

Structural Social Work: A Moral Compass for Ethics in Practice

By

Merlinda Weinberg, PhD, MSW, ACSW, RSW, DCSW
School of Social Work, Dalhousie University
Halifax, NS

Abstract

This paper, utilizing case illustrations, argues that structural theory is a necessary but insufficient analytic device for social workers concerned with social justice. Because it is a moral theory (concerned with unearthing underlying causes for social problems and suggesting what kind of society should be constructed), it offers direction about the values social workers should adopt. It corrects modern liberal humanist thinking by broadening the discussion of ethical concerns beyond the dyadic relationship to wide-ranging political issues. It provides a measure of certainty in the paradoxical area of ethics in practice, countering the relativism of post-structuralism.

Credit

My thanks to Linda Weckler Advokaat for feedback on an earlier version of this paper.

Introduction

Structural social work has been viewed as problematic and outdated as a theoretical tool (Fook, 2002; Healy, 2000; Leonard, 1997). However, I believe that, while insufficient as a comprehensive approach for progressive social workers, it offers support to practitioners in forming ethical relationships. It is a moral theory because it is concerned with the underlying causes of social problems (Fook, 2002) and with what kind of social order we ought to construct. In particular, by arguing that the reasons for societal ills are broader than individual pathology and by advocating for strategies to enhance social justice, it provides direction to the applied science of social work which, of necessity, must decide between opposing concrete interventions in response to complex ethical conundrums. In this way it can act as a moral compass for practitioners. By suggesting underlying values, it counteracts the relativism of post-structuralism and offers direction for the course of action practitioners should take.

Following an outline of what constitutes structural social work and its limitations, I elaborate on the advantages it brings to ethics in practice.

What is Structural Social Work Theory?

Structural social work (Corrigan & Leonard, 1978; Lundy, 2004; Moreau, 1989; Mullaly, 1997, 2007; Payne, 2005; Wood & Tully, 2006) is part of a critical, progressive tradition that has been concerned with the broad socio-economic and political dimensions of society, especially the effects of capitalism, and the impact of these influences in creating unequal relations amongst individuals. Its primary goals have been to reduce social inequality through the transformation of Western, Euro-Centric civilizations and the emancipation of those who have been oppressed. The lens of this theoretical approach has been focused on the interplay between the agency of individuals and structures, particularly the broad structural barriers which influence and limit the material circumstances of service users. By structures, I am referring to "social regularities and objective patterns external to individual action, intentions, and meanings, and not reducible to the sum of those meanings or actions" (Kondrat, 2002, p.436), specifically both institutional arrangements and broad social relational patterns such as racism and sexism. The suggestion is that our institutions are structured in such a way as to discriminate against some people on the basis of class, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc. and that a function of the profession of social work should be on eliminating these disparities. Structural theory argues that these arrangements serve those in power, allowing them to maintain their power and privilege at the expense of others.

Structural social work theory begins from a conflict, rather than an order perspective (Howe, 1987; Mullaly, 1997). The theory regards society as composed of groups with conflicting interests who compete for resources, power, and the imposition of their own ideological views of the world. In this perspective, social problems are more the result of "defective rules" which pathologize those who are marginalized (Mullaly, 1997, p.120) and the consequence of institutional arrangements which maintain social hierarchies, rather than faulty socialization of individuals.

Historically, this theoretical perspective evolved from socialist ideology concerned with class struggle. In the 1970s, in the United States, Goldberg and Middleman proposed a structural approach that viewed social problems as a "manifestation of inadequate social arrangements" rather than individual pathology (quoted in Lundy, 2004, p.57). Concurrently in Canada, Maurice Moreau, at Carleton University, was working on his own version of structural theory. He added feminist principles to his analysis, attempting to shift the privileging of class to a more inclusive discussion of social divisions (Moreau, 1989). His view was that in a capitalist society, these inequities are inherent and self-perpetuating, resulting in the exclusion from full participation of oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, racially marginalized individuals, etc. (Lundy, 2004).

With the social discontent fomented in the 1960s, the profession itself came in for its share of criticism by structural theorists. Social workers were critiqued as being a part of the problem by choosing to emphasize casework as a model of practice, an approach

that perpetuated the pathologizing of clients. Furthermore, social workers were viewed as helping clients to “accept and adapt to basically unjust social structures” (Moreau, 1989, p.7) with the profession being “nothing else but a professionally elitist activity that mystified, infantilized and disempowered clients” (Moreau, 1989, p.7). The structural model demanded that social workers “abandon their social control function to involve themselves in institutional and structural change” (Moreau, 1989, p.15). Emphasis shifted to seeking more collaborative, dialogical relationships, rather than top-down, expert models with service users.

In structural theory, the mechanisms of oppression and the internalization of “false-consciousness” for marginalized groups were explored (Mullaly, 1997, 2002, 2007). Using the feminist notion of the personal is political, practitioners were expected to identify the processes by which victims were blamed, linking service users to the broader structures that led to their domination as well as connecting them to others with similar problems (Payne, 2005). Wood and Tully (2006, p.21) identified four main tactics for structural practitioners: 1) connecting people to needed resources, 2) changing social structures, where feasible, 3) helping service users negotiate problematic situations and 4) deconstructing sociopolitical discourse to reveal the relationship with individual struggles. Providing clients with insider information was an additional strategy suggested by structural theorists (Payne, 2005). Currently, structural theory has evolved to examine the transformation of capitalism, particularly the effects of globalization, and the shifts governmentally to increasingly neo-liberal agendas with the consequent effects on those most vulnerable in society (Mullaly, 2007). The view that structural theory can offer guidelines for animating political alliances and anti-globalization movements is part of that exploration.

Critiques of Structural Social Work Theory

There have been significant critiques of the structural approach. One is that this theoretical perspective sets up a binary between human beings and structure, viewing “structure” in a reified manner, as something outside the individual. But through a recursive process, the social actor creates societal structures and is produced by these same structures. For example, each time a social worker implements a policy (or refuses); she1 participates in what is constituted as structure. Social workers contribute to the construction of a social order which favors some ways of being in the world while discouraging others. Most effects of these constructions have both emancipatory and social control elements. As an illustration:

- A social worker supports an overly stressed adult daughter to move a cognitively impaired father into a nursing home.

This intervention will have differential effects on the daughter and father due to their divergent positions and interests. The father might not perceive being put in a home as empowering but for the adult daughter this intervention might be liberating. The limitation with structural social work theory is that it presents the field as a battle between the forces of good and evil, with social workers being on one side of that divide or the other. But due to their positioning in society, social workers are engaged in both liberatory and disciplinary functions, often at the same time, resulting in ethical trespass, the “harmful effects ... that inevitably follow not from our intentions and malevolence but from our participation in social processes and identities” (Orlie, 1997). Trespass is the harm that follows from a worker’s actions, often unwittingly, because in any act some possibilities are opened, while others are closed. Also, the effects of one’s actions impact differently on a multiplicity of individuals, having ripple effects beyond the immediate event that can never be fully anticipated (Weinberg, 2005). In general, structural social work theory does not allow for the contradictions that the social participation of social workers entails. But the field of social work is rife with trespasses, as well as the paradoxes and complexities that accompany them (Sachs & Newdom, 1999; Weinberg, 2005, 2006). Furthermore, while there is an emphasis on the importance of categories of class, race, etc. in structural social work, structural theory is insufficiently nuanced to explain contradictions of social location and differences within social groups. For instance, an individual can be an Aboriginal woman with a Ph.D. teaching at a university. Is that individual oppressed based on race or part of the dominant group due to her positioning as a professor? Structural social work does not provide the analytical tools to examine these issues.

Additionally, structural social work theory is limited in its exploration of an individual’s role as an agent of change on the micro level. Mullaly (2007, xv), in writing a third edition of a book on structural social work, acknowledged that in his earlier versions “there was ...criticism made that the chapters on practice were not sufficiently nuanced to address the complexities of real-world experience.” In fact, the model has been critiqued as contributing to maintenance of a dualistic approach to micro and macro practice (Fook, 2002). While there is exploration of micro practice, the emphasis in structural social work has been on macro practice. It has been attacked for exacerbating a gendered approach both because of the status differential between primarily male sociology theorists and female practitioners, and the devaluing of micro practice, which has, by and large, been women’s domain (Fook, 2002). On the whole, there has been an under-theorization of the agency of the individual in structural social work theory (Leonard, 1997) despite recent attempts to correct for this (Mullaly, 2007). This omission can contribute to an overly deterministic view of society (Pease, 2003b).

In a structural analysis, power is seen as a commodity that people have to varying degrees. Power tends to be conceptualized as power over, at times missing sight of the potential constructive aspects of power. It also sets up an understanding of power in oppositional terms with power as finite (Fook, 2002). This construction of power relations can lead to the possibility of denying, for those who have been disadvantaged, the power they do have because they have been characterized as disempowered (Fook, 2002). For one person to have power would imply that another does not.

Post-structural theorizing has added some important dimensions to an understanding of power. In post-structuralism, power is perceived as productive, not simply repressive. What is meant by “productive” is two-fold. Firstly, power has potential benefits rather than simply being a negative top-down force. So, while power may be between unequal players, the relations are “mobile” (Foucault, 1978, p.94) with the possibility that the balance of power will be upset and that those who have been marginalized may be successful in their aims, some of the time. An example would be a client showing her displeasure about some aspect of her relationship with her worker by not being home when the practitioner comes for a planned home visit. Power creates opportunities and the potential for change. The concept of power in structural social work is not sufficiently theorized to take into account the complexities of power arrangements. Instead, it tends to view workers either wielding power on behalf of the powerless or utilizing professional power to “empower” others.

The second concept in the interpretation of power that is absent from structural theory is the importance of the way in which power

produces subjectivity and what is taken as truth. For instance, when a child welfare worker apprehends a child, through her use of power, she constructs what is taken to be the “inadequate mother” as well as contributing to what are understood as dimensions of mothering. “Truth is not discovered, it is enacted” (Addelson, 1994, xii). Structural theory does not provide the apparatus for a fine grained analysis of how subject positions are constructed.

Not Discarding the Baby with the Bathwater: Structural Social Work’s Applicability to Ethics in Social Work Practice

So why not discard structural social work as a theoretical device? Fook (2002, p.16) differentiates between two kinds of theories: epistemological and moral theories. Moral theories are concerned with unearthing underlying causes. Structural social work is a moral theory. It suggests that the underlying causes for social problems are the “differential control of resources and political power” inherent in capitalistic societies (Mullaly, 1997, p.119). The system is viewed as faulty. It is a moral theory because it suggests what type of society we wish to have and how we ought to behave to create it. It examines the processes by which inequality is maintained. It brings into focus the broader dimensions that require social workers to move beyond an individualized approach to a collectivist stance. Structuralists would argue that there are universal truths (Carniol, 2005), such as peace being preferable to war, and that these values, based on reducing harm and enriching the quality of life, are consistent with the values and goals of the profession of social work. Structural theory “recognizes commonalities among all forms of oppression” (Mullaly, 2007, p.223), a significant conceptual tool in determining ethical action. Ironically, due in part, to its limitations as a somewhat blunt instrument which does not examine the politics of difference, it provides direction to practitioners. Because of its lack of nuance, it brings strength through certainty, a powerful political basis “from which to challenge the truths of dominant” discourses (Allan, 2003, p.44). Social work, as an applied science, engaged in the messy, quotidian reality of practice, must have direction about societal aspirations. And because structural social work takes a moral-political stance towards these questions, it charts a moral path for practitioners struggling with how to behave in a field that is fraught with complexity and contradiction. In this way it provides a moral compass for social workers by identifying the underlying causes as related to capitalism and the consequent privileging of some individuals over others through unequal access to resources. It suggests that the role of practitioners is two-fold: “1) to explore the socio-political and economic context of individual difficulties and to help collectivize personal troubles; 2) to enter into a helping process that facilitates critical thinking, consciousness-raising, and empowerment” (Lundy, 2004, p.57).

When there is consideration of macro issues, such as the responsibilities of workers to the state, the dominant approach taken generally accepts the status quo in social work and sees both the profession and a capitalist society as, for the most part, benign (e.g. Reamer, 1999). But structural theory problematizes the underlying goodness of the social work profession due to the inherent problem of accruing benefits by reproducing social hierarchies to preserve one’s own power and privilege. This critique opens up the issues in ethics to a much broader range of questions.

Also, traditionally, ethics has been viewed primarily from the standpoint of the relationship between worker and client. In particular, matters such as confidentiality, boundaries, conflicts of interest etc., all aspects of the dyad of worker and client have been the focus. Abstract principles and codes that are often decontextualized, rule-bound and linear have been the tools to resolve dilemmas. The assumptions in traditional notions of ethics have been that ethical action can be accomplished by using these principles, with correct decision-making and careful conduct (e.g. Linzer, 1999; Robison & Reeser, 2000; Rothman, 2004). But context is critically important to both the choices available and decisions made. Societal expectations, complexities of organizations, structural inequities, and the location of the workers within those structures are the very material that results in the inevitability of ethical dilemmas and trespass. For example, the inadequacy of resources can create irresolvable ethical tensions. Structural theory adds immeasurably to an understanding of the importance of context in the framing of what constitutes “ethics” in social work.

Consider the following scenarios:

- A hospital social worker has to facilitate a discharge planning process for an elderly man who lives alone, has just had a hip replacement, and is still incapacitated but cannot stay in the hospital any longer because the bed needs to be freed up given the pressure on the hospital to account for days of stay in hospital statistics.
- A social worker in an outreach clinic has \$50 a month of discretionary funds to provide to her entire caseload of street involved youth.
- A hospital social worker is part of a team which is debating whether an 80 year old woman should receive dialysis when there is limited operating room space available to insert the shunt needed for the dialysis and other patients are queued to use the operating room for other serious medical problems.

In each of above vignettes, resource limitations place social workers in significant ethical conundrums. The paucity of resources is not just a technical problem but an ethical predicament. But often in mainstream views of social work ethics, the lack of resources itself is not seen as an ethical violation. Thus the field does not constitute systemic constraints or workers’ responsibilities to fight such limitations as part of the optics of ethics in practice (for example, Reamer, 1990). Many institutions operate from the basis of a theoretical stance of modernity which has a strong normalizing effect on practitioners. Then adaptation, rather than structural transformation, becomes the goal for workers.

The grand narratives of structural thinking are a helpful corrective in moving away from normative theories. In the above cases, structural theory would raise questions about a practitioner’s acceptance of the status quo. Should a social worker fight for the elderly man with a hip replacement to remain in the hospital? Does different policy around days of stay need to be developed? Or in the second example, should the social worker negotiate with her agency for increased funding for the street youth, or explore the possibilities for added resources through, for example, diaper companies? In the third, is the 80 year old woman who needs a shunt a victim of ageism in which the elderly are seen as “less deserving” of the resources? Structural social work theory brings into bold relief the unequal access to the spoils of capitalism, the material realities of disadvantage, and the impact of these inequities on service users. It underscores who gets and who does not. Structural theory goes further to suggest that there is political choice and will in maintaining insufficiency. We have the means, for example, to feed all the hungry of the world, but the political resolve has never been

there. A structural approach to social work raises concerns about asymmetrical opportunities, the investment in social institutions to maintain private interests, and the inherently oppressive aspects of capitalism. It disparages the continuation of a blaming the victim mentality (Ryan, 1976) that would view the impoverished and marginalized as lazy or pathological. Structural social work puts the spotlight on the unequal sharing of those resources and the need to shift that division. It also brings to bear a notion that ethics is always political. It debunks the thinking that social work is a politically neutral activity and provides moral direction about a reallocation of resources.

Because resources are not infinite, the question arises as to how they should be managed. Limitations of resources and the protection of the vulnerable require that someone adjudicate between conflicting claims. Social control is a necessary function in modern society, much as social workers might wish to reduce it. But structural social work theory demands an examination of the necessity of the power inherent in social control functions and highlights the dangers of maintaining those controls when they are used to benefit the power elite. It (along with other radical theoretical approaches such as feminist theory or anti-racist theory) suggests that those who are dominant in society, including professional social workers, have a stake in maintaining those inequities for their own gain and privilege (Mullaly, 1997). Practitioners are exhorted to be self-reflective about the advantages accrued from their positions and to reduce unnecessary power. Take, for example, the following:

- A school social worker is instructed she cannot provide birth control counselling or discuss the use of condoms to prevent HIV/AIDS because she is working for the Catholic School Board.

Structural social work brings into bold relief the importance of context and politics, which in this case is the vested interest of a Catholic funded institution to promote its own ideology about birth control measures. Relying on a structural theoretical lens, a clinician could examine the problematic of clients wanting birth control information and her constraints in offering a full range of options. She could query the beneficence of this agency and the advantage that accrues from a particular view of what “appropriate sexual practices” might be. Power relations contribute to the determination of what is seen as “truth,” and structural theory focuses on an examination by workers of self-interest in those power relations.

Generally the structural underpinnings that contribute to the creation of clienthood and the disadvantage that leads to individuals needing help are downplayed or absent in traditional notions of ethics. However, because it is based on Marxist principles, structural social work is valuable in viewing class and socio-economic position as primary categories for investigation and analysis. The following examples illustrate how a structural approach could be useful in raising ethical concerns and pointing a direction for their resolution:

- A child welfare worker has to evaluate whether a situation constitutes neglect when an impoverished, immigrant Ecuadorian family leaves the 11 year old daughter to look after two younger siblings while both parents are working swing shifts at factories.
- A social worker in the correctional system has to inform a working-class family whose home is 100 kilometers from the penitentiary that visiting hours are only on Wednesdays between 2 pm and 3 pm.

Postmodernism by its emphasis on difference and micro-interactions can fail to recognize the significance of the “material reality of oppression in which people have unequal access to resources” (Pease, 2003a, p. 8). Structural theory brings group inequality to the fore, especially that of class and other “isms” such as ethnicity. By recognizing issues of culture and material disadvantage, a child welfare worker, functioning from a structural perspective, would have some additional means to evaluate whether the Ecuadorian family is being resourceful and culturally consistent rather than neglectful (Swift, 1995). If a worker viewed poverty or divergent cultural norms as central to the construction of the dilemma identified above, she might enact a solution which gave credence to the reality of this family’s pressures. In the prison case, a practitioner operating from a structural perspective, might analyze the visiting hours as punitive, contributing to the perpetuation of existing social hierarchies and, again, seek alternate resolutions.

Structural social work is not just a theory, but also a practice. Strategies for practitioners to respond to a lack of resources are offered by structural theorists. Structural theorists recommend linking people to needed resources and when those resources are inadequate, advocating for additional assets by applying pressure (Allan, 2003). In the correctional institution example, structural social work practice could lead a worker to promote longer visiting hours by acknowledging limited options in the discretionary free time of the working poor. One of the main techniques suggested by a structural approach is the conscientization (Friere, 1973) of service users by redefining the problem as greater than their own personal predicament. While structural theory is not the only theoretical approach to offer this orientation (liberation theory and feminist theory being other examples), structural theory’s emphasis on the unequal distribution of resources and the linking of those who have-not with the likelihood that their insufficiency is tied to broader societal ills is a key contribution for practitioners.

In the normative trend in ethics, practitioners feel individually responsible to deal with these concerns as they arise in their caseloads, rather than seeing these matters as endemic to the field as a whole. Because ethics tends to be seen as individualized and privatized, clinicians’ “struggles are not framed as ethical, but as technical in nature” (Prilleltensky, Rossiter & Walsh-Bowers, 1996, p.294, italics in the original). Structural social work theory opens the optical field of what constitutes ethics to a broader vision that takes into account institutional barriers and broad social categories. Rossiter, Walsh-Bowers, and Prilleltensky (1996, p.315) state that “the individualism of mainstream ethics is disciplinary: it renders the professional an individual subject of correction and at the same time it creates the totalizing category of professional.” In dominant discourses, to be “professional” means to be accountable for ethical challenges that ultimately go beyond the individual worker’s ability to resolve. For instance, being a “good client” carries the expectation of being open and honest with one’s worker; but in child welfare work, doing so places a client more at risk of revealing material that could jeopardize her right to mother. This is a structural dilemma in child welfare work, but is not resolvable for the practitioner (or client), regardless of the worker’s professionalism or ethical handling of a case. Structural social work educates that there are ethical issues which are not privatized matters or workers’ own personal failings, but part of the paradoxes of fundamental social arrangements that wide groups of providers and service users confront. In this way structural theory is a collectivist moral theory because it investigates the “processes through which the normal and the deviant are enacted” (Addelson, 1994, p. 15). The universal truths articulated by structural theory allow for the potential of solidarity in social justice movements (Mullaly, 1997). Structural theory encourages alliances to promote the systemic change necessary to create a more equitable society. A long-term goal is the

mobilization of clients through collective action to change oppressive social structures (Moreau, 1989).

The emphasis on social democracy and the positioning of the state as it impacts on workers are important contributions of structural theory. While social workers on the front lines may feel far removed from the effects of, for example globalization, the impact of that trend may affect their freedom to make individual decisions that they perceive as ethical. An illustration of this is that agencies are moving more and more towards business models to justify their existence and to meet government parameters for funding. Workers may be expected to attain increasingly high productivity standards as part of this shift. Consequently there may be more pressure to provide short-term counseling, to boost the number of clients served, even when this runs counter to the needs of a particular population of service users. In an increasingly neo-liberal environment, the move to managerialism that has been paired with the reduction of professional credibility, status and power (Hough & Briskman, 2003) are serious threats to the profession of social work. Structural theory both highlights the overarching political landscape and emphasizes collective resistance to trends that support capitalism to the detriment of individual service users. This emphasis broadens the discussion of ethical concerns beyond the dyadic relationship of practitioner and individual clients to wide-ranging political issues and structures.

Necessary but Not Sufficient

Because the field of social work ethics has been dominated by an ideology which privileges objective decision-making focused on the dyad of worker and client, structural theory adds an important corrective by recognizing the gaps of context, power, and unequal access to resources. What structural social work does not contribute to the discussion is an examination of the epistemological issues that underlie these concerns. By an epistemological theory, Fook (2002) refers to theories that are about ways of knowing. Post-structural theory, as an example, is an epistemological theory because it focuses on the "fact that we do search for underlying explanations" (Fook, 2002, p.16). Post-structuralism is concerned with theories of knowledge or ways of knowing. For instance, using post-structural theory in the area of social work ethics, Rossiter, Prilleltensky, and Walsh-Bowers (2000) claim that "codes of ethics and the professional ethics literature do more than the explicit work of rendering values and priorities - they simultaneously create the field of professional ethics itself, while obscuring the process of production" (p.86). Structural theory is limited in its capacity to examine these concerns.

While structural theory is useful in outlining the necessity of collective resistance, it has been less successful in suggesting ways to accomplish this resistance. Although it proposes the need for solidarity, consciousness-raising, and advocacy; post-structural theories and feminist theories have contributed more of the "nuts and bolts" of how these micro-technologies could be implemented. At the same time, post-structural theory's strengths and weaknesses are the avoidance of the grand narratives that are central aspects of structural theory. The overarching themes of structural social work provide clear direction in moral values and offer a means to examine ethical decision-making in practice. For social workers, the relativism of post-structuralism, without structuralism as its handmaid, would leave practitioners without a path to navigate through the shoals of ethical dilemmas.

References

- Addelson, K. P. (1994). *Moral passages. Toward a collectivist moral theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Allan, J. (2003). *Practising critical social work*. In J. Allan, B. Pease, & L. Briskman (Eds.). *Critical social work: An introduction to theories and practices* (pp.52-71). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Carniol, B. (2005). *Analysis of social location and change: Practice implications*. In S. Hick, J. Fook, & R. Pozzuto (Eds.). *Social work. A critical turn* (pp.153-165). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Corrigan, P. & Leonard, P. (1978). *Social work practice under capitalism: A Marxist approach*. London: Macmillan.
- Fook, J. (2002). *Social work. Critical theory and practice*. London: Sage.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality. An introduction. Vol.1*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books. (Original work published in 1976)
- Friere, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: Seabury Press.
- Healy, K. (2000). *Social work practices. Contemporary perspectives on change*. London: Sage.
- Hough, G. & Briskman, L. (2003). *Responding to the changing socio-political context of practice*. In J. Allan, B. Pease, & L. Briskman (Eds.). *Critical social work: An introduction to theories and practices* (pp. 202-213). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Howe, D. (1987). *An introduction to social work theory*. Ashgate, England: Community Care.
- Kondrat, M. E. (2002). *Actor-centred social work: Re-visioning "person-in-environment" through a critical theory lens*. *Social Work*, 47(4), 435-448.
- Leonard, P. (1997). *Postmodern welfare: Reconstructing an emancipatory project*. Sage: London.
- Linzer, N. (1999). *Resolving ethical dilemmas in social work practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lundy, C. (2004). *Social work and social justice*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press.
- Moreau, M. [In collaboration with L. Leonard] (1989). *Empowerment. Through a structural approach to social work. A report from practice*. Ottawa: National Welfare Grants Program, Health and Welfare Canada.
- Mullaly, R. (1997). *Structural Social Work* (2nd ed.). Toronto: Oxford University Press.

- Mullaly, B. (2002). *Challenging oppression. A critical social work approach*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Mullaly, B. (2007). *The new structural social work* (3rd ed.). Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Orlie, M. A. (1997). *Living ethically. Acting politically*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Payne, M. (2005). *Modern social work theory* (3rd ed.). Chicago, Illinois: Lyceum.
- Pease, B. (2003a). Introducing critical theories in social work. In J. Allan, B. Pease, & L. Briskman (Eds.). *Critical social work: An introduction to theories and practices* (pp.1-14). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Pease, B. (2003b). Rethinking the relationship between the self and society. In J. Allan, B. Pease, & L. Briskman (Eds.). *Critical social work: An introduction to theories and practices* (pp.187-201). Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Prilleltensky, I., Rossiter, A., & Walsh-Bowers, R. (1996). Preventing harm and promoting ethical discourse in the helping professions: Conceptual, research, analytical, and action frameworks. *Ethics and Behaviour*, 6(4), 287-306.
- Reamer, F. (1990). *Ethical dilemmas in social service. A guide for social workers* (2nd ed.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reamer, F. (1999). *Social work values and ethics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Robison, W. & Reeser, L. C. (2000). *Ethical decision-making in social work*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Rossiter, A., Prilleltensky, I., & Walsh-Bowers, R. (2000). A postmodern perspective on professional ethics. In B. Fawcett, B. Featherstone, J. Fook, & A. Rossiter (Eds.), *Practice and research in social work* (pp. 83-103). New York: Routledge.
- Rossiter, A., Walsh-Bowers, R., & Prilleltensky, I. (1996). Learning from broken rules: Individualism, bureaucracy, and ethics. *Ethics and Behavior*, 6(4), 307-320.
- Rothman, J. C. (2004). *From the front lines. Student cases in social work ethics* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Ryan, W. (1976). *Blaming the victim* (2nd ed.). New York: Vintage.
- Sachs, J. & Newdom, F. (1999). *Clinical work and social action. An integrative approach*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Swift, K. J. (1995). *Manufacturing 'bad mothers.' A critical perspective on child neglect*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Weinberg, M. (2005). A Case for an expanded framework of ethics in practice. *Ethics and Behavior*, 15(4), 327-338.
- Weinberg, M. (2006). Pregnant with possibility: The paradoxes of "help" as anti-oppression and discipline with a young single mother. *Families in Society*, 87(2), 161-171.
- Wood, G. G. & Tully, C. T. (2006). *The structural approach to direct practice in social work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹ I will utilize the feminine form of pronouns as both a corrective to the dominant practice, which privileges men, but also because social workers are primarily women.

[\[Return to top \(#top\)\]](#)