

POLICY PRACTICE: A CANADIAN STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

**POLICY PRACTICE DISCOURSE AND SCHOLARSHIP IN SOCIAL WORK: A CANADIAN
GRADUATE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE**

By

Evan Dear

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Approval:

Name: Evan Dear

Degree: Master of Social Work

**Title: Policy Practice Discourse and Scholarship in Social Work: A Canadian Graduate
Student Perspective**

Examining Committee:

Dr. Leah Douglas, BA, BSW, MSW, PhD, RCSW

MSW Program Committee Chair

Associate Professor, School of Social Work & Human Services

Timothy Dueck, BSW, MSW, PhD (c), RSW

Senior Supervisor

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work & Human Services

Dr. Amanda LaVallee, BSW, MSW, PhD, RSW

Second Reader/External Examiner

Assistant Professor & HSER Committee Chair, School of Social Work & Human Services

Approved: April 2022

Abstract

The underdevelopment of policy practice competencies in social work students as they enter the labor market is detrimental to the future of social work as a profession, social services, and social policy, it also contributes to systemic malpractice in the field. Therefore, improving areas regarding policy practice and scholarship for future social work students is critical. This thematic literature review aims to contribute to the broader macro social work discourse through focusing on the area of policy practice from a Canadian Master of Social Work (MSW) student perspective. More specifically, this review will recapture the historical development of the field of social work, locate policy practice within the field of social work, and suggest areas for assessment in accredited education programs.

Keywords: Canadian social work history, macro social work, policy practice, graduate student perspective, social work student competencies, educational assessment

Acknowledgements

As a continued effort of decolonization, this paper begins with an acknowledgment of the land upon which it was developed. My name is Evan Dear; I was born into the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples by settler parents, who are the children of uninvited immigrants. I grew up in the shared land of the Kwantlen and Katzie First Nations. This paper was researched and created in a suburban neighborhood on the traditional territory of the Katzie First Nation. Therefore, I would like to extend immense gratitude to the Katzie Peoples for the incredible care they have taken over this land for thousands of years - hay ce•p qə. As a settler, I benefit from the space I occupy, the air I breathe and the resources I use, specifically as I live, learn, work, play, and grow here with my family.

I also recognize that the pursuit of post-secondary education is a privilege, and it requires significant support and resources to make the first steps, let alone making it out the other side in one piece. I would like to take this time to thank my partner for their unwavering support; I would not be here today without them. Moreover, my family and friends continue to be the foundation from which I continue to pursue social justice, social change, and well-being. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the faculty of the School of Social Work and Human Services at the University of the Fraser Valley throughout my studies. Your insights, expertise, and lived experience have and will continue to challenge and inspire me.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
LIST OF ACRONYMS	VII
INTRODUCTION	1
MY PERSONAL LOCATION	2
MY MOTIVATIONS	3
MY SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE	5
METHODS	7
THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW	8
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT	8
<i>Foundations of Social Work Practice: From a Culture of Caring to Helping</i>	
<i>Professionals</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Professionalization and Colonial Ideological Entrenchment</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Pathologization and Medicalization in Casework Practice</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Historical Factors Impacting Micro and Macro Practice Advancements</i>	<i>19</i>
LOCATING POLICY PRACTICE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE	21
<i>National and Provincial Regulations and Regulators</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Social Work Scope of Practice and Policy Practice Mandates</i>	<i>23</i>
DEFINING POLICY PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK	25
<i>Theoretical Foundations for Policy Practice</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>An Evolving Definition of Policy Practice in Social Work Scholarship</i>	<i>26</i>

<i>Policy Process: A Neglected Element in Policy Practice</i>	28
<i>Competency Based Education for Accredited Schools of Social Work</i>	31
POLICY PRACTICE RESEARCH GAPS	33
<i>Policy Practice Research Themes</i>	33
<i>Areas for Assessment in Schools of Social Work in Canada</i>	37
Curricula and Pedagogies.	38
Faculty and Educators.....	41
Field Placements in the Policy Arena.	43
CONCLUSION	46
REFERENCES	49
APPENDIX A	62
APPENDIX B	63

List of Acronyms

AASW	American Association of Social Workers
ACOSA	Association for Community Organization and Social Action
ASWB	Association of Social Work Boards
BCASW	British Columbia Association of Social Workers
BCCSW	British Columbia College of Social Workers
BSW	Bachelor of Social Work
CASW	Canadian Association of Social Workers
CASWE	Canadian Association for Social Work Education
CCSWR	Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators
CSWE	Counsel for Social Work Education
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
MSW	Master of Social Work
RSW	Registered Social Worker

Introduction

Social work is historically rooted in social justice and social change, making it inseparable from social policy and the Canadian welfare state (Government of British Columbia, 2008; British Columbia College of Social Workers [BCCSW], 2009; Canadian Association of Social Workers [CASW], 2020; International Federation of Social Workers [IFSW], 2014). However, a gap between accredited social work education in Canada and mandated macro level social work practice competencies remains evident, despite the national and global core elements of social work being comprised of social justice, social change, and well-being. Contemporary macro practice is broken into three subcategories: administration and management, community practice, and policy practice (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2018). This competency break down is a phenomenon evident in the contemporary facet of policy practice, specifically in the promotion, education, and problem framing of social needs, development, implementation, and evaluation processes of social policies, as well as change and reformation processes (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Hunter & Ford, 2010; Mattocks, 2018; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). This incompetence can lead to social work malpractice on a macro level and contribute to ongoing systemic oppression (Reisch, 2016).

This thematic literature review aims to strengthen and promote the policy practice discourse in Canadian social work. This review captures a Canadian social work graduate student perspective on policy practice gaps in contemporary social work and pulls from academic literature to bridge global data into a Canadian context as the profession of social work has developed in Canada. This review also aims to identify factors that contribute to gaps in policy practice competencies for a Master of Social Work (MSW) program graduate and suggests areas for an educational institution to assess programming. These efforts are imperative if social work

as a profession hopes to improve access to decision making tables for future social work graduates. In short, to link the global academic policy practice discourse to the Canadian context this review starts by recapturing the historical development of social work in Canada and locates policy practice within the contemporary social work scope of practice. Then defines the state of contemporary policy practice and scholarship and closes with suggested areas for assessing policy practice education.

To ground this paper, it is important to be transparent about the lens from which I view the world. The following sections are designed to elaborate on my personal and professional backgrounds and provide insight regarding my motivations around the pursuit and interest of this topic.

My Personal Location

My parents are an interracial, cisgender and heterosexual couple. Both grew up in working poor families and were the children of first-generation uninvited immigrant parents who settled on the unceded land of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Peoples. My father's parents are from China, and my mother's parents are from Scotland. However, my parents were working professionals with post-secondary educations and owned property on the unceded land of the Kwantlen and Katzie Peoples. This laid a foundation that insulated my upbringing with immense privilege. Resources like financial stability, a home over my head, and food in the fridge, contributed to good health and the ability to engage in a social support network of family, friends, and professionals. I have attained a post-secondary education, and do not worry about having a warm place to sleep, food in my belly, and people to hug. These economic and social resources bolster privileges that come with being male, heterosexual, cisgender, and able bodied. The cards I have been dealt mean I do not worry about being

violently attacked for existing authentically. These privileges afford me space, time, and resources, creating a platform to exercise substantial and significant self-reflection, which is also a privilege. Nevertheless, I am not white passing and experience mental health and substance use challenges, which are significant locations of oppression. Racial discrimination has been my lived experience, despite the western cultural competence that comes with assimilation. Moreover, the negative societal stigma attached to mental health and substance use challenges has impacted the way I see myself and the way others see me, specifically regarding the limitations of personal and professional capacities. This has led to an interest in helping others navigate similar experiences.

My Motivations

It was Saturday morning, and we just parked; it was crisp and bright. I could see my breath, but spring was in the air. I could hear Dee's voice through the traffic as we unpacked food and supplies. Across the street (at the corner of Cordova and Dunlevy) he leaned against one of the buildings, singing a little blues tune past the cigarette sitting on his lip and watching the hustle and bustle through his mirrored aviators. Spotting his dark trench coat and ivy cap were always a bright spot in my week. We often sat together and talked about the voices, his tales of fame and fortune, the rats that bit his toes when he slept, and his favorite jazz musicians.

Dee and I had lunch together regularly, because the charity I volunteered for was one of the stops on his weekly circuit. His substance use impacted his mental health, which created barriers around accessing better housing, and racial stigma and deteriorating health, cuffed him to unemployment and income assistance. This made it very difficult for him to improve his socioeconomic status (which is not a unique narrative among Downtown Eastside residents). Moreover, during my time as a mental health worker, it was not uncommon to bear witness to

angry shouting and the defeated tears of the hopeless echoing out of my office, silencing those within ear shot. These stories were not unique either and often included long wait lists for services, groups, or psychoeducation, challenging medication changes, unreachable psychiatrists, case managers being unavailable during crisis, months between formal support, and traumatic hospitalizations.

The primary focus of my work has been helping individuals cope with their circumstances in ways that improve their personal well-being. This has included creating safe spaces for people to exist authentically as a primary goal and has led to listening and witnessing narratives of pain. Interventions were largely psychotherapeutic in nature, as well as hands on skill-based training and resource navigation. All of which were strength-based, person-centered and largely micro focused and included the implementation of therapeutic strategies such as cognitive behavioral therapy, solutions-focused therapy, and narrative therapy. These therapeutic modalities were implemented specifically to help identify problems outside of themselves or change unhelpful thought patterns. Moreover, brokering programs aimed at improving economic status, providing basic life skills training to help foster confidence and increase capacity, teaching healthy relational skills to improve social capital and emotional support, and advocating for individuals and their needs, were all a part of the work. Dee was one of these people, and his life and story helped shape my passion for mental health, and ultimately the trajectory of my professional career. His smile always reminded me of how tenacious humanity can be but was also a reminder that he was still disproportionately impacted and burdened by systemic barriers, pinning him to the cycle of poverty. Therefore, if I continue asking people to cope with an unjust world, without trying to change it, then am I not a part of the problem? This realization was and continues to be haunting for me.

My Social Work Practice

Like many social workers, volunteerism was my entry point into the social services field. I started in the Downtown Eastside community of Vancouver BC, primarily in the community around Oppenheimer Park. Over the last 15 years, my professional practice has been focused on supporting youth and adults experiencing (or impacted by) substance use and/or mental health, specifically as they navigate the pursuit of improved well-being. Much of my professional development has been geared towards fine tuning micro and mezzo levels of direct practice and clinical skills. A decade of volunteerism, 1585 hours over five different practicum placements, a Diploma in Social Services, a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, the pursuit of a MSW degree, and over a decade of regular employment in the field of social services has helped hone my clinical skills around social work assessment, intervention, and evaluation.

However, over the development of my personal practice, access to housing, employment and health care are still major areas where social injustice is evident for people navigating mental health and substance use related issues. Focusing on the micro and mezzo level change is an insufficient method for mobilizing the sustained social change needed to mitigate and break cycles of systemic oppression (Reisch, 2016). Fully addressing the scope of these problems goes beyond direct practice. Therefore, efficacious social work also requires macro level interventions and is achieved through developing a wide range of competencies through curriculum and reflexive practice aimed at refining the praxis of a person-in-environment lens (CSWE, 2018).

Broadly, social workers specialize in analyzing the dynamic interplay between people and legislated and/or socially constructed systems and structures that negatively impact the most marginalized and vulnerable populations within contemporary and historical socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental contexts. They work to develop and/or leverage the

available resources to improve economic, social and/or cultural capital for individuals, families, groups, communities, and nations, while using anti-oppressive and culturally appropriate methods. Ultimately, the goal of social work is to contribute to the active and durable redistribution of power to those whose voices have been silenced and/or overlooked (BCCSW, 2009; CASW, 2020; IFSW, 2014).

Throughout my return to academia there has been a wealth of training and education geared towards honing direct (micro and mezzo level) practice, specifically through enhancing interpersonal communication skills and techniques, knowledge in human development, and therapeutic approaches. This results in a more informed approach grounded in critical theory and enhanced communication skills, particularly in assessment, diagnosis, intervention, analysis, evaluation, and explication of personal practice. However, a rift has developed in my abilities and competencies, specifically to effectively address and mobilize systemic change. Intimate knowledge of direct practice skills and theory has rendered itself largely unhelpful when navigating the praxis of macro social work, and more specifically policy practice. This gap in practice has been noted by scholars like Figueira-McDonough (1993), Hunter and Ford (2010), Mattocks (2018), and Rothman and Mizrahi (2014). As such, the research questions guiding this thematic review are:

- How did policy practice develop in the field of social work?
- Why is policy practice important to the field of social work?
- What does contemporary policy practice look like in Canada?
- How do accredited social work programs in Canada contribute to developing policy practice competencies in students?
- What are the most effective ways to develop policy practice competencies for social work

students?

- What is the future of policy practice in Canadian social work?

Methods

This section describes the methods used for this thematic review. The inclusion criteria for this review are peer reviewed journals, articles, and textbooks (which were published in English between 1990-2022) as well as documents published by Canadian national and provincial governments and social work regulatory bodies and associations.

The identification and selection process of literary pieces that contributed to the local and global discourse of policy practice helped explore the topic of policy practice in social work throughout its development and into contemporary Canadian social work. This process included searching electronic databases (EBSCO host and Google scholar), as well as reviewing academic textbooks, local legislation, and information from social work regulatory bodies. Search terms for electronic databases include combinations of the words: macro social work, macro social work practice, policy practice, social policy, social policy practice, social welfare, Canadian welfare, welfare state, social action, social advocacy, social welfare practice, social work education and policy practice, political social work, policy practice placements, policy practice educators, policy analysis, policy advocacy, policy change, policy process, Indigenous social work, Aboriginal social work, and social work history in Canada. Additionally, a manual search was conducted in *the Journal of Policy Practice and Research*, *Journal of Policy Practice*, *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, and *Journal of Social Work Education*. Special focus was given to articles discussing the historical development of policy practice, contemporary direction of policy practice, policy practice in social work education (accredited social work programs at the baccalaureate and graduate level), and social work student perspectives on policy practice

and policy practice education. Lastly, a chain searching technique was used to identify influential articles and experts in the field from articles that were cited or referenced regularly (i.e., CSWE, 2018; Jansson, 2014; Rothman, 2013; Weiss-Gal, 2016).

Documents were also utilized from social work regulatory bodies including the provincial government of British Columbia, British Columbia College of Social work, British Columbia Association of Social Workers, Canadian Association of Social Workers, Canadian Association for Social Work Education, Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators, Counsel on Social Work Education, National Association of Social Workers, Association of Social Work Boards, and International Federation of Social Workers.

Exclusion criteria included articles not published in English, multimedia content, and articles published before 1990. However, articles published before 1990 were used if referenced consistently throughout the historical body of academic literature or contribute to the contemporary Canadian policy practice discourse within the field of social work.

Thematic Literature Review

This thematic literature review is broken into four major sections and aims to contribute to and promote the discourse around macro social work practice, specifically the field of policy practice from a Canadian social work student perspective. The four major themes are as listed: the historical development of policy practice within Canada, locating policy practice within Canadian social work, defining contemporary policy practice and competencies, and closes with a discussion about the gaps in policy practice research and suggested areas for assessment in social work education moving forward.

Historical Development

To contextualize policy practice within the social work profession, the first section starts

with a brief recapturing of social work as it has developed throughout the last 200 years in Canada, noting some Indigenous perspectives and ideologies that were eliminated from the early development of social work. The following section also largely discusses the social movements that contributed to the contemporary ideological foundations and definition of social work, specifically by discussing the pursuit of professionalization. Lastly, this section concludes with acknowledging the impacts of that process, specifically regarding scholarship and research.

Foundations of Social Work Practice: From a Culture of Caring to Helping Professionals

The foundations of contemporary social work developed out of individuals addressing socio-economically derived needs, a desire for social justice, social change and improving well-being for the most marginalized. It is important to note that the development of social work as a profession within Canada is inseparable from Indigenous history and perspectives (Blackstock, 2017; McCauley & Matheson, 2018). Moreover, it is also important to recognize and acknowledge that the field and profession of social work contributed and continues to contribute to the traumatization and cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples. Examples of this include, the development of the Indian Act, residential schools, the 60's scoop and contemporary child welfare system, the neglected missing and murdered Indigenous women, the criminalization of land and water protectors, and ongoing silencing of cultural ways of knowing through the privileging of Western ideals (Absolon, 2010; CASW, 2021; Finkel, 2006; Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019; Hart et al., McCauley & Matheson, 2018; Sinclair, 2019).

Nevertheless, the responsibility and strategies for assisting people with socio-economically derived needs is not a new concept in Canada or across Turtle Island. There were systems and frameworks present and well established prior to colonization (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2019; Finkel, 2006; Hart et al., 2016; Thomas & Green, 2007). It should be noted

that I come from a settler family and am not an expert in any Indigenous culture. Therefore, to assume that this metanarrative captures the complexities of all Indigenous Nations across Turtle Island does justice to no one. However, the following are some Indigenous principles and values illustrating an existing ideology around a cultural way of life prior to first European contact.

Indigenous communities operated out of their own systems of governance, it was an interconnected extension of their ways of being, knowing, and doing, passed on from one generation to the next and nuanced for the unique and complex needs of each Nation (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2019; Finkel, 2006; Thomas & Green, 2007). It was less about addressing needs and was more a way of life. Many of these governance systems encompass integrated systems for education, justice, and social supports, as well as frameworks for how to live in a good way, as a family, as a community, clan, Nation, and as part of their environment/home. This included holistic frameworks for relationships, childcare, mediation, and protection (Absolon, 2010; Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2019; Finkel, 2006). Indigenous Peoples fully understand and embrace that the needs of an individual are inseparable from the needs of the family, community, and environment, and as such provided for them through those connections. Moreover, they understood that needing and giving are not two sides of a spectrum, but a part of the same cycle of reciprocity and a natural part of life (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2019; Finkel, 2006; Thomas & Green, 2007). Additionally, it was not one person's responsibility to care for another or address the issues but everyone's responsibility. These were the foundational ways for addressing societies' needs on Turtle Island, and were focused on macro and mezzo collectivist interventions and responsibilities. They were not dictated by written law but taught through life lessons, oral traditions, and embedded in the cultural ways of being (Blackstock, 2019; Hart et al., 2016).

However, the development of social work as a profession paralleled colonization leading up to the federation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867 (Baskin, 2018; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). European immigrant women from middle-income or upper-income families with roots in Judeo-Christian traditions were the major proponents of social services in early Canada. This looked like caring for those negatively impacted by a rapidly changing way of life, specifically through significantly differing cultural ways of being that were informed by Judeo-Christian morality, beliefs, and values (Cummins et al., 2011; Hart et al., 2016; Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). The emergence of the social work profession was closely linked to the development of the profession in the United States (US) during the late 1800's and was heavily influenced by the dominant religions at the time, namely Catholicism, Judaism, and protestant Christianity.

Social workers became agents of assimilation for the government, through facilitating, mediating, and enforcing legislation like the Indian Act and the Child Protection Act of British Columbia (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2017; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Thomas & Green, 2007). Ideological perspectives, bolstered by religious belief systems, and Eurocentric ways of being, approached social issues radically differently and prioritized changing the individual rather than the circumstances (Hart et al., 2016; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). These are the ideological foundations for contemporary social work practice and education today and expedited the ensuing cultural genocide of Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing, leading to the shift away from collectivist interventions for societal needs. An ideological shift towards individualism was the genesis of social work moving away from a collective way of life, or a cause driven profession, and towards the commodification of helping services by professionals (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The two most significant recorded movements that impacted the foundation and development of the contemporary social work profession and scope of practice emerged out of the United Kingdom (UK), specifically the housing settlement movement and the charity organization movement. Both movements focused on improving the well-being of civilians experiencing the negative impacts of social and economic conditions caused by rapid population growth, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization. This resulted in poverty, unemployment, poor living, housing, and working conditions, and poor health, which led to neglected children and families (Cummins et al., 2011; Finkel, 2006; Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019; Hare, 2004; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Moore & Johnston, 2002; Reisch, 2016).

However, these two movements managed the issues through radically different approaches. The housing settlement movement was characterized through its advocacy, social action, social reform and the development of group work and community organizing (Cummins et al., 2011; Hare, 2004; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Reisch, 2016). Evidence of this movement in Canada could be seen in examples like Evangelia, the first settlement founded in Toronto by Sara Libby, and the university settlements of the University of Toronto and McGill University (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). This movement is argued to be the foundation for what is called macro social work today. Macro social work is an umbrella term used to describe activities associated with community practice, administration and management, and policy practice (Hare, 2004; Hoefer, 2019; Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Moore & Johnston, 2002; CSWE, 2018).

Conversely, the charity organization movement is characterized by a coordinated effort between organizations (both volunteer and charitable) to assist individuals by redistributing in kind resources like food, clothing, and fuel, or by providing work opportunities and housing

options. To minimize duplicate services many Canadian agencies joined the National Association of Societies for Organizing Charity, which was based out of the US. This led to an international network for sharing knowledge and information on specific social problems, which aided in providing advisory and inquiry opportunities for social service workers. This network of organizations guided social work practice as it developed early on (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

One of the agencies in Canada connected to the National Association of Societies for Organizing Charity was the Montreal Charity Organization Society (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). The Montreal Charity Organization Society linked and coordinated 61 Churches, agencies, and organizations, but would eventually shift its focus from coordinating to providing services to families. Montreal was the origin of the Montreal Council of Social Agencies, which was established in 1919. This organization developed into the Family Welfare Association of Montreal and went on to produce *The Social Worker* journal, Canada's first social work specific journal (2011). The charity organization movement became the foundation to casework theory and practice, also known as micro and mezzo social work or direct practice in contemporary literature (Cummins et al., 2011; Hare, 2004; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Moore & Johnston, 2002).

Both movements were deeply rooted in religious morality and ethics and were heavily influenced by colonial ideological frameworks like capitalism, individualism, patriarchy, and white supremacy (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). These movements were culturally bound, and defined ways of being, knowing and doing for the public and field of social work within Canada. Colonial ideologies were reflected and magnified in and through public and political discourses as the social welfare state developed. Two beliefs impacting social policy and legislation were

that problems originated from within and were personal, and there are deserving and undeserving people. These two beliefs impact social services and were foundational in the federal and provincial government responses to social issues throughout Canadian history, specifically in that help was only afforded to those deemed deserving (Cummins et al., 2011). This led to policy initiatives and legislation that reflected that belief throughout the development of the social welfare state in Canada, and was disproportionately helpful for some, but ultimately was devastating to Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island (Baskin, 2018; Blackstock, 2019; Finkel, 2006; Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019; Hart et al., 2016; Sinclair, 2019).

Professionalization and Colonial Ideological Entrenchment

In the field of contemporary social work, the profession of social work is provincially legislated, and the professional title, public safety, code of ethics, and standard of practice are provincially regulated. Moreover, social work education programs are nationally accredited, and the community of social workers are supported through a network of provincial and regional associations. For example, in British Columbia the profession is legislated through the Social Workers Act and regulated by the BCCSW. Additionally, social work education programs are accredited by the CASWE, and social workers are supported by the British Columbia Association of Social Workers (BCASW) (BCASW, n.d.; CASWE, n.d.; Government of British Columbia, 2008). Much of this will be discussed in detail in the next major section. However, this was not always the case for the field of social work.

As the field of social work sought professionalization, it continued to entrench itself in colonial ideals. Professionalization of an occupation granted prestige, authority, autonomy, and a monopoly over practice. This standard was, and is, exemplified by medical doctors and lawyers. The concept of professionalization within the capitalist economic context in the 1910's -1930's

required the monopolization of a market and jurisdictional autonomy around whom and how to fulfill the needs of that market. For social work, this was a complex patriarchal pursuit that took over 30 years (Cummins et al., Finkel, 2006; 2011; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

Professionalization was characterized by defining a unique body of knowledge and practice, as well as positing it within the economic framework of the labor market to meet the needs of a specific population. It required the establishment of university programs for teaching and training (Cummins et al., 2011). Additionally, it required the development of legislated ethical and professional standards of practice that could be verified through evidence and accredited to protect the professional title, as well as the public. The female dominated field of social work was engulfed by this patriarchal system to establish social work as a profession within the professional hierarchy, in effect compromising social action and social reform philosophies that were fundamental to the heart of social work (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The foundations for pursuing professionalization for social work in Canada were developed out of four major events. The first event being the institutionalization of accredited Canadian schools of social work, the University of Toronto opened a Department of Social Services in 1914 and by 1918 McGill University opened a Department of Social Studies. These were the first universities in Canada that developed into social work specific programs. The field of social work was still heavily influenced by the dominant religions during the 1920's and in some cases, social work programs were financially dependent on religious organizations for ongoing funding. This was the case regarding the social work program at McGill University (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The second major event was when Canada detached itself from the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) and by 1926 developed the Canadian Association of Social Work

(CASW). This was of crucial importance due to the localized and regional differences in public needs and political agendas between the US and Canada. This allowed for Canadian social workers to decentralize the scope of practice to meet the needs of their specific population more adequately and aided in developing a unique body of knowledge and practice for Canadian social work (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The third event was the establishment of the Canadian Conference of Social Work in 1928, which provided a national platform for social workers across the country to share Canadian social work knowledge and practice. By 1932, as an academic extension to the heart behind the Canadian Conference of Social Work, the inaugural *Journal of Social Work* was published. This was the fourth major event that contributed to the development and professionalization of social work (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

These four major milestones emerged within the context of increasing individualization, pathologization, and economic advancement, mirroring the professionalization process in the UK and the US. Moreover, despite the development of the CASW and Canadian Conference of social workers, Canadian social work continued to rely heavily on the AASW and American social work conferences for professional development opportunities and professional direction for decades to come. Additionally, Canadian universities worked with the Counsel of Social Work Education (CSWE) for program accreditation until the 1970's, as such the profession in Canada remained heavily enmeshed with prominent colonial ideologies from the UK and the US. Nevertheless, these events laid a foundation for the contemporary profession of social work in Canada (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

Pathologization and Medicalization in Casework Practice

The advancement of western medicine in the 18th and 19th century had adopted the

philosophical foundations of the scientific revolution from the 17th century. Metaphysical and epistemological thought progression and the refinement of the scientific method gave strength to rationalism, positivism, empiricism, and reductionism within astrology, physics, biology, and medicine (Cook, 2011). This provided replicable results on examined phenomena through mathematical, deductive, and reductive approaches. The philosophical underpinnings of these theories benchmarked what qualified as evidence throughout the development of evidence-based practice, scholarship, and education and contributed to the framework for professionalization for the UK and North America (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions built into the professionalization process forced the field of social work to largely embrace the theoretical foundations of Freudian psychology in the 1920's, specifically as it pertained to informing casework practice (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). Implementing the theoretical foundations of psychology effectively brought much of the social work profession into alignment with the medical model. Moreover, the commitment to professionalization galvanized an implicit agreement to organize and operate within the capitalist market economy. Within this economic framework social work needed to maintain political centrality to exist, as radical movements would jeopardize funding streams that provided stability within the competitive labour market (Breton et al., 2003; Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). This continues to be a reality for the contemporary social work profession. Lastly, as stated earlier Judeo-Christian beliefs and values heavily shaped social work practice through the work force, code of ethics, and early funding streams (at federal, provincial, and municipal levels) which mobilized welfare program development and legislation, research initiatives, scholarship, and social work program accreditation for social work in Canada (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

Both the medical model and religious beliefs and values favored identifying and locating issues in an individual. Thus, the casework framework focused on containing the issues, isolating them from society, and treating them individually. Moreover, capitalism requires solutions or interventions to fit within the competitive labour market, specifically around efficiency and maximizing profit margins for products and services. These factors resulted in an upward trend in the medicalization of social issues. Within contemporary social work the terms medicalization and pathologization are often used interchangeably. The phenomenon of pathologization is simply the assertion that a particular thing (or cluster of things) is a problem and that the root of that problem exists within, or because of, an individual's abnormal physiology or psychology. Moreover, it posits that the problem should be treated or managed through physiological or psychological means (Johnstone et al., 2018).

This phenomenon was particularly evident in the field of mental health, specifically in the historical development of psychiatry and pharmacological and psychotherapeutic interventions during the 18th and 19th century (Deacon, 2013; Johnstone et al., 2018; Skull, 2006). The influence of psychiatry and psychology in casework has continued into contemporary social work practice. Psychology-based theories are still fundamental in contemporary micro social work practice and are exhibited in therapeutic modalities used within psychotherapeutic interventions, such as cognitive behavioral theory, family systems theory, attachment theory, and person-centred theory (Payne, 2014).

The ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of modern science, the alignment of Judeo-Christian values and beliefs around centering problems within an individual, as well as the economic ideals of capitalism, all contributed to the pathologization of social issues. Some examples of these issues are poverty, crime, immigration, mental illness, substance

use, poor health, child neglect, violence against women and children, poor housing, and terrible work conditions. Consequently, this framework for casework practice tended to overlook environmental, structural, cultural, or systemic factors contributing to these issues. Moreover, it also expediated the movement away from spiritual explanations for societal phenomena and traditional/cultural forms of healing and wellness, in effect silencing and invalidating these forms of knowledge (Absolon, 2010; Hart et al., 2016; Sinclair, 2019).

Historical Factors Impacting Micro and Macro Practice Advancements

Focusing on casework as a platform for professionalization created significant tension within the social work community during the profession's developmental stage in the 1920s – 1930s (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Rice & Price 2013). It was argued that the pursuit of professionalization diminished the heart of social work as a cause, because the focus shifted to developing and defining the function and the specific technical service of social work practice (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Rice & Price 2013). Committing to casework as the primary professional service of social work contributed to the neglect of social reform activities, specifically, the deterioration of social action and social policy engagement.

Ultimately, the field of social work chose professional status over progressive politics (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). In essence, the social work profession became a cog in the machine and contributed to systemic racial, gendered, and economic oppressions for the sake of professional validation. Additionally, focusing on micro social work has contributed to the dichotomization of micro and macro social work, specifically within academic scholarship and professional practice (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Mattocks, 2018; McBeath, 2016). As the focus of the social work profession concentrated on micro social work, it naturally blunted social justice initiatives and resulted in the underdevelopment of theoretical frameworks for macro

social work practice and scholarship.

Professionalization was not the only factor contributing to the ebbs and flows of micro and macro practice advancements throughout the last century. Social work in Canada was not exempt from responding and reacting to the volatile economic, social, and political shifts throughout mainstream recorded history. Major events that impacted the shifts in practice priorities included: the labour movement, the great depression, World War II, post-war reconstruction, the cold war and the villainism of the politically left leaning. Additionally, the peace movement, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the expansion of the welfare state into the 1960's and 70's and the development of the charter of rights and freedoms all played a significant role in the increased pursuit of macro practice. Nevertheless, the introduction of neo-liberal policies, the progressive retrenchment of welfare services during the 1970's - 2000's, increased globalization, identity politics, and increased individualism within North America aided in reducing interest in macro practice (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Rice & Price, 2013).

During eras such as the great depression, post-war reconstruction, the peace movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement there was a surge in interest and shift in focus, specifically towards the macro elements of social work practice. These political movements and events impacted how social work was expressed, perceived, and practiced. As a result, several academic journals devoted to macro social work were created between 1977-2001, notably *Human Service Organizations*, *Journal of Community Practice*, and *Journal of Policy Practice* (Austin, 2019). The emergence of these journals was one response to the growing focus on micro practice and clinical skills, which began to proliferate curriculum and course offerings after the 1920's. The 1970's also brought a new era of social work practice marked with

theoretical perspectives influenced by the structural approach (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Rice & Price, 2013). This theoretical progression and adaptation had a radical impact on sustaining the perceived importance of the macro elements of social work practice and scholarship. Regardless of academics', educators', and practitioners' attempts to counterbalance the disproportionate advancement of micro practice, macro social work practice was still considered a neglected element of social work practice throughout the 1990's and into the 2000's (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; McBeath, 2016; Rothman, 2013; Wyers, 1991).

Locating Policy Practice in Contemporary Social Work Practice

Contemporary definitions of policy practice fall under the umbrella of macro social work practice (CSWE, 2018). Moreover, policy practice is only one facet of this umbrella and is accompanied by administration and management, as well as community practice (2018). Each of these practices have significant areas of overlap, therefore policy practice does not function in isolation from the other elements of macro social work practice (Gamble, 2011; Hoefer, 2019). However, an in-depth discussion of administration and management and community practice is predominantly outside the scope of this paper. The primary focus of this review is on policy practice, as such the peripheral facets of macro social work will only be discussed in brief when contextualizing, defining, and describing policy practice. The following section covers the second major theme of this review, specifically by locating policy practice within the Canadian social work scope of practice and iterating the explicit mandates associated with policy practice.

National and Provincial Regulations and Regulators

Within Canada, social work practice is regulated provincially and territorially, however it is not isolated from national and international agendas regarding social work ethics, vision, and practice (Canadian Council of Social Work Regulators [CCSWR], 2012). For example, in British

Columbia the Social Work Act (2008) protects the title of Social Worker, defining social work as: “Assessment, diagnosis, treatment and evaluation of individual, interpersonal and societal issues using social work knowledge, skills, interventions, and strategies, to assist individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities to achieve optimum psychological and social functioning” (Section. 1).

Within the Social Work Act, the BCCSW is the legislated body dictating the registration standards, code of ethics, and scope of practice for social workers (2008). This means the BCCSW defines what social work knowledge, skills, and abilities are required for practicing social work, and is designed and mandated to protect the public from malpractice and harmful conduct from registered social workers (RSWs). Therefore, the BCCSW defines and sets the scope of practice and competency standards for RSWs. This involves defining how social workers conduct micro, mezzo and macro levels of assessment, diagnosis, strategy development, treatment, intervention, and evaluation. With that, minimum levels of training and knowledge are required to attain the title of RSW. This is verified by acquiring a BSW degree from an accredited social work program, as well as successfully completing the standardized licensure exam (BCCSW, n.d.; BCCSW, 2009).

The exam is designed and published by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB), which is a non-profit organization composed of social work regulatory boards and colleges across the US and Canada. Moreover, regarding accredited education and training, the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) is the national body that regulates and accredits education programs for social workers. These two bodies link national and international social work knowledge and evidence-based best practice to Canada. The result is a competency-based education framework designed to equip social work students with entry-level

competencies for the profession (CCSWR, 2012; CSWE, 2018).

Social Work Scope of Practice and Policy Practice Mandates

Today social work, as a field of practice and area of study, is committed to identifying, implementing, and/or developing interventions centered on positively impacting well-being on micro, mezzo, and macro levels; this mandate necessitates practitioners to traverse between each level to effectively fulfill the accredited and legislated definition and scope of practice (Government of British Columbia, 2008; BCCSW, 2009; CASW, 2020; IFSW, 2014). Moreover, the importance and need for policy practice has shaped the field of social work since its inception and has been well documented throughout history and into present day. Policy practice in social work is a crucial route to the praxis of social justice, social change, and social action; as such, policy practice has been embedded into the explicit mandates of the social work scope of practice and education policies, affectively linking practice to global agendas (Finkel, 2006; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Marsh, 2005; Ritter, 2019). For example, in the BCCSW Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice, point f) of the scope of practice states that social work includes “the development, promotion, implementation, and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality” (BCCSW, 2009, p. 8). This is one of nine categories summarizing the scope of practice for social work in British Columbia and a full list of the other activities can be reviewed in Appendix A.

The BCCSW policy practice activities echo the Scope of Practice Statement of by the CASW (2020) and the practice section of the International Federation of Social Work (2014). These statements list practice activities related to advocacy and political interventions as well as the development, formulation, promotion, implementation, analysis, and evaluation of social policies that aim to improve social conditions and equality for individuals, families, groups, and

communities (CASW, 2020; IFSW, 2014).

To ensure that RSWs can carry out these policy practice activities (in addition to the remaining eight practice activities) in a way that meets the code of ethics and standards of practice, the BCCSW Code of Ethics and Scope of Practice (2009) also defines the base level of competence required for each activity. For social workers in British Columbia competence means “meeting all relevant educational and experiential requirements, having the ability to fulfill the professional scope of practice, and carrying out professional duties or achieving goals, while adhering to the values and code of ethics of the profession” (BCCSW, 2009, p. 31).

Conversely, incompetence means:

A lack of knowledge, skill or judgment, or disregard for the welfare of a client of the public, to an extent or nature demonstrating that the registrant is unfit to carry out one or more of the mandated responsibilities or fails to comply with the standards of practice from time to time (BCCSW, 2009, p. 35).

Incompetence in the field of social work can lead to malpractice, not just with individuals, but for groups, and communities as well (BCCSW, 2009). Therefore, an emphasis is put on social work training and education as key elements used to gatekeep competence in the profession (Gibbs & Blakely, 2000). As such, accredited schools of social work are required to provide opportunities for students to learn how social policies and laws relate to the well-being of individuals, families, groups, and communities in Canadian and global contexts. Moreover, providing training to develop critical policy analysis and evaluation skills, and skills that contribute to the development and implementation of new and more equitable social policies are also required. Lastly, schools of social work are required to provide opportunities aimed at

developing the skills necessary to participate in efforts to change policies that negatively impact Indigenous Peoples and members of equity-seeking groups (CASWE, 2021).

To that end policy practice remains an essential element to social change and social justice, which are core mandates to the field of social work in Canada. Rooted in social justice, social change, and the pursuit of well-being, and regulated by legislation, policy practice remains a core component to the scope of practice for social work internationally, nationally, and provincially. As stated above, this is explicitly reflected in the localized social work scope of practice and registration requirements, as well as international mandates, national social work program accreditation standards and the educational policies that dictate social work curriculum (BCCSW, 2009; CASW, 2020; CASWE, 2021, IFSW, 2014).

Defining Policy Practice in Social Work

The following section will discuss some theories that inform contemporary policy practice in social work and define policy practice, specifically to identify the knowledge, skills and abilities that are outlined as measurements for the minimum level of competence in this area of practice by the CSWE. The aim of this section is to provide criteria for analyzing policy practice education, specifically to identify some gaps in contemporary social work education as the field of social work continues to evolve in Canada.

Theoretical Foundations for Policy Practice

Theoretical models for policy practice in social work are sparse and severely underdeveloped (Feldman, 2020; Hoefer, 2021a; Wyers, 1991). Loosely, the theoretical foundations of contemporary policy practice were developed from social action, social change, social justice, structural, humanist, and feminist theories, which proliferated during the

progressive era in the 1960's through till the 1980's (Byers, 2014; Finkel 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). From these foundations, legislative advocacy, policy reform through litigation, social action activities, and social policy analysis developed into the main activities used by social workers to impact the policy change process (Figueira-McDonough, 1993). Moreover, by the 1990's policy practice models were being developed, explored, and critiqued. Examples included, a policy expert, a change agent outside work environments, a change agent inside work environments, a policy actor, and policy itself. These models represented some of the first conceptualizations of policy practice as it pertained to the field and practice of social work (Wyers, 1991).

The primary frameworks that influence contemporary policy practice activities are the person-in-environment lens and anti-oppressive practice (Hare, 2004; CSWE, 2018). These frameworks guide contemporary policy practice tasks, activities, and actions, specifically for social workers who are seeking to operationalize the social justice and social action ideals of the profession. However, there are gaps in research regarding how effective these frameworks are around policy change as it is situated in the current socio-political, cultural, and economic framework (Hoefer, 2021b, Hoefer, 2021c).

An Evolving Definition of Policy Practice in Social Work Scholarship

Identifying and describing policy practice in the context of social work is relatively new, largely in development, and highly contested (Allen et al., 2018; Feldman, 2020; Wyers, 1991). Many scholars use the terms political social work, political advocacy, policy analysis, political participation, policy research, and social policy engagement interchangeably (Friedman et al., 2020; Hoefer, 2019; Pritzker & Lane, 2017; Rocha et al., 2010). However, these terms only speak to specific elements of policy practice. The first working definition of policy practice was

conceptualized in 1984 by Bruce Jansson (Finkel, 2006; Jennissen & Lundy, 2011; Wyers, 1991). Jansson (1984) states that policy practice includes a series of roles and skills used concurrently at different phases of policy development. These include identifying and defining social issues, designing, and evaluating policy, troubleshooting potential issues around the implementation of policies, and being an agent of change (2014). Jansson's early definition laid the foundation for contemporary scholars to explore what social work roles and skills are within local, provincial, national, and international contexts that specifically affect the policy change or development process.

Building off Jansson's (1984) definition, Gal and Weiss-Gal (2015) and the CSWE (2018) refer to policy practice as activities undertaken by social workers within diverse fields of practice, which focus on the formulation, implementation, and facilitation of new policies, as well as the analysis, evaluation, and suggested reform of existing policies. These activities must seek to further policies on the organizational, local, national, and international levels in accordance with social work values, specifically the advancement of human rights; racial and gender equity; access to high-quality, comprehensive social welfare services and programs, and social, economic, and environmental justice (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015; CSWE, 2018).

Depending on the setting, policy practice may consist of a variety of tasks and strategic implementations, specifically to change or improve existing policies, establish, or develop new policies, or defeat the policy initiatives of other people (Jansson, 2014). Some strategies can include legislative advocacy and lobbying, social and community action, policy analysis, research, and information dissemination, as well as reform through litigation (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013). Nevertheless, social workers involved in policy practice commonly seek to engage in areas related to the policy making process, such as agenda setting, research and problem

analysis, policy development, and policy implementation and assessment (Jansson, 2014).

Furthermore, according to Gal and Weiss-Gal (2013) policy practice specifically refers to activities undertaken within a social worker's professional setting and is associated with duties required by their employer. They make the distinction between voluntary civic involvement as a partisan, stating that political engagement outside of a social worker's professional setting is not included within the parameters of policy practice in the field of social work (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013).

Policy can be a nebulous term for many social work students, and can be intimidating to engage with, policy practice even more so. Defining policy practice helps bring clarity around what the tasks and activities look like when engaging in this practice area. However, simply defining what constitutes as policy practice is largely unhelpful regarding guidance on how to effectively impact the policy process (which is a crucial element to policy development and reform) (Pritzker et al., 2021). Most schools of social work focus on theoretical frameworks for social policy analysis, specifically by using a person-in-environment lens and anti-oppressive theories (Allen et al., 2018; Hoefer, 2019; Shewell et al., 2021). However, within the field of social work there is a lack of data on the ongoing interaction of social workers implementing policy practice within daily activities, evidence suggests a small portion of a practitioner's week is allocated to policy practice activities (McBeath, 2016; Pritzker & Lane, 2017; Reisch, 2016; Rocha et al., 2010). Many BSW students can articulate principles of justice, equity, and empowerment, as well as the objectives and importance of social action and social change. However, are unable to demonstrate or identify the steps, tasks, and skills needed to implement these principles and goals within the policy process (Zubrzycki & McArthur, 2004).

Policy Process: A Neglected Element in Policy Practice

Areas of policy practice that social work education has focused on revolve around identifying relevant policies for practice and how they impact the individual, groups, or communities being supported, as well as the socio-cultural and political history leading to the development of those policies. Additionally, there is also a focus on policy analysis and political advocacy through community organizing. However, the policy process has been a historical gap in academic literature within the field of social work (Figueira-McDonough, 1993). Moreover, it has led social justice-oriented individuals to gravitate towards other professional fields that have more effective strategies around the policy process, specifically law, business, public health, public policy, political science, economics, and public administration (Austin, 2019; Makaros, 2020; Reisch, 2006).

The policy process often involves an extremely complicated set of elements that never function in isolation of the historical and contemporary socio-cultural, political, and economic factors (Cummins et al., 2011; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013; Sabatier & Weible, 2014; Shier & Graham, 2014). Canada for example, as an industrialized, developed, and capitalist country, functions through a Western democratic framework and adheres to many of the archetypal characteristics, such as a decentralized decision-making process and shared governance. As such, when engaging in the policy arena hundreds of individual or corporate actors, interest groups, government agencies from differing levels, legislators, think-tanks, researchers, journalists, public opinions, lawyers, or judges and other formal or informal influences could contribute to this process (Harding & Jeyapal, 2019; Hoefer, 2020; Sabatier & Weible, 2014). Many of these parties have potentially differing ideologies, interests, values, and policy preferences, which contribute to how a situation is viewed. This ultimately guides the development, enactment, and funding of what is deemed appropriate and/or viable regarding policy positions and solutions.

Even more so, it is important to know which actors develop partnerships to gain more influence on the policy process (Mabiso et al., 2015). As a social worker in this arena, it is crucial to understand the larger socio-political cultural agenda and power dynamics associated with who is setting that agenda, specifically to effectively develop and implement a strategy that meets social justice mandates for the most marginalized communities (Harding & Jeyapal, 2019; Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Not only is the policy process exceedingly complex, but reforming policies typically require extensive data collection and interpretation. However, a policy usually spans at least 10 years depending on the policy life cycle, funding streams, and political climate. The social work field has historically been a responsive profession (Franklin et al., 2022). Moreover, to attain enough data to meaningfully understand and evaluate the impact of socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and scientific variables on a particular problem, 20 - 30 years is often required (Cummins et al., 2011; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013; Sabatier & Weible, 2014). To that end, in-depth historical analysis of social policies (as they have developed within the Canadian context) is one of the only benchmarks available to measure or theorize the factors that impact the policy process or contribute to successful policy change efforts for the field of social work, as such this area of practice is undertheorized (Pawar & Nixon, 2020).

However, some of the most contemporary theoretical models for policy practice (as it pertains to the policy change process) include institutional policy practice, elite policy practice, resource-based policy practice and radical policy practice (Feldman, 2020). Additionally, the adaptation of the multiple-streams framework by Kingdon (1984) has made its way into contemporary policy practice literature for social work, as well as the civic voluntarism theory (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2020; Hoefer, 2021a; Hoefer, 2022). These models pull from the fields of

political science and sociology to develop the concept of policy change within policy practice and seem to reflect the future of policy practice in social work (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2020; Hoefer, 2015).

Competency Based Education for Accredited Schools of Social Work

Competency is an important concept to social work educators, employers of RSWs, graduates, and the public (Hoefer, 2019). Ensuring the knowledge, skills, and abilities (that are attained through formal education and lived experience) will effectively, efficiently, and ethically be mobilized via professional practice, is crucial to public safety and maintaining professional status. Plainly, ensuring the competence of social work graduates as they enter the field reduces the frequency of malpractice, and explicitly defines what the public should expect from RSWs. As such competency-based education is the framework utilized to benchmark graduate knowledge, skills, and abilities and is the first of two major requirements for professional practice (Bogo, 2020; CASWE, 2021).

During the 1990's the call for social workers to engage in policy practice was becoming more frequent and by 2008 policy practice was included as one of the core competencies for social work practice in North America (Byers, 2014; CASWE, 2021; CCSWR, 2012; CSWE, 2018). Within British Columbia, the legislated competency regarding policy practice for a RSW states mandatory involvement in the development, promotion, implementation, and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality (BCCSW, 2009). RSWs are mandated to engage with policy practice with at least a minimum level of competence. This is a broad mandate and includes specific activities and/or tasks outlined by the CSWE (2018). Moreover, these activities benchmark a minimum measurement for competencies pertaining to the knowledge, skills, and abilities in this area of practice. These specific activities and tasks are

listed in Appendix B.

It should be noted that these competencies may not be feasible due to organizational or employer mandates and environmental factors impacting social workers access to the policy process (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2020). However, this does not diminish the legal requirement for RSWs to complete these activities at a minimal level should the need or opportunity arise, incompleteness of these tasks in professional practice is defined as incompetence or the disregard for the welfare of a client of the public (BCCSW, 2009). Moreover, incompetence in the field of social work, specifically in policy practice, can lead to malpractice that breaches all levels of practice.

The scope of social work practice is daunting in its entirety. The visceral void between theory and practice, often driven by neoliberal structural binds, has personally led to cognitive-dissonance, feelings of helplessness, and burnout. Ultimately, social work in Canada functions within a neoliberal framework and has been complicit in historical and current expressions of colonial violence, injustice, and oppression (Strier & Feldman, 2018). Navigating the ethical compromises justified by legislation has had a detrimental impact on the field of social work, specifically around building safe and trusting relationships with marginalized individuals, families, communities, and nations. This has been evident in the historical and ongoing legacy of Indigenous genocide across Canada, specifically through the facilitation of the Indian Act, residential schools, the 60's scoop and contemporary child welfare system, the neglected missing and murdered Indigenous women, the criminalization of land and water protectors, and ongoing silencing of cultural ways of knowing through the privileging of Western ideals (CASW, 2021; Fortier & Hon-Sing Wong, 2019; McCauley & Matheson, 2018).

These are just a few examples that impact hundreds of thousands of stories and narratives

of individuals, families, communities, and nations and ripple through Canadian history into present day. These examples clearly illustrate areas where social workers have been agents of oppression through imposed macro level policy and legislation. However, it also highlights that macro social work practice is paramount in moving towards decolonization, reconciliation, and improved well-being for marginalized Canadians. Malpractice is not an option if social work is going to pursue substantial and durable social justice and social change in these areas. Schools of social work in Canada are well positioned to address skill gaps or discrepancies through educational interventions and arguably have an ethical obligation to evaluate program curriculum and pedagogical methods aimed at achieving these outcomes (Barlow & Coleman, 2003; Bogo, 2020; CASWE, 2021; Carpenter, 2011). Additionally, this would aid in addressing systemic malpractice and contribute to decolonization and reconciliation within the Canadian context.

Policy Practice Research Gaps

The last section of this thematic literature review will discuss research themes in the field of policy practice with specific attention being given to social work education. These findings reiterate potential solutions for bridging the gaps noted between policy practice education in accredited schools of social work in Canada and the policy practice competence of graduates. Lastly, this section will close with suggested areas for further research and development moving forward for policy practice in Canada.

Policy Practice Research Themes

Policy practice research is a growing and diverse body of literature. Research themes within policy practice that are backed by empirical literature include examining involvement levels of social workers in the policy arena, the different factors that elicit social work involvement in policy practice, and different strategies and actions employed in those settings to

impact the policy process (Feldman, 2020; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2020). There are also several studies that discuss elements like social work student perceptions of policy practice, public perceptions around social work roles, social work educator engagement in policy practice, the role of policy practice education, pedagogical approaches for developing policy practice competencies, policy practice curriculum, and the impact of the policy environment on social work policy practice (Weiss-Gal, 2016; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2020).

The absence of national studies assessing or engaging with the discourse and scholarship of policy practice within Canada speaks to the neglect of this topic. As a result of the limited Canadian scholarship on this topic, Canada has largely leaned on global data from industrialized countries such as the US, Israel, UK, Australia, and South Africa, specifically for general assessment measures and direction as demonstrated in studies by Dudziak and Coates (2004) and Shewell et al. (2021). An example of a major study that has impacted the global discourse on policy practice and ultimately permeated the Canadian context was conducted in 2010. The Association for Community Organization and Social Action (ACOSA) charged Dr. Jack Rothman to conduct a report in the US on the diminished state of macro social work in the US. While Rothman was conducting his survey, a report conducted by the CSWE in 2011 identified that only 8.8% of MSW students were enrolled in macro focused practice, policy practice making up 1.6% of that study (Austin, 2019; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014).

The Rothman report identified issues in three domains: faculty, curriculum, and students (2013). Specific issues included faculty within social work schools lacking interest in macro social work or opposed macro courses and programs, which resulted in little or no hiring of faculty specializing in macro practice. Additionally, school curriculums were largely structured towards clinical practice, there were limited or problematic practice field placements, and student

attitudes reflected a general lack of interest towards macro practice (Weiss et al., 2006; Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013). Suggestions put forth to address these issues included raising the visibility of macro practice and advocating for a strong place for macro social work within social work institutions and the public, advocating for greater involvement by the CSWE, and educate and advocate with the deans and schools about the importance of including macro course work in their existing programs (Rothman, 2013).

In response to the Rothman (2013) report, CSWE (2018) developed the *Specialized Practice Curricular Guide for Macro Social Work Practice* to bridge social work competencies, accreditation standards, and social work education when specializing in macro social work. It also set out to increase macro social work specialization of MSW students to 20% (McBeath, 2016). This tool gives direction on ways to accomplish teaching and engaging with the core competencies of policy practice, specifically through clarifying the social work activities associated with this area of practice and by suggesting complementary learning materials and practice exercises. Notably, by 2019 in a workforce study report done by the CSWE, enrolment in schools of social work had increased to around 17% for macro practice specializations in the US (Austin, 2019).

This is an example of a significant research investment that rendered increased interest around macro practice in the US. Some of these research findings seemed to echo preliminary Canadian studies in the 1990's conducted by Bogo et al. (1993) and Bogo et al. (1995), specifically around pedagogical approaches that impact student perceptions of macro social work. However, there are significant gaps in contemporary Canadian data and research around policy practice in social work, specifically student self-perceptions around policy practice competencies, confidence regarding engagement in the policy process, and graduates'

willingness to engage in policy practice activities. Moreover, there are gaps globally on data pertaining to social work graduates' effectiveness or competence, specifically around impacting the policy change process (Feldman, 2020).

Notably, one of the first studies in Canada assessing social workers perceived engagement in policy practice and the political arena was conducted by Dudziak and Coates (2004). This study was built off the data and methodological frameworks of South African and American studies. However, the sample only included social workers from Maritime provinces, specifically New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Curiously, this study noted social worker's high awareness pertaining to a wide range of social policy issues but a significant discrepancy in the active involvement around them. This study also noted the adaptation of passive policy practices such as informal communications and voting, and the extent of policy practice being relegated to advocacy as a primary activity. These notes seem to echo the collective academic narrative across North America and globally about the diminishing state of social worker's direct involvement in the development of social policies during this time and thereafter.

Recently, the first Canada wide study regarding policy practice was published in June 2021 by Shewell et al. (2021). This study builds off the framework and methodology of the cross-national study on social work and policy practice by (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2015; 2017). It was developed to assess how social work educators engage in policy practice and to what extent, specifically to gain insight into the institutional and individual factors associated with policy practice engagement. However, this was a small study and did not fully represent large portions of Canadian social work educators, specifically those located in primarily French speaking areas of Canada (Shewell et al., 2021). Nevertheless, this study has contributed to the Canadian

discourse on contemporary policy practice and suggest that increased exposure and experience in policy practices generates higher levels of interest, confidence, and involvement for educators.

This seems to mirror global data trends for students (Prizker & Lane, 2017).

Interest levels in policy practice have increased in the academic spheres of social work over the last 30 years, as such many studies have been added to the body of literature in this area of practice. However, most of these studies rendered data based on the perceptions of students and educators. Additionally, most of the studies conducted do not facilitate systematic evaluations that reach adequate conclusions, specifically the long-term outcomes of pedagogical innovations (Carpenter, 2011). This is due to factors, such as restricted capacities of researchers (or research teams), limited budgets, and the weakened focus on empirical research in social work (Shewell et al., 2021). These factors impact follow-up research and result in data gaps. This scope of research narrows our understanding of this topic and has a limited impact on policy makers in the current economic framework in Canada. Research and data are driving factors in policy change, and if social work is to engage in this process, this is an area where social work must improve to keep pace with global trends (Lien et al., 2017).

Areas for Assessment in Schools of Social Work in Canada

Social action, social justice and social change have been fundamental in developing the guiding principles for the field of social work. However, interest in policy practice has deteriorated across the field in North America and has been marginalized within accredited social work programs, creating a skills gap as graduates enter macro social work positions (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Hunter & Ford, 2010; Mattocks, 2018; McBeath, 2016; Prizker & Lane, 2017; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). As the field of social work evolves, there is a dire need to close the gap between micro social work and macro practice to work towards eliminating the

dichotomization of professional social work practice, ultimately strengthening social work assessment and interventions (Austin, 2019; Mattocks, 2018).

As noted in the previous section, there are various studies discussing the factors influencing the interest, confidence and competence levels of social work students and graduates regarding the pursuit and/or importance of policy practice within academic literature. However, there are key factors according to the Rothman (2013) report that are noteworthy when developing policy practice knowledge, skills, and abilities in students and ultimately future RSWs. These include the limited inclusion of policy practice courses in the curricula, a national norm of individualism, limited interest from students, the lack of agency and organization norms and transparency, specifically around policy practice or the policy process, as well as the limited or a lack of social work faculty and field placements specializing in policy practice (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2013; Rothman, 2013; Weiss et al., 2006). A school of social work (as an organization) can immediately develop interventions in three of the areas, specifically curricula and pedagogical methods, faculty and educators, and field placement opportunities. However, a by-product of interventions in these three areas have shown to improve student interest levels pertaining to policy and policy practice. For example, increased exposure to policy practice activities enhances the students' sense that policy practice is relevant to all social workers and validates that they should be key players in policy change (Bogo et al., 1993; Bogo et al., 1995; Hoefer, 2019; Segal-Engelchin et al., 2017).

Curricula and Pedagogies. An extensive empirical study on social policy course content across all schools of social work has not been completed in Canada. Additionally, pedagogical approaches are highly dependent on social policy educators and the specific curriculum culture of each school (Pawar & Nixon, 2020). However, deductions from my experience, in addition to

similar experiences noted by Shewell et al. (2021), suggests that social welfare and/or social policy courses in Canada typically focus on identifying relevant policies related to localized social work practice, or policy analysis and evaluation (2021). Moreover, the courses are often structured to identify policies that negatively impact marginalized communities within the colonial, euro-centric, patriarchal, and neo-liberal context (Harding & Jeyapal, 2019; Hick, 2013; Lightman & Lightman, 2017; Shewell et al., 2021; Weiss et al. 2006). For example, an exercise I completed during a social policy course was studying a social problem from the news, and examining the public and political discourses, antecedents, complexities, and impact on different populations. Then identifying existing social policies associated with the topic, critically examining them, and formulating potential policy solutions that promoted equity to populations experiencing disproportionately negative impacts.

The emphasis of these courses can be summarized by course outcome breakdowns in Weiss et al. (2006). Specifically, to provide a foundation of factual knowledge on the social structures and social policies implemented and developed within the Canadian context and to develop analytical skills and improve awareness of the various dimensions and links between social policy and the goals and values of social work. Additional outcomes desired are to expand the capabilities needed in undertaking a critical examination of social policies as well as the impacts, values, interests, and forces which influence policy. An emphasis is also given to curricula and content aimed at developed a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics embedded in social structures and social policies and the negative impacts experienced by service users (Weiss et al., 2006). These programs are typically delivered via didactic teaching methods and often do not focus on developing practice skills associated with directly impacting the policy change process (Halvor, 2016; Heidemann et al., 2011; Pawar & Nixon, 2020). This

has led to social work graduates being able to articulate principles of empowerment and the goals or values of social work, specifically around social action, social justice, and social change. However, many are unable to demonstrate or identify the skills necessary to implement these principles and goals in policy practice activities when in the field (Zubrzycki & McArthur, 2004).

In the years following these findings there has been several articles published globally evaluating differing pedagogies as well as different active learning strategies, specifically around how they impact student perceptions of policy practice efficacy, self-efficacy, knowledge, skills, or behaviour related to policy practice and/or ongoing political involvement (Halvor, 2016; Pawar & Nixon, 2020; Pritzker & Lane, 2014; Rocha, 2000; Segal-Engelchin et al., 2017; Weiss-Gal, 2016; Witt et al., 2020). For example, adapting more experiential learning paradigms through hands-on methods and innovative learning activities (consisting of actual involvement in policy practice activities in and outside class) have shown to increase students' future policy practice engagement (Apgar & Parada, 2018; Heidemann et al., 2011; Ritter, 2008; Weiss et al., 2006). This could look like observing parliamentary proceedings and developing a hypothetical exercise around designing a policy. This would require students to define its objectives, design strategies for achieving them, and compare their costs and benefits. Another example could be structuring courses to facilitate a local policy change process in which students engage in different stages of the process like the models outlined by Zubrzycki and McArthur (2004) and Heidemann et al., (2011).

However, the most feasible short-term adjustment for improving policy practice competencies in students is implementing a pedagogical strategy that develops clear and explicit connections between micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice (Austin, 2019; Kiesel & Abdill,

2019; Krings et al., 2019; Lombard & Viviers, 2020; Molloy & Finn, 2020; Weiss et al., 2006).

For example, incorporating case-based learning workshops that create concrete contexts and links between policy and clinical practice (Weiss et al., 2006). This can aid in broadening skills in analysis, evaluation, and intervention strategies. Additionally, these pedagogical strategies strengthen the explicit link between policy-related activities and direct practice, which can aid in diminishing the false dichotomy narrative associated with micro and macro practice specializations (Austin, 2019; Krings et al., 2020). Notably, a pedagogical method that adapts adult learning principles, outlined by Pawar and Nixon (2020), integrates student input into the formulation of the social policy course. This study analyzes the process of refining curriculum, teaching, training, and assessment in accordance with student preferences around policy issues, which ultimately aligns well with social work values.

Faculty and Educators. Faculty within schools of social work consist of educators and administration and function within a greater institutional environment. Educators in schools of social work embody diverse experiences and backgrounds, which ultimately impacts course curriculum and content, as well as pedagogical methods of delivery. Moreover, they play a critical role regarding the transference of knowledge, skills, passions, and motivation required for social work practice because of the power and influence associated with educating (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2019).

However, the reduction of macro social work practice specialist since the 1980's has resulted in the proliferation of micro or direct practitioners within academic settings, as such a disproportionate focus on micro practice has followed. Ultimately, a result of increased faculty with micro practice backgrounds has diminished tenure positions in macro areas of practice, which includes policy practice (Rothman, 2013). Moreover, some barriers noted by educators

specializing in macro level practice within contemporary schools of social work are experiencing a lack of support or cohesion from administration and colleagues (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). This has contributed to social workers specializing in policy practice to seek careers outside the field of social work, ultimately weakening scholarship in this area.

Additionally, for generalist faculty there is resistance around adjusting and adding explicit and implicit policy practice content to curriculums or learning and adapting unfamiliar pedagogical approaches (Kiesel & Abdill, 2019). This is understandable as these changes can be substantial and are imposed on top of existing workloads and the strenuous demands on faculty time, specifically as they balance personal responsibilities, conduct research projects, teach several classes, supervise students and/or staff, and serve on boards, committees, and/or working groups (Kiesel & Abdill, 2019). However, not unlike social work students, positive shifts in educator attitudes towards policy practice are feasible if they have access to policy arenas, the employing academic institution supports a climate conducive to policy practice, and the educator is motivated to mobilized social justice values through social policy initiatives (Shewell et al., 2021; Weiss-Gal & Gal, 2019).

Lastly, the resistance to hiring additional macro faculty poses as a significant barrier if policy practice is to be increasingly integrated into the agenda of schools of social work (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2019; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). Specifically, because student exposure to policy practice and the policy process is dictated by social work educators' commitment and views regarding what is important when influencing social policy. However, this requires educators to be able to understand, identify, and engage in policy practice as role models for students (Gal & Weiss-Gal, 2019). The influence faculty have on student bodies is immense and have shaped narratives that are detrimental to the field of social work and social justice mandates. In a study

conducted by Pawar and Nixon (2020) they witnessed narrative themes such as students should not pursue policy placements because they do not easily fit with the generalist curriculum, and a clinical licence is the key to a successful social work career.

Field Placements in the Policy Arena. Field placements within social work education are a signature pedagogical method and play an essential role in the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities for students (Collins et al., 2022; Dickinson, 2007; Pritzker & Lane, 2014). These placements also heavily influence the trajectory of BSW and MSW student careers as they graduate and enter the professional work force, specifically through job opportunities that follow placements, or through increased clarity around personal passions and capacities (Bogo, 2020).

The contemporary state of policy related placements may be the result of similar factors associated with the diminished state of macro practice in social work (Dickinson, 2007). Many schools of social work across North America have not actively sought out or identified viable placements in the policy arena, which has historically led to schools of social work struggling to offer policy related field placements (Dickinson, 2007; Pawar & Nixon 2020; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014; Pritzker & Lane, 2014). Moreover, in the study by Pawar and Nixon (2020) it was noted that it is not uncommon for students to be told that they will have difficulty getting policy jobs and will be paid less compared to direct practice positions. This narrative has contributed to inadequate recruitment and limited financial supports for macro students, which are trends that persist into present day (Pritzker & Lane, 2014; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). Therefore, increasing available field placement opportunities and positive promotion of these placements are actionable steps that schools of social work may take towards demystifying and strengthening policy practice in social work.

Undoubtably, this is an exceedingly complex process which includes numerous factors

for any school of social work. Some barriers to the expansion of policy related placements could be the limited interest from students, or that placements may not adequately facilitate opportunities to meet the required micro and macro level competencies (Hunter & Ford, 2010; Pritzker & Lane, 2014). Pritzker and Lane (2014) also noted in some instances that the faculty responsible for placing students had a lack of knowledge around how to identify placements that could offer policy practice experiences for students. Another barrier is the lack of social work supervision associated with placements that are on the peripheral edges of typical social work placements. Moreover, distance poses another barrier, particularly for schools of social work that are in rural areas of Canada, namely because policy related positions are often located closer to major urban centres and provincial capitals. Lastly, due to the political nature of policy development some academic institutions may be hesitant to involve programs in political activities due to the risks connected with certain political associations. Nevertheless, some strategies used for increasing policy related placement opportunities have been explored by scholars such as Manit and Hylton (2017) and Poulin et al. (2006), specifically by hosting a summit for policy practitioners, and by developing a specialized placement agency.

Increasing the number of policy related placements is only one area of intervention, improving the quality of placements is also important. This requires recognizable practice connections to social work theories with ongoing education and support around reflexive integration. This is typically conducted by faculty from a school of social work and is an area that can further normalize and strengthen the integration of policy practice into generalist social work practice. This is a crucial component for social work students, specifically to practice and improve identifying and articulating the connections between policy practice, social justice, social change, social action, and well-being mandates (Pritzker & Lane, 2018). This would help

address issues noted by Zubrzycki and McArthur (2004) regarding student incompetence in the field around policy practice. An additional element contributing to the quality of a field placement is meaningful and regular supervision. To improve the likelihood of quality supervision requires an academic institution to not only provide supports to students but to field instructors as well. Field instructors are typically working professionals that oversee and supervise students within the field placement context or environment and are not usually faculty of the academic institution associated with the student (Bogo, 2020).

Field instructors are a crucial element to field placements, as they play a significant role in promoting human rights and social justice within a practice context. Moreover, they aid in developing feasible outputs for learning contracts that align and enhance social work practice competencies, as well as evaluate the intended outcomes outlined in that contract. As such, field instructors may also need education and support if they are to partner in further promoting the importance and relevance of policy practice in social work. This responsibility falls on academic institutions specifically, to develop, mobilize and uphold accessible educational resources, and provide relevant and meaningful support, consultation, or cross sectoral collaborative opportunities for field instructors (Collins et al., 2022).

It should be noted that literature discussing field placements related to policy practice are sparse within social work scholarship, and non-existent regarding the Canadian context. Not unlike previous sections of this review, this has led to a dependence on US data for direction regarding this topic and led to a questionable meta-narrative due to the broad application of findings across North American social work scholarship. Albeit the recorded development of social work in Canada has paralleled similar trends within the US historically, the absolute aggregation of nations and the application of methods, findings and conclusions is largely

unhelpful when considering the differing socio-political and cultural contexts nationally, provincially, and regionally. More specifically the ongoing reliance on US data contributes to the silencing of Indigenous perspectives within the Canadian context (McCauley & Matheson 2018). Therefore, this section primarily aims to open a discussion around policy practice field placements within Canadian social work scholarship and highlight the numerous areas for research development regarding the Canadian context.

As noted throughout this last section, areas a school of social work can assess and evaluate, regarding the level of policy practice integration in programs, are in curricula, teaching methods, faculty expertise and field placement opportunities. Improvements made in these areas have been linked to increased student interest and engagement. Demystifying the policy process, and normalizing policy links between micro practice and macro interventions are imperative as the field of social work re-envision the future of social work practice, specifically in the evolving context of grand challenges, technological advancements, and in the wake of big data (Lein et al., 2017; Marsh, 2005; McBeath, 2016; Uehara et al., 2013). Improving and strengthening the tradition of policy practice within social work education at an undergraduate level ultimately increases interest levels of students who may pursue graduate level studies and doctorates. This affectively helps contribute to the strengthening of social works direct presence in and access to the policy making process for the future (Lein et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Social work is historically rooted in social justice and social change, making it inseparable from social policy and the Canadian welfare state (BCCSW, 2009; CASW, 2020; IFSW, 2014). This thematic literature review aimed to broaden the macro social work discourse through focusing on the area of policy practice from a Canadian student perspective. Briefly

recapturing some historical developments regarding policy practice in Canada throughout the last 200 years aided in contextualizing, defining, and describing the state of contemporary policy practice and scholarship in Canadian social work. North American and global data indicate that gaps between social work education and macro level social work practice competencies remain evident, despite social justice, social change, and well-being still being core elements to social work.

The underdevelopment of policy practice competencies in social work students as they enter the labor market is detrimental to the future of social work as a profession, social services, social policy, and the Canadian welfare state (Reisch & Jani, 2012; Reisch, 2016). Therefore, improving areas regarding policy practice and scholarship for future social work students is critical. Schools of social work play a vital role, specifically by educating and equipping students with the policy practice knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence to assume leadership roles at tables of influence (where policies are made and implemented). Areas that positively impact student self-perceptions of policy practice competence and interest levels are: Incorporating connections to policy practice and the policy process within micro and mezzo course content, paired with experiential classroom activities, integrating faculty with expertise in policy practice into department teams and programs, and increase practice placement opportunities (Rothman, 2013).

Nevertheless, there is much to be done in the arena of policy practice in Canada as well as globally. Some major gaps in knowledge exist around the theoretical underpinnings of the policy change process in social work practice. Additionally, more research is needed around social work policy practice regarding effectiveness and impact within the policy process. Moreover, research on university social policy programs, curriculums and outcomes will aid in

building strategies for balancing the micro-macro competency divide. Lastly, to attain a broader understanding of the future of policy practice the addition of quantitative studies and mix method studies will need to be developed and published for the next generation of social workers and social work educators. The future of social work is in the student bodies to come. Therefore, changes need to be made in education if the field of social work is to continue mobilizing the tradition of social justice through social policy development, reform, and implementation. We can no longer ask people to cope with an unjust world as the primary means of social work intervention, we need social workers to be able to effectively address the systemic factors contributing to social injustices.

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Appendix A

British Columbia College of Social Workers Scope of Practice

- a) The provision of assessment, diagnostic, treatment, counselling and evaluation services within a relationship between a social worker and client;
- b) The development, promotion, management, administration, delivery and evaluation of human service programs, including that done in collaboration with other professionals;
- c) The provision of advocacy services;
- d) The provision of professional supervision to a social worker, social work student or other supervisee;
- e) The provision of consultation services to other social workers or professionals in relation to the activities described in paragraph a);
- f) The development, promotion, implementation and evaluation of social policies aimed at improving social conditions and equality;
- g) The provision of services in organizing and/or mobilizing community members and/or other professionals in the promotion of social change;
- h) The conduct of research or provision of education regarding the practice of social work, as defined in paragraphs a) to i);
- i) Any other activities recognized by the British Columbia College of Social Workers (BCCSW, 2009, p. 8).

Appendix B

Policy Practice Competency Behaviors CSWE (2018)

- Using a person in environment lens to analyze how policies impact human rights, as well as social, economic, and environmental justice, on micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- Educating local, provincial, and national stakeholders about policy impacts on holistic well-being of individuals, families, organizations, communities, provinces, and nations
- Engaging, motivating, and mobilizing constituents to participate in or lead in the policy process.
- Building strategies to document and disseminate information to key policy makers about gaps in services and unmet needs using a lens of race, class, and gender, practice wisdom, anti-oppressive research evidence and data and narratives and stories of lived experience
- Using social work strategies and tactics to lead, build and facilitate comprehensive advocacy campaigns on a micro, mezzo, and/or macro level
- Analyzing socio-economic, political, and cultural issues to develop strong arguments, and then communicate persuasively about social action and social change, specifically by using effective written and oral formats and media platforms, to reach multiple audiences across differing fields
- Using social work skills in interpersonal communication, relationship building, group work, and organizing skills to form coalitions, lobby policymakers, engage and mobilize constituents, and leverage political capital to challenge structures of power and privilege and effect positive change
- Advocating for and encouraging civic and political engagement, and mobilizing voters, through educating the public about specific political positions, candidates, party

platforms, electoral processes, and procedures

- Engaging, allying, and advocating with, and for, lobbyists supporting: the enhancement of services, increased access to resources, and ensured sustainability and equity regarding community development
- Participating in, facilitating, or leading professional organizations, coalitions, industries, and other groups that advocate for and mobilize client social justice, equity, and well-being
- Promoting an organizational culture recognizing and rewarding professionalism, diversity, high-quality consumer service, and employee engagement and empowerment (CSWE, 2018, p. 89-90).