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***Mapping knowledge for social work practice. Critical intersections.* Liz Beddoe & Jane Maidment. Published by Cengage Learning, South Melbourne, 2009. Paperback, 150 pages.**

Fate seems to provide us with what we need and this book to review arrived on the same day as I was sitting down to put together a pre-placement week for third-year Bachelor of Social Work students. The authors have intended this book for social work students entering placement. The book is set out around the core social work subjects and works towards encouraging students towards an integrated and critical perspective. Interwoven into its chapters are some key contemporary debates around social work practice and it provides students with a clear and concise overview of these within a small and relatively easy-to-read text

This book fills a significant gap in the New Zealand market as both the authors are currently working in Australasia and have ensured that the book covers important local debates such as diversity, population trends, the effects of colonisation and recent developments within social work in both New Zealand and Australia, e.g. registration. Especially useful are sections devoted to working from a Pasifika, Aboriginal or Maori perspective and references to relevant codes of ethics to assist social work students to develop the understanding of their role and purpose as social workers.

Topics covered in the book include a review of core social skills, theory and knowledge, self-reflection, analysing and working within an organisation and incorporating a structural and critical perspective into your practice. Professional practice is encouraged through the chapter on working towards being a practitioner researcher, the focus on working with stake holders and analysing the effects of social policy in your practice. Students are also reminded of the importance of professional ethics through a chapter on ethical decision-making, relationships and boundaries within social work. The text follows adult learning principles through the provision of clear objectives, pre-chapter quizzes and suggested exercises many of which could be completed by students in their placement journals whilst on placement.

This book would be highly recommended for: degree or postgraduate students as a resource for engaging students into topical critical debates, for practice teachers (or practising social workers) who want to update themselves on the current content of social work education and as an excellent text for courses with a placement focus.

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Two decades of change in New Zealand: From birth to death V, by Judith A. Davey. Published in 2003 by Institute of Policy Studies, Wellington. Paperback, 207 pages.

This book is the fifth in a series written by Judith Davey. The first two were commissioned by the New Zealand Planning Council to track social change in New Zealand. In the following three books, including this one, the author follows the same format of analysing key indicators of social change and demographics gleaned from census data. This latest book focuses on statistical trends and provides an overview of social and economic changes in New Zealand over the past 20 years.

The book uses a lifecycle framework, and explores seven age-groups, described as 'birth and the early years', 'childhood and dependent teenagers' (5-14 years), 'transition to adulthood' (15-19 years), 'young adulthood' (20-39 years), 'middle years' (40-49 years), the 'young, old' (60-74 years) and the 'old, old' (over 75 years). The clear distinction made between the 'young, old' and the 'old, old' is a positive recognition of societal and attitudinal changes towards the aging population in New Zealand.

Each chapter begins with a brief list of highlights relevant to the one of the age-groupings being discussed. Included in these highlights is information about household composition, educational and employment trends, and main causes of accidents and deaths. The subsequent discussion and presentation of data identifies and tracks significant social changes that have impacted on each age-group over the past two decades. Although there is a standard format within each chapter, the topics and data explored are different for each age-group. For example, the chapter pertaining to Birth and Early years discusses early childhood education and immunisation, Childhood Years looks more deeply at child abuse, and Young Adult Years addresses parenthood, contraception and alcohol and drug use.

Following these chapters is a chapter titled Death, which discusses trends in mortality and life expectancy over the past two decades. The emphasis is to explore and analyse mortality data by age-groupings. The summary of this chapter looks analytically at preventable causes of death such as death by accident, suicide and life-related cancer. Of particular interest in this chapter is the exploration of the relationship of socio-economic factors to age and ethnicity.

The final chapter examines policy implications arising from social changes over the past two decades. This is done by looking at the key indicators from the previous volumes: Family and Household Circumstances, Occupation and Work, and Health and Well-being.

This book is a valuable resource and social commentary for all social work students, for social policy, community development and any other research relevant to social services. Although at first glance the book appears to be full of graphs and tables, the material and data are presented in a readable and readily accessible way. Another very useful resource is a comprehensive list of websites where more in-depth statistical data and information can be located, as well as further reading suggestions relevant to each age-group. I would have no hesitation in recommending this book as a text for social policy teaching and for social workers to use for research.

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Dialogical community development: With depth, solidarity and hospitality. By Peter Westoby and Gerard Dowling. Brisbane, Tafina Press, paperback, 217 pages.

In an age dominated by a preoccupation with technocratic solutions to 'fix' social problems, Brisbane authors Peter Westoby and Gerard Dowling invite the reader into a journey of depth in engagement in the communities in which we live and work, authentic relationships and solidarity with impoverished and marginalised peoples, and inspired creative action towards change in society, both locally and globally. Westoby is currently a lecturer in community development in the School of Social Work and Human Services at the University of Queensland, and Dowling a community development worker with the Brisbane City Council and various other projects. They share over 20 years' working in the culturally and socio-economically diverse inner Brisbane suburb of West End, and Westoby also has experience in South Africa, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. The book draws extensively on their rich experiences in these contexts.

The introduction orients the reader to the authors' overall philosophy of community development. The book is placed in the context of what the authors refer to as 'a legitimisation crisis in community development' (p.6). In a modern paradigm there is an expectation that social problems can somehow be fixed. Community development can be seen as a technique to facilitate the community to 'take responsibility' to achieve this. The authors argue that this is impossible. More than that, in this context community development loses its 'depth and soul ... its capacity for genuine engagement with the poor and marginalised' (p.7).

In contrast the authors argue that techniques of community development must be under-girded and informed by the traditions of community development. They identify the heart of community development as dialogue, defined as 'a deep, challenging and enriching conversation, a mutual process of building shared understanding, meaning, communication and creative action' (p.10). Community development especially involves engaging with who and what we may define as 'the other', other people, other perspectives, other analyses from our own. This dialogical approach involves processes of embracing depth, re-imagining community as hospitality, and enfolding community development within a commitment to solidarity. Depth involves recognising the complexity of our world, being patient, willing to listen and learn. It refuses 'quick fix' approaches. Hospitality 'orients towards relationship and a welcoming of the 'other' (p.12). The authors quote Derrida's definition 'community is hospitality' (p.12), arguing that such hospitality in community is not only the ends but the means, inherent in the nature of the development process. A commitment to solidarity implies that while development workers should be willing to extend hospitality to anyone, there is a primary commitment to identification with the poor and marginalised in the community.

Community development is seen as grounded in 'a soulful orientation, quoting singer Ray Charles' definition of soul as 'the ability to respond from our deepest place' (p.14), a place of depth and relatedness. The authors assert the importance of identifying community work as a 'social practice', observing that solutions to human problems are primarily social rather than technical. Finally they introduce the importance of being open to 'deconstructive movements', remaining open to complexity, and most importantly rejecting simplistic analysis that is often reduced to dualisms, including 'us-them', 'centre-periphery', 'rich-poor', and 'left-right'.

The five chapters deepen and explore these themes. In chapter one the authors draw on Paulo Friere and Eric Fromm, to reclaim the concept of love as foundational to engagement in community. Love is understood as 'overcoming ego-centricity, and moving towards a position where the needs of the other become as important as our own' (p.25). This theme is further developed drawing on Martin Buber's concept of the 'I-thou' relationship. Without this people in communities are likely to be treated as objects, for projects to be done to rather than with. 'Community work without love will become technical, routinised, shallow and exploitative' (p.25). This relatedness is not limited to people. The authors continue to discuss the significance of the physical and geographical basis of community. Mere space is transformed into place, when people develop a sense of relatedness in and belonging to a location, and base as they begin to develop a sense of responsibility for it.

A creative approach to problems is encouraged. A healthy community is conceptualised not as a community without problems, but a community that is willing to honestly face its problems and live with them creatively. Problems are seen as gifts that call us back to renewed dialogue. The Jungian concept of the Shadow is also drawn upon, the authors asserting the importance of both personal and corporate facing of destructive attitudes such as racism, within ourselves and our communities.

Chapter two describes skills involved in community development processes. It is acknowledged that practitioners will bring their own analysis of community issues to the situation. However, the authors challenge workers to hold their own analysis lightly, in favour of facilitating a process of analysis developed through dialogue especially with the poorest and most marginalised people, and with those perceived as 'the other' or even 'the enemy' in the situation. Despite the overall assertion of a dialogical approach to work in communities, the authors acknowledge that there are times when conflict is inevitable, even desirable to provoke transformation. Discerning when conflict is ultimately inevitable is discussed, and the importance in conflict situations of truly listening to others' stories, and deconstructing binary ideological positions is asserted.

Chapter three explores current social trends that undermine community life and a dialogical approach to community development practice, including objectification of people and communities, entrenched ideological positions, including a discourse of secularism which devalues the sacred and spiritual, and addictive consumerism. They critique the prevalence of therapeutic culture, whereby people seek to alleviate personal distress privately through technical therapeutic solutions, rather than through social relatedness in communities.

Chapter four reflects on caring, in the sense of giving ongoing attention to various aspects of community life. The first ordinary, everyday activities and events of life in a community are noted, recalling Mother Theresa's challenge to 'do ordinary things with extraordinary love' (p.151) is highlighted. Social-cultural, economic and political aspects of community life are discussed. Finally the authors observe that all of our community life happens on a planet that is in ecological crisis, and reflect on the need for collective action both locally and globally to restore health to the planet.

Chapter five explores community development training. The call for the development of 'possibilitators' as change agents in communities, and to promote a form of training that develops imagination, creativity, a sense of vision, and inspiration more than information.

Finally the conclusion challenges readers as to whether we are identifying with a profession, a role and the interests of organisations we work for, or with a vocation that calls us to identify with the poor and marginalised. This is reminiscent of Catholic author Henri Nouwen's challenge to professionals to 'go back to the original meaning of the word profession, and realise that it refers, first of all, to professing one's own deepest conviction' (1995, p.66).

Although not directly addressing the Aotearoa New Zealand context, the authors express deep empathic awareness of the issues facing disenfranchised indigenous peoples, and increasing cultural diversity. The authors capture the reader's attention with some very creative use of language. Words such as 'gentling' (p.67) and phrases such as 'the alchemy of poetic participation' (p. 34) often require a double read to apprehend, however this is richly rewarded. This book resonates with and complements Ife and Tesoriero's classic volume *Community development: Community-based alternatives in an age of globalisation*. While Ife and Tesoriero present a more comprehensive account of the theory and practice of community development, Westoby and Dowling recapture its heart and soul.

Readers looking for a manual of quantitatively evidence-based models on how to do community development will probably find themselves disappointed with this book. However, those looking for inspiration towards being in community, engaging relationally and in depth with people who may be different from ourselves, and creating change together with them, will be richly rewarded.

References

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- Nouwen, H. (1995). *Our greatest gift*. San Francisco: Harper.

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Social work and disadvantage: Addressing the roots of stigma through association. Peter Burke & Jonathan Parker (editors), London and Philadelphia, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007, 176 pages, paperback.

Addressing disadvantage has been a cornerstone of social work practice and theory throughout its history. As the editors observe in their introduction, this anthology takes its inspiration from some groundbreaking research into 'disability through association' experienced by siblings of children living with disabilities. The book seeks to expand this lens through exploring other instances of disadvantage and stigma by association. It introduces the concept of disadvantage as an associative condition that affects more people than the individual and posits the importance of this for social work theory and practice, particularly, although not exclusively, in the health field. This collection of essays includes both research reports and more theoretical reflections on disadvantage, stigma and the implications for ethical social work practice. Many of the essays draw on Erving Goffman's defining work on stigma. Some also draw on a Foucauldian analysis of social power and control highlighting the human impact of these social forces acting in their lives.

Each of the contributing articles presents readable and satisfying studies or reflections on their stated topics. This ranges from siblings of children with disabilities, older gay people, looked-after children, families of people with problematic substance use and people with dementia and chronic illness. Some of the most interesting insights came from Liz Walker's essay on HIV / AIDS where she included descriptions of how workers also experience disadvantage by association. Here the workers, families, children and individuals living with HIV / AIDS in African countries all acknowledged the stigma of contagion and disease. This raises some intriguing questions about any social worker's experience of working with marginalised, vulnerable and stigmatised populations and how much we as workers either suffer from a parallel disadvantage or perpetuate disadvantage by association.

The success of an anthology often depends on the skill of the editors. In this case, the editors have used the introductory and final reflective chapters to draw together the disparate and sometimes disjointed individual chapters to very good effect. It is evident that some of the chapters, while excellent studies in themselves, are only tangentially related to the stated focus of stigma by association. As this is a relatively new area of research focus, it is hardly surprising that in many cases, the main focus remains on the disadvantage experienced by the person/s living with the stigmatising factor. The only sad thing is that this continues to marginalise the experience of stigma by association and in some places the reader was left to extrapolate the impact of association on family members, caregivers, and friends because the main discussion remained about the stigma of the 'identified client'. As much as I experienced this as a setback to the overall aim of the anthology, there are also sufficient portable insights in the individual articles for the intelligent reader to be able to transfer to consideration of how the disadvantage affecting the 'identified client' might impact on those around them.

Overall this book stands as an important addition to knowledge and reflection on ethical social work practice. The collection provides a good balance between research evidence and theoretical reflection. It shows up spaces that will hopefully inspire future research and reflective work to articulate disadvantage by association in greater detail. It also raises the question about creating space for inclusion of the concepts of disadvantage and stigma by association in social work assessment and practice.

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Practice skills in social work & welfare: More than just common sense (2nd ed.). Edited by Jane Maidment and Ronnie Egan. Published in 2009 by Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, N.S.W. Australia. Paperback, 348 pages.

This is one of several exciting new additions to hit the Aotearoa New Zealand social work textbook scene this year. It is the second edition of the first text which was produced by the same editors in 2004, and continues the trend of trans-Tasman collaboration. There are 19 chapters in the book, written by prominent academics and social work practitioners from both Aotearoa and Australia. The book is divided into six parts, each addressing different phases of social work intervention. Changes from the first edition vary from minor addition of newer references in some chapters, to new chapters which address current social work practice such as the chapter on delivering helping services online and over the phone, by

Maidment. There is also the welcome addition of a DVD (produced by Deacon University) that depicts practice examples in the various stages of intervention.

This is a great introductory textbook in relation to the skills of social work practice. The skills are framed around a strong and coherent practice framework which is introduced in the first chapter. In this edition, the editors have added the dimension of organisational context to their previous framework of theories, skills and phases of helping sitting within anti-oppressive practice. I did wonder though about the choice of the toaster to depict their practice framework!

The substantive change in the second edition is its emphasis on collaboration and strengths-based practice. This thread runs through all of the chapters. This is addressed in terms of the importance of strengths-based work within indigenous populations, and continued in terms of working within statutory settings and when conducting risk assessments. At times the strengths-based message can feel a bit repetitive, but it is a message which bears repeating.

This book is very teacher and student-friendly. It is well laid out, easy to read and has a good range of practice exercises throughout. One of its strengths lies in its attention to detail in the range of skills described. These range from how to work well with interpreters to the importance of wiping the phone with disinfectant between phone counselling sessions.

The editors and authors have done a good job in bridging the trans-Tasman gap and have managed to provide a solid text for social work skills and practice in both countries, while acknowledging the very unique practice contexts which are present in each.

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