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**THE RESTRUCTURING OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF  
SOCIAL WELFARE  
AND  
IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

**1986 - 1988**

**A dissertation presented  
in partial fulfillment for the requirements of  
a Doctorate in Philosophy at  
Massey University**

**Angeline Barretta-Herman  
1990**

## ABSTRACT

This exploratory study analysed changes in the practice of social work in the Department of Social Welfare which occurred as a consequence of the Department's restructuring in 1986. This restructuring introduced major changes in management, service delivery, and the provision of culturally appropriate social services.

It was proposed that changes in the practice of social work were related to wider economic, political and social debates regarding the viability and effectiveness of New Zealand's social services. These debates were interpreted as indicating a significant shift from policies derived from a welfare state model of provision to a welfare society model of social service delivery. A multi-leveled analytical framework was used to examine issues of policy, organization and professional practice.

Three qualitative techniques were used to generate the data reported in the dissertation: documents published during the period 1969 - 1988; a structured interview schedule completed with both managers and social workers; and, finally, participant observation in two District Offices of the Department.

Findings from this exploratory study provided general support for the shift in policy from a state funded, centrally directed model of service provision, to a pluralistic model that altered the role of the state and was intended to increase the involvement of community - based voluntary services. Within this shift, it was shown that during the 1986 - 1988 period, the Department's role became increasingly concerned with funding, monitoring and evaluating services. Biculturalism and the needs of Maori were shown to be critical factors in these shifts.

The practice of social work within the Department of Social Welfare also became more limited and more specialised and its professional identity was altered by the changed organizational emphasis and the requirements of the Department. Several avenues for further research were delineated. Prospects for the future practice of social work sketched in the context of ongoing change within the Department were identified.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is a synthesis of twenty years experience as a social work practitioner. For ten of those years, I have been a social work educator while completing a Masters in Business Administration and embarking on the doctorate. My teaching of administration, management, professional and organizational issues in social work has a practitioner's perspective.

My commitment to understanding the interrelationship between social work and its organizational setting began with my first awareness of the dissonance between the social work values, skills and knowledge I gained as a masters student and the harsh realities of practice in an agency. I became acutely aware of that dissonance for social workers in New Zealand's Department of Social Work through my teaching responsibilities with extramural students who leave their work place for periodic classroom instruction at the university. They were struggling to make sense of social work in what they saw was a threatening environment in the middle 1980's and which, after 1986, became a rapidly changing, and sometimes openly hostile, environment filled with contradictions, inconsistencies, and uncertainties about the role and practice of social work within statutory agencies. Changes in the Department of Social Welfare had direct implications for the practice of social work in other statutory agencies and in the voluntary sector as well, since the Department was a key actor in the organizational infrastructure of social services funding and provision in New Zealand.

It was the extramural students who drew my attention to the developments occurring in the Department and the implications for social work practice. As work on this project progressed, I presented the material to them. It was their enthusiasm, their feedback and their confirmation of the analytical framework that sustained me throughout the years devoted to the completion of the dissertation. It is to those students, as social work practitioners, that this dissertation is dedicated.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION FOR RESPONDENTS

*The author expects that those who read this dissertation will respect the confidentiality of the respondents to insure that they are not harmed in any way by their willingness to participate in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding.*

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## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

**AD:** Assistant Director - District Office Managerial position, in this thesis referred to as Assistant Director of Social Services.

**Administrative Style of Management:** Used by Administrative Review Committee to describe a style of management characterized by "administration of instruction top-down communication, emphasis on inputs" (See Chapter Five).

**Alternative Care:** Designation given to the development of community care programmes for pre-adolescents as an alternative to institutionalization.

**Biculturalism:** *Puao-Te-Ata-Tu* interprets biculturalism within the Department of Social Welfare as "the sharing of responsibility and authority for decisions with appropriate Maori people" (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986:19:50).

**CETSS :** Council for Education and Training in the Social Services.

**COGS:** Community Organisation Grant Scheme. A joint funding scheme of the Departments of Labour and Social Welfare for community programmes.

**Community Services Funding:** The funding allocation for community groups and programmes distributed by the Department. In 1987 over 60 million dollars was distributed (Administrative Review Committee, 1987).

**DSW:** Department of Social Welfare.

**EMG:** Executive Management Group. Established in the restructuring of 1986 to include the Director-General, the two Deputy Directors-General and the four Assistant Director Generals. In 1988, the Regional Directors were redesignated Assistant Directors-Generals: Region and included in the membership.

**hui:** Meeting, usually on a Marae and conducted according to Maori protocol.

**Institutional Principal:** - The senior administrative position in the Department's residential institutions.

**iwi:** Tribe.

***iwi*** : Tribe.

***Kaumatuā***: Respected Maori elder.

***Kaupapa*** : Purpose, objective.

***Komiti*** : Committee.

***Korero*** : Talk, conversations, interviews.

***Kuia*** : Maori women elders.

***Maatua Whangai***: A programme established in 1983 by joint effort of Department of Social Welfare Services and Maori Affairs to stem tide of young Maori into care.

**NZASW**: New Zealand Association of Social Workers.

**NZCAB**: New Zealand Citizens Advice Bureau.

**NZCSS**: New Zealand Council of Social Services.

**NZFWO**: New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations.

**NZPC**: New Zealand Planning Council.

**Pakeha**: White New Zealanders of European ancestry.

***powhiri*** : Formal ceremonial welcome conducted in accordance with Maori protocol..

**PSA**: Public Service Association.

**REOs**: Regional Executive Officers. The middle management positions in the newly established regional structure. In this thesis, REOs refer to those positions designated for Social Services and Alternative Care.

**RMT**: The Regional Management Team. It was comprised of the District Directors, the Institutional Principals, the Regional Director and selected REOs.

**SSDs:** Social Service Departments. The centralized local authority structure in Britain changed with the provision of social services following the recommendations of the 1968 Seebohm Report.

**SAC:** Social Advisory Council.

**Social Welfare Commission:** The major advisory body to the Department established in 1986 comprised of four officers of the Department, two people nominated by Minister of Maori Affairs and two persons nominated by the Minister of Women's Affairs. Replaced the Social Security Commission created in Social Welfare Act 1971.

**SSSW:** Supervising Senior Social Worker.

**SSW:** Senior Social Worker, the first line field social work supervisor usually with staff of 3-5 direct line practitioners.

**SW:** Social worker, used here to designate the direct line or front-line practitioner whose responsibilities are direct practice with clients.

**SWTC:** Social Work Training Council.

**Tangata whenua :** Literally 'people of the land', refers to the indigenous population of New Zealand.

**VOTP:** Voluntary Organisation Grant Scheme - a Labour Department training programme that provided paid positions for voluntary organizations.

**Whanau :** Extended family group.

## SPELLING CONVENTIONS

Americanized spellings are used for selected words such as organization and professionalization throughout the text with the following exceptions: when the term appears in a title or direct quote that uses the British spelling and when the term appears in a quote from the respondents who used the preferred British spelling.