups. Thus at issue is what it is that the professionals want when they seek to engage the political systems. Ultimately, it is the political will of both politicians and informed professionals that is needed to effect positive social change and development. Hearn's (1982) view that radical social work entails a political strategy is to a large extent, therefore, equally applicable to Africa.

Radicalising the leadership

As with political linkages, writers in Africa have, curiously, focused very little attention on the issue of the professional leadership of social work. In this paper the thesis is advanced that the pivotal position effecting changes to a more relevant professional stance is that of the top administrators of practice. Only a cursory examination of that viewpoint is necessary to this work.

All human groupings establish authority systems which designate those who lead. These become the wielders of power, who represent specific interests - be these political, economic, or professional interests. They are the critical decision-makers who determine the operationalisation of models. The dependency school of thought suggests that those who decide, ie the ruling elite, on the nature and quality of development will be in conflict with those who advance arguments favouring the majority¹¹. Promoting a

radicalised practice, no less than effecting social development itself, implicitly evokes a turbulent situation in which diametrically opposing ideologies, goals, and strategies contend for pre-eminence. The larger systems, in particular, the global economic order that conditions Africa's underdevelopment, resist change, thus limiting organisational and professional modifications.

Because of demands for effectiveness and efficiency in use of funds, in order to survive, agencies have a built-in bias to continue with their current programmes, which creates an inhospitable atmosphere for any significant change (Weiss, 1982:611)

It is these forces, apparent in the western world as well, that restrain change to a more developmental model as recommended by the 1968 UN Conference of Ministers of Social Welfare, rather than its appropriateness and inapplicability as Midgely (1982:254) has claimed. Developmental roles have not been permitted. But neither have those forces restricting practice to the residual model been acknowledged. Until the sum of obstructing factors, those described essentially by the dependency rather than the modernisation paradigm, are critically addressed in the approaches of practice, little headway will be made towards implementing roles pertinent to Africa's progress.

Given the marginality of social work and social welfare concerns to planners of development, finding a way out of the impasse of having a will but no way to more significant involvement poses a real dilemma. For African countries facing comparable hindrances due to conditions of dependency. Seers (1983:144) contends that political leadership is the determining factor. Such leadership can establish, eg through education policies, those conditions where there will be more room to manoeuvre in future.

Essentially the same conclusion is taken in the research already mentioned in this paper. With respect to producing a practice that meets Africa's requirements, the professional leadership, in most instances the administrator position, is the locus of greatest import. More radicalised roles cannot emerge unless sanctioned fully by that leadership. However, organisational patterns persist which show a monopoly of power concentrated in positions at the top. This tends to dwarf thinking by professionals. It reinforces the dilemma identified by Barkun earlier: the very minds needed to creatively deal with development problems are brought under leadership systems that can reduce their contributions to routine matters. While the leadership has considerable control over important facets of practice such as planning, administration, and financial control in the three countries studied (Ankrah, 1984; Thompson, 1961; Blan & Scott, 1962), it is perceived, nevertheless, as sharing little power with professionals to direct or to change the *modus operandi*.

And this is as it should be: for this inherited, rigid, Weberian organisational model is needed to entrench residual social work. The restraint is materialised

in the functions of the leadership of practice. If those guiding social work accept the implicit authority resting in the expert knowledge and skills that professionals bring to bear on the problems of development, then, professional leadership must itself be radicalised.

There must be administrative sharing of power. The writer here refers to the legitimation by the top position of actions of professionals as an inherent component of leadership and basic to the attainment of goals. It implies structural arrangements by which positional authority, legitimised power, is divested from the administrative position to the professionals in forms that in effect increase their power within the organisation. Power, the ability to cause the desired behaviours, is here a concern with the way professional leadership uses its mechanisms of control. That such legitimation has hardly been realised in social work in Africa is illustrated by lack of a recognition of the social worker on par with other professionals such as agriculturalists, economists and sociologists. It is also indicated by the low levels of pay, despite the fact that social workers are equally qualified educationally.

The professional leadership holding positional power shares power when it consciously uses structural supervisory mechanism of communication, decision-making and the allocation of resources to enhance the authority of the professional to operationalise the social work mandate. In all three respects, the leadership studied in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia were seen hardly to legitimate the professional role. The administrators, as perceived by professionals, communicated in a manner that hampered feedback from it. Participation in decision-making was circumscribed except where the person at the top was away at headquarters - away from the field of action. And practice was impoverished of resources. Where the leadership aims to enhance the contributions of the professionals of practice it can give them more power - a power manifested in terms of the removal of obstacles to their actualising new roles. There will be reinforcement of trends that legitimate professional goals. This would be seen where the leadership uses its power to manipulate the larger environmental systems towards support for developmental roles for social work.

It is clear that a radicalised professional leadership as outlined would represent a dramatic departure from the status quo - especially so, since most social work is practised in the bureaucracy of the civil service. Thus, change of professional leaders may prove the more change difficult to effect. Yet designing and redesigning practice under Africa's conditions, requires the maximum of creativity and skill. Obstructing any segment of the profession is therefore untenable.

Needed: a social science response

The social behavioural sciences made major contributions in using their

disciplines in the western nations. This was seen in their efforts to reshape organisational and managerial behaviour, for example, through analyses that demonstrated the constraints imposed by bureaucratic structures and the advantages of more democratic leadership styles. The task for the sociologists and anthropologists in the region is to engage the leadership and professionals in dialogue around the issues of models and roles pertinent to Africa's development needs and problems. As many social science graduates soon became managers, and in light of the stringent criticism from western, neo-colonisers about African's mis-management, the dialogue about practice issues could well be intra-disciplinary to continue to provide the analytical tools that would move professional leadership in those directions that theories indicate would most likely arrest Africa's downward trend.

Practically, there is a imperative that the sociologists and anthropologists assist by closing the gap between their disciplines and the practice field. This calls for greater interdisciplinary cooperation in areas of research and in the formulation of theories derived from Africa's experiences. (The implication for educators is treated by others). Beyond the classroom, this necessitates coalition between the applied and non-applied disciplines to discover and to use all available leverage to get structural, systematic changes within and sanctioned by the political systems. This would recognise that underdevelopment and dependency are imbedded in structures and institutions of practice and education. In summary, what is needed is a departure from *ad hoc* arrangements to sustained attention to practice by all - the sociologists and anthropologists no less than the social worker.

Summary and conclusion

The residual model of social work has been examined and criticised as being inappropriate for Africa. A need to break away from this model towards a development model was preferred, implying a radicalisation of social work roles. The alternative approaches growing out of theories of modernisation and dependency have failed to provide suitable prescriptions. Failure to find a way to move away from residual practice is explained by credence given the assumptions that do not take the context of underdevelopment into full consideration.

A paradigm was suggested as a tentative start toward radicalisation of roles which would reflect five dimensions. It would be macrodeterministic, emphasise social designs, have a social change orientation, be futuristic in outlook, and show political will. The paper concludes that the way to fundamental development practice lies with the professional leadership. It can prepare for the future desired, in spite of constraints to change in the contemporary context. To maximise impact, that leadership must be

radicalised. It will need to share the power of the administrative position with professionals whose expertise in current organisational contexts is little legitimated.

The discovery of an appropriate alternative model for development practice ultimately is of impact beyond one applied discipline. It touches all of the social sciences concerned with the doing of their theories. Therefore, progress and success in the search will depend, finally, on carefully conceived and sustained cooperation between the sociologists and anthropologists and applied practice fields such as social work.

Footnotes

1. Margaret Hardiman and James Midgely, **The Social Dimensions of Development: Social Policy and Planning in the Third World**, Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, 1982, pp 254-257. See also E. Maxine Ankrah, "Constraints to social work practice in East Africa with special reference to voluntary agencies" in E P Kibuka ed, **Planning for Services in East Africa**, Kampala, Makerere University, 1979.
2. Hardiman and Midgely's view that such concerns should be left to other than welfare ministries, and by implication social workers, is not shared by this writer. Unless the profession grapples with these problems and issues it lacks credibility in the region. See Hardiman and Midgely, op cit, pp 254-257.
3. Martin Rein, "Social work in search of a radical profession", in Neil Gilbert and Harry Specht, eds, **The Emergence of Social Welfare and Social Work**, Itasea, Illinois, F R Peacock, 1976; Jerry H Galper, **The Politics of Social Services**, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1975; S Macpherson, **Social Policy in the Third World: The Social Dilemmas of Underdevelopment**, London, Wheatsheaf Books, 1982; Hardiman and Midgely, op cit; Jeff Hearn, "Radical Social Work - contradictions, limitations and political possibilities," in **Critical Social Policy**, vol 2 No 1, Summer 1982.
4. James Midgely, "Social welfare implications of development paradigms", in **Social Service Review**, Vol 58, No 2 June 1984, pp 181-198. See also Harold Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux, **Industrial Society and Social Welfare**, New York, the Free Press, 1965.
5. James Midgely, "Social Welfare implication of development paradigms", op cit. See also Gabriel Palma, "Dependency and development: a critical overview", in Dudley Seers, ed, **Dependency Theory: A Critical Rassessment**, London, Frances Pinter, 1983, pp 20-78.
6. S Amin, "Underdevelopment and dependency in Black Africa: origins and contemporary forms", in **Journal of Modern African Studies**, Vol 10, No 4, pp 503-525; T dos Santos, "The structure of dependence", in **American Economic Review**, Vol 60 No 2 pp 231-261; Walter Rodney, **How Europe Underdeveloped Africa**, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1972; Ali A Maruzi, **The Reith Lectures**, London, Heinmann, 1980 pp 70-90.
7. A search for a relevant model began in Africa in the early 1960s. Increased consideration of this issue is reflected in the works of, eg Glenn O Haworth, "Social work research, practice and paradigms" in **Social Service Review**, Vol 58 No 3, September 1984, pp 343-371; and see Salvatore Imbrogno, "An emerging inquiry: social design in social development", in **International Social Work**, Vol 28, No 2 1985, pp 35-43.
8. This is not to imply that no social workers practice at national levels. Rather, when they do, it is frequently outside the framework of the profession. See Hearn, op cit, community

development activity is small scale and cannot usually be integrated with national development.

9. Imbrogno, op cit, p 35. His theory is for social development but has relevance for a social work model as I have tried to show.
10. Ankrah Maxine, op cit, pp 299-303, practitioners of the three countries studied chase politicians last when forming coalitions to influence change in policies or programmes.
11. Ankrah Maxine, op cit, pp 63-93; see also Dudley Seers, "Development options: The strengths and weaknesses of dependency theories in explaining a government's room to manoeuvre", in Seers, **Dependency Theory: A Critical Assessment**, op cit, pp 133-149; Imbrogno, op cit.

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