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INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN THE AMERICAN HUMAN SERVICE SECTOR:

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

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ABSTRACT

A large body of literature documents the increasing adoption of fee-for-service models, competitive marketing strategies, corporate governance structures, and business rhetoric in the human service sector as well as in the nonprofit and public sectors more broadly. Authors have argued that neoliberal policies of government austerity, performance-based contracting, and consumer-side subsidization have instilled businesslike operations and competitive relations in the human service sector since the 1980s, leading to an incursion of market practices and a threat of mission drift. However, though neoliberal policy shocks have certainly driven organizational change in social welfare systems, I argue that the overwhelming focus on developments in the late twentieth century has obscured historical evidence pointing to longstanding and deep-rooted market influences in the sector. This lack of historical perspective perpetuates a myopic view of market forces as externally imposed and relatively recent.

Focusing on U.S. social work history and based on extensive archival and secondary analysis, this dissertation offers a farther-reaching perspective on the interplay of self-interest and altruism in this critical institutional pillar of American society. Specifically, the dissertation examines three important cases of field-level organizational change in American social work: 1) the rise and justification of fee-charging policies; 2) the development of agency-based client outcome evaluation practices; and 3) the formation and attenuation of hierarchical fundraising and service planning networks. The dissertation comprises three self-contained articles that draw on a variety of sociological principles and perspectives, yet each article contributes to an overarching argument about the nature of managerialism and market relations in professional service domains.

Proposing a conception of marketization as organizational disembedding, I highlight a persistent tension between collective professional priorities and individual organizational commitments. From this perspective, marketization can be understood partly as the process by which interest becomes centered in individual organizational actors rather than in diffuse professional communities. As modern society vests formal organizations with a growing sense of independent actorhood, it is important to understand the process and implications of disembedding, not only for the sociological study of organizations but also for the increasingly collaborative and relational forms of cross-sector governance that have taken root in the United States and other societies with large human service sectors.

INTRODUCTION

In a time of escalating economic inequality and social vulnerability, nonprofit human service organizations are struggling to meet mounting needs while simultaneously contending with welfare budget cuts, erratic support from donors, and stringent accountability standards from government and philanthropic benefactors. Facing a dual imperative to help the disadvantaged and to weather competitive funding environments, the human service sector is increasingly torn between its charitable roots and today's business-oriented performance criteria.

This conflict features prominently in research on "hybridity" in organizational behavior, a phenomenon whereby organizations host various administrative structures, goal orientations, and cognitive schemas normally associated with distinct sectors (Battilana and Lee 2014; Besharov and Smith 2014; Pache and Santos 2013; Smith 2014). Arguably the clearest (and certainly the most cited) examples of hybridity are organizations that combine social welfare objectives and "businesslike" operations, as evident in the tension between "mission and margin" in the human services today (Chetkovich and Frumkin 2003).[1] A large body of literature documents the increasing adoption of fee-for-service models, competitive marketing strategies, corporate governance structures, and business rhetoric in the human service sector as well as in the nonprofit and public sectors more broadly (see Maier, Meyer, and Steinberethner 2016).

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[1] Areas of activity commonly characterized as human services include individual and family counseling, job training, childcare, and residential care. Broader definitions include recreation, youth development, emergency and legal services, and certain civic organizations. Modern data sets on nonprofits rely on the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) to categorize organizations by service area, with major group P applying to human services. However, this dissertation employs no such organization-level data set and, moreover, generally deals with a time period preceding the NTEE's development. My analysis is based on documents and records from institutions historically associated with the human services, such as the Community Chest, the National Social Welfare Assembly, the National Conference on Social Welfare, and the National Association of Social Workers.

Academic literature frequently references neoliberalism as the impetus for marketization in the human services (for a review see Gray et al. 2015). Authors have argued that neoliberal policies of government austerity, performance-based contracting, and consumer-side subsidization (e.g., voucher schemes that allow clients to shop among service providers) have helped to instill competitive and commercial dynamics in the sector since the 1980s, leading to an "infiltration of the language and the practice of the market into nonprofit operations" (Young, Salamon, and Grinsfelder 2012, 538). However, though neoliberal policy shocks have certainly driven dramatic organizational change in social welfare systems in recent decades, I argue that the overwhelming focus on developments in the late twentieth century has obscured historical evidence pointing to longstanding and deep-rooted market influences in the sector.[2] This lack of historical perspective perpetuates a myopic view of market forces as externally imposed and relatively recent.

Focusing on U.S. social work history and based on extensive archival and secondary analysis, this dissertation offers a farther-reaching perspective on the interplay of self-interest and altruism in this critical institutional pillar of American society. Specifically, the dissertation examines three important cases of field-level organizational change in the U.S. human service sector: 1) the rise and justification of fee-charging policies, 2) the development of agency-based client outcome evaluation, and 3) the formation and attenuation of hierarchical fundraising and service planning networks. The dissertation comprises three self-contained articles that draw on a variety of sociological principles and perspectives (including moralized markets, resource

[2] Much debate surrounds the definition of neoliberalism as a political, economic, and cultural movement. Rather than attempt an exact theoretical specification of neoliberalism's content, this dissertation emphasizes its temporality as a cluster of public policies (welfare budget cuts, deregulation, privatization, etc.) ascendant in the 1980s.

dependence theory, community power, and more), yet each article contributes to an overarching argument about the nature of managerialism and market relations in professional service domains. Proposing a conception of marketization as organizational *disembedding*, I highlight a persistent tension between collective professional priorities and individual organizational commitments.[3] From this perspective, marketization can be understood partly as the process by which interest becomes centered in individual organizational actors rather than in diffuse professional communities. As modern society vests formal organizations with a growing sense of independent "actorhood" (e.g., Bromley and Sharkey 2017), it is important to understand the process and implications of disembedding, not only for the sociological study of organizations but also for implementing the increasingly collaborative and relational forms of cross-sector governance that have taken root in societies with large nonprofit sectors (Marwell and Brown, forthcoming).

The remainder of this introduction proceeds as follows. In the following section I review different analytical perspectives in sociology on the interplay of professions and organizations as loci of interest, beginning with individual-focused models and then moving to institutionalist perspectives. Drawing insights from both of these sociological traditions, I contextualize the process of marketization within a tension between distinct normative systems for organizational administration, one premised on a professional frame of reference and one premised on an organization-centric frame of reference. Reviewing the dissertation's three empirical chapters, I show that developments in the human services commonly attributed to neoliberal restructuring

[3] "Embededdness" is a prevalent motif in economic sociology. It describes the degree to which economic activity is constrained by non-economic institutions. However, sociologists have hesitated to explore processes of disembedding, such as the disintegration of cooperative networks into competitive organizational relations (Podolny and Page 1998, 71; Schrank and Whitford 2011, 152).

actually have a deeper history, and that the interplay of profession and organization is an effective thematic framework for a sociological analysis of that history.

The Interplay of Profession and Organization

The sociological study of organizations as a specialized field of scholarship took off in the middle of the twentieth century with a series of case studies of diverse organizations, ranging from a federal government agency (Selznick 1949) to a gypsum plant (Gouldner 1954). Whereas previous analyses were of distinct types of organizations as separate areas of inquiry, these case studies were unified by a common theoretical interest in explaining general intraorganizational dynamics and the unanticipated outcomes of bureaucratic administration in hospitals, prisons, welfare agencies, and the remaining panoply of different organizational forms. Accordingly, these studies inaugurated the generic organization as an object of social scientific analysis (Scott and Davis 2007, 9).

One area of special interest during this formative stage in organizational sociology's development was the relationship between bureaucratization and professionalization. This was an especially interesting topic during this period, as the classic image of the professional as an independent practitioner had given way to a more organizational rendering of professional life. Blau and Scott (1962) remark on this shift in their treatise on formal organizations:

> During recent years a large number of the members of the "old" professions, such as physicians and lawyers, have become salaried employees of formal organizations; the "new" professional groups—social workers, librarians, nurses, accountants—are almost exclusively employed by organizations rather than engaged in private practice." (64)

Individual-Focused Models of Professional–Organizational Dynamics

Mid-twentieth century sociology commonly assumed that bureaucratic authority and professional authority represent distinct and antithetical normative systems (Ritzer 1975, 632). Organizational scholars conceived of bureaucracy as a hierarchical allocation of power by office, in which bureaucrats complete discrete tasks coordinated top-down by superiors. In contrast, professionals were viewed as autonomous specialists carrying out larger projects based on expert knowledge and privileged discretion rather than administrative regulations and hierarchical directives. Though earlier ideas of bureaucracy had conflated authority of office and authority of expertise, midcentury organizational sociology drew a critical distinction between the two (Etzioni 1964; Kornhauser 1962; March and Simon 1958; Sorensen 1967; Wilensky 1964).[4]

In addition to their supposedly divergent sources of authority, bureaucrats and professionals were understood to hold different reference groups. Borrowing terminology from Robert Merton's study of community elites, Gouldner (1957) elaborated a typology of reference group orientation comprising a "local" identification with co-workers in one's employing organization and a "cosmopolitan" identification with members of one's professional community. Early studies offered some support to this model of divided loyalties, suggesting that workers who are committed to their professional communities exhibit lower levels of loyalty to their employing organizations (Blau and Scott 1962, 62).

Later studies, however, pointed to a more complex relationship between professional and organizational commitments. Authors found that organizations could win dedication from

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[4] As Parsons explains in a lengthy and much-discussed footnote to his translation of *Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*, Weber's notion of bureaucracy presents a decision-making apparatus guided by both technical competence and hierarchical position, thus conflating authority of office and authority of expertise (see Weber 1947, 58–60).

professional staff by granting latitude in decision-making, providing opportunities for career advancement, and maintaining fair and transparent criteria for distributing rewards (for a review see Wallace 1993). As DiMaggio and Powell (1983) recognize in their agenda-setting article on institutional isomorphism, the growing importance of formal organizations in modern society reconfigured the institutional context of professionalism:

> The increased professionalization of workers whose futures are inextricably bound up with the fortunes of the organizations that employ them has rendered obsolescent (if not obsolete) the dichotomy between organizational commitment and professional allegiance that characterized traditional professionals in earlier organizations. (152)

There is now reasonably conclusive evidence that professionals often harbor dual commitments to their employing organizations and their occupational communities (Kim and Mueller 2011).

Other research has looked beyond competing commitments within individuals and has instead examined group-based differences between "substantive professionals" and "managerial professionals" (Suarez 2010, 710).[5] The former work in specific professionalized service areas such as medicine, social work, or teaching, while the latter focus on techniques of "abstract managerialism" untethered from specific service domains (Hallett and Gougherty 2018, 153). These techniques include "strategic planning, management by objectives, [and] segmentation of operations along individual lines of business" (Salamon 2012, 54). Unlike earlier literature on organizational commitment versus professional commitment, research on the relationship between substantive and managerial professionals assumes that the former can be quite committed to their employing organizations, even as they often maintain ideals for how their organizations should operate that are distinct from those espoused by their managerial

[5] Authors sometimes use the terms "traditional" and "managerial" occupations" (e.g., Heusinkveld et al. 2018).

counterparts (Slavin 1988, 86). For example, in his study of intraorganizational dynamics among Protestant denominations, Chaves (1993) identifies a persistent conflict between theological concerns and bureaucratic priorities as "'organization men' replace priests and prophets among the religious elite" (5). In a fascinating study of the 1996 Atlanta Symphony Orchestra musicians' strike, Glynn (2000) reveals conflicting claims on the orchestra's organizational identity, with musicians emphasizing artistic excellence and administrators emphasizing economic efficiency. Alexander (1996) uncovers similar tensions between museum managers and curators, and a number of authors have reported recurring disagreement between university administration and faculty (see Bess and Dee 2014).

Like the literature on organizational commitment, research on substantive and managerial professionalism tends to portray substantive professionals as absorbed in expert service provision and detached from administrative matters, while managerial professionals are thought to be absorbed in maintaining productive efficiency, systematic performance evaluation, and other trappings of rationalized administration. However, while academic literature does furnish numerous case studies of tension between administrators and service providers, more systematic studies present a more complicated picture (Golden, Dukerich, and Fabian 2000). A growing body of research shows that professionals often combine substantive and managerial responsibilities in their work roles, thus undermining notions of a simple dichotomy (Carvalho 2014; Kirkpatrick 2016; McGivern et al. 2015; Noordegraaf 2015; Olakivi and Niska 2017). In social work particularly, much has been written on the common career path from direct clinical practice to organizational administration. With professional education and frontline experience, human service administrators are commonly steeped in substantive training and knowledge (Austin et al. 2013; Knee and Folsom 2012).

In summary, individual-focused models of professional–organizational dynamics began with a framework of competing commitments, whereby professionals who are attached to their host organizations are supposed to exhibit lower levels of occupational identification. Subsequent research dispelled the idea that organizational and professional commitments are zero-sum, instead exploring how different types of professionals—substantive and managerial—express organizational commitment in different and sometimes conflicting ways. Like earlier literature, research on substantive and managerial professionalism essentializes professionals, underestimating the ways in which they toggle between service provision and organizational maintenance. Still, as I argue below, individual-focused models of professional–organizational dynamics identify distinct and important influences in organizational life, which are often better explored at the institutional level.

Institutionalist Perspectives on Professional–Organizational Dynamics

Institutionalist research adds critical perspective to the study of professional–organizational dynamics. Following a longstanding tradition of focusing on contextual factors driving organizational behavior, institutionalist scholars examine not only the dispositions and agendas of individuals, but also (and, to some extent, more so) the influences of public policy, technological developments, and cultural prescriptions (Scott 2014). While institutionalist scholarship acknowledges distinct attitudes between substantive and managerial professionals (e.g., Andersson and Liff 2018), institutionalists have generally pursued organization- and field-level studies privileging organizational policies and structures as objects of analysis, thereby studying how administrators and service providers *alike* negotiate changing regulatory and resource environments (Blomgren and Waks 2015, 81). Put more simply, institutional analysis locates key variance in environmental characteristics rather than in individual actors.

A key theoretical tool in institutionalist research on professionalism in organizations is the "institutional logic." This concept was formally articulated in a seminal essay by Friedland and Alford (1991), who argued that modern society can be construed as a mosaic of social orders each with its own notions of legitimacy and rationality. These logics are understood as "systems of cultural elements (values, beliefs, and normative expectations) by which people, groups, and organizations make sense of and evaluate their everyday activities, and organize those activities in time and space" (Haveman and Gualtieri 2017, 2). For instance, within the sphere of the market, actors operate on a "market logic" premised on self-interest and instrumentalism, while the institution of the family channels a logic premised on affective bonds and self-sacrifice (Miller, Le Breton-Miller, and Lester 2010). The question animating research on institutional logics is how the combination of these modes of rationality shapes behavior in different settings by providing schemas with which to interpret strategy, decision-making, and action.

Among the logics outlined in this rapidly growing literature, professionalism has attracted outsized attention from sociologists and management scholars. Though there is no established and consistent definition of the professional logic, research invoking this idea commonly associates it with an emphasis on quality of craft, competent service to society, and expert autonomy (Skelcher and Smith 2015, 438). Typically, the professional logic is analyzed in contrast to an encroaching managerial logic illustrated by businesslike practices such as strategic planning and detailed performance monitoring (Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006, 1002). For example, Scott et al. (2000) examine how regulatory changes in the U.S. healthcare field disempowered independent physicians, leading to a managerial logic exemplified by large managed care organizations with corporate governance and businesslike management styles.[6] More recent descriptions of the fraught transition from professional to managerial logics explore fields ranging from public accounting (Bobek et al. 2017) to French cinema (Jourdan 2018). Most importantly for this dissertation, much of the research on the growing influence of managerialism in modern life relates to human service contexts, where classic motives of charity and public service increasingly clash with the ethos and practices of business (e.g., Binder 2007; Hasenfeld and Garrow 2012; Spitzmueller 2016).

Research on the interplay of professional and managerial logics bears a certain resemblance to much of the literature on tensions between substantive and managerial professionals. In both cases we find dueling ideologies of organizational stewardship stressing either the virtues of a professional service ethic or the benefits of a rationalized administrative style. The difference is that individual-focused models associate these ideologies with different types of individual actors while institutionalist literature locates them in broader political and cultural developments. Although this disembodiment of professional–organizational dynamics allows institutionalists to avoid some of the essentializing tendencies of individual-focused models, institutionalist literature clearly suffers from its own form of reductionism as well.

Given the broad and multifaceted nature of institutional emergence and change, scholars have struggled to operationalize logics (particularly in quantitative field-level studies), often positing that a particular practice, circumstance, or organizational feature reflects an underlying institutional logic with little empirical elaboration or theoretical justification (Andersson and Liff 2018, 76; Durand and Thornton 2018, 650; Reay and Jones 2016, 442). The main problem with

[6] The professional logic goes by many terms—editorial logic, medical logic, therapeutic logic, etc.—that can be understood as variants of the professional logic (e.g., Andersson and Liff 2018, 78; Spitzmueller 2016, 50; Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012, 149).

this approach is that it substitutes material structures and practices for what are essentially cultural phenomena, as elaborated by Haveman and Gualtieri (2017):

> If we are to take the terms we use seriously, we have to admit that logics are cognitive constructs—socially constructed schemas, shared understandings, (preconscious, subconscious, or conscious) rationalizations. Logics are not material constructs: they are not organizational structures, practices, or policies, nor are they rituals or roles. All of those material phenomena are *consequences* of human action guided by logics: they are *manifestations* of logics, not logics themselves. (26)

To be sure, we can often observe logics empirically through concrete structures and practices, but analysis of institutional logics still requires serious engagement with the meanings underlying material phenomena, and many recent studies fall short of this standard.

For example, Hwang and Powell (2009) measure the professional orientation of nonprofit organizations by whether the executive director or board chair of a given organization holds a substantive or managerial professional degree, thus projecting the classic substantive/managerial identity distinction onto entire organizations and neglecting the multiple-constituency makeup of many nonprofits. In similarly reductionist form, Barman and MacIndoe (2012) operationalize a nonprofit's exposure to "the logic of the market" as any recorded collaboration with for-profit organizations, thus disregarding the numerous other ways in which a nonprofit may be exposed to the market logic, the variance by which for-profit businesses may adhere to an ideal typical market logic, and the various collaborative arrangements a nonprofit might pursue with for-profit businesses without necessarily becoming influenced by the market logic (e.g., a joint venture might entail considerable exposure while a standard funding or sponsorship agreement might not). Pache and Santos (2013) take an even more reductionist tack in their study of work integration social enterprises, measuring the influence of the "social welfare logic" and the "commercial logic" in the vocational services field as the proportion of organizations structured as nonprofits and for-profits, respectively. While tax status is not empty of sociological meaning, it is a very blunt standalone measure for institutional analysis.[7]

These studies have produced important findings, but they present a dramatically oversimplified depiction of institutional influences on organizational behavior. In particular, they downplay the co-existence of multiple institutional orders and the ways in which specific practices and policies may channel different logics depending on political and cultural context. While there are rich case studies that explore institutional logics within individual organizations in considerable depth, field-level studies such as the ones cited above often strip away this complexity by focusing on straightforward but decontextualized surface-level features (Greenwood et al. 2011, 322; Jackson et al. 2019, 34; Johansen and Waldorff 2017, 52; Zilber 2017, 140). The result is both an empirical underspecification of logics and a systematic underestimation of hybridity at the level of industries and sectors, as well as a tendency to imply false dichotomies between institutional logics (e.g., that the efficiency represented by a managerial logic cannot also be a trapping of a professional logic centered on service quality).

Dissertation Structure and Arguments

I have argued so far that the interplay of professional and organizational priorities has been a prominent theme in organizational sociology since the subdiscipline's formation. Early individual-focused models proposed a distinction and tension between organizational and professional commitments, while subsequent theories of individual dispositions explored group

[7] Sector-blurring is a prominent theme in literature on hybridity in the nonprofit sector (see, e.g., Bromley and Meyer 2017). A growing number of authors have voiced skepticism about the explanatory value of tax status in understanding organizational behavior (e.g., Knutsen 2016; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014; Witesman 2016).

differences between substantive and managerial professionals. Institutionalist research carried these concepts to the environmental level of analysis, probing how institutional logics spur or constrain organizational behavior in accordance either with professional standards of conduct and autonomy or with managerial criteria of business performance and productive efficiency.

This dissertation adopts an institutional perspective on professional–organizational dynamics in the human services, but it also proposes a revival and reapplication of Gouldner's individual-focused typology of organizational and professional commitment. More specifically, I argue that organizational behaviors commonly understood as recent market and managerial influences in the human services actually reflect ongoing struggles to balance professional and organizational priorities in human service activity. The professional framing of these activities has emphasized solidarity, service, and collective status, while the organizational framing of these activities has emphasized the independence and advancement of individual agencies (cf. Brickson 2007). Thus, rather than portray sector-wide market and managerial influences in terms of credentials, revenue profiles, tax statuses, and other surface-level organizational features, the dissertation draws on archival research to explore the underlying normative frameworks by which these features are vested with meaning (see Ventresca and Mohr 2002).

Chapter 1: The Moralization of Commercialization

The dissertation's first chapter addresses the most cited indicator of market and managerial influence in the human services: reliance on fee payments to generate revenue. As discussed in the chapter's opening, numerous authors have used fee-reliance as a proxy for commercialization in the human service sector (particularly the nonprofit human service sector), often describing commercialization as evidence of neoliberalism's reconfiguration of charity as business. Most recently, Hwang and Suárez (2019) measure a nonprofit's level of earned income as evidence of "the penetration of the market logic into the nonprofit sector" (95). Similarly, Spitzmueller (2016) refers to a "managerial logic" as the catalyst for fee-for-service reforms in community mental health services. These arguments seem intuitive, as fees for service seem to defy the redistributionist function of charity's traditional donative framework, thereby potentially changing public goals of social welfare into private goals of economic gain. Thus, the "commercial turn" in nonprofit finances is said to transform the sector from an arena of fellowship and altruism to a market built on crude utilitarianism and self-interest.

My historical research overturns the conventional narrative of commercialization in the U.S. nonprofit human service sector. The first chapter shows that fee-charging grew markedly beginning in the 1940s and reflected social work's evolution from class-bound traditions of elite benevolence toward an aspiration for more egalitarian service provision. Engaged in a strenuous professionalization effort, social workers sought to distance themselves from the paternalism and amateurism traditionally associated with their line of work. Accordingly, they advertised their services as common amenities available to the community at large rather than as handouts for the poorest levels of society. Fee-charging was central to this rebranding, as the practice turned clients from passive beneficiaries of upper-class philanthropy into active consumers of services. In short, historical evidence shows that fee-charging was infused with a professional service ethic based on communal inclusiveness in service provision during the mid-twentieth century.[8]

To be clear, my argument is not that the subsequent rise in fee-charging during the neoliberal period is entirely mischaracterized. Authors have supplied compelling evidence that

[8] I elaborate on this point in the chapter by drawing on the moralized markets school of economic sociology, which explores how market activity channels and informs society's values.

increased reliance on fee-charging beginning in the 1980s resulted from neoliberal policy shocks and, as such, reflected growing market influences in the sector.[9] My argument is that the empirical interpretation of organizational cash flows necessarily depends on wider cultural context. Although there is methodological convenience in treating fee income as a proxy for a market logic based on business priorities and self-interest, the practice of fee-charging is too complex to reduce to an ahistorical narrative of market colonization. From this perspective, the notable development in the 1980s is not simply that fee-reliance increased (as it did in the 1940s as well) but also that the practice took on new meaning, shifting from a professional toward an *organizational* framing of priorities. While the economic benefits of revenue diversification were not lost on social workers in the 1940s and 1950s, financial stability for individual organizations is only one of several advantages discussed in literature from the period; collective professional advancement and communal fellowship are equally, if not more, salient in discussions of fee-charging. In contrast, the business-inspired discourse of the neoliberal period places more emphasis on fee-reliance as a way to ensure competitive organizational advantage.

Chapter 2: Constructing Accountability

The dissertation's second chapter relates to the subject of provider-driven outcome evaluation (POE).[10] Authors have presented POE in the human service sector as a strategic response to performance-based funding models that became prevalent in the 1990s (Barman

[9] As I acknowledge in the chapter, human service agencies charged fees in part to replace lost government funding, protect against future spending cuts, and conform to expectations that nonprofits operate more like businesses.

[10] As explained in the chapter, POE refers to client outcome evaluation protocols that the service provider itself carries out (as opposed to an external evaluator).

2016; LeRoux and Wright 2010, 572; Thomson 2010). The idea that funders should know what they are purchasing with their grants and contracts was an element of a more general call to make the human service sector more businesslike by allocating funds to agencies able to demonstrate a superior product. As with commercialization, POE appears in the literature as a recent development in the human services, transplanted from the private sector and enforced by neoliberal governance.

My historical research reveals an important but neglected earlier chapter in the delegation of outcome evaluation to frontline service providers. Although it is true that there was an upsurge in POE activity in the late twentieth century, this change followed decades of efforts within the social work profession to incorporate outcome evaluation in casework service provision and monitoring. Social work leaders viewed POE as a means to validate professional methods and to bolster the profession’s legitimacy. Channeling a professional logic, social work leaders framed the object of evaluation as replicable social work method rather than individual organizational performance. Indeed, early evidence of POE appears in academic journals and trade periodicals intended for a professional readership, not in annual reports designed to impress funders and to procure resources for individual agencies.

It is true that human service agencies faced new urgency in the late twentieth century to document their outcomes in order to meet performance-based grant and contract requirements, but I claim that these new accountability standards speak to a more fundamental shift in the ideational underpinnings of service effectiveness during this time. Whereas in prior decades service outcomes were generally attributed to replicable competencies and procedures, the neoliberal period saw a new depiction of individual organizations as causal drivers of outcomes. With the valorization of decentralization, entrepreneurship, and competition, funders and policymakers viewed direct service organizations as agentic producers of social betterment, thus directly accountable for client outcomes. This cultural change is evident not only in the rise of performance-based contracting but also in the emergence of management education in the human services, a focus area traditionally neglected in social work training. The clearest illustration of this trend is the rise of nonprofit management, a discipline centered on organizational management, with less attention paid to the principles of social work or other substantive professions grouped under the “nonprofit” category.

As with the historical findings on commercialization, my analysis of outcome evaluation suggests that noting merely the quantitative upsurge in POE in the late twentieth century is insufficient to understand marketization in the human service sector. Equally important is the qualitative change in POE’s meaning as it shifted from a professional project of legitimacy-building toward a managerial practice of competitive organizational positioning.

Chapter 3: Cooperation, Coordination, and Control

The final chapter explores interorganizational relations in the human services. Authors have posited that cutbacks in government funding, transitions to consumer-side spending, and widespread expectations of businesslike operations have forced nonprofits to adopt an increasingly competitive posture in accordance with neoliberal principles. As Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) put it in their much-cited article on nonprofit marketization, contract competition and other neoliberal developments “lead nonprofits to compromise their missions and replace a benevolent spirit with a mindset of competition” (136). Critics voice concern that growing competitiveness undermines the traditionally cooperative ethos of the nonprofit sector.

At the same time, scholars assume that increased government funding of nonprofits since the 1960s has restricted nonprofit autonomy. Because government is associated with hierarchical bureaucracy, authors have suggested that public funding may undermine the principles of voluntarism and autonomy that nonprofits embody, leading these organizations to become mere "vendors" of public programs (Salamon and Toepler 2015). In this case, government funding is viewed as a conduit for the institutional logic of centralized power associated with the state (in the same way that fee income is viewed as an institutional vector of the market logic).

The chapter opens by drawing on sociological insights about coordination and power in organizational networks to question the dual assumption that the nonprofit sector's past was characterized by grassroots autonomy (stemming from a spirit of voluntarism unsullied by government involvement) and by extensive cooperation (resulting from a spirit of selflessness unspoiled by market influences). In contrast to this romanticized historical imagery, classic network theory suggests an inherent and intractable tension between independence and cooperation, a tension borne out by the historical evidence presented in this chapter.

Investigating the Community Chest movement (predecessor of the United Way and a major actor in the human services especially prior to the 1960s), I reveal how charitable financial federations maintained cooperation among their member organizations. The chapter presents evidence showing that cooperation among charities was precarious and hard-won. Despite strong endorsement of cooperation from the business community and from social work leaders in the administration and community organization fields, the literature features regular complaints about so-called "agency-mindedness"—i.e. the tendency among agency staff to privilege their organizations' interests and purviews above a collective plan for community service provision.

Faced with a conflict between organizational independence and the goal of cooperative service planning, federations used monetary incentives to curtail their member agencies' operational discretion, essentially buying conformity to a centralized service plan and compelling member agencies to share surplus revenue with other affiliated organizations. Though portrayed as selfless cooperation, this arrangement necessitated financial inducement and hierarchical control. I further explain that the marked increase in government funding for social welfare beginning in the 1960s destabilized these centralized networks by empowering member organizations to lobby for relaxed membership standards. Thus, in contrast to the dominant narrative about the controlling influence of government funding, this new resource stream actually promoted nonprofit autonomy and engendered more atomized relations among agencies.

Like the previous chapters, this section of the dissertation challenges oversimplified narratives and demonstrates that an understanding of institutional logics requires serious historical perspective. Unlike the other chapters, however, the final analysis does not point to a historical shift from professional to organizational priorities with the advent of neoliberalism, a point already demonstrated in the prior two chapters. Instead, this chapter shows that there has long been a pronounced tension between social work's ethos of professional solidarity and the organizational reality of competitive self-interest. While organizational priorities have come into sharper relief in recent decades, past literature attests to the fact that there has long been a complex interplay of profession and organization in social work.

Marketization as Organizational Disembedding

A notable feature of much of the institutional logics literature is the common conflation of market and managerial logics. Scott et al. (2000) and Dunn and Jones (2010), for example, center much of their analysis of institutional change in U.S. healthcare on the advent of a "managerial–market logic" combining businesslike administration and profitability objectives. Similarly, Lander, Heugens, and Oosterhout (2017) describe a "commercial/managerial logic" in their study of Dutch law firms, thereby positing that there is a natural concordance between "ensuring efficiency in operations and realizing superior profitability" (129).[11] This tendency to conflate managerial and market logics speaks to an apparent but unarticulated connectedness between the growing influence of market forces in external resource environments and the permeation of business practices in internal organizational structures.

The historical findings presented in my dissertation help to make sense of the affinity between market and managerial logics. Specifically, I argue that an important aspect of marketization is the disembedding of organizations from higher-order communal affiliations, as exemplified by the relative decline of social work's professional logic in U.S. human service provision. This understanding of market activity accords with Powell's (1990) influential characterization of the ideal typical market as an arena of "individually self-interested, noncooperative, unconstrained social interaction" (302). Insofar as the managerial logic reflects increasing prioritization of internal organizational processes in service to insular organizational interests, we may understand it as a typical concomitant of the market logic. While surface-level behaviors such as fee-charging and outcome evaluation may be interpretable as features of a managerial–market logic, I demonstrate in this dissertation that such an interpretation is contingent on a more fundamental understanding of the interests to which these behaviors are

[11] Other authors have followed suit, implying a strong affinity or even interchangeability between market and managerial logics (see, e.g., Besharov and Smith 2014, 372; Blomgren and Waks 2015, 78; Wallenburg et al. 2016, 89).

oriented. Conceptualizing marketization as organizational disembedding invites a new perspective on market-oriented institutional change as a process of negotiation over organizational identity—what organizations are, whom they serve, and how they ought to operate (cf. Kraatz, Phillips, and Tracey 2016).

In these examples from social work history, marketization occurred when the locus of interest shifted from a professional commitment toward an organizational commitment. At the same time, the evidence shows that there has long been tension in social work between the professional logic and the organizational commitment inherent in so-called "agency-mindedness." This tension helps to frame marketization not merely as the exogenous influence of neoliberal politics but also as the result of internal contradictions in preceding institutional arrangements (Clemens and Cook 1999, 449).

CHAPTER 1

THE MORALIZATION OF COMMERCIALIZATION: UNCOVERING THE HISTORY OF FEE-CHARGING IN THE U.S. NONPROFIT HUMAN SERVICE SECTOR[1]

Charities have long been viewed as symbols of fellowship and generosity distinct from the self-interested business firms of the private sector. Accordingly, the rise of for-profit strategies among nonprofit organizations (NPOs) has caused alarm over a utilitarian transformation of civil society, leading scholars to study the extent and nature of business-oriented change in the nonprofit sector. A number of methods have been used to examine how NPOs are emulating their private sector counterparts, but an especially popular approach has been to gauge the proportion of commercial income—particularly fees from service and sales—in nonprofit revenues (Guo 2006; Kerlin and Pollak 2011; Moulton and Eckerd 2012).

There are intuitive reasons for identifying fee-charging with pecuniary rather than charitable goals. Fees seem to entail bilateral transactions between NPOs and clients, an arrangement that deviates from the traditional donative model, in which individuals receive services underwritten by third parties. While the donative model involves a redistributionist function, fee-charging evokes the insular priorities of for-profit businesses (Fitzgerald and Shepherd 2018). As a result, fee income as a proportion of total revenue is often treated as an indication of the extent of market rationalities in the nonprofit sector. Again, market-oriented change can be studied in a variety of ways, but the focus of this chapter is commercialization, which is generally understood as "increasing reliance on revenue from sales of goods and services" (Maier, Meyer, and Steinbereithner 2016, 71).

[1] This chapter has been published in the journal *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (see Brown 2018b).

The question of whether the nonprofit sector has increased its reliance on fees invites a variety of policy considerations, ranging from whether fee-reliant NPOs should lose their tax-exemption (Bennett and DiLorenzo 1989) to whether the nonprofit sector is fulfilling its mandate to improve the wellbeing of poor and vulnerable populations, who are often unable to pay for services (Backman and Smith 2000). As indicated above, increased fee-reliance in the sector also suggests a commodification or "marketization" of benevolence (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004).

Given these implications, the topic of commercialization has generated much debate. This chapter moves the debate forward by looking backward. I contend that much of the symbolic importance of fee-charging in the United States hinges on beliefs about the dispositions of American NPOs in the past. In particular, the notion that increased rates of fee-charging have changed the character of the nonprofit sector implies novelty in significant fee-reliance. Until now, this assumption has been passable because of a supposed lack of records on nonprofit finances prior to the late 1970s. This chapter fills that gap with data on the revenues of voluntary human service agencies from the 1930s to the 1960s. In addition, I examine social work literature relating to fee-charging during this period. Taken together, these quantitative and qualitative data pose a challenge to the historical narrative of commercialization in the nonprofit sector and to the reductionist conception of earned income as a sign of profit-seeking. Rather than treat fees as a proxy for business-minded action, this chapter makes a case for economic sociology's constructivist theorization of markets.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by demonstrating that the subject of commercialization is most directly relevant to changes in the human service subsector beginning in the 1980s. I then highlight historical and sociological assumptions inherent in the prevailing commercialization narrative. Specifically, authors have assumed that the increase in fee-reliance in the 1980s was an unprecedented effect of neoliberal policy changes. Current literature also suggests a fundamental conflict between commercialism and the civic values that NPOs are supposed to encapsulate. Citing historical financial data, I show that human service NPOs actually boosted their fee-reliance substantially beginning in the 1940s. Moreover, professional literature suggests that fee-charging was framed by a sense of universalism in community welfare provision contrasted with a class-bound imagery of charity. This progressive portrayal of fee-charging waned in the 1960s with the growing emphasis on selective services targeted to the poor, but I assert that the egalitarian rendering of fee-charging still offers important lessons for the study of NPOs and of the organization of human services.

Current Views on Nonprofit Commercialization

Child (2010) finds that the best support for commercialization comes from the 2002 *Nonprofit Almanac*, which shows that NPOs classified as providing “social and legal services” grew their reliance on commercial income between 1977 and 1997, with most of the increase occurring before 1982 (see Table 1.1). Although the numbers in the *Nonprofit Almanac* suggest a straightforward operationalization of commercialism, they belie a complex set of theoretical and empirical considerations resulting in significant variation among estimates.

First of all, investment returns, government contracts, and member dues may all be placed somewhere on the spectrum ranging from pure unrestricted donations to direct payments for services rendered, and authors have chosen variously to include or exclude these revenue categories in their calculations (e.g., Guo 2006, 130 vs. Kerlin and Pollak 2011, 690). Compounding this issue is the inconsistency with which NPOs report their income. For example, government contracts are likely to function essentially as grants with specific conditions (much like restricted donations) but are frequently itemized as program revenue along with out-of-pocket fee payments in tax returns, which often constitute the data sets used to examine nonprofit finances (Lecy and Van Slyke 2012, 201).

Table 1.1. Revenue from Private Sector Payments in the Nonprofit Sector[2]

	% Aggregate Revenue				
	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997
Health services	49.1	49.1	51.8	48.3	46.9
Education and research	52.9	53.0	55.3	57.0	56.1
Social and legal services	9.7	15.2	18.9	17.5	18.9
Civic organizations	11.9	13.8	12.8	20.4	20.7
Arts and culture	29.4	29.2	30.0	24.4	27.9

Source: Weitzman et al. 2002, 98-99

Additionally, authors have used different estimation methodologies, leading to large discrepancies in reported figures (Grønbjerg 2001, 282). Thus, estimates by Salamon (1999, 117) and Weitzman et al. (2002, 98-99) of fee reliance in 1977 among social service agencies are comparable (13% vs. 9.7%), but the corresponding estimates for 1996–1997 are quite different (43% vs. 18.9%). Lastly, authors have defined nonprofit subsectors differently by relying either on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) or the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE). For example, while the 2002 *Almanac* uses the NAICS, the 2008 *Almanac* adopts the NTEE, a change that shifts past estimates of private sector payments upward (Wing, Pollak, and Blackwood 2008, 134–37).

[2] Private sector payments comprise dues, fees, and charges for service. The category consisting of civic, social, and fraternal organizations shows commercialization in the late 1980s, but this trend may be misleading because "private sector payments" include member dues, which represent a quasi-donative income stream (Kerlin and Pollak 2011, 690). The growing importance of member dues does not necessarily reflect a drift toward the private sector; in fact, it may indicate a positive trend in associational affiliation.

These complications notwithstanding, retrospective analyses of fee-charging in the nonprofit sector converge on two findings evident in the 2002 *Almanac*: (1) increased reliance on fees (regardless of how this income stream is measured) is largely a feature of the human service subsector; (2) much of this increase occurred during the 1980s (Grønbjerg and Salamon 2012).

Clarifying Commercialization

Although narrowing commercialization to a time and subsector would seem to diminish the issue's importance, this circumscription actually draws attention to the heart of the matter. There are two reasons. First, the human service field comprises institutions that have traditionally financed their operations largely with contributions. Areas of activity commonly characterized as human services include individual and family counseling, job training, child care, and residential care. Broader definitions include recreation, youth development, emergency and legal services, and certain civic organizations. Although definitions vary (for an overview see Grønbjerg 2001), the human service sector is known for encompassing organizations that are "almost synonymous with charities" (287). Although this area of activity is small compared with other tax-exempt fields, the human services carry considerable symbolic weight as classically charitable organizations and, as such, are recognized as "the mainstay of the nonprofit sector" (Hwang and Powell 2009, 281). NPOs such as universities and hospitals make up a larger portion of the nonprofit sector and also show signs of market-oriented change, but these institutions have long depended on commercial transactions for most of their income. Therefore, to the extent that commercialization is conceptualized as a drift from donative to commercial revenue with consequences for civic culture and welfare, human service agencies are particularly relevant.

Second, the fact that much of the proportional increase in commercial income occurred in the 1980s underscores the importance of neoliberalism as an overarching theme in discussions of businesslike behavior in the nonprofit sector, especially with respect to the human service domain (Eikenberry 2009; Gray et al. 2015; Hasenfeld and Garrow 2012). These discussions center on the following policy changes in the 1980s, which are widely associated with the neoliberal sacralization of competition and government austerity: (1) the transition from cost-reimbursement grants to performance-based contracts; (2) the welfare budget cuts stemming from the 1981 Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act; and (3) the use of consumer-side financing of human services. Numerous authors have argued that, among the many consequences of these policy shocks, the resulting resource scarcity and uncertainty forced NPOs to seek earned income to replace lost government grants, establish a buffer against future shortfalls, compete with for-profits, and meet expectations of revenue diversification (Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, and Dowell 2006; Robichau and Wang 2018; Salamon 1995; Smith 2012).

To summarize, identifying the rise of fee-charging with the human service sector and with the 1980s clarifies the issue's moral and political dimensions. Commercialization is not merely a fiscal trend; it is described as a historical encounter between traditional notions of charity and recent market-centered philosophies of social welfare. As such, the issue of commercialization is especially relevant to changes in the human service field in the 1980s.

Historical and Sociological Aspects of Nonprofit Commercialization

The narrative of growing fee-reliance implies novelty in commercial income at current levels. To be sure, authors have acknowledged that fee-charging has a long history in American charity, but this history has been invoked with vague claims and selective illustrations. For instance, Young, Salamon, and Grinsfelder (2012) point out that “religious orders … have long marketed wine, and orphanages have taken in laundry to help cover their costs” (522). Kerlin and Pollak (2011) note that early American charities “held bazaars and sold homemade goods to supplement voluntary donations” (686). Although these quaint examples show that earned income is not new to charity, they also highlight the lack of data on the historical extent of fee-charging. This lack of data enables the assumption that the scale of commercialization in the 1980s represents a marked departure from the past—a “commercial transformation of the sector” raising a “host of *new* issues concerning the fundamental character of nonprofit charitable service provision” (Frumkin 2002, 152; Lynn 2002, 69, emphasis added).

The idea that commercialization is relatively new in the sector finds expression in a prevalent language of market encroachment, with businesslike behavior described as a “penetration,” “colonization,” “infiltration,” or “invasion” of the market into the nonprofit sector (Eikenberry 2009, 583; Salamon 1995, 220; Scott 2014, 252; Young, Salamon, and Grinsfelder 2012, 538). As this language suggests, the commercialization narrative is not simply a claim about budget statements over time; it also offers a stark view on the interplay of monetary transactions, organizational behavior, and social relations. According to this view, there is an inherent tension between altruistic values and “the economic and competition-centered values” of commercialism (Sanders and McClellan 2014, 70). As Froelich (1999) summarizes, “the fear is that nonprofits will become so like business firms that the social missions will take a backseat to revenue and profitability goals” (258). The most iconic example of this reductionist framing is Weisbrod’s “collectiveness index,” which operationalizes the public orientation of NPOs as a function of reliance on grants and contributions as opposed to sales (Weisbrod 1988, 75). Of course, authors have recognized that NPOs may engage in commercial activities that generate surplus revenue while also advancing social mission (e.g., Young 1998), but this nuance has not carried over to discussions of sector-wide commercial trends.

The portrayal of commercial activity as an invasive and corrupting force accords with a critique of market society with a long history in the social sciences. According to Zelizer (1988), this pessimistic depiction speaks to the idea of a "boundless market" undercutting "traditional forms of social responsibility and cooperation" (621). Likewise, Fourcade and Healy (2007) describe a "commodified nightmare" in which a dominant market ethos "reduces our justifications for action to the narrowest kind of self-interest" (291). An alternative conception of market activity—one that informs the analytical approach in this chapter—interprets economic action as a social process shaped and colored by a variety of factors, ranging from interpersonal networks to national cultures. Especially since the rise of the "new economic sociology," a growing and influential contingent of sociologists has adopted this perspective on the market, arguing that economic activity is embedded in social relations and institutions (Smelser and Swedberg 2005).

A more recent manifestation of economic sociology shows not only how culture constrains neoclassical models of economic behavior but also how economic activity is always an inherently cultural project (Krippner and Alvarez 2007). A leading example is the "moralized markets" school, which argues that "the notion of an all-powerful market impinging on our lives is a fiction, a fallacious dichotomy between a market out there and the social values we cherish" (Reich 2014, 1577). This paradigm challenges us to move beyond the idea of the market as an imperialist entity and to seek an understanding of how economic valuation and exchange may channel morals rather than debase them. Drawing from the moralized markets school, this chapter scrutinizes the assumptions that commercialization is a novel phenomenon among human service NPOs and that commercialization necessarily conflicts with prosocial values.

Overview of Research

The primary data source for quantitative trends in fee-reliance is a series of surveys that grew out of the Registration of Social Statistics, a groundbreaking national initiative started in the 1920s to collect service and financial information from community welfare planning bodies across the United States (Zimbalist 1977). Launched jointly by the University of Chicago and the Association of Community Chests and Councils (forerunner of the United Way), the project was transferred in 1930 to the Children's Bureau, which continued to cooperate with the national Community Chest headquarters until transferring the project back in 1946. The Community Chest umbrella organization continued publishing survey results until 1965. Although all of these reports furnish valuable data on community health and human service finances, the ones for the years 1938, 1940, 1948, 1955, 1960, and 1965 are particularly useful for the purposes of this chapter, as they distinguish between private and public agencies. These surveys include organizations not affiliated with local Community Chest branches and generally cover a substantial geographic range, though the 1965 report is based on only 13 urban areas and should, therefore, be interpreted with extra caution (the five other reports average nearly 28 urban areas).

It is impossible to know exactly how accurate these documents are, but some insight on their reliability can be gained by comparing the estimate for fee-reliance among nonprofit, short-term, general and specialist hospitals to the same estimate from the American Hospital Association (AHA), which undertook annual surveys of hospitals starting in 1946. The AHA estimated that these hospitals earned 87.5% of their income from patients in 1948 (AHA 1956), while the corresponding estimate from the 1948 Community Chest report is a close 90.3%.[3] This comparison supports Ormsby's (1965) conclusion that the Community Chest estimates "may be accepted as showing overall trends" (332). Indeed, the data from these reports were reviewed in academic journals (e.g., Reed 1940) and cited in government agency bulletins (e.g., Karter 1958). It is therefore surprising that these documents have not been used in more recent studies of historical nonprofit financial trends.[4]

The reports vary slightly in their service categorization, but each of them classifies healthcare organizations and central planning/financing organizations separately from other subgroups (Table 1.2 presents the 1960 taxonomy). To maintain comparability with later data, I excluded these two categories from my calculations, leaving organizations that conform to current understandings of non-healthcare direct human services. I recorded revenue figures from the appendix of each report, measuring fee-reliance as aggregate fee income divided by aggregate total income. This is the same method used for the numbers shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.2. Service Taxonomy from 1960 Expenditures Report

I. Economic Assistance and Social Adjustment
   A. Public Assistance Services (exclusively public sector programs)
      1. General Assistance
      2. Aid to Dependent Children
      3. Old Age Assistance
      4. Aid to the Blind
      5. Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled

[3] This is the only year for which the sources present a comparable categorization of hospitals.

[4] The only exception I found is a secondary citation by Wellford and Gallagher (1988), who briefly reference a discussion of the 1960 survey in the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (Ormsby 1965). Jacobs (1981), Smith and Lipsky (1993), and Morris (2009) cite surveys, but these references pertain to government funding.

Table 1.2. (continued)

- B. Institutional Care of Adults
  1. Shelters for Transients and Homeless
  2. Institutions for Domiciliary Care of Adults
- C. Family Service and Child Care
  1. Family Service, Protective and Foster Home Care
  2. Domestic Relations Service
  3. Institutions for Dependent Children
  4. Day Nurseries
  5. Day Care for Mentally Retarded Children
  6. Special Services for Children with Behavior Problems
  7. Institutions for Delinquent Children
- D. Maternity Home Care
- E. Specialized Services for the Handicapped
- F. Other

II. Health Services

- A. Hospitals and clinics
  1. General and Allied Special
  2. Chronic
  3. Tuberculosis
  4. Rehabilitation Programs
- B. Mental Hospitals and Clinics, and Residential Treatment Centers
  1. Mental Hospitals
  2. Outpatient Psychiatric Clinics
  3. Residential Treatment Centers
- C. Public Health Nursing Services
- D. School Health Services
  1. School Medical and Dental Services
  2. School Nursing Services
- E. Institutions for Mental Defectives or Epileptics
- F. Community Health Services
- G. Other Health Services

III. Recreation Services

- A. YMCA and YWCA
- B. Boys' Clubs and Girls' Clubs
- C. Settlements and Community Centers
- D. Scouting and Camp Fire
- E. Public Recreation Services

F. Resident Camps
G. Other Recreation Services

Table 1.2. (continued)

IV. Federated Financing, Planning, and Central Services
1. Community Chests and United Funds
2. Community Welfare Councils
3. Other Council-Type Central Services
4. Other Central Services

Source: United Community Funds and Councils of America 1963

In addition to determining quantitative trends in fee-reliance, I aimed to understand how human service professionals conceptualized and implemented fee-charging as a component of organizational finance and of client interaction. Historical data exhibiting professional sentiment and practice are embedded in the vast body of academic papers, conference presentations, trade journal articles, and administrative reports comprising the literature of the time. I began my qualitative research by triangulating among authoritative sources that integrate various viewpoints rather than convey the position of a single author or agency. Three sources were treated as both authoritative and summative.

The first source is the periodical *Social Work Year Book*. Published every two to four years between 1929 and 1960, these volumes were comprehensive reviews of social work practice issues. Although the focus on social work may appear arbitrary, the term "social work" had broader institutional connotations in the first half of the twentieth century, often signifying a general focus on health and welfare services (examples of this use of "social work" include the National Conference of Social Work and the Social Work Publicity Council). Later editions of the *Year Book* are titled the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* and were released less frequently.

Published initially by the Russell Sage Foundation and later by the National Association of Social Workers, these volumes were regarded as reflective of mainstream practice and philosophy. As such, they have been used as historical data for assessments of various trends in the human services (e.g., Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie 1999). I reviewed all entries on the financing of private human services from 1929 to 1977, each of which includes commentary on developments in fee-charging. In addition, it is noteworthy that the 1965 and 1971 editions feature separate entries on fee-charging, indicating that the subject had become meaningful enough to be treated as a discrete concern.

The second source is a study titled *Fees for Health and Welfare Services*. Published in 1949 by the national Community Chest headquarters, this report was intended "to provide overall perspective on the function of fee payments in the financing of health and welfare services" (Community Chests and Councils 1949, 1). In addition to documenting variation in pricing and other aspects of fee-charging policy, the study aimed to answer "questions of general thinking and philosophy about fee payments" (1). The report was organized jointly with the Child Welfare League of America, the Family Service Association of America, and the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds. The data are based on questionnaire responses received from "several hundred local health and welfare agencies" (1).

The third source is the final report of a 1957 workshop organized by the National Social Welfare Assembly (NSWA) on fee-charging. The event drew one hundred participants from the human services who, according to the report, "represented a cross-section, geographically and in fields of interest" (NSWA 1957). Participants represented both agencies that had implemented fee policies and agencies that were only considering doing so. Attendees were divided into discussion groups organized around particular questions concerning the basic philosophy and practice of fee-charging. The report presents a final composite summary of the discussions along with a "Resume of Published Data" providing a summary of knowledge on fee-charging based on an extensive literature review.

After identifying consistent themes in these sources, I reviewed the standalone sources listed in the 43-item bibliography in the report of the NSWA workshop. In addition, the journal *Social Casework* includes an index of articles published between 1920 and 1979, which cites numerous articles on attitudes and policies related to fee-charging. I also carried out online searches on JSTOR and HathiTrust for articles published in academic journals such as *Social Service Review* and trade publications such as *The Survey*. Citations in the *Social Work Year Book* also offered a useful guide to relevant literature.

Quantitative Trends

The U.S. nonprofit human service sector was at a low point of fee-reliance in the late 1930s (see Table 1.3), with payments from clients making up about 16% of total revenue. It is worth mentioning that fee-reliance was probably higher in the 1920s and likely dropped with diminished purchasing power during the Great Depression (Todd 1937, 159). Financial reports on non-healthcare private agencies in Boston in 1922 (BCC 1924), New York City in 1929 (Huntley 1935), and Chicago in 1922 (CCSA 1924) show fee-reliance levels of 38%, 34%, and 32%, respectively. However, there are insufficient data on private agency finances from before the Depression to make a reliable estimate.

Table 1.3. Composition of Nonprofit Human Services Revenue[5]

	% Aggregate Revenue						
	1938	1940	1948	1955	1960	1965	1977
Fees	16.2	15.6	21.2	23.4	25.5	28.4	9.7
Government	6.8	6.8	5.1	5.0	5.3	9.9	54.4
Contributions	57.1	56.3	52.6	47.3	45.7	38.6	32.0
Other	19.9	21.2	21.1	24.3	23.5	23.1	3.9
Without recreation and group work agencies:							
Fees	8.0	9.2	14.6	17.6	21.3	23.2	
Government	9.8	9.7	6.8	7.6	8.0	13.8	
Contributions	58.9	55.9	52.9	44.7	42.9	34.3	
Other	23.3	25.2	25.6	30.1	27.8	28.5	

Source: For 1938 and 1940: Children's Bureau (1939; 1941). For 1948: Community Chests and Councils (1948). For 1955: Merriam (1960, 275). For 1960 and 1965: United Community Funds and Councils of America (1963; 1968). For 1977: Weitzman et al. (2002, 98–99).

The data presented in Table 1.3 also show that human service NPOs increased their fee-reliance throughout the 1940s and 1950s. This increase is more pronounced if we remove recreation and group work agencies (e.g., Girl Scouts and YMCAs), which maintained a relatively consistent aggregate fee-reliance of approximately 35% throughout the period studied. Without these agencies, the proportion of income from fees nearly triples from 8% in 1938 to 23.2% in 1965. Although some of this growth undoubtedly stemmed from compositional

[5] It is difficult to compare the 1977 estimates to the preceding figures because it is unclear how the classifications of the sector and of nonprofit revenue change from 1965 (the last of the United Way expenditure reports) to 1977 (the first year for which data are available in the *Nonprofit Almanac* series). The lead alternative to the estimate for 1977 shown above comes from Salamon (1999, 116–117), who estimates that social service nonprofits in 1977 drew 13% of their revenue from commercial activity and 67% of their revenue from government. Compared to the estimates from the 1960s, these numbers conform to the account of substantial growth in government reliance and significant decline in fee-reliance beginning in the late 1960s.

changes in the sector (i.e. expansion of subsectors more disposed to implementing fee policies), studies from the period show that much of the trend derived from organizations adopting new financing strategies. For example, a study by the Child Welfare League of America in 1947 found that only a quarter of affiliated adoption agencies charged fees (Schapiro 1956). In 1960, over two thirds of surveyed member agencies reported fee-charging (Fradkin 1961). Similarly, fee-charging for casework services was practically nonexistent among member agencies of the Family Service Association of America in 1941 (FSAA 1951, 139). By 1965, 98% of surveyed agencies reported fee-charging (FSAA 1967).

Table 1.3 also reveals the dramatic influx of government funding into the nonprofit human service sector after 1965. A concomitant trend is the proportional decline of nongovernment sources of revenue, including commercial income. In addition to simply changing the denominator in the proportional calculation of commercial income, the influx of government funding in the mid-1960s brought down the relative share of fee income by incentivizing human service agencies to target services to the poor. Among other initiatives in President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty, the Community Action Program (CAP) directed grant funding to local human service agencies with the explicit intent of increasing service utilization among low-income clientele. Government-commissioned program evaluations confirm that CAP funding exerted “a moderate influence on change in the proportion of social services delivered to the poor and a strong influence on change in the levels of interaction between social service agencies and the poor” (Orden, 1973, 364–65). Thus, the proportional decline of commercial revenue resulted not only from growth in government funding but also from the conditions and goals attached to this funding (this development is discussed at greater length later in this chapter).[6]

Authors recognize that government grants played an increasingly important role in nonprofit human service financing beginning in the mid-1960s, but a lack of data has prevented an understanding of the extent to which government funding changed fee-reliance. The quantitative data discussed in this section show that the revenue profile of human service NPOs in the late 1970s does not reflect the degree of fee-reliance among these organizations in prior decades. It appears that the relatively low reliance on fee income before neoliberal restructuring is the result of state intervention beginning in the 1960s. In other words, rather than describe the proportional growth in fee income during the neoliberal period as a "transformation" of the nonprofit human service sector, we should view this increase as the *resumption* of a trend going back decades and interrupted only briefly by the War on Poverty.

The Moral Dimensions of Fee-Charging

As explained previously, fee-charging in the nonprofit sector is often interpreted as a sign of concern with financial gain rather than public welfare. From this perspective, the increase in fee-charging discussed above might be interpreted as suggesting that human service NPOs began succumbing to market forces well before the advent of neoliberal policies. However, a more nuanced analytical approach is to explore how social values "can be realized in and through economic activity" (Barman 2016, 16). Adopting this sociological frame, it is important to consider how human service professionals conceptualized changes in organizational financing.

[6] Fee revenue in the 1960s and 1970s was more likely to be drawn from higher income clientele than it is today. Because of the growth in consumer-side subsidies since the 1980s, fee income today is often drawn from individuals receiving tax-funded vouchers and income support.

Ormsby's (1965) entry on fee-charging in the 1965 edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* identifies four main reasons for the practice:

> 1) Many potential clients can afford to pay and would use services more readily if a fee plan were in effect. 2) The charging of fees has therapeutic value for clients. This reason is advanced primarily by casework agencies. 3) When fees are charged, agency services will become better known and will be extended to a wider cross section of the population of the community… 4) Fee income is essential to finance agency programs. (333)

The same four reasons are listed in the final report of the NSWA workshop on fees, confirming that motives for fee-charging revolved around attracting a broader clientele and generating extra revenue (the claim of therapeutic value is addressed later).

Here it is helpful to note that numerous historians of the American social welfare system have shown that courting middle class clientele was central to social work's evolution following the Great Depression (Morris 2009; Stuart 1999; Walkowitz 1999). With the expansion of the American welfare state in the 1930s, public agencies solidified their role as primary dispensers of relief aid, leading voluntary agencies to shift to issues beyond material needs. Recognizing that problems such as depression, domestic conflict, and disability cross class lines, human service professionals sought out higher income clientele by presenting family guidance, child care, vocational counseling, mental health treatment, and other agency services as commodities fit for purchase by middle class consumers. This professional rebranding required downplaying the association between social work and charity, which carried the stigma of poverty and deviance. Fees facilitated this rebranding by marking social work as a service "worthy of its hire" (Goodman 1960, 46). For this and other reasons, the social work establishment was generally in favor of fee-charging. Although professionals disagreed on the appropriate extent and particular criteria for selling services, data from the period suggest widespread support for the general principle of charging clients capable of paying. For example, a survey of 190 members of the Philadelphia chapter of the American Association of Social Workers found that 73% were strongly in favor of "charging for private social services whenever the person served had the ability to pay," with an additional 20% somewhat in favor (Jacobs 1952, 200).[7]

To be sure, plenty of social workers believed that their profession should concentrate on the poor rather than serve a broad cross-section of the community, and even those who supported extending services to the middle class worried about alienating the poor. For example, the report of the NSWA workshop on fee-charging notes that, despite agreement that fee-charging is acceptable, participants shared concerns about "the possibility that there may be discrimination against those who desire and need service but cannot pay for it" (NSWA 1957, 13). Overall, however, the various historical sources reviewed clearly indicate an evolutionary process toward a general acceptance of fee-charging, a trend borne out by the financial data presented in the previous section. As the final report of the NSWA workshop summarizes, "the propriety of fee-charging is demonstrated by the continuous growth in the number of agencies establishing a fee for service and an attending increase in the number of persons paying fees" (NSWA 1957, 10).

Fee-Charging and Disengagement

Those who have written about social work's growing interest in middle class clientele have taken a mostly critical stance (e.g., Ehrenreich 1985; Reisch and Andrews 2001). Authors have attributed this episode of social work history to, at best, a regrettable aloofness to lower class problems and, at worst, a dereliction of professional responsibility to the poor. The text

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[7] There was never unanimity on the appropriateness of charging clients for services. For example, the Community Chest study on fee-charging points out that the Conference of Catholic Charities found "general opposition to the idea of charging fees for family casework service and some difference of opinion with respect to fees for adoption services" (Community Chests and Councils 1949, 6).

cited most frequently (and often exclusively) as evidence for social work's lack of concern for the poor during the middle of the twentieth century is a well-known essay by Richard Cloward and Irwin Epstein (1965) titled "Private Social Welfare's Disengagement from the Poor: The Case of Family Adjustment Agencies." Cloward and Epstein famously argued that social workers' concern with professional status and preoccupation with talk-based therapeutic services led them to seek out more educated and affluent clientele, abandoning the poor to overburdened public agencies charged with basic material relief. This narrative of disengagement has proven highly influential in historical scholarship on the U.S. human service sector (Stuart 1999), and it is also consistent with present-day concerns that growing fee-reliance means a departure from social welfare priorities. From this perspective, increases in fee-reliance beginning in the 1940s may be viewed as a sign of sector-wide mission drift. However, the evidence for disengagement in the middle of the twentieth century is not nearly as persuasive as typically suggested.

The literature on disengagement (including Cloward and Epstein's critique) has focused on family service agencies, largely because this prominent subsection of the American human services sector published highly detailed service reports. These reports confirm that family service agencies drew in a clientele roughly representative of the national income distribution (Beck 1962); however, family service agencies were not representative of the human service sector as a whole and do not serve as a reliable sample for determining how voluntary agencies related to the poor (Kahn 1976, 25). Illustrating this point, a 1964 government-commissioned survey of private human service organizations (including but not limited to family service agencies) in high-poverty areas found that at least half of clients came from families with annual income of less than $3,000, the definition of poverty used at the time by the Council of Economic Advisors. Furthermore, at least 90% of clients came from families with annual income of less than $5,000, the lower end of what might be considered the “working poor” designation (Orden 1973, 368–69).

It is undoubtedly true that human service professionals increasingly worked above the poverty line during the middle of the twentieth century, but the extent of this transition has been overstated.[8] Although social workers forthrightly acknowledged the financial advantages of fee-charging and their desire for a broader clientele, human service NPOs did not abandon the poor in pursuit of a more lucrative caseload. In addition, the financial federations overseeing many of the most professionalized agencies at the time regularly redistributed earned surpluses, thus making self-enrichment from fees unlikely because increased revenue would need to correspond to increased expenses.[9] In short, the disengagement narrative does not provide an adequate framework for interpreting mid-twentieth-century developments in fee-charging. I argue that we can better understand the rise of fee-charging by examining how human service professionals “articulat[ed] and institutionaliz[ed] a vision of the market as moral” (Reich 2014, 1578).

Fee-Charging and Egalitarianism

Scholars have thoroughly documented how social workers strove to distinguish themselves from traditional charity by building a modern identity based on professional credentials and scientific expertise (Lubove 1965). This account stresses that the social work establishment sought to differentiate itself from the amateurism and sentimentalism caricatured

[8] Data from later decades does show a sizable expansion of the consumer base for human services (e.g., Salamon 1995). However, the sector appears to have catered primarily to the lower end of the economic spectrum until at least the early 1960s (Gilbert and Specht 1981).

[9] Known as deficit financing, this system of cross-subsidization through surplus redistribution was recognized for dampening the financial incentive for fee-charging (see chapter 4).

in the popular image of “Lady Bountiful,” the privileged woman of status who spent her leisure time imparting moral instruction and gift baskets to poor urban families (Walkowitz 1999, 50). Yet historical literature shows that the social work establishment disdained Lady Bountiful not only because she was frivolous and inept but also because she was “superior and patronizing, the object of envy, and the cause of class antagonism” (Robbins 1914, 452). Thus, the “charity connotation” was not simply amateurism and sentimentalism; it was an archaic notion of “the rich serving the poor” (Jacobs 1952, 198). Lady Bountiful epitomized a time “in which status was fixed and the upper classes were not self-conscious about their superiority and their obligation to help the less fortunate” (Becker 1964, 71).

This blatantly paternalistic vision of class-based dependency relations was anathema to an emerging profession whose idea of community was based on inclusiveness and solidarity. The most pronounced and progressive example of this ethos was the settlement movement, but the social work mainstream advanced a cooperative and neighborly vision of community organization until well into the 1960s: “Community organization practice attempts to modify situations characterized by conflict, social lag, social stratification, concentration, and segregation. It seeks to bring about cooperation and assimilation” (Murphy 1954, 201).[10]

Consistent with the popular ideal of communal fellowship, the introduction of broad-based fundraising methods such as payroll deduction for Community Chest contributions enabled a folk image of extensive community participation, as exemplified by a popular

[10] Social work was slow to surrender its idealized picture of American community even in the increasingly tumultuous 1960s, as illustrated by Warren’s (1967) review of citations to social scientific work in community organization papers between 1961 and 1965, in which he finds a striking lack of engagement with issues of political power. This finding accords with Brager and Specht’s (1965) quip that “social work professionals tend to prefer cooperation, no matter how spurious, to conflict, no matter how necessary” (202).

Community Chest campaign slogan designed specifically to evoke an egalitarian sense of philanthropy: “Everybody Gives, Everybody Benefits.”[11] Fee-charging was very much a part of this new financial circuitry, as it helped to frame human services as community amenities for all in need rather than as handouts for a bottom segment of society. Accordingly, social work leaders often presented fee-charging as a feature of modern service provision “long since graduated from the primitive charitable field” (Nelson 1954, 88). For example, in her foreword to a Child Welfare League pamphlet on fee-charging in adoption services, Gordon (1956) writes that the “growth of social work as a professional service needed by people in every walk of life [has] hastened the departure of the ‘charity’ concept” and that “the charging of fees for all services is aiding this departure” (3). Similarly, at the 1955 Southwest Regional Conference of Community Chests and Councils, Chest executive Rudolph Evjen criticized his colleagues for “still waving around the ‘old charity concept,’” arguing that “once we sell agency programs … as services salable to all walks of life, we need not worry about charging services rendered to those who have ability to pay” (Evjen 1955). Policy manuals (United Community Funds and Councils of America 1965a, 7), journal articles (Berkowitz 1947), and conference presentations (Foster 1947) all expressed the ideal that services should be advertised as purchasable commodities accessible and beneficial to all. In this way, clients would approach agencies not as recipients of handouts financed by the upper class but as active consumers of professional services. Thus, to many social workers, fee-charging embodied a sense of empowerment and equity instead of passivity and *noblesse oblige*, as Robert Morris (1957) expressed in his opening

[11] This slogan’s egalitarianism is apparent in an address by President Truman (1946): “I like the campaign slogan this year: Everybody Gives, Everybody Benefits. It marks a significant change in our thinking about the word ‘charity.’ Today our contributions to the Community Chest are not alms given by the wealthy few to the poor… . The word ‘charity’ has regained its old, true meaning—that of good will toward one’s fellowman; of brotherhood, of mutual help, of love.”

talk to the NSWA workshop on fee-charging: “the concept that ‘we serve each other’ replaces the claim ‘we help them’” (4).

The theme of client agency also appeared in claims that fee-payment holds therapeutic value. Jacobs’s (1952) survey found that many social workers believed that a fee-paying client “has more of a feeling of self-esteem, more self-respect, is more comfortable, and has more freedom to express his true feelings” (200). Although claims of improved service outcomes were not formally tested, the sentiment that fee-charging promotes self-image aligns with the general theme of fee-charging as a mechanism for granting clients a sense of active participation.

One cannot properly interpret the increase in fee-reliance prior to the 1970s without understanding the moralization of commercial transactions as a means to distinguish modern services from a conception of charity based on flagrant class distinctions and a patronizing elite. Although it is true that fee-charging entailed market rather than eleemosynary activity, historical evidence shows that fee-charging was infused with the service ethic of social work and with the aspiration to universalism in service provision. This notion differs markedly from more recent concerns that earned income signifies a “focus on client demands rather than community needs” (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004, 135). Past scholars conceptualized the interdependence between client and community interests quite differently, arguing that when “health and welfare agencies become increasingly fee-charging and fee-supported, the slogan of ‘charity’ must be replaced by the slogan of ‘community service’” (Lurie 1955, 71).

A Premature Universalism

I have argued thus far that fee-reliance in the human service sector began growing substantially in the 1940s and that social workers viewed fee-charging as part of a broader effort to modernize and democratize service financing and provision. Thus, mid-twentieth-century commercialization was not merely an incursion of market-oriented rationalities; it was embedded in a professional service ethic emphasizing community belonging. In practice, however, the moral significance of fee-charging was influenced not only by professional ideology but also by the material conditions of American life. Accordingly, it is necessary to consider the practical application and limitations of social work's egalitarian rendering of commercialism in light of the political and economic environment.

Despite the ideal of inclusiveness in an "affluent society," mid-twentieth-century American communities were shot through with economic inequality (Harrington 1962), undermining the universalist ethos behind support for fee-charging. A common practical response to this economic reality was to charge fees "in relation to ability to pay" (Goodman 1971, 413). However, this "sliding fee" policy did not sit well with much of the social work profession. Some decried the attention to differential spending capacity as comparable to the means test, a public policy held in poor repute among social workers at the time because of its violation of privacy and emphasis on class distinctions. The controversy over the sliding fee policy highlights a fundamental contradiction in the universalist portrayal of fee-charging. On one hand, social work professionals correctly identified the stigmatizing potential of the traditional charitable model and the progressive promise of market transactions. On the other hand, fee-charging could not truly facilitate egalitarianism as long as a sizable segment of American society lacked the spending power to purchase services comfortably. The sliding fee was an administrative manifestation of this tension; it was neither a donation nor a standard market exchange.

To its credit, the social work establishment demonstrated awareness of the need to eliminate cash poverty. Despite complaints that "the social work profession has been slow to recognize income as a basic human right" (Dorfman and Sherrard 1967, 204), the National Association of Social Workers was the first professional organization to call for a guaranteed minimum income, supporting the principle of "income as a matter of right, in amounts sufficient to maintain all persons throughout the nation at a uniformly adequate level of living" (quoted in Wade 1967, 95).[12] This advocacy evidences an awareness that the universalism espoused by fee-charging advocates would remain an inchoate universalism in the face of persistent poverty.

Although the annual guaranteed income ultimately did not come to pass, the 1960s witnessed a massive influx of government grants aimed at combatting entrenched poverty. With the growing focus on the particular needs of the poor, social work's celebration of inclusiveness and fellowship gave way to a more conflict-oriented paradigm of community organization, which was more sensitive to the specific demands of the economically disadvantaged and of disenfranchised racial minorities (Barman 2006). The romantic view of a common public interest was seen increasingly as a conservative strategy of social control (Brilliant 1986). With this change in professional focus and philosophy, fee-charging faded from the human service agenda, declining as a proportion of total revenues and dropping off from the literature of the period. As Goodman (1971) observed at the time, "this lack of concern with fees relates to the increased preoccupation with services for the poor more closely and actively related to their needs" (415).

Great Society legislation brought much-needed attention to poor communities throughout the United States. However, retrospective analyses of the War on Poverty demonstrate that its

[12] Social workers during this time often complained that the social work establishment was not doing enough to promote a guaranteed minimum income. Here it is worth citing Wade's (1967) characterization of social work as "the most self-critical of professions" (95).

emphasis on targeted services perpetuated the exclusion of the poor from mainstream society (Lawson and Wilson 1995). Richard Titmuss, perhaps the foremost advocate of universalist welfare policy, commented at the time that the "'War on Poverty,' despite its radicalism…, has not found the answers to the challenge of how to provide benefits in favour of the poor without stigma" (Titmuss 1968, 113–14). The War on Poverty provided a valuable correction to naïve ideals of communal equality under material conditions of inequality; however, it was unable to construct the environment under which such universalist ideals could be realized. The revenue composition of the nonprofit human service sector in 1977 (the first year cited in previous studies of financial trends) symbolizes this mixed record. The dominance of government-funded subsidies for human service NPOs reflects the emergence of public initiatives to provide much-needed services to those living in poverty, and the decline in fee-reliance illustrates the failure to bundle these targeted services in a broader universalist welfare regime that would shore up the purchasing power of the poor (Skocpol 1995).

In light of this historical review, it is instructive to revisit the standard narrative of marketization in the nonprofit human service sector. According to that account, the shift from donative toward commercial revenue accompanying neoliberal policy changes in the 1980s reflects a concomitant shift from social purpose objectives toward profit-oriented priorities. Furthermore, scholars have suggested that this tension between "mission and margin" is inherent in nonprofit income streams, which are thought to "derive from the nature of the services offered by nonprofit organizations" (Wilsker and Young 2010, 197). Yet a farther-reaching historical perspective indicates that the moral valence of nonprofit revenue depends very much on social context. To review, professional ideologies of the past have presented fee-charging not merely as a revenue-maximization strategy but also as a potential vehicle for communal inclusiveness, while economic conditions and political systems have determined the extent to which commercial transactions can realize those egalitarian principles.

Discussion

The study of the nonprofit sector has benefited immensely from the work of historians such as Peter Hall and David Hammack, but historical inquiry constitutes a small and often overlooked segment of nonprofit scholarship (Friedman 2002). As a result, one of the most striking features of research on the blurring of organizational boundaries in the nonprofit sector is its lack of historical context (Morris 2004). Without the benefit of a rich historical perspective, the study of nonprofits has been prone to exaggerated claims of organizational and sectoral transformation. The narrative of commercialization is a case in point. Although scholars have associated commercialization with neoliberalism in the 1980s, I have shown that fee-charging has a longer and more complex history.

This chapter demonstrates the utility of economic sociology's frame of reference by challenging the representation of commercialization as a colonizing force that transforms civil society into a marketplace, thereby supposedly corroding altruism and civic values. Departing from this portrayal, I have argued that fee-charging expressed social work's flawed but underappreciated communitarian ethos during the middle of the twentieth century. Uncovering the history of fee-charging in the nonprofit human service sector will hopefully help to add nuance and qualification to the "unchallenged, hegemonic view of neoliberalism [that] pervades the human services literature" (Gray et al. 2015, 370).

To be clear, the objective of adding more nuance and qualification to views of neoliberalism is not to downplay the consequences of neoliberal policies in recent decades.

Likewise, I do not mean to argue that fee-charging *necessarily* signifies pro-social objectives. Indeed, there is considerable evidence that the rise of neoliberalism made business principles more salient in the human services, with the result that agencies were expected to charge fees as a way to maintain and demonstrate market competitiveness (Adams and Perlmutter 1991; Dees 1998; Demone and Gibelman 1984). As professional service ethics increasingly square off with managerial priorities (e.g., Binder 2007), fee-charging has become viewed more and more as a business practice.

That said, it is critical to recognize that the complexity of commercial transactions has not disappeared since the 1980s. Sliding scale fees remain a fixture in the human service sector (Frumkin 2002), and the rise of consumer-side subsidies means that commercial trends partially reflect (often embattled) public initiatives to grant lower income populations access to human services (Grønbjerg and Salamon 2012). Although there is methodological convenience in treating the ratio of fee income to total income as a proxy for commercialization, earned income is too multifaceted to reduce to a consistent and ahistorical narrative of market intrusion. Disregarding the social packaging and political context of commercial transactions leads us to neglect how market processes may complement rather than crowd out civic values (Child 2016; Daniel and Kim 2018; Dimitriadis et al. 2017; Vaceková, Valentinov, and Nemec 2017).

Likewise, the designation of donated income as a "sacred source of nonprofit support" may encourage a lack of critical reflection on the social implications of reliance on contributions (Froelich 1999, 258). As with commercial transactions, donations entail a variety of sources, conditions, expectations, and agendas, including some that may undermine communal values (e.g., Arena 2012). Moreover, research has shown that charitable aid remains a source of stigma for recipients (Fothergill 2003; Kissane 2012). Especially in a time of runaway economic inequality, it is worthwhile reflecting on the distinction that social workers came to establish between charitable services and community services.

CHAPTER 2

CONSTRUCTING ACCOUNTABILITY: THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELEGATION OF OUTCOME EVALUATION IN AMERICAN SOCIAL WORK[1]

Funders, clients, and the general public have come to expect evidence of the value that human service organizations generate. In response, large numbers of these organizations have attempted to gauge the effects of their services on intended beneficiaries (Benjamin 2012; Carman 2009; MacIndoe and Barman 2012). As both a daunting administrative challenge and a consequential development in the history of social welfare, provider-driven outcome evaluation (POE) has attracted scrutiny from scholars interested in organizational effectiveness in human service systems, the growing salience of accountability standards in modern society, and the proliferation of business-oriented performance criteria in the nonprofit and public sectors (e.g., Barman 2016; Binder 2007; Eckerd and Moulton. 2011; Lee and Nowell 2015).[2]

Explanations of POE tend to offer adaptivist accounts, whereby organizations respond strategically to external demands for accountability. The clearest example is the resource-dependence explanation, which attributes the practice to funding policies tying payments to the documentation of positive outcomes (Ebrahim 2005; Hatry 2002; Thomson 2010). Beyond this "follow-the-money" account, authors have advanced institutionalist explanations by arguing that

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[2] There are several terms used to describe the assessment of service results in public and nonprofit organizations. "Outcome measurement" refers to the quantitative tracking of client outcomes (MacIndoe and Barman 2012), while "performance measurement" may incorporate other indicators, such as financial measures (see Carnochan et al. 2014, 1016). The term "program evaluation" is normally reserved for more formal, rigorous, and causally oriented assessments (Hatry 2013). As this chapter focuses on general assessment of client outcomes conducted by providers, I have chosen the term "provider-driven outcome evaluation," or POE.

providers appraise and publicize their outcomes to meet regulatory standards and to keep public confidence (Arvidson and Lyon 2014; Barman and MacIndoe 2012; Carman 2011; Rey-Garcia et al. 2017). Institutionalist interpretations establish that the need for legitimacy, not just grants and contracts, drives the practice and prevalence of POE.

Yet institutionalist theory examines not only how certain practices become legitimate and widespread but also the construction of meaning that makes practices legitimate and widespread in the first place (Zilber 2017). From this constructivist perspective, organizational behavior is not simply the result of technical needs; organizations also embody culturally pervasive understandings of what is functional and appropriate. Following the constructivist tradition, this article analyzes POE's cultural underpinnings. In doing so, the chapter is not intended merely as sociological due diligence; I will show that this type of analysis relates directly to the *practical* matters of evaluating outcomes.

The primary concept guiding this analysis is rationalization, a familiar trope in current literature on public administration, the nonprofit sector, and the human services. As Reisman (2018) summarizes, authors have applied the idea of rationalization "to describe the process by which [organizations] form durable structures and processes to demonstrate economic efficiency and the measurable benefit they provide to society" (457). Although inquiry into rationalization has seeded interesting scholarship, the focus on current organizational structures and processes has led authors to an ahistorical reading of rationalization as the attainment of some suite of characteristics that help achieve outcomes more efficiently. Rationalization is typically depicted as the codification, routinization, and calculation of induced change, suggesting an everincreasing reliance on scientific method and managerial acumen.[3] Endorsing a more constructivist idea of rationalization, I adopt a definition offered by Scott and Meyer (1994): “the creation of cultural schemes defining means–ends relationships and standardizing systems of control over activities and actors” (3). By highlighting the cultural construction of *means*–ends relationships, this definition situates POE as an enactment of historically contingent beliefs about *how* organizations achieve outcomes.

By approaching rationalization historically, this chapter builds on scholarship showing that the study of the past is integral to institutionalist research, as it illuminates timebound processes of institutional emergence, persistence, and transformation (Suddaby, Foster, and Mills 2014). Documenting change in the habits and meanings governing organizational behavior affords a compelling view of how cultural developments give rise to particular institutional arrangements (Clemens 2007). However, historical research is about more than change; it also draws attention to consistencies over time, which may expose stable sociological principles. As Erikson (1970) remarks in a classic call to historicization, “the sociologist is observing the history of his own age as well as looking for broader indicators of regularity and law” (336).

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by deconstructing the idea of *outcome* in present POE frameworks in the human services, a field that has faced particularly strong pressure to show results (Barman 2016; Benjamin and Campbell 2015; Campbell and Lambright 2016). I outline how the conceptual separation of outcomes from outputs points to

[3] Rationalization is a classic theme in social theory, commonly associated with Max Weber’s foundational work on the development of bureaucracy and calculative decision-making. Recently, however, authors have adopted a less historical and more index-like notion of rationalization, which describes an organization’s level of professionalism as a composite of indicators, such as whether an organization conducts an independent audit or carries out research on donors (e.g., Betzler and Gmür 2016; Hwang and Powell 2009; Suárez and Hwang 2013).

two major conditions for interpreting program effects, with significant implications for how human service organizations are expected to assess their impact. Next, I review the current historical account of POE, arguing that it emphasizes changes occurring in the late twentieth century. I then revisit earlier discussions of this subject with consideration to the shifting assumptions and auspices under which outcome evaluation took place. Focusing on social work's development, I contextualize the historical evolution of POE as part of an ongoing struggle to define the analytical frame of reference and the substance of legitimate expertise for outcome evaluation.

Following this line of inquiry, I argue that modern POE exhibits a historically peculiar but characteristically neoliberal interpretation of means–ends relationships underscoring the causal role of discrete *organizations*, as distinct from replicable *practices*. As I explain, earlier manifestations of POE channeled a commitment to building professional legitimacy, thus aiming at the evaluation of codifiable and replicable competencies and procedures. In contrast, modern POE embodies a neoliberal ethos concerned with the competitive performance of separate organizations, regardless of their professional affiliations. Accordingly, modern POE portrays client outcomes as the results of individual organizational activity rather than as the effects of transferable professional method. While the increase in POE adoption is also notable, I argue that the true historical novelty lies in the reconstruction of accountability that modern POE signifies.

Current Understanding of Human Service Outcome Evaluation

Academic and trade literature on outcome evaluation distinguishes between *outputs* as units of service (e.g., hours of casework) and *outcomes* as changes resulting from service (e.g., improved peer relations). The latter are of central interest, since they capture actual benefits rather than mere service volume. For this reason, practitioner-oriented guides often stress the inadequacy of output measurement alone, sometimes articulating the output–outcome distinction quite emphatically (Benjamin 2012, 440). For instance, we read in the Urban Institute's *Key Steps in Outcome Management* that "outputs are expected to lead to desired outcomes, but by themselves do not tell anything about the outcomes" (Lampkin and Hatry 2003, 10).

In some cases, however, the literature is more ambivalent on this distinction (e.g., Niven 2008, 211). A telling example is found in the United Way's pathbreaking guide to outcome measurement, which cautions that "for some programs, *initial outcomes* may be arguably closer to outputs [since] initial outcomes rarely represent *major change*" (Hatry et al. 1996, 49, emphasis added). Consider how this qualification pertains to basic services such as food for the hungry. The number of meals consumed indicates services (i.e. outputs) but also points directly to the number of individuals for whom hunger is temporarily alleviated. According to the United Way's caveat cited above, there are two reasons for classifying such results as outputs and not as outcomes: (1) the fact that *initial* results are considered outputs implies that "true outcomes" need time to manifest; (2) as stated in the above excerpt, outcomes entail "major change." In other words, the difference between outcomes and outputs rests not only on whether change occurs but also on the *time* required for change to occur and on the *degree* of change. Below I elaborate on the theoretical and practical ramifications of these criteria.

Outcome as Culmination

As explained above, POE conventions are based on the assumption that outcomes usually require time to manifest, as evident in the claim from the United Way guide that *initial* outcomes are better designated as outputs. Other literature echoes this point. For example, in their contingency-based categorization of program results, Ebrahim and Rangan (2010) refer to emergency service outputs as "immediate effects on clients," suggesting interchangeability between units of service volume and *initial* program results (3). Similarly, the Kellogg Foundation's widely circulated *Logic Model Development Guide* explains that *short-term* outcomes "should be attainable within 1 to 3 years," implying that service results require time to graduate from outputs to even short-term outcomes (W. K. Kellogg Foundation 2004, 2).

The assumption that outcomes need time to become observable accurately reflects the processual quality of human services, which often require relationship-building and adjustment of services to changing situations. However, POE rubrics seem to overlook this quality by prioritizing *final* results. As Benjamin (2012) concludes in her incisive review of evaluation guides, "current outcome measurement frameworks direct nonprofits to track program activities completed…and the outcomes resulting from those program activities" (432). One consequence, as again noted by Benjamin, is that POE guides tend to black box human services by overlooking how staff adapt services to changing client needs and strengths. While assessment literature does cover process-oriented evaluation, this "formative" approach highlights activities rather than outcomes (Hatry 2013, 23; W. K. Kellogg Foundation 2004, 36). To summarize, "outcome" in this context is not synonymous with "result," which could be interpreted as an interim step in an ongoing process; instead, POE conventions signify a more restrictive reading of "result" as the upshot of a concluded intervention (cf. Abbott 2016, chap. 6).

Outcome as Transformation

As Carman (2010) observes, human service outcomes are customarily understood as "changes in knowledge, attitude, values, or behaviors" (261). Of course, many providers are devoted to meeting basic physical needs, but culturally dominant ideas about social impact relegate the benefits of these services to "mere outputs" (Rothschild 2012, 52). POE conventions privilege more fundamental changes in competency and behavior.

There is a long history behind the assumption that significant and lasting impact requires changes in mindsets, morals, and manners. One of the first prominent statements of this sentiment is Linton Swift's 1934 essay titled *New Alignments between Public and Private Agencies in a Community Welfare and Relief Program*, which marked a turn in social work from material relief (i.e. charitable provision of money, food, fuel, clothing, etc.) to therapeutic services aimed at adjusting personality and conduct (Morris 2009, 23). Swift argued that public agencies should assume responsibility for meeting basic economic needs while private agencies would explore and develop the emerging field of "mental hygiene" (Swift 1934, 40). *New Alignments* gave early expression to a lasting ideal by which human service organizations at the vanguard of social welfare should be "people-changing organizations" (Hasenfeld 1972; Vinter 1963). Many years later, the nonprofit sector continues to be perceived as "a laboratory for experimentation and risk taking, a place where new ideas are tested and evaluated" (Frumkin 2002, 32). This reputation for innovation downplays human service programs that meet basic needs, privileging a notion of outcomes as transformative change in client functioning.

Because human service outcomes connote transformative psychosocial change, POE can be exceedingly complex. Shifts in self-esteem, savings behavior, or parental affect cannot be tracked simply by logging hours of casework, and scales for measuring such developments can be difficult and costly to administer. Moreover, significant change implies sustained change, but documenting outcomes after termination of service requires resources that many agencies lack. Finally, by conventional standards, client data lacking proper controls do not furnish evidence of cause–effect relationships between program activities and outcomes, and the vast majority of direct service agencies do not have the resources to carry out even quasi-experimental methods, let alone randomized controlled trials (Bach-Mortensen and Montgomery 2018; Despard 2016; Strickhouser and Wright 2015). This shortcoming is less relevant to the documentation of immediate and self-evident results (i.e. outputs), but causal attribution of outcomes poses a unique challenge by requiring unusual levels of time and expertise.

Current Historical Accounts of POE in the Human Services

I have argued so far that POE prescribes a delimited rendering of human service outcomes as time-dependent and significant changes in psychosocial functioning that occur as end products of interventions. I have also argued that assessing outcomes and assigning them to a causal sequence are acknowledged as highly time-consuming and often-expensive endeavors. For this reason, we often read that outcome evaluation was previously the rarefied purview of research specialists with the skillsets and resources necessary for demanding experimental evaluation designs (for a review see Barman 2016, 57). These specialists inaugurated the modern development of program evaluation as a distinct field of applied research in the 1960s as the expanding American welfare state launched large-scale social welfare programs (Carman, Fredericks, and Intracaso 2008, 7).

According to current scholarship, in the 1980s and 1990s evaluation experts repurposed their methods for street-level service providers, who faced new accountability pressures stemming from changes in philanthropy, government contracting, and public oversight (Blalock 1999; Carman 2009; Fischer 2001; Plantz, Greenway, and Hendricks 1997). Although practitioners appreciated the need to show results to their funders and critics, most lacked capacity for the intensive program evaluation that had taken shape in the 1960s. As Barman (2016) details, evaluation experts accommodated these limitations by positing that the collection of monitoring data combined with an outline of why and how a program works "negated the need to employ the experimental research design" (59). This "expedited evaluation process" proved much more feasible for service providers (Kapp and Anderson 2010, 137; see also Berman 2006, 145; Weiss 1997, 514).

The account reviewed above places the antecedents of POE in the 1960s and dates the full emergence of the practice to the end of the twentieth century. Most authors have simply ignored the first half of the century. Some who have considered these earlier decades argue that human service providers during this period stuck to measuring outputs (e.g., Barman 2016, 49) and that "evaluation, assessment, and performance measurement…were not thought to be necessary" (Penna 2018, 158; see also LeRoux and Wright 2010, 572). A handful of authors writing more narrowly on the history of social work have noted crude attempts by direct service agencies to evaluate outcomes before mid-century, but these trials have been treated parenthetically because of their paltriness (e.g., Austin 2002, 39; Kirk and Reid 2002, 37; Okpych and Yu 2014, 13).

Taking a different tack, I argue that we should pay more attention to these initial efforts to understand why they proved mostly unsuccessful and how their foundational assumptions persist into the present. I contend that the deficiencies of early agency-based outcome evaluation are precisely what make this chapter of POE so important. Reviewing this history clarifies the uniqueness and limitations of present-day POE. This analysis also demonstrates that POE is not merely an administrative procedure carried out to appease funders; it is also a reflection of enduring beliefs about knowledge production, social change, and organizational capacity.

Overview of Research

Social work history offers an appropriate vantage point for examining the origins of POE in the human services. Although social work carries a more clinical connotation today, prior to the 1970s it was associated with the general administrative apparatus of social welfare. A fitting example is the United Way, which is seen today as a general human service funder and as one of the chief catalysts of POE in the nonprofit sector (Hendricks, Plantz, and Pritchard 2008; Poole et al. 2000; Stone and Cutcher-Gershenfeld 2001). In the past, the United Way and its forerunners were linked more closely to the social work profession, operating "as the chief fundraising, planning, and public relations arms of voluntary social work" (Reisch and Wenocur 1986, 78). Of course, social work history does not afford a comprehensive view of the human services, but past writing on social work touches on agency practices in many of the charitable organizations that make up the bedrock of the modern human service sector (e.g., family-counseling agencies, youth-mentoring organizations, settlement houses, etc.).[4]

Drawing on social work's documentary record, this chapter presents what Rowlinson, Hassard, and Decker (2014) term an "analytically structured history," an approach to historical analysis that uses analytic constructs to guide primary and secondary research, thereby balancing theoretically driven investigation and narrative recounting of events. Having identified the relevance of rationalization, I undertook an analytically structured review of social work texts with the goal of understanding how professionals conceptualized causal drivers of outcomes. I began my research by reading early social work administration textbooks (identified in the review sections of the journals *Social Work* and *Social Service Review*) to discern the extent to

[4] The history of evaluation in education is ordinarily treated separately from that of human service evaluation (Alkin and King 2016). This chapter does not engage academic standardized testing, teacher assessments, and other aspects of academic evaluation in school settings.

which outcome evaluation was discussed in agency contexts. I reviewed a total of fifteen major social work titles, including classics such as Elwood Street's *Social Work Administration*, Pierce Atwater's *Problems of Administration in Social Work*, and Ray Johns' *Executive Responsibility*.

After determining that outcome evaluation was typically associated with social work research, I reviewed authoritative histories of this subfield (e.g., Zimbalist 1977) along with historical compendia of research in social work (e.g., Maas 1971; Polansky 1960; 1975; Shyne 1959). I then reviewed all twenty entries on research published from 1929 to 2008 in the periodical *Social Work Year Book*, which became the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* in 1965. I also read all presentations delivered at the National Conference on Social Welfare (NCSW) indexed by Heath and Dunham (1963) under "Fact-finding and Research" (84 presentations in total).[5] Citations from these sources led me to well over two hundred academic and trade journal articles, published evaluation standards, and practitioner manuals, which were routinely disseminated by national membership associations. I also conducted archival research at the University of Minnesota's Social Welfare History Archives and at special collections at Temple University, Northwestern University, University of Chicago, and University of Illinois at Chicago.[6] This work centered on reports and manuals published by a wide variety of service providers, community councils, and national associations.

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[5] The NCSW proceedings and year books have long been regarded as bellwethers for human service trends (e.g., Bruno 1957; Chaterjee and Koleski 1970, 87).

[6] I reviewed records from dozens of direct service agencies, including Hyde Park Neighborhood Club, Jewish Family Service of Philadelphia, Northwestern University Settlement Association, and Minneapolis Family and Children's Services. I also reviewed records from community councils in Chicago, Hennepin County, and Philadelphia. Lastly, I reviewed records from umbrella organizations including Family Service Association of America, Big Brothers of America, National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, and Child Welfare League of America. Many of these collections include materials from other national agencies.

In synthesizing my findings, I have chosen to focus on casework, not only because this was the dominant practice area in social work, but also because outcome evaluation was far less developed in group work and community organization. To be clear, I am not suggesting that these practice areas made only marginal contributions to social work research (it is well known, for example, that macro social workers pioneered early surveys of community needs and problems), but I have found in my research that historical literature on POE tends to relate to casework specifically.

Early Trials in Outcome Evaluation: 1920s to 1940s

Before the 1920s, much of social work involved the direct remediation of material hardship. Consequently, determining service results was a straightforward task: Employment bureaus disclosed figures on job placements (e.g., Prison Association of New York 1917, 169), child protection agencies released details on orphans assigned homes (e.g., Orphans' Home and Asylum 1905, 7), milk charities reported quantity of milk distributed (Kerr 1910, p. 1363), and travelers aid societies publicized numbers of stranded individuals given transportation (e.g., Travelers Aid Society of Chicago and Illinois 1916, 12). These examples suggest that the quantitative tracking and reporting of added social value has been a fixture of the human service sector for over a hundred years. Indeed, as Barman (2016, 49) shows, social welfare administrators in the early 1900s frequently measured the cost and volume of services, leading to the development of social statistics and recording templates (see Figure 2.1 for an example).

Figure 2.1. Portion of statistical card for Charity Organization Societies (issued in 1915)

Carried Over	New	Old	Recurrent	Rec'd by transfer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Resident	Homeless

Surname	First Name	White / Negro / Mong.	Birthplace of Family's Head	Pers. App'n / Referred by agency	Ref'd by individual (enter name)	Date of: This opening / This closing	Case record No.	Dist.

SOCIAL STATUS OF FAMILY'S HEAD

1. Marital Condition

With two or more children under 14	*With no children under 14, or with less than two*
a. Married	g. Married
b. Widowed	h. Widowed
c. Deserted	i. Deserted
d. Div. or sep.	j. Div. or sep.
e. Unm'r'd mothers	k. Unm'r'd mothers
f. Others	l. Others

2. Other Social Status Items

RELIEF FROM OR THROUGH SOCIETY

1. None
2. From the general fund
3. From a fund for this family, raised from
   Natural sources
   a. Relatives
   b. Employers or former employers
   c. Other friends of the family
   d. The family's church
   e. Other org's connected with family
   Other sources
   f. Other churches
   g. Other org's not connected with family
   h. Benevolent individuals

PROBLEMS PRESENTED

1. Unemployment
2. Under-employment
3. Occupational disease
4. Strike or lockout
5. Child labor under 14
6. Disability from industrial accident
7. Death from ind'l acc'd't or occupat'l disease
8. Tuberculosis
9. Epilepsy
10. Venereal disease
11. Cardiac trouble
12. Pellagra
13. Insanity
14. Other disease
15. Blindness or sight seriously impaired
16. Feeblemindedness
17. Old age
18. Intemperance
19. Desertion or non-support
20. Illiteracy
21. Recorded conviction of crime
22. Arrest for juvenile delinquency
23. Known sexual immorality
24. Illegitimacy
25. "Loan shark" victim

Note.

This card is for sale by the Charity Organization Department. Price 45c. per 100.

SERVICE

1. Physical or mental treatment in
   a. Hospital or sanatorium
   b. Dispensary
   c. Family's home
   d. Other places
2. Legal aid or advice through
   a. Juvenile court action
   b. Non-support action
   c. Other court action
   d. Search for deserter or non-supporter
   e. Other means
3. Obtaining of employment
   a. Temporary
   b. Ought to prove permanent
   c. "Relief work"
   d. Work offered and refused
4. Provision of business equipment
5. Institu'l care, child'n (not in hosp'ls, etc.)
   a. Temporary shelter
   b. Permanent for defectives
   c. Permanent for others
6. Institu'l care for adults (not in hosp'ls, etc.)
7. Placement of children in free private homes
   a. Temporary in city
   b. Temporary in country
   c. Permanent
8. Special or vocational training
9. Day outings
10. Removal to better homes in city
11. Transportation to other localities
12. Extension of credit
13. Church connection strengthened

Source: American Association of Societies for Organizing Charities 1915, 150

Impressive as it was at the time, such accounting met only the standard of outputs by the POE criteria discussed previously. The more specific conception of service results as culminative and transformative *outcomes* became widespread in the 1920s with the growing conviction that skilled social work rests upon psychological examination and treatment (Ehrenreich 1985, 73; Lubove 1965, 89; Morris 2009, xxxv). With this development, social workers began attending to more esoteric questions of character and personality change, which became the purview primarily of casework. This complexity brought the promise of scientific credibility to the fledgling profession, but it also created a new and formidable accountability challenge: As targeted outcomes became less intuitive and immediate, the effectiveness of treatment became less apparent and measurable (Claghorn 1927). Social work's emerging prioritization of emotional and psychological support services necessitated a different approach to documenting results, as service volume was understood to be "just about worthless" as a gauge of psychosocial change (White 1928, 604; see also, e.g., Brown 1944, 54; Fisk 1934, 104; Lee 1928, 167; Long and Griggs 1929, 175; Wilcox 1927, 47).

The need for outcome assessment became especially clear after a committee on evaluation reported in 1923 "almost no attempt…to evaluate the results of social case work" (Rich 1923, 2). Indeed, Richard Cabot acknowledges in his 1931 presidential address to the NCSW that "in the years since 1923 there has been manifest in almost every meeting of this National Conference an uncomfortable awareness that we do not know our results" (Cabot 1931, 10). Cabot's speech is frequently cited in past literature as an influential rallying cry in social work, declaring outcome evaluation "the order of the day" (Fenlason, Ratner, and Huff 1937, 82). Thus, as a modern profession with scientific aspirations, social work required a more direct method of evaluating service outcomes.

The Delegation of Outcome Research

Authors have argued that social workers in pursuit of professional standing made use of the scientific method to distinguish their labor from the lay knowledge and informal altruism of amateur volunteers (Lunbeck 1994, 42; Okpych and Yu 2014, 9; Ruswick 2013, 188). In fact, social work's early scientism entailed boundary-work not only with avocational "friendly visitors" but also with social scientists. In their struggle for professional status, social workers sought the benefit of scientific legitimacy while avoiding the risk of turning social work into a derivative variant of other disciplines. Therefore, it was commonly held that social workers should not rely on researchers from other fields to examine their work (e.g., American Association of Social Workers 1929, 41; Abbott 1931, 148; Baylor and Monachesi 1939, 60; Witmer 1942, 6). In short, it is true that social work invoked science to establish professional jurisdiction, but that same goal caused "estrangement and separation" from social science research during the first half of the twentieth century (Pollak 1951, 61).[7]

Despite professional ambitions, however, social work mostly lacked academic capabilities of its own during this time. University-based programs concentrated almost entirely on training clinicians, and many of the instructors were former or active agency staff (Steiner 1921, 41; Walker 1928, 166–67).[8] Wary of ceding ground to social scientists but faced with their own limited academic capacity, social work leaders designated research on client outcomes (among other topics) an agency function alongside service delivery, as spelled out in the professionally formative report of the Milford Conference:

> It is quite possible that there may in time be established institutes for research in social case work analogous to institutes for medical research…. A limited part of this task of research may be assumed by educational institutions. It seems to us, however, not only desirable but imperative that much of it be undertaken by the national and local social case work agencies themselves and by individual social case workers in their employ. (American Association of Social Workers 1929, 41)

It is helpful to recall here that current accounts of POE in the U.S. human service sector point to the late twentieth century as the period when outcome evaluation became the remit of service providers. In contrast, the history detailed above reveals that this setup began taking shape in the

[7] Such turfism is typical of occupational communities aspiring to professional status. A specialized academic knowledge base is the linchpin of claims to authority, enabling not only research on best practices and instruction of neophytes, but also a potent signal of legitimacy to external audiences (see Abbott 1988).

[8] Social work schools recruited from other disciplines for instruction, but social science research was "remote from the field of social work in organization and viewpoint" (Lurie 1930, 416).

early twentieth century, when social work leaders decided that evaluation "can be developed and practiced only by the agencies and case workers themselves" (Blackman 1925, 246).

Still, there is a crucial difference between past and present: POE is often viewed today as a facet of *organizational* performance assessment, meaning that client outcomes are viewed as the accomplishments or failures of specific organizational actors (Barman 2016, 59; Mitchell 2012; Sowa, Selden, and Sandfort 2004, 720). Past literature differs from today's organizational emphasis, portraying client outcomes as the effects of decisions and practices that constitute social work *technique* and that, as such, transcend particular agencies. As Cabot (1931) makes clear in his NCSW presidential address, the anticipated value of outcome research was "not a comparison of worker with worker or of agency with agency but an evaluation of one method against another" (22). To be clear, social workers did not entirely disregard organizational effectiveness, but agency evaluation did not incorporate outcome assessment. Instead, as Hengerer (1950) lays out in her extensive review of national association standards, agency effectiveness was determined with operational benchmarks for personnel qualifications, financial stability, building conditions, and other resource inputs.[9]

It seems paradoxical that outcome evaluation was treated as an agency function even as guidelines for agency success emphasized inputs, but this distinction accords with the idea of agencies as laboratories studying professional (not organizational) effectiveness (Barrow 1925, 133; Sheffield 1922, 38; Youngdahl 1937, 328). The social worker's competencies were considered professional assets unconfined by agency boundaries. It followed that "any increased

[9] For example, French (1952) explains that Child Welfare League of America evaluations "do not attempt to find out how the children dealt with by [an] agency actually turn out" (50) but rather look at how agencies align with standards on turnover, boarding rates, and caseload size.

knowledge of people and means of helping them to resume the uninterrupted conduct of their lives should become the accessible property of all social workers" (*The Compass* 1936, 13). This cooperative sentiment is ubiquitous in early social work textbooks and manuals, which exhort staff to "share their technical findings, however tentative, with the profession" (Family Service Association of America 1953, 14).

Notably, these same historical documents evince a marked lack of engagement with POE as a publicity strategy. Past guides on fundraising and public relations focus on dramatic anecdotes of client improvement and statements of need while virtually ignoring systematic outcome data.[10] As indicated previously, authors have argued that the absence of outcome data in organizational reporting suggests that human service professionals deemed outcome evaluation irrelevant at the time. I argue, however, that such claims miss critical institutional context by overlooking the socially constructed nature of POE's current organization-centric framing. The agencies undertaking evaluation research in the early twentieth century were not viewed in competitive isolation; they were seen as vessels of a broader professional research enterprise in service to social work's jurisdictional claims (Fletcher 1949, 435). Accordingly, the precursors of present-day POE appear in trade and academic periodicals intended for collective professional

[10] To determine the amount of attention paid to outcome evaluation in publicity materials I reviewed all issues of the periodical "News Bulletin" issued by the Social Work Publicity Council from November 1923 until April 1936. Later renamed *Channels*, the bulletin was a periodic digest of human service publicity. I found no discussion of communicating aggregate outcome evaluation results (though there is much discussion of sharing dramatic case stories). The Council also released several pamphlets and books on publicity and on the preparation of annual reports (e.g., Baker and Routzahn 1937; 1947; Routzahn 1941; Routzahn and Routzahn 1928; Tolleris 1946). Again, these sources yield no mention of reporting aggregate outcome evaluation as measures of effectiveness. Similar patterns emerge in fundraising guides (e.g., Gamble and Gamble 1942; Jones 1934). This is a striking difference from today's practices.

advancement, not in annual reports showcasing individual organizational performance (for a useful review see Perl and Simon 1942).

As shown in the following section, this early research lacked rigor and was relatively rare. However, it marks an important and largely neglected first step in POE. Indeed, the scarcity and simplicity of this research make it all the more worthy of study, as the misalignment between the expectation and reality of agency-based evaluation is a recurring historical theme.

The Struggle for Quantitative Evaluation

The delegation of outcome research to service agencies followed an intuitive logic. To wit, social work effectiveness is a function of service results, and part of the social worker's charge is to monitor those results. By this logic it appeared that social workers were already inscribing outcome data in their narrative case reports, which needed only to be standardized and harnessed systematically. Recognizing this potential trove of data, a chorus of social work leaders and critics declared "the necessity for some method of classifying, summarizing, and generalizing the hundreds of case histories that come into [social workers'] hands" (Lundberg 1926, 63; see also, e.g., Frankel 1926; Lee 1928; Phelps 1927; Price 1929; Sherman 1925).

Social work's scientific devotees considered standardization and quantification to be vital qualities of research, as science was equated with the objective identification of generalizable trends and relationships without the undue influence of idiosyncratic subjectivity (for useful historical context see Porter 1995). Paragraphs of text in the case record, no matter how informative on their own, were not computationally tractable and thus could not be put to the test of "telltale rates, ratios, curves, trends, medians, averages, and parabolic graphs" (Emerson 1926, 465). With the ascendancy of statistical methods in the social sciences, many social work leaders were eager to capitalize on the allure of quantification (see Tice 1998, chap. 2), thereby conforming to a common tendency of the time (especially pronounced in education) to conflate evaluation and measurement (see Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen 2004, 33).

Consistent with these trends, the 1920s saw a flurry of studies presenting decisions about client progress as ratings. By the 1930s there was growing belief that "the only way a large number of cases can be treated statistically…is to regard the judgments or conclusions about cases as statistical data" (White 1933, 64).[11] Though this technique was by no means omnipresent in practice, it received a high-profile validation in 1940 when the Family Welfare Association of America (FWAA) distributed a standard "statistical card" allowing workers to mark whether a client's problem had been "modified" (see Figure 2.2).[12]

[11] The conversion of judgments into quantitative data was normally quite simple. For example, Karpf's (1927) report on delinquent boys classifies a case as either "adjusted" or not. Slightly more complex studies include those by Nesbitt (1926), Clark (1930), and Hay and Kappenburg (1931), who make intermediate rankings (e.g., "partially adjusted"). The most elaborate system was devised by Reed (1931), who uses a weighted, multidimensional, 100-point scale.

[12] The quantification of social worker judgment was restricted largely to casework. In group work the adoption of rating systems was significantly slower. For example, though the publishing arm of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) movement distributed several studies of evaluation charts in the 1940s (Bernstein 1949; Dimock and Trecker 1949; Swift 1941), the 1950 YMCA manual on record-keeping includes only narrative evaluation templates, suggesting minimal uptake of rating-based evaluation by mid-century (Young Men's Christian Association 1950). In community organization there were efforts to develop "self-appraisal" surveys for community councils and chests, but these focused on meeting attendance, fundraising efficiency, and other operational standards rather than direct effects on the wellbeing of community members (for reviews see Dawson 1950, 182; Robinson 1950, 267).

Figure 2.2. Portion of statistical card for FWAA-affiliated agencies (issued in 1940)[13]

A	B	C	D	E	F	
					1.	Problem modified from agency standpoint
					2.	Problem modified from client's standpoint
					3.	Problem unmodified because of limitation of case work resources within the agency
					4.	Problem unmodified because of limitation in community resources
					5.	Problem unmodified because of limitation in client's capacity
					6.	....
					7.	....

Letters A, B, C, etc., refer to general classifications of problems.

Source: Parker 1948, 9

The conversion of caseworker judgment into ratings is a quintessential instance of rationalization, which often centers on smoothing out the intricate textures of the social world to facilitate accounting and valuation. Numerous authors have observed that quantification is integral to rationalization, as numbers signify standardization, objectivity, and commensurability (Meyer 1986; Power 2004). However, lest we interpret this metrication purely as the distillation of complex phenomena into simpler units of information, it is worth heeding the constructivist refrain that quantification tends to "remake what it measures" (Espeland and Stevens 2008, 431). With respect to social work history, the reconstructive property of quantification is apparent

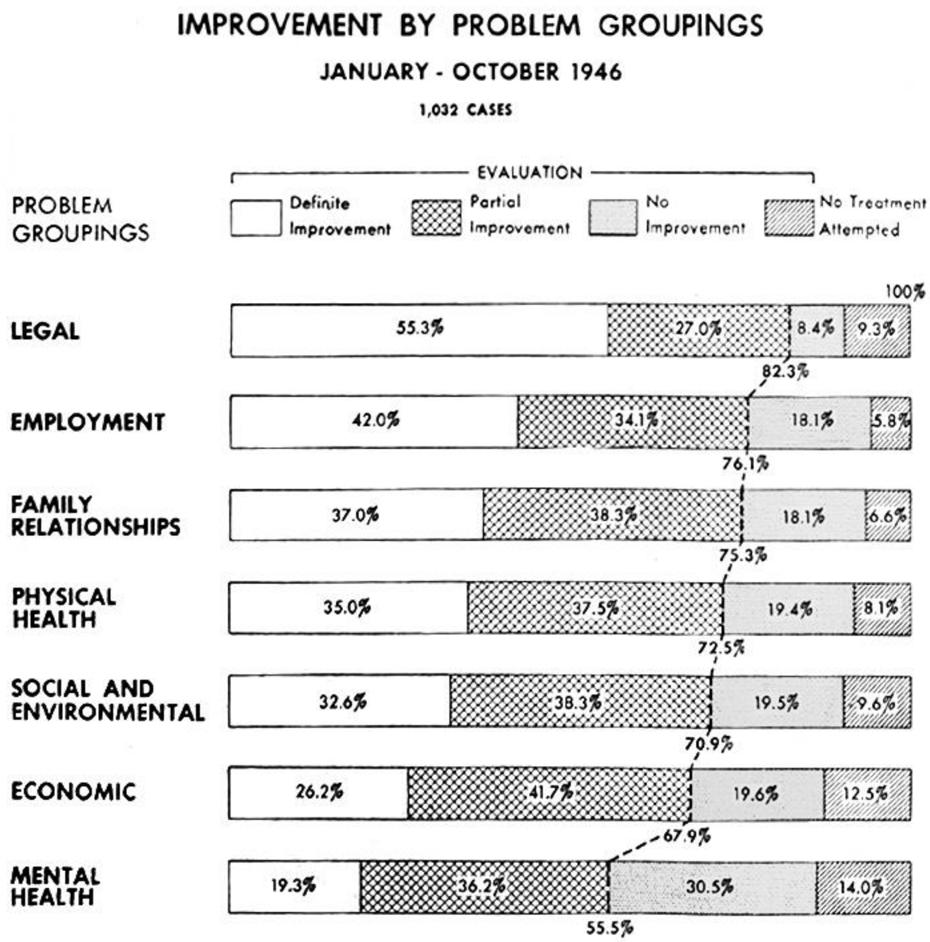
[13] The portion of the statistical card not shown lists problems and classifications mentioned at the bottom of the grid (A for Economic, B for Employment, C for Family Relationships, etc.). Simplified versions of this template were released later in the 1940s, and my archival work shows that individual agencies sometimes customized this template to suit their specific needs.

when one compares rating-based evaluation to the traditional function of narrative case recording, which involved an open-ended mode of evaluation interwoven with ongoing diagnosis and service adjustment. Traditionally, the caseworker's evaluation of client functioning was both a check on progress and an assessment of outstanding challenges. As such, evaluation was inseparable from the broader running account of client circumstances, as caseworkers often treated outcomes as intermediate developments rather than as culminating endpoints (see, e.g., Bristol 1936, 171; Hamilton 1936, 35).

Without this diagnostic context, the rating data in the social work research of this period reconstructed evaluation as a summative and retrospective accounting of service effects (see example in Figure 2.3). Instead of a medley of life histories, interview transcripts, and clinical notes on changing situations, the so-called "statistical method" enacted a uniform and terminal tabulation of discrete outcomes, thus stripping away the narrative detail of case study (Jocher 1928, 208; Queen 1927, 226). Consequently, as a profession-building strategy to promote effectiveness, rating-based studies fell short; the client situations and treatment methods behind the numbers were either underspecified or entirely obscured, preventing an understanding of means–ends relationships. In what Hooker (1945) calls "the ancient controversy between the caseworker and the statistician" (72), practitioners and allied scholars valued the individualized logic of case study over the aggregative logic of the statistical method (Bain 1929, 150; Lundberg 1926, 63; Towle 1941, 67; White 1930, 260; Witmer 1942, 2).

Additionally, though ratings yielded a cosmetic standardization, they failed to overcome idiosyncrasy in decision-making. With fluctuating evaluation norms across workers and agencies, ratings lacked the homogeneity necessary for generalizable evaluation (Bruno 1926, 304; Stevenson and Smith 1934, 148; White 1928, 605).[14] Furthermore, standardization could not alone address the nettlesome issues of counterfactuals, construct validity, and persistence of observed improvements.

Figure 2.3. Presentation of service results at the Family Society of St. Paul



Source: Heckman and Stone 1947, 270

[14] An FWAA report on statistical card usage admits that even the Association's professionalized affiliates routinely disregarded the statistical card's evaluation section because of difficulty in building consensus on criteria (Family Welfare Association of America 1946).

Because of these obstacles, statistical POE was rare. Measurement of results was a time-consuming task; without the payoff of useful data, the work of recording, compiling, and interpreting assorted ratings was easily dismissed as "useless labor" (Klein 1948, 16). Administrators found more utility in descriptive statistics related to immediate operational needs (e.g., caseload characteristics, agency spending, service volume). As a result, agency research earned a reputation as "the handmaiden of administration" (Clague 1935, 422). By mid-century social work leaders had become exasperated by the surplus of administrative reporting and the shortage of outcome assessment (Konopka 1955, 59). As Blenkner (1950) put it, "the recurrent theme is always the same—caseworkers need [evaluative] research, they must do it themselves, they are just on the verge of doing it, but they have not quite managed to get around to it" (55).[15]

To review, the belief in the early twentieth century that service agencies could operate as research centers to advance professional legitimacy ran aground of narrow operational objectives, limited administrative capacity, and preferences for narrative and idiographic methods (i.e. methods that furnish rich qualitative information on unique cases without trying to extract quantitative data on generalizable phenomena across cases). Agencies occasionally produced a superficial form of quantitative outcome analysis that gestured to ascendant symbols of rigor but that lacked actionable value. More typically, these organizations allocated their resources to more pressing, practical, and particularistic concerns.

[15] A review of 468 social work studies published between 1946 and 1950 revealed that the overwhelming majority of research was "directed to specific needs, answering specific questions, and of real value to specific agencies or communities only" (Preston and Mudd 1956, 35). This review certainly understates the predominance of agency-tailored administrative research, as agencies produced a sizeable volume of unpublished studies for internal purposes.

The Formalization of Outcome Evaluation: 1950s to 1970s

The immediate postwar years initiated a "decade of reappraisal" in social work research (Greenwood 1957). Literature from this period displays an unmistakable shift toward more acknowledgment of outcome evaluation as a domain of basic research (as opposed to administrative fact-finding), more recognition of the resources required, more acceptance of agency limitations in conducting such work, and more openness to collaboration with academics from other fields (Blenkner 1950; Davies 1950; French 1952; Gordon 1951; Hamilton 1949; Herzog 1953; Hunt and Kogan 1950; Kahn 1957; Klein 1951; Kogan and Brown 1954; Konopka 1955; Maas 1950; MacDonald 1957; Morgan 1949; Preston and Mudd 1956; Western Reserve University 1948). Along with this change in viewpoint, schools of social work hosted growing numbers of doctorate-holding faculty and doctorate-pursuing students, a sign of new investment in basic research (Kirk and Reid 2002, 38).

These changes occurred amidst a rise in positivist epistemology in the American academy, triggered in large part by the American government's recruitment of academics for military and social policy research and development (Steinmetz 2005). Under this reenergized utilitarian ethos and expanding technocratic mandate, postwar social science exhibited increasingly empiricist and causal leanings, which spilled over into social work and seeded the modern field of program evaluation (Austin 2002, 401).

An Age of Accountability

The expansion of American social science and social welfare following World War II led the U.S. government to boost funding for social program evaluation, resulting in waves of formal evaluations assessing interventions in myriad fields, including education (e.g., Head Start), urban redevelopment (e.g., Model Cities), and casework (see studies in Geismar 1972). Studies of casework commonly failed to reach the experimental ideal, but some did incorporate a degree of random assignment, control, and validation. In doing so, these studies were a notable advance over the work of prior decades. Unfortunately for the social work profession, however, the findings suggested that casework is ineffective, a conclusion that prompted multiple symposia and debates on the meaning and merits of the evidence (Rubin 2008, 452). Adding to the urgency of this "effectiveness crisis" (Kirk and Reid 2002, 39) was the Nixon administration's suspicion of in-kind social services, considered sources of fiscal waste, administrative bloat, and cultural degradation (Mergel 2010, 114). With this new political reality social workers faced an "age of accountability" in which social programs would need to show evidence of effectiveness to justify claims on taxpayer dollars (Briar 1973; Hoshino 1973; Tropp 1974).

There is an apparent dissonance in the practice of outcome assessment during this age of accountability. While the American government invested in social program evaluation, contracting policies for service provision via private agencies "largely ignored" the question of client outcomes (Martin and Frahm 2010, 141). However, while there seems to be a fundamental contradiction between the growth of program evaluation and the simultaneous lack of regard for outcomes in contracting policies, I argue that this duality reflects a coherent notion of means–ends relationships attributing causal primacy to large-scale programs over individual agencies.

To contextualize this conception of means–ends relationships it is necessary to recognize the intellectual atmosphere of postwar social welfare policy. The definitive social policy innovations of the time were not simply agency service modules; they were endeavors "to create new institutions to plan, coordinate, and deliver services in new ways" (Ehrenreich 1985, 168). In accordance with this scope, outcome evaluation aspired to the grand parameters of social science. Channeling the positivism of the era, evaluations were often premised on theories of social change and executed by trained specialists under experimental or quasi-experimental standards of causal inference (for a discussion see Nathan 2000, chap. 3).[16]

Under this "analytic revolution," evaluators treated factors such as facilities and personnel as context variables, necessary for determining external validity but peripheral in the final causal accounting (O'Connor 2001). Organizations were viewed as sources of facilitation or friction for new service models, but the models themselves were the focal drivers of outcomes and hence the main objects of analysis. Moreover, it was not feasible to administer full-fledged evaluations repeatedly in the multitude of organizations carrying out services. Therefore, a key objective was "to separate the program itself as a stimulus to change from the staff and organization carrying out the program" (Suchman 1967, 107; see also Cain and Hollister 1972, 117; Rossi, Freeman, and Wright 1979, 288). Contracts with service providers reflected this partition, leaving aside questions of goal-attainment and centering on costs, counts, and compliance (Kettner and Martin 1998, 187; Mosley and Smith 2018, 114; Smith 2012, 206).

This policy environment testifies to both change and continuity in the history of outcome evaluation. In terms of continuity, the differentiation of programs from agencies resembled early social work's emphasis on professional method. As discussed previously, outcome evaluation took shape in social work agencies in the early twentieth century as a field-building project to discover effective techniques, which were understood more as collective professional resources than as organization-specific assets. Similarly, the outcome accountability systems born of Great Society legislation abstracted social programs from the service providers delivering them, further

[16] Barman (2016, 57) notes that evaluators recognized the challenge of external validity and soon shifted their concern to addressing the "implementation gap" between program design and management, but the evaluative object of analysis remained the program, not the organization.

institutionalizing a version of means–ends relationships whereby organizations serve as administrative hosts for transferable intervention designs.

Given this construction of accountability and performance monitoring, social work leaders perceived the solution to their effectiveness crisis as a cooperative undertaking to appraise new treatment methods, much in the same way that outcome evaluation had developed in decades prior as a way to share insights about effective practice and to build professional legitimacy. Although some pointed to the need for better training in budgeting, personnel management, and other aspects of administration, direct service innovation remained top priority under an accountability regime that sidelined organizational factors (see Patti 1983, chap. 1).

With respect to change during this period, the growing cohort of capable and dedicated evaluators challenged traditional norms of expertise in social work that had privileged frontline experience, as evident in the practical backgrounds of instructors, the primacy of fieldwork in credentialing, the delegation of research to direct service agencies, and the centrality of pure clinical judgment in evaluation.[17] By bringing about the administrative resources and specialized skillsets necessary for distinguishing outcomes from outputs or unstandardized ratings, academic maturation in the postwar era significantly altered the discipline's construction of evaluative competency. This period saw the emergence of a new form of social work expert, one who could claim authority not from exposure to the daily travails of direct service or from facility in interacting with clients, but from familiarity with abstruse literature and a command of statistical analysis (Fanshel 1980, 9). Thus, the published evaluations that spawned social work's

[17] Clinical judgment continued to play an important role in postwar evaluation, but published studies relied increasingly on standardized scales and external criteria (e.g., court appearances) for assessing outcomes (see, e.g., studies cited in Fischer 1973, 15).

effectiveness crisis challenged the discipline both because of their results and, as elaborated below, because of the detachment from practice settings that they legitimized.

Empirical Practice and the Reassertion of Clinical Process

Immediately following the reviews that led to the effectiveness crisis, a number of critics asserted that these studies failed to impart useful guidance to social workers. By highlighting the averaged results of treatment and comparison groups, these evaluations aggregated away the nuances of client problems and progress. Adding to this problem of underspecification, researchers had operationalized casework essentially as whatever caseworkers do, collapsing distinct practice modalities into an overly generalized treatment category and precluding identification of specific areas needing improvement (see, e.g., responses in Fischer 1976, 172, 179, 193, 199, 226, 264, 280, 303).

Critics claimed further that the black boxing of casework derived from the growing division of labor between researcher and practitioner, a split that kept researchers out of touch with the dynamic and interactive processes under study. Social work scholars argued that fusing these roles would promote understanding of how individuals respond to particular procedures over time, engendering "models that examine both the *process* and the outcome of treatment" (Wood 1978, 455, emphasis added; see also Alexander and Siman 1973, 106; Briar 1980, 33; Howe 1974, 2; Hudson 1976, 222; Reid 1976, 266; Talsma 1976, 281). The unifying methodology behind these models was single-subject design (SSD), whereby clinicians operationalize client baselines, monitor progress systematically, and manipulate treatment to simulate experimental conditions (e.g., by withdrawing and resuming treatment). Though SSD predates the effectiveness crisis of the 1970s, it received new interest with this turning point

(Rubin 2011, 66). Joel Fischer himself (who had catalyzed the crisis in his review of group-comparison evaluations) called for a moratorium on "gross evaluative research," encouraging a shift to "research programs based on the systematic investigation of the success of individual procedures with individual clients, using rigorous case study methods of evaluation" (1976, 153).

Authors have sometimes depicted the movement to integrate practice and research—known as empirical practice—as an attempted paradigm shift; however, empirical practice can also be explained as a reprise of past developments.[18] In particular, Fischer's endorsement of "rigorous case study methods" calls to mind the contest of prior decades between case study and the statistical method. While empirical practice was not an anti-positivist affirmation of narrative evaluation, the weight it placed on treatment process and case distinctiveness evokes prewar sentiments favoring individualized evaluation over aggregate scores. Like earlier backers of case study, empirical practice enthusiasts advanced an idiographic form of assessment as an antidote to treatment underspecification. From this perspective, support of empirical practice was not just a plea to improve social work research; it was a maneuver to redirect the course of social work rationalization by underscoring *means* in the study of means–ends relationships. This movement revisited past debates over the relative value of charting process versus tabulating outcomes, debates that underlay ideas of precision and utility in evaluation. Likewise, the movement's idealization of the caseworker who combines clinical intervention and evaluative inquiry replicated past assumptions about the ability of frontline staff to be part-time researchers as well as the need to have the practitioner steer the professional research agenda. Epitomized by Scott

[18] In addition to "empirical practice," authors have referred to "scientifically based practice," "scientist–practitioner model," and "researcher–practitioner model" (Gray, Plath, and Webb 2009, chap. 4; Kirk and Reid 2002, chap. 4; Wakefield and Kirk 1996).

Briar's (1977) "clinical scientist" concept, this movement recentered practical experience in notions of social work expertise.[19]

Also a repeat of history was the disappointing result of this attempt to delegate outcome research to service providers. Though the paragon of the practitioner–researcher became influential in professional education (Reid and Zettergren 1999, 45), it had less staying power in practice. Following the precedent of the early twentieth century, service agencies proved to be poor initiators of systematic outcome evaluation. Numerous studies indicated a lack of time and inclination among practitioners to consult academic literature, implement rigorous research methods, and disseminate evaluation findings (see Okpych and Yu 2014, 20). Additionally, both researchers and practitioners called attention to the ethical dilemma posed by withholding treatment from clients in order to simulate experimental conditions (whether in an SSD study or a group-comparison analysis). As Thomas (1978) explains, "if the researcher-practitioner remains fully objective by research criteria, this professional disinterest may transmit itself as a lack of concern or compassion and compromise service objectives" (27). Thus, in contrast to ideals of compatibility and mutual reinforcement between research and service functions, clinicians resisted the tenets of empirical practice (Simpson 1979).

In sum, social work's mid-century adolescence was a time of profound disruption and reformulation, yet trends in POE display several meaningful threads of continuity with the preceding era as well. First, POE continued to be a prominent ideal in social work

[19] Briar (a leading empirical practice advocate) called on agencies and schools of social work to devote at least 20 percent of their resources "to the pursuit of effectiveness," by which he presumably meant research-related activities (Briar 1974, 15). Compare this figure with findings from Hill and Ormsby's (1953) time-cost study of Family Service of Philadelphia (a relatively well-resourced agency). Hill and Ormsby found that all research (not just outcome evaluation) accounted for 6.4% of staff time and 6.5% of agency expenditures. Klein (1948, 25) had earlier called on agencies to devote only 1 to 2 percent of their budgets for collective research projects.

professionalization, though one seldom realized due to the abiding reality of minimal agency capacity. Whether because of academic underdevelopment in the prewar era or because of dissatisfaction with group-comparison methods in the postwar period, practitioners faced repeated appeals from social work leaders to incorporate scientific research into clinical record-keeping. Second, history shows that the exercise of combining the idiographic perspective of direct practice with the nomothetic objectives of scientific research has generated a seemingly dialectical tension between the priorities of particularization and standardization, the former required for capturing essential details of individual service provision to tailor treatment to specific needs and the latter necessary for generating a curated mass of generalizable outcome data. Finally, while the substance of POE varied from rating-based reports in the 1920s to the articulation of empirical practice in the 1970s, the impetus for POE remained essentially the same; it was understood consistently (if aspirationally) as a means to strengthen the empirical foundation of professional social work. To use the institutionalist parlance, social workers imbued the idea of POE with a *professional logic* emphasizing collective knowledge-building to hone effective techniques and to bolster social work's legitimacy (cf. Thornton, Ocasio, and Lounsbury 2012).

The Marketization of Outcome Evaluation: 1980s to Present

The professional logic of outcome evaluation receded in the 1980s as neoliberal ideologies such as New Public Management (NPM) introduced business strategies into the public and nonprofit sectors (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004, 134; Hasenfeld and Garrow 2012, 301; Lynch-Cerullo and Cooney 2011, 367). Manifesting new levels of trust in competitive enterprise and market discipline, government and philanthropic funders incorporated outcome evaluation requirements directly into contract terms and grant guidelines, repurposing outcome data as organizational performance indicators and instilling a *market logic* in evaluation (Martin and Frahm 2010). For social work practitioners, these changes meant that the demand for POE was no longer just an exhortation to cooperate in building an evidence base; it was an imperative to substantiate an organization's worthiness for funding. As Ciarlo (1977) observes in a prescient review of incipient self-evaluation expectations in community health service contracting, POE "is centered squarely upon the philosophy that evaluation is a management function, rather than a research function" (48).

Organizational Accountability in the Human Service Market

The literature on human service marketization tends to depict the advent of performance-based payment systems as part of a new expectation for outcome accountability (e.g., Alexander, Brudney, and Yang 2010, 566; Emslie and Watts 2017, 328; Mosley and Smith 2018, 114; Spitzmueller 2016, 38; Suárez 2010, 697). Yet much of this literature overlooks the fact that policymakers had already ushered in an "age of accountability" by the 1970s with program evaluation mandates. Though NPM certainly reinforced this accountability regime, I maintain that the ideology's central historical significance lies not in its accentuation of accountability standards but in its reapplication of these standards to *organizational* effectiveness.

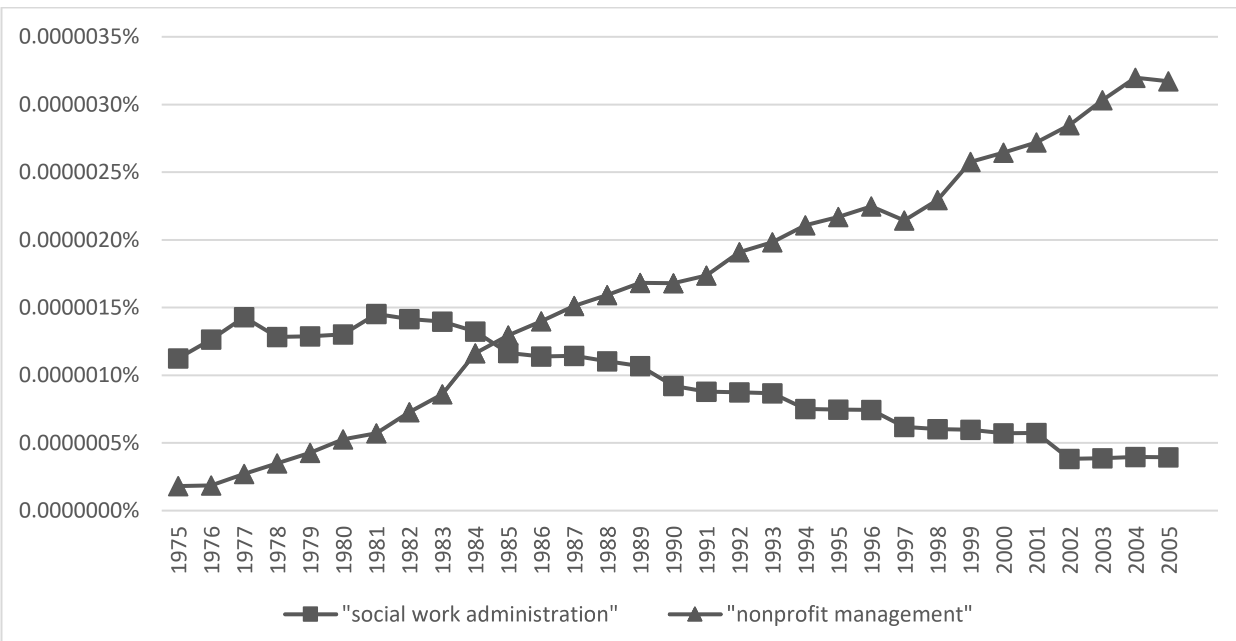
The inclusion of outcome reporting in requirements for grant and contract fulfillment signaled a new perception of means–ends relationships placing greater causal weight on individual agencies in contrast to general professional technologies. To be sure, the rise of the market logic did not cause POE to displace large-scale program evaluation, but it did shift the framing and incentives by which agencies viewed the task of proving effectiveness. Whereas prior assessment standards had related to agencies as passive implementers of preformulated social programs, the new zeitgeist valorized an entrepreneurial ethos favoring "high degrees of innovation, risk-taking, and pro-activeness" (Maier, Meyer, and Steinbereithner 2016, 71).

The idealization of competitive enterprise challenged the traditional institutionalization of agency administration in social work. Throughout the profession's development, the normative career trajectory for administrators required a formative period in direct practice, which ensured that administrators would be "responsible stewards of the profession's values and technology" (Patti 1983, 19). Additionally, social work texts and curricula had regularly melded administration with community organization, a practice area stressing interorganizational relationships and regional policy planning over internal agency operations (Spencer 1959, 26). By subordinating administrative skill to clinical experience and conflating administration and community organization, social work education and training had systematically downplayed independent organizational identity, constructing agencies primarily as service delivery mechanisms for the profession (Austin 2018, 556).[20] These conventions had aligned well with a policy context that marginalized organizational influences in outcome evaluation, but they proved out of sync with a neoliberal "enterprise culture" (Gray et al. 2015, 371), which spawned a more decentralized and competitive system of human service planning, provision, and evaluation (Kramer 1994, 38; Lynn 2002, 70; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011, i207).

[20] Early social work literature refers to the preoccupation with internal organizational interests as "agency-mindedness," a pejorative describing loyalty to one's agency at the expense of relationships with other community organizations (see chapter 4). The term also described a lack of professional camaraderie beyond community boundaries—"blindness to the importance of the body of social work practice" (The Compass 1936, 13). The term illustrates the normative treatment of organizational independence in past social work literature, much of which frames service delivery "as social policy decisions primarily and agency managerial decisions secondarily" (quoted in Kramer 1966, 51).

In response to marketization developments, educational programs began to offer courses and credentials focused more narrowly on the generic aspects of management, a phenomenon that Patti (1984) aptly terms the "MBA-ing of social welfare" (20). Especially noteworthy is the spread of nonprofit management (Figure 2.4), a discipline based on the domain-agnostic project of leveling administrative styles across human services, arts, education, and other disparate fields comprising the nonprofit sector (O'Neill 2005, 10).[21]

Figure 2.4. Google Ngrams of "social work administration" and "nonprofit management"[22]



[21] In his dissertation on the institutionalization of nonprofit management, Block (1987) comments that nonprofit managers tend to "discuss their role, positions, and responsibilities in terms of 'agency practice' rather than 'professional practice'" (15).

[22] Smoothing of 6. "Human service administration" and "human service management" follow the same trajectory, declining in the mid-1980s.

Mirroring this trend, the representation of social workers in administrative positions declined as administration became more differentiated from clinical service (Sarri 1987, 34). Part of this decline resulted from job declassification in public welfare agencies, which relaxed standards of education and work experience to place less priority on specific disciplinary backgrounds (Pecora and Austin 1983). This process of declassification made social work training increasingly optional for human service positions, thus reducing the professional influence of social work in social welfare systems. These changes dislodged organizational stewardship from previously established professional logics, contributing to the reconstruction of outcome data as a gauge of agency performance rather than of the efficacy of higher-order professional technology.

The Evidentiary Limits of POE

Scholars have observed that the rise of organizations as independent and empowered agents is a distinctive lineament of the neoliberal age and its blending of scientism and managerialism. By advancing the sense of predictability and control over uncertainty and volatility, today's data-driven bureaucratization fosters a highly agentic image of organizational "actorhood," whereby organizations appear as "bounded, purposive, and rationalized sovereign actors, with great capabilities for effective action toward goals" (Drori, Meyer, and Hwang 2009, 18; see also, e.g., Bromley and Meyer 2017; Hwang and Powell 2009; Suárez and Esparza 2017). POE at the turn of the twenty-first century typifies this ideal of the muscular, sophisticated enterprise deploying metrics and models for social impact. Promoted as a "leap of reason" in one popular industry initiative (Morino 2011), modern POE channels both the longstanding sacralization of numerical data as a corrective to subjectivity and the neoliberal glorification of business methods to maximize efficiency (Blalock 1999, 120; Brest 2010, 47; Campbell 2002, 252).

However, scientifically inspired managerialism does not arise merely from technical requirements. Following a venerable tradition of institutionalist scholarship on the "decoupling" of organizational processes from organizational presentation, authors have revealed that the trappings of rational bureaucracy (such as outcome evaluation) commonly perform the symbolic function of signaling legitimacy to external stakeholders even as actual implementation may be quite perfunctory or contentious (Bromley and Powell 2012; Meyer 2010). Indeed, while survey-based studies of POE have found significant rates of reported adoption (Thomson 2010, 612), in-depth qualitative studies uncover serious limitations in finances and staffing for outcome analysis (Carman 2007; Carman and Fredericks 2008; Liket, Rey-Garcia, and Maas 2014; Sandfort 2000; Snibbe 2006; Stoecker 2007). It appears that agencies typically report data on client circumstances, participation, and feedback, information that may be useful for needs assessment and formative evaluation but that often fails to pass muster as compelling evidence of impact (Hatry 2011, 22). While many professionalized and well-resourced agencies have made effective use of outcome evaluation systems, most service providers have adhered to historical precedent: When it comes to determining durable emotional and behavioral changes, POE does not reach conventional standards of rigor in measurement precision, causal inference, and follow-up (Gugerty and Karlan 2018; Hendricks, Plantz, and Pritchard 2008; McDavid, Huse, and Hawthorn 2019, 481; Mitchell and Berlan 2016).

There is also a well-documented challenge in gaining buy-in from frontline staff, who are apt to question the suitability of numerical outcome data for representing the care and counsel they provide (Carman 2007, 68; Carnochan et al. 2014, 1019; Maxwell, Rotz, and Garcia 2016, 479).[23] In line with this general finding, scholars have reported that frontline human service workers view their work as highly nuanced, interactive, and judgment-based (Benjamin 2012; Benjamin and Campbell 2015). The result is that they are frequently disinclined to reduce their services to checkmarks and digits in order to achieve the generalizing objectives of research, especially if those objectives interfere with service delivery or threaten to disclose data that undermine the agency's standing with funders and other crucial stakeholders (Gambrill 2013, 512; Rubin and Babbie 2017, 339).

In social work, the project of normalizing the agency-based clinical scientist had run its course by the mid-1990s, by which point a sizable body of evidence showed a lack of research utilization and orchestration among practitioners (Benbenishty 1989; Geismar and Wood 1982; Jayaratne 1977). Instead, as Reid (1994) recounts, social work's growing cadre of academic researchers had assumed responsibility for building the discipline's evidence base: "Although the idea of practitioner–researchers as contributors to social work knowledge has remained dormant in the social agency, it has come to life in academic settings" (179). Researchers in social work and cognate disciplines have generated an ever-growing corpus of randomized controlled trials and systematic reviews, curated by intermediaries such as the Campbell Collaboration and What Works Clearinghouse. As a result, funders, policymakers, and practitioners can now access an expansive "evidence-based practice bureaucracy" tasked with maintaining records of evaluative findings and catalogs of empirically supported interventions (Gray, Plath, and Webb 2009, 78).

[23] It is a commonplace in literature on workplace dynamics across sectors that professionals resist efforts to standardize their actions (e.g., Bosk 2018; Townley 2002; Turco 2012).

The rise of such evidence repositories points to a seemingly intractable contradiction in the exaltation of both evaluative rigor and outcome accountability in the present age of POE: On the one hand, the market logic demands *ex post* verification of client outcomes from service providers. On the other hand, as apparent in the types of professionals who contribute to directories of evaluation evidence, rigorous outcome analysis requires a level of capacity, expertise, and sustained interest that is generally limited to specialized research institutions (i.e. institutions such as academic departments, think tanks, and policy centers whose staffs consist largely of full-time, credentialed research professionals). Also, because the time and expense required for formal outcome assessment limit its volume, thorough evaluations are most useful as *ex ante* estimates of success in programs resembling tested parameters (as opposed to retrospective assessments of organizational performance). Thus, while today's ideal of organizational actorhood presents a virtuous complementarity between hardheaded managerialism and rigorous outcome evaluation, institutional trends point to the same deep-rooted conflict between scientific aspirations and organizational constraints that have continually dogged human service professionals.

In historical perspective, then, the spread of POE is both unprecedented and familiar. There is clear novelty in (1) the ideational shift in outcome attribution from a focus on replicable methods toward an emphasis on discrete organizations; (2) the practical instantiation of this shift in changes in contracting and training; and (3) the elevated material urgency of POE. Meanwhile, there is striking historical consistency in (1) the call for direct practitioner involvement in evaluation; (2) the idiographic–nomothetic dialectic characterizing divergent views on how to evaluate deeply nuanced and relational service activity (which would seem to require the practitioner's level of investment and care) while also arriving at generalizable rules about what works in treating client problems (which would seem to require the researcher's level of analysis and impartiality); and (3) the overestimation of agency capabilities to demonstrate outcomes, an overestimation especially palpable in the era of social enterprise.

Discussion

The study of history has traditionally held a marginal place in social work scholarship and education (Fisher 1999). One might argue that keeping abreast of changes in public policy, service norms, and technology necessarily takes priority over cultivating historical awareness and sensibility; however, since the discipline's early years, social work leaders have recognized the indispensability of historical knowledge. Historical awareness helps to inoculate against professional faddism and shortsightedness by shedding light on past missteps and recurring patterns (e.g., Abbott 1931, 55; De Schweinitz 1956, 125; Reisch 1988, 5). When combined with a constructivist analytical orientation, studying the past can also illuminate meaningful variance in institutional arrangements and their contextual dependencies, thus helping to challenge the taken-for-granted status of seemingly entrenched practices.

Current accounts of POE lack this deep historical perspective. Consequently, authors have described POE as a product of recent expectations for outcome accountability. In contrast, I have reviewed repeated attempts throughout the twentieth century to involve service providers meaningfully in outcome evaluation, and I have argued that neoliberal restructuring changed the stakes for outcome evaluation from the advancement of collective professional legitimacy to the survival and success of individual organizations. Accordingly, I claim that the core distinguishing feature of modern POE is its consecration of direct service agencies as central determinants of outcomes.

This historical overview invites a reconceptualization of rationalization in the human services. As argued earlier, rationalization is normally comprehended as the systematization and quantification of purposive change. I advocate a more constructivist interpretation of rationalization as a culturally anchored and historically contingent negotiation of causal forces linking deliberate actions and targeted outcomes. This negotiation of means–ends relationships is a critical prerequisite to the more familiar processes of standardization, but it is largely overlooked in current organizational research. In the case of modern POE, rationalization reflects not only the degree to which organizations adopt managerial practices to optimize and convey their effectiveness, but also the development of a cultural milieu in which organizations have become objects of primary interest in outcome attribution. As this chapter's historical analysis shows, this milieu is by no means timeless; notions of causality tying outcomes to organizations over programs are quite recent, stemming from the diminution of professional authority and from the neoliberal apotheosis of decentralization, entrepreneurship, and competition.

The case of POE also illustrates the ceremonial qualities of rationalization. Indeed, the delegation of outcome evaluation to service providers is not especially rational by technical standards. Given the empirically elusive nature of human service outcomes (i.e. culminative and transformative results), methodical evaluation requires commitments of time, attention, and money that would jeopardize most agencies' service missions. In this sense, POE is a textbook example of a "rationalized myth," a belief system about causality and problem-solving that appears rational but whose perceived efficacy rests more on widespread subscription than on intrinsic correctness or usefulness (Meyer and Rowan 1977, 343). Having identified POE as such, we may use historical evidence to consider whether a more feasible and functional configuration of outcome evaluation is possible.

Accommodating Frontline Realities

The most apparent trend in the history reviewed in this chapter is the seemingly perennial overestimation of service agency capacity for outcome evaluation. Curiously, though, it appears that this overestimation does not result from utter ignorance about the day-to-day challenges that service providers encounter. Every entry on research in the *Social Work Year Book* notes the difficulty of research and evaluation, and practitioners have been forthright on this point.[24] Even with the more recent upsurge in POE, funders have apparently recognized agency limitations (e.g., Hendricks, Plantz, and Pritchard 2008). Nevertheless, external stakeholders call on service providers to furnish evidence of their achievements while discounting resource requirements (Carman and Fredericks 2008, 58; Smith 2013, 29).

History suggests that expecting service providers to defy frontline realities by attempting rigorous outcome evaluation is a dubious strategy, likely to result in data that, even when diligently collected and thoughtfully scrutinized, offer only an adumbration of outcome evidence.[25] Following from this historical takeaway, I echo the recommendation from Reid and Zettergren (1999) that "conceptions of accountability should be broadened to reflect the idea of appropriate practice…and not simply be demonstrations of client change or the effectiveness of whatever interventions happen to be used" (58). Such a reconstruction of accountability would not require a complete causal downgrading of individual organizations as compared to

[24] In addition to the articles previously cited, one finds compelling evidence in the first stanza of a poem titled "Statistics," published in the 1932 bulletin of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies: "With swear or prayer we tear our hair; When bidden to compile them; We moil and toil, burn midnight oil; And earnestly revile them" (cited in Deardoff 1933).

[25] I am not arguing that randomized controlled trials, regression discontinuity analyses, and other formal program evaluation tools provide ironclad evidence of impact. However, these methods do align more closely than agency-produced outcome data to prevailing standards of rigor.

generalized programs, but this change would entail a more indirect approach to assessing organizational effectiveness by shifting reporting toward descriptive information that does not require extensive analytical manipulation, such as details of intake procedures, needs assessment, staff training, and operational fidelity to empirically supported intervention templates. In such a scenario, direct evaluation of hard-to-measure psychosocial outcomes would fall mainly to researchers tasked with the development and assessment of effective practices.

Building and Utilizing Empirically Supported Interventions

The prospect of reorienting outcome evaluation to the development of empirically supported interventions harks back to another historical caveat: The tension between capturing the processual nuances of service provision and generalizing treatment methods in order to produce cumulative estimates of effectiveness. Although this challenge remains, evaluation research today features considerably more process-specification than the black box evaluations that sparked the empirical practice movement's critique of endpoint-centric myopia in group-comparison methods. Heeding this critique, researchers have broken down global conceptions of social work treatment into separable intervention protocols (see Kirk and Reid 2002, chap. 5).

Exemplified by Rothman and Thomas's (1994) six-step sequence in intervention research, this newer approach to evaluation emphasizes the delineation and systematic appraisal of change strategies, incorporating field tests, manualization, and practitioner/client feedback throughout the process. The result, ideally, is that human service interventions become both operationally definable and evidence-based without the expectation that practitioners themselves conduct intensive primary research (Fraser and Galinsky 2010). To be sure, this more process-sensitive method of evaluation cannot account for the full range of contextual idiosyncrasies that determine individual outcomes, but it is clearly an advance over the totalizing methods that preceded it (Kirk and Reid 2002, 138). An especially important contribution to greater process-specification in formal evaluation research is the increasing reliance on mixed methods (see Mertens 2018, chap. 1). As researchers recognize the need to triangulate among different analytical techniques to determine the efficacy of distinct intervention models in various contexts, evaluation research has become more nuanced and holistic.[26]

Yet there is scant evidence that empirically supported interventions have made significant inroads in the human services. Scholars continually observe a wide gap between research and practice in social work (Mullen 2002; Okpych and Yu 2014; Rubin 2015). Furthermore, with few exceptions, funders have invested far more in cataloging research-backed human service programs than in propagating them (Aarons, Hurlburt, and Horwitz 2011; Davies et al. 2017; Liebman 2018; Stannard-Stockton 2010). Overcoming these roadblocks requires that funders accept the contradictions and limited utility of POE for hard-to-measure outcomes, foster intervention research, and encourage application of empirically supported service models.

However, change in funder directives is insufficient. I argue that the human service sector must rediscover the cooperative ethos of its past. Though an overarching professional logic may not be feasible for today's fragmented and multidisciplinary sector, practitioners and scholars may still reconceive the search for evidence-based practice as a collaborative endeavor requiring both the technical skillset of the social scientist and the privileged vantage point of the service provider. If history is any guide, such change is both possible and overdue.

[26] A fitting illustration of this progress is an extensive evidence map recently produced by the Centre for Homelessness Impact (Centre for Homelessness Impact, n.d.). In addition to the typical collection of program evaluations, the Centre compiled qualitative studies revealing challenges around implementation of homelessness interventions in different settings.

CHAPTER 3

COOPERATION, COORDINATION, AND CONTROL: THE EMERGENCE AND DECLINE OF CENTRALIZED FINANCE IN AMERICAN CHARITY[1]

The effect of government funding on the independence of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) is a prominent theme in the multidisciplinary literature on the American nonprofit sector. Especially since the dramatic expansion of the American welfare state in the 1960s, government agencies in the United States have contracted out a large portion of social service delivery to local NPOs, raising questions about how this system of "third-party government" may affect the behavior and priorities of recipient agencies (Salamon 1987). At issue in these discussions is not only the responsiveness of NPOs to their clients and beneficiaries but also the vitality of American civil society, which has long been associated with a strong "third sector" organized separately from business and government institutions (Skocpol 2003).

By and large, the effect of government funding on NPOs has been perceived negatively: "Funds from government, whether as a partner, patron, or purchaser, are often viewed as inherently controlling, co-opting, and contaminating the mission of nonprofit organizations" (Kramer 1994, 35; see also Binder 2007, 548; Marwell and Calabrese 2015, 1031). However, though scholars continue to cite these concerns, empirical assessments tend to show that the supposed detriments of public funding have been significantly overstated (Kramer 1994; Lu 2018; Salamon 1995). Yet the fact remains that scholars and policy makers often view this type of revenue with a unique suspicion that it undermines the autonomy of NPOs (Allard 2009, 99; Rushton and Brooks 2007; Suárez 2011, 309).

[1] This chapter has been published in the journal *Social Science History* (see Brown 2018a).

I critique this suspicion in two ways: First, rather than treat the question of state influence over NPOs as a straightforward empirical one, I investigate why government funding has received so much attention in the first place. As part of this inquiry, I scrutinize underlying beliefs about NPOs by applying organizational theory to widespread assumptions about nonprofit behavior. Second, I adopt a historical perspective focusing on the periods preceding and coinciding with the increase in government funding in the American nonprofit sector, thereby interpreting such funding as a historical event with broad institutional repercussions rather than as an income stream affecting a given organization. This organizational and historical analysis is anchored in a study of the Community Chest, a cross-country network of welfare planning and fundraising federations that came to prominence in the United States after World War I and that eventually became today's United Way. The Community Chest affords a valuable perspective on how the behavior of NPOs has been shaped by the web of interorganizational relations in which they are embedded (Wooten and Hoffman 2008). Although this is certainly not the first study of the Community Chest (e.g., Seeley et al. 1957), my research emphasizes previously overlooked factors and details that challenge prevailing historical accounts of American civic culture and state–nonprofit relations.

Before proceeding, it is important to acknowledge that the moniker "nonprofit" includes a vast array of organizations holding tax-exempt status, of which many are only nominally nonprofit in the designation's conventional charitable sense. As elaborated later in this chapter, the Community Chest was a major stakeholder in the community-based human service subsector, which includes "local direct service providers such as soup kitchens, child care, and youth mentoring organizations, as well as [local affiliates of] large national organizations like the YMCA and YWCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and the American Red Cross" (Boris et al. 2010, 3). Consequently, the historical analysis in this chapter reflects trends among nonprofit (or voluntary) human service agencies and cannot be extrapolated to museums, private universities, and other NPOs outside of this subsector. That said, voluntary human service agencies are widely recognized as “the quintessential expression of the nation’s benevolent spirit” (ibid.) and are frequently the subject of discussion in literature on the nonprofit sector even when the more generic term *nonprofit* is used (Grønbjerg 2001, 287). Furthermore, the human service subsector receives special attention in discussions of government–NPO relations because these organizations comprise the voluntary dimension of the all-important social safety net and receive more public financial support than any other nonprofit subsector. Thus, a study of the Community Chest is necessarily selective, but it also focuses attention on a cross-section of NPOs that are particularly relevant to concerns about governmental influence on nonprofit organizational behavior and the implications of such influence for American civil society.

An additional caveat concerns my conceptual treatment of NPO autonomy. Although much of the literature exploring the effect of government funding on nonprofit independence relates specifically to the extent of nonprofit advocacy activity (see Lu 2018), a more general formulation of autonomy is what Grønbjerg (1993) calls “management discretion” (57). This term refers to the degree of freedom that nonprofit personnel have in deciding how to allocate organizational resources, whether on fundraising, administration, advocacy, or direct service provision. To be sure, the freedom to advance policy positions that run counter to the political status quo is a particularly salient feature of an independent civil society. However, a broader concern is the loss of management discretion due to what various authors have described as vendorism: “ceding control of the organizational mission to funding agencies when financial survival depends on providing what the government requests” (Rushton and Brooks 2007, 89).

This chapter addresses the fear of vendorism rather than the more specific concern surrounding the capacity of NPOs to pursue contentious advocacy activity.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. I begin by contextualizing the concern about government funding within an influential organizing framework that informs much of the research on the American nonprofit sector and that identifies NPOs as community-oriented entities. While this community orientation has been thought to distinguish NPOs from the hierarchical authority of state institutions, I use organizational theory to demonstrate how such an orientation can engender the very mechanisms of centralized control that have been considered alien and threatening to the nonprofit sector. I then instantiate these theoretical points with historical evidence supporting a resource dependence perspective on community control of nonprofit organizational behavior. The historical evidence shows that the community orientation of NPOs has historically hosted a fundamental tension between cooperation and autonomy, that the image of community was deployed by the social work establishment to justify hierarchical authority under nonstate auspices, and that the influx of government funding beginning in the 1960s promoted nonprofit independence by undermining this community-rooted system of control. The chapter ends by drawing out theoretical implications for our understanding of NPOs as tokens of civil society and as actors in the political economy of social welfare.

Theoretical Background

Skelcher and Smith (2015) note that much of the theory on the nonprofit sector is informed by a “state-market-community triptych,” a prevalent motif in the study of the institutional division of labor in modern economies (e.g., Edwards and Foley 1998; Miller 1989; Offe 2000; Van Tulder and Pfisterer 2014). According to this schematic (see Figure 3.1), the state represents "hierarchical control," the market signifies "dispersed competition," and the community embodies "spontaneous solidarity" (Streeck and Schmitter 1985, 119). In their popular Tocquevillian rendering, NPOs fill the community slot, combining the free enterprise of business firms and the public goods provision of government organizations but excluding the less attractive aspects of the market and the state: greed and coercion (Prewitt 2006, 356). It is this wholesome interaction of private initiative and public service that has led scholars and policy makers to celebrate the nonprofit sector for exemplifying "a general principle of societal constitution based on communal responsibility, social trust, and self-organization" (Anheier 2009, 1086).

Figure 3.1. Mapping the State-Market-Community Triptych

	Interest	
Establishment	*Private*	*Public*
Voluntary	Private Sector (Market)	Nonprofit Sector (Community)
Mandated	X	Public Sector (State)

This idealization of NPOs as "tangible, significant manifestations of community" has also led to unease over the blurring of sectoral boundaries (Smith and Lipsky 1993, 22). Just as authors have raised questions about receipt of government money, so have they expressed concern about the increasing proportion of nonprofit revenues (particularly in the human service sector) derived from service fees, a financing method reminiscent of private-sector business methods and frequently conceptualized as a “penetration,” “colonization,” “infiltration,” or “invasion” of the market into the nonprofit sector (Eikenberry 2009, 583; Salamon 1995, 220; Scott 2014, 252; Young, Salamon, and Grinsfelder 2012, 538).

These parallel literatures—one monitoring the state–nonprofit boundary and the other monitoring the business–nonprofit boundary—reflect a deep intellectual investment in the tripartite classification of society and in the ideal type of the charitable NPO as a visible outcropping of communal fellowship (Alexander 1987, 165). In fee-charging, critics see NPOs sliding toward the private sector, with the risk of succumbing to “the temptations of individualism and commercialism” (Van Til 1990, 278). In reliance on government money, observers find NPOs drifting toward the public sector and potentially falling victim to co-optation by centralized bureaucracies, becoming nothing more than “dutiful implementers of public sector programs and priorities” (Frumkin 2002, 10). Thus, public funding of NPOs continues to receive outsized attention because, in reducing the nonprofit sector to the delivery mechanism for government, such funding seems to blur the boundary between the hierarchical, centralized organization of the state and the voluntary, grassroots action of the community.

Yet one of the most striking features of the academic and professional literature on the blurring of organizational boundaries in the nonprofit sector is its lack of historical perspective (Morris 2004, 275). Since the formalization of the study of the nonprofit sector in the mid-1970s (Barman 2013), scholars in this discipline have maintained an overwhelmingly contemporary focus, seeking to make sense of emerging “hybridity” in the nonprofit sector while assuming that the nonprofit organizational form has been stable and distinct rather than inherently volatile (e.g., Doherty, Haugh, and Lyon 2014).[2] This assumption leads us to imagine a "social services sector that was once decentralized, independent, often informal, and voluntary" (Lynn 2002, 58). In the remainder of this section I lay the theoretical groundwork for calling this historical imagery into question.

Community and Cooperation

As the state-market-community triptych suggests, a fundamental concept in theories of why and how nonprofit sectors develop is that NPOs are oriented toward community needs rather than monetary gain (Hansmann 1980). This emphasis on community needs can be interpreted not only in terms of goal orientation but also in terms of interorganizational relations. Because profit is assumed to be of relatively peripheral importance to nonprofits, they are typically considered distinct from conventional businesses in their pursuit of non-zero-sum objectives and, consequently, in their inclination to cooperate with other nonprofits sharing similar objectives. To use the parlance of recent institutional theory, the nonprofit sector is said to exhibit a "community logic" reflecting altruism, camaraderie, and a shared moral order, while the private sector is linked with a competitive and self-interested "market logic" (Crosby, Stone, and Bryson 2015, 43; Glynn and Raffaelli 2013, 177). As a result, much of the literature on interorganizational relations among NPOs is framed by the belief that they are "*supposed* to be mutually supportive" (DiMaggio 2001, 24).

[2] The study of the nonprofit sector has benefited immensely from the work of historians, but the fact remains that historians make up a small and often overlooked minority in the professional study of the nonprofit sector (see Friedman 2002, 3).

To be sure, no one argues that NPOs are *purely* cooperative, but it is noteworthy that accounts of competition in the sector often attribute competitive behavior to recent commercialization trends (discussed previously). In this rendering, competitiveness appears as a foreign influence resulting from resource pressures that oblige NPOs to “replace a benevolent spirit with a mindset of competition” (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004, 136; see also Alexander, Nank, and Stivers 1999, 462; Brainard and Siplon 2004, 439; Martin 2000, 63; Sanders and McClellan 2014, 70; Smith 2012, 210; Young 2010, 59).

Because statements about NPOs are commonly packaged in an image of the nonprofit sector as a locus of values, authors have often depicted cooperation among these organizations as a sort of idealized state stemming from their cooperative character. Examples include “altruistic ‘habits of the heart,’” “the traditional value-orientation of nonprofits,” “a normative impetus away from competition,” “a cooperative culture,” “the pursuit of broader community interests,” and “a cooperative ethos” (Baum 1999, 552; Bush 1992, 404; Oster 1995, 47; Rothschild and Stephenson 2009, 801; Woolford and Curran 2013, 46; Young, Salamon, and Grinsfelder 2012, 527). The problem with this line of reasoning is that it presupposes a level of analysis focused on the individual NPO. In other words, cooperative inclinations in individual organizations are thought to aggregate up to cooperation among organizations. However, cooperative dispositions and alignment of interests are insufficient to bring about cooperation; at least as important are the *administrative* processes that maintain persistent networks of exchange and mutual adjustment (Gulati, Wohlgezogen, and Zhelyazkov 2012). Although cooperative dispositions at the organizational level may be a prerequisite for sustained relationships, cooperation depends ultimately on the interorganizational mechanisms that coordinate complementary activity. In the following text I argue that, given certain cooperative network structures, these *interorganizational* mechanisms may engender the centralized, hierarchical administration typically associated with the state.

Cooperation and Hierarchy

Community-oriented cooperation involves more than the self-interested search for bilateral exchange opportunities (e.g., space rental, client referrals); it implies a sense of collective obligation among numerous actors to an overarching social mission. In short, it is often believed that voluntary human service agencies should be motivated to serve the common good by a communal identity transcending narrow, organization-specific objectives (Irvin 2010; Kania and Kramer 2011). This affectively charged form of cooperation evokes the solidary organizational character traditionally associated with a "community logic," but at the interorganizational level of analysis we find an arrangement that resembles the hierarchical control conventionally ascribed to the state, as this form of cooperation tends to materialize as a large, complex network demanding centralized management of coordination costs (Laumann, Galaskiewicz, and Marsden 1978, 467).

While independent dyadic exchanges can persist on trust and norms of reciprocity alone (Podolny and Page 1998, 59), informal and broadly dispersed means of coordination are generally inadequate to maintain a multiplex web of interdependent actors collaborating simultaneously. These networks typically require centralized orchestration to facilitate communication and decision making among numerous participants because an arithmetic increase in the number of actors corresponds to an exponential increase in the amount of possible relationships (Provan 1983, 81; Van de Ven 1976, 27). Hierarchical coordination is especially necessary when tasks cannot be easily routinized (Thompson 1967, 65). Because dynamic and multifaceted undertakings such as conducting local needs assessments and planning programs to fill service gaps can be only partially standardized at best, their coordination necessitates oversight by a focal agent vested with executive authority (Litwak and Hylton 1962, 417).

To summarize, insofar as community-oriented cooperation involves diffuse, concerted, and functionally complex effort rather than a series of pairwise transactions, organizational theory suggests that subordination of individual actors to a centralized authority is necessary.

Centralization and Autonomy

Here we encounter a problem: As explained previously, private governance is a distinguishing feature of NPOs. The nonprofit community orientation entails both cooperative behavior *and free enterprise*. Again, it is instructive to consider what decades of organizational theory tell us about the implications of the nonprofit organization's official independence.

While organizational scholars have discussed the possibility of willing participation in systems of centralized coordination among independent actors, a venerable tradition of sociological research suggests that "this happy state of affairs unfortunately has little relevance to most important issues, which are usually highly controversial and in which the respective interests of the various parties do not coincide" (Warren 1973, 358). The accumulated evidence illustrates what Selznick (1949) long ago described as "the centrifugal tendencies" of organizations (155). Organizational theory indicates that "one of the major sociological functions of organizational independence is to promote autonomy" (Litwak and Hylton 1962, 396). Moreover, when independent organizations acquiesce to centralized authority, the salient consideration is often resource procurement rather than camaraderie (Galaskiewicz 1985, 282). In accordance with the predictions of resource dependence theory (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), centrally coordinated cooperation will often require means of inducement, if not coercion. Levine and White (1961) put it most succinctly: “Theoretically, were all the essential elements in infinite supply there would be little need for organizational interaction and for subscription to cooperation as an ideal” (583).

In summary, while the classic “state-market-community triptych” in theories of the nonprofit sector associates the community orientation of NPOs with a historical synthesis of other-regarding cooperation and voluntary action, I highlight the necessity of conflict between centralization (due to the complexity inherent in managing community-oriented cooperation) and decentralization (due to boundary maintenance among separately constituted organizations). This theoretical starting point leads us to expect that if community-oriented cooperation was historically a mobilizing ideal in the nonprofit human service sector, then it should have also been an impetus for social control. Furthermore, if NPOs followed the organizational tendency to comply with such control mostly because of resource dependence, we should be attentive to how changes in resource environments have modulated the capacity of NPOs to operate as self-directed actors.

Overview of Research

The Community Chest is a natural point of entry for historical analysis of cooperation among nonprofit agencies. This institution not only extolled cooperation as an indispensable organizing principle in social welfare provision but also documented the technical details of how cooperation is achieved as a viable interorganizational network structure. Additionally, before the expansion of the American welfare state in the mid-1960s, community chests were widely recognized as major players in voluntary social welfare planning and provision, sometimes described as the “unofficial governments” in the hundreds of cities in which they operated (North 1931, 320).[3] As such, these organizations lend themselves to a historically informed, community-level perspective on questions of nonprofit autonomy.

Although the Community Chest has featured prominently in historical analyses of American charity, scholars have paid little attention to the administrative details of its organizational model. More typically, the Community Chest has been discussed in the context of social work’s professional development (Reisch and Wenocur 1986), elite influence in American communities (Clemens 2015, 11), and conflict among social movements (Barman 2006; Brilliant 1990). Accordingly, scholars have generally offered synoptic organizational descriptions of the Community Chest as part of a larger sociological story. I make a deeper historical dive to understand the power relations and incentive structures underlying cooperation under the Community Chest, as well as the material circumstances explaining changes in its organizational form.

As part of this effort, I have conducted a thorough reading of primary and secondary sources preceding the increase in government funding in the mid-1960s. I used two references to structure my initial search for material available online and for circulation among libraries:

[3] The extent of the Community Chest’s role in voluntary social welfare financing can be glimpsed in data from three major national welfare associations: the National League for Nursing (NLN), the Family Service Association of America (FSAA), and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). NLN data from 1958 show that nearly 90% of reporting community health agencies participated in Community Chest financing (National League for Nursing 1960, 274–76). In 1960, 99% of FSAA-affiliated agencies reported receiving money from “Chests, Funds, or Federations” (Family Service Association of America 1965–1979, 8–9). The earliest year for which I could find data on the number of CWLA-affiliated voluntary agencies participating in federated financing was 1973, when 85% of such agencies received funds from United Ways (Haring 1973, 4). Trends among FSAA and NLN agencies suggest that this figure was higher in earlier decades.

- *Bibliography with Notes on Social Work Finance and Publicity* (Welfare Council of New York City 1930)—Published by the Welfare Council of New York City, this annotated bibliography cites and summarizes numerous articles, books, conference presentations, and fact-finding reports pertaining to financial federations, most prominently the Community Chest.
- *Trends in Community Organization: A Study of the Papers on Community Organization Published by the National Conference on Social Welfare, 1874–1960* (Heath and Dunham 1963)—Prior to the 1960s, a primary focus of the social work practice area known as community organization was the coordination of community-based social service agencies. Heath and Dunham's corpus enabled me to locate conference presentations reflecting trends in the development of the Community Chest movement and its forerunners.[4]

My archival research was based on the following sources:

- United Way of America microfilms—When the United Way of America moved its headquarters from New York City to Arlington, it microfilmed its entire collection of archived documents. The digitized microfilm prints (nearly 60,000 scanned images) include budgeting manuals, bulletins, promotions, and various administrative records.[5]

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[4] The National Conference on Social Welfare was held annually under various names from 1874 to 1984. As a clearinghouse for new ideas it was widely regarded as a bellwether for developments in social work, philanthropy, and welfare policy. I focused on papers relating to Charity Organization Societies (classified by Heath and Dunham in Appendix A as III, A); Community Chests, United Funds, Community Welfare Councils, and Related Agencies (III, B); and Cooperation in Interagency Relationships (V, C, 62). These categories comprise 83 papers.

[5] I am grateful to Christopher Marquis for providing the microfilms and finding aid.

- Records of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago at University of Illinois, Chicago; Records of the United Way of Philadelphia at Temple University; and Records of United Way of the St. Paul Area at the Minnesota Historical Society[6]—My research at these archives was supplementary to my review of documents published by the United Way headquarters. Because of time and financial constraints, I focused the bulk of my research on the period of increased government funding for social welfare (1965–80).

The Ideals and Demands of Community Organization in Social Work

Charitable organizations in the nineteenth century relied on the state to obtain legal charters but were able to start up and expand independently once approved as corporate entities (Hall 1992, 31). Among the results of this relative freedom from centralized legislative institutions was a substantial proliferation of benevolent associations accompanying rapid industrialization and urbanization during the turn of the twentieth century (Sutton 1990, 1392). This unchecked growth galled social service professionals, who believed that it exacerbated duplication of charitable effort and undermined economies of scale in service provision.

Concerted efforts to foster cooperation began with the "charity organization" movement. Working under the progressive mantra of bureaucratic efficiency, charity organization leaders attempted to restructure social service provision as a rationally planned and executed operation, encouraging resource sharing, administrative consolidation, and joint programming as components of a unified strategy for community improvement. Evidence of this cooperative ideal abounds: The motto of the New York Charity Organization Society was "United, an Army;

[6] There are few major archives of United Way branches. I chose these three for practical reasons. The Chicago archive was nearby, and I received grants to visit Philadelphia and St. Paul.

Divided, a Mob." The newsletters of the Children's Bureau of Philadelphia and the Chicago Bureau of Charities were both titled *Co-operation*. Indeed, Frank Watson (1922) notes in his landmark treatise on charity organization that "coöperation has been the watchword of the [movement] since the beginning" (128). With the Russell Sage Foundation's establishment of a department devoted to advancing the movement in 1909, charity organization was consecrated as the leading influence for social work professionalization (Hammack 1994), encoding the goal of cooperation in the emerging practice area of community organization (Kurzman 1985, 96).[7]

Community-Mindedness and Agency-Mindedness

Community organization's emphasis on solidary dedication to the common good is a clear illustration of the nonprofit sector's idealized cooperative heritage.[8] Notably, however, the proceedings of the National Conference on Social Welfare are filled with complaints about the immense difficulty of promoting cooperation among independent agencies, a project that social work pioneer Mary Richmond (1901) described as "so stupendous that only workers of large faith and tireless patience can succeed in it" (307). While competitive behavior may seem odd for charities, it has long been understood that nonprofit founders, employees, and volunteers can

[7] Charity Organization Societies (COSs) are key players in historical treatments of cooperation among charities, but historians have overemphasized their discrimination among the "worthy" and "unworthy" poor (see Hammack 1994, 8). Though this is an important aspect of the early COSs, the movement largely abandoned this draconian moralism in the early twentieth century, instead focusing on promoting cooperation. Moreover, the term *charity organization* had begun to lose its strict association with COSs as early as 1897, when the committee on charity organization of the National Conference of Charities and Correction changed its name to the "committee on organization of charity" to include other movements working toward the professionalization and integration of community welfare agencies (Crozier 1897, 140).

[8] Although the tenets of community organization pertained to both public and private organizations, the field strongly emphasized voluntary agencies. Public welfare was associated with income support rather than social services (Morris 2009, 47).

obtain a profound sense of personal mission and accomplishment from their work, leading to strong attachments to their organizations.[9] The resulting "jealous pride" and "zeal in promoting one's own organization" can easily undermine cooperation with other groups (Steiner 1925, 40). As the director of the Indianapolis Charity Organization Society put it, "In the realm of benevolent effort every charity is *the* charity. Most special charities are doing a work which, to their promoters, is the cure of all social evils. I would say that the jealousies between charity societies exceed that of the members of church choirs, if it be possible" (Grout 1900, 252). This documentary evidence leads historian Michael Katz (1996) to conclude that "virtually everywhere, individual charity organization societies were unable to overcome completely the suspicion, hostility, and rivalry of churches and local relief organizations" (83).

A review of policy discussions lends credence to Katz's conclusion. For example, one recurring topic is whether coordinating institutions should provide material relief to the needy in addition to arranging cooperation among other agencies. Literature from the period suggests overwhelming agreement among charity organization advocates that providing direct assistance undermines cooperation by inciting jealousy among other organizations (see Watson 1922, 162). An additional topic of concern was public subsidization of charities. While scholars today attribute increased competitiveness in the nonprofit sector to greater scarcity in government funding (Smith 2012, 210; Young 2010, 59), charity organizers pointed to government subsidization as a negative influence on cooperative efforts, arguing that a state bureaucracy is "too awkward to discriminate properly between the various and often competitive organizations

[9] Some of the literature on competition in the nonprofit sector speaks to the increased pressure to maximize survivability and performance (i.e. the ecological perspective) while not necessarily exploring the implications for the persistence or breakdown of interorganizational relationships (i.e. the behavioral perspective). This paper treats competitiveness behaviorally rather than ecologically (for more on this distinction see Barnett 2008, 8).

that volunteer to act as distributors of its bounty" (Superintendent of Charities 1892, 11; see also Almy 1912, 485; Dripps 1915, 469; Fetter 1901, 375; Richmond 1905, 845; Warner 1894, 129).

Unfortunately, it is difficult to arrive at firm conclusions regarding the nature and extent of interagency cooperation, and excerpting isolated quotations generally does little more than suggest trends and illustrate sentiments. In the case of social work literature, however, there is a telling aspect of discourse on cooperation that is worth noting: In the 1930s the terms *agency mindedness* and *community mindedness* entered social work jargon as contrasting descriptions of organizational dispositions toward collaboration. These terms appear in various sources, including local planning documents (e.g., Central Planning Board 1938, 28), national surveys (Johns and DeMarche 1951, 217), and the *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (MacRae 1957, 187).

Community mindedness described a readiness to adjust programming and planning to other agencies' services as part of a community-wide social service strategy. The concept appears in social work literature unambiguously as a positive characteristic. Agency mindedness, however, encompassed outright hostility to potential community partners but seems to refer more often to simple myopia in agency planning (for a summary see Kramer 1956, 58). Indeed, while early social work literature evinces plenty of frustration about "mutual throat-cutting" (Atwater 1940, 252), most of the complaints concern mere indifference to community-wide cooperation, a situation in which "co-operation between members of charitable organizations [means] nothing more than a feeling of cordiality" (O'Connor 1913, 341). With the notable exception of one author who claims some positive qualities (Kapell 1950, 144), agency mindedness appears consistently as a negative characteristic (e.g., Mayo 1934, 246; Reeves 1940, 97).

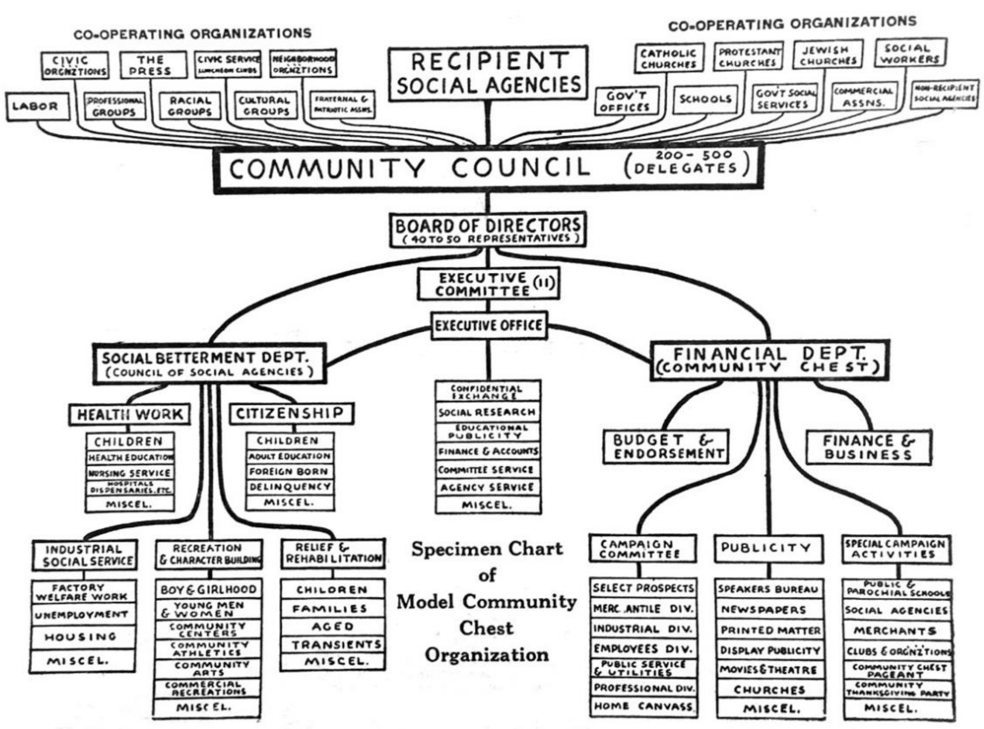
The significance of the term agency mindedness lies less in its frequency than in its phrasing. The association between noncooperation and the legal boundaries of individual agencies underscores the fact that the field of community organization contended with more than just occasional ill will; the challenge was to overcome the tendency among independent charities to “think of themselves as fundamentally separate agencies, each with its own salvation to work out” (Buell 1935, 3). As organizational theory would lead us to assume, the combination of autonomy and cooperation represented not an organic expression of community sentiment but rather a conflict to be negotiated. In the following section, I argue that community chests emerged in part as a response to this conflict, introducing the critical ingredient of resource dependence to facilitate acquiescence to centralized authority.

The Advent and Function of the Community Chest

Recent historical scholarship on community chests emphasizes their fundraising function. In particular, authors have focused on how business elites in hundreds of American communities spearheaded the “financial federation” strategy of recruiting local charities into annual, consolidated fundraising campaigns, in which charities substituted a single joint appeal for independent solicitation. Under this arrangement, community members and local corporations contributed to an “undesignated fund,” empowering the chest to allocate the money according to community needs. Based on these facts, scholars generally describe the financial federation system of the past as a method of reducing fundraising costs for charities and of sparing donors the nuisance of constant appeals (e.g., Clemens 2010, 384; Morris 2015, 111).

Yet a review of historical documents shows that many supporters of financial federation advocated “not federation for finances only, but for every phase of cooperative endeavor reaching fully into the field of social service” (Edlund 1919, 717). This insistence that financial federation involved more than monetary matters was not peculiar to a few advocates. A 1922 report by the Chamber of Commerce national office on the emerging community chest movement points out that "there seems to be a tendency on the part of federationists to minimize the financial" (Chamber of Commerce of the United States 1922, 23). Indeed, federation promoters were clear that the ideal community chest would facilitate not only economical fundraising but also collaborative welfare planning. As seen in Figure 3.2, the organizational blueprint of the Community Chest incorporated both the financial affairs commonly associated with the "chest" title and a separate domain of "social betterment" planning executed by a council of social agencies (sometimes referred to as a central council or welfare council).

Figure 3.2. Early Multi-Divisional Chart of Community Chest



Source: Back cover of Leebron (1924)

Growing out of the charity organization movement, welfare councils originally existed as models of cooperative service planning quite distinct from financial federations. Francis McLean (1917), the chief architect and evangelist of the council movement, stressed that these bodies consisted of organizations "bound together by cooperative rather than contractual relationships," as contrasted with federations built on "joint money-raising" (216).[10] A key distinguishing feature of the council, then, was that it provided a forum for agency delegates to make nonbinding recommendations for local social service planning (Brilliant 1986, 571–72). This distinction between contractual and voluntary relations reflects a vigorous debate between advocates of financial federation and advocates of the traditional council, which McLean described as a form of "moral federation" (McLean 1917, 218).

Among the arguments in favor of financial federation was the lackluster performance of the councils, which had come to be seen by a growing number of social workers as "hollow organizations to which control has been denied" (Norton 1916, 583). Without the advantage of enforceable decision making backed by contract, voluntary councils were perceived as lacking "the regularly established machinery" for comprehensive cooperation (Edlund 1919, 720). Cecil North (1931, 299) provided a telling summation of council performance:

> The councils of social agencies that existed in many cities previous to the inauguration of the community fund movement accomplished a great deal in the way of developing acquaintance among social workers and promoting good will among the agencies. But without any power of controlling action not many of them got far in changing the actual practice of agencies. *Budgetary control gives to a council of social agencies the necessary power to enforce its decisions*. (emphasis added)

[10] Centralized finance in private social work dates back at least to 1887, when the Denver COS maintained a system of joint fundraising. The Jewish Federation movement had also emerged around this time. However, it was not until after World War I that financial federation became a truly important feature of the voluntary human services in the United States (Lubove 1965, 189).

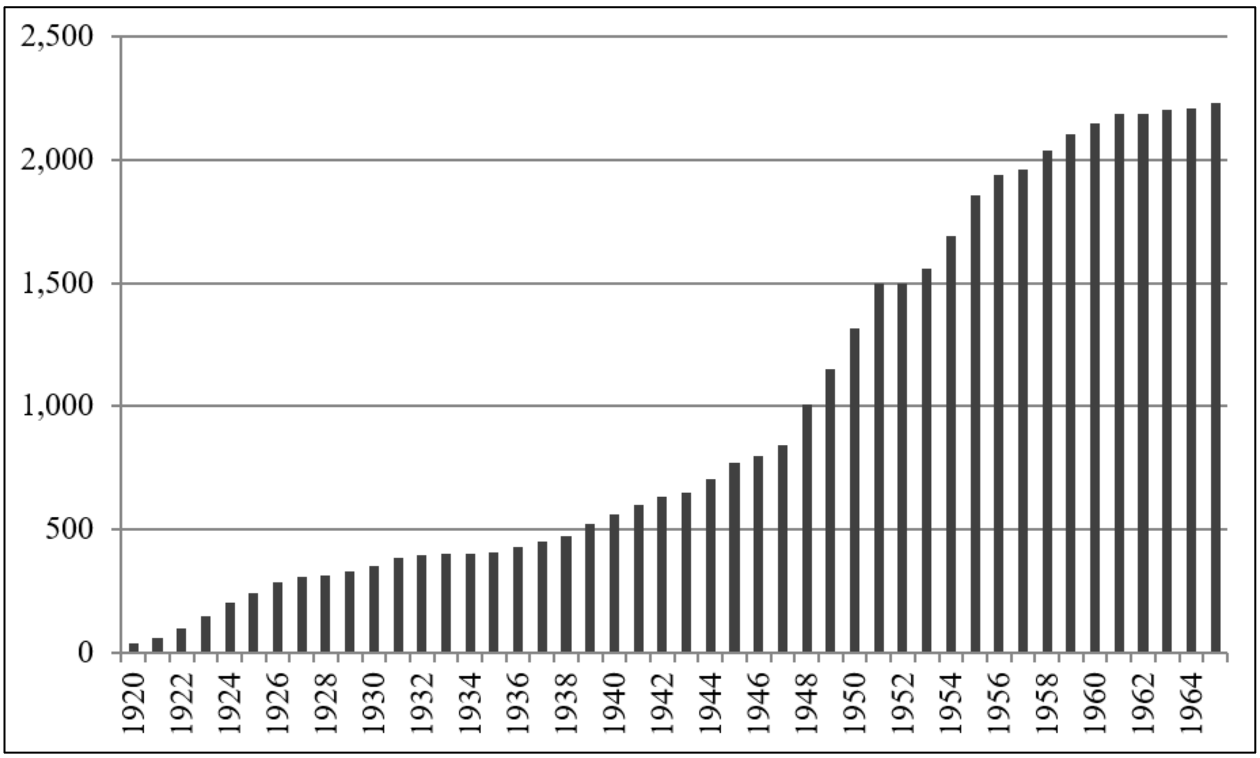
Arthur Dunham, among the leading mid-century academic authorities on community organization, echoed this opinion on councils nearly three decades later, observing that "the welfare of the community seems to require some degree of *centering of power* to act for the common good, greater than the traditional council of agencies has had" (Dunham 1958, 148–49; emphasis added). Thus, many social work leaders arrived at the conclusion that intensive and multifaceted cooperation would not emerge spontaneously among independent, "agency-minded" organizations. Coordination demanded a hierarchical authority capable of wielding "the lure of the undesignated fund" (quoted in American Association for Organizing Charity 1917, 204).

With the gradual acceptance of financial federation by the social work establishment and the backing of local business interests, community chests proliferated during the first half of the twentieth century, with many of them merging planning and finances into a single organizational apparatus (Walker 1933, 1186). Consequently, the growth of the movement illustrated in Figure 3.3 signifies not only the expansion of consolidated fundraising but also the victory of the community chest philosophy of "concerted action through financial control" over the welfare council's system of "concerted again by voluntary agreement" (1186).[11] Although the

[11] Walker (1933) suggests that *separately organized* councils (in contrast to those serving as planning units of chests) maintained their focus on voluntary consensus-building, but it is difficult to assess the validity of this claim, especially following the significant growth among chests following the Depression. Even independent councils were "always closely affiliated" with chests in their regions (Community Chests and Councils 1938, 5), and there is mixed evidence on the nature of council-chest relations. For example, a 1941 report on the Council of Social Agencies in Springfield, Massachusetts, found that the council "appeared merely as an advisory body to the board of trustees of the chest" and lacked "aggressiveness in exerting its influence in situations which are properly within its province" (quoted in Johns and DeMarche 1951, 95). In accordance with this case study, Dunham (1958) points out that "some councils *lack independence and autonomy*; they may be, in effect, appendages to the community chest" (148). He also writes that councils are "frequently *lacking in strength and effectiveness*," noting

streamlining of local fundraising efforts was the primary impetus for the financial federation movement and remained a central feature throughout its existence, as the movement matured "financial federations began to talk less of saving the business man from the annoyance of many solicitations and more of social planning and standards of workmanship" (Watson 1922, 436). By the 1930s the community chests and councils had become "the chief fundraising, planning, and public relations arms of voluntary social work" (Reisch and Wenocur 1986, 78).

Figure 3.3. Number of Community Chest Campaigns Over Time



Source: United Community Funds and Councils of America 1965b, viii.

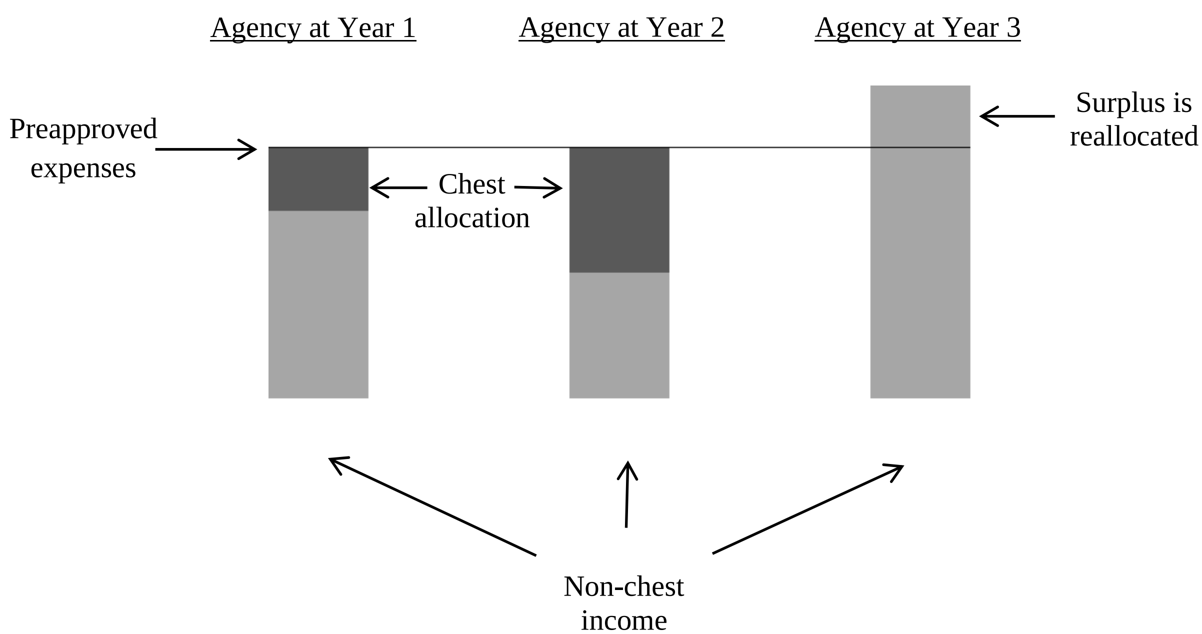
that some attribute this impotence to "the council's lack of the 'power of the purse'" (148). In contrast, according to McMillen (1945), the Community Fund of Chicago used its "power to grant or to withhold allocations" to "implement the social planning of the Council" (168). Thus, it appears that councils either were frequently overshadowed by the chest or capitalized on the chest's power to carry out social planning that was nominally voluntary but effectively obligatory.

In light of the information presented, I argue that recent research overemphasizes economy in fundraising as the function of community chests. These federations did not represent simply a "movement of cooperating with others in fundraising" (Zunz 2012, 52); rather, they constituted a system of integrating fundraising efforts while enforcing coordination of service planning and provision through control over allocations. It is also worth noting that the principles of the welfare council seem to exemplify the idealized "community logic" of NPOs: a combination of voluntarism and *esprit de corps*. Historical evidence suggests that this model was ineffectual and quickly relegated to centralized power sustained by financial inducement.

The Logic of Deficit Financing

The mechanism underlying the community chests' financial control was a budgetary framework known as deficit financing, whereby a chest distributed money earned through the annual campaign to its member agencies in amounts needed to cover the difference between a given agency's preapproved operating expenses and its operating revenue from non-chest sources, such as client fees and member dues (individual fundraising was thought to undermine the consolidated campaign and was therefore prohibited). In other words, a local chest apportioned funds to balance its member agencies' operating budgets, filling the gap between anticipated expenses and realized revenue (see Figure 3.4). If a given charity earned more than expected from non-chest sources, the surplus either reverted to a "family reserve fund" or was counted as part of the subsequent allocation, allowing the chest to redistribute the residual income rather than letting it remain in the "treasuries" of individual agencies (Dunham 1958, 175). Deficit financing was a basis for sharing resources and for enforcing centrally managed coordination. Under this system, participating agencies were assured balanced budgets in return for relinquishing their surplus, refraining from individual fundraising campaigns, complying with budgetary and salary regulations, and conforming to the community social service plan.[12]

Figure 3.4. Deficit Financing Illustrated



[12] It is unclear when the standard deficit financing regulations became institutionalized, but a meaningful degree of uniformity appears to have emerged by the 1920s. Regarding the policy of returning surplus funds, for example, one federation advocate reports in 1922 that "practically every Community Chest in the country has the provision" (Street 1922, 639). By 1931, when the national umbrella organization representing community chests circulated its first general purpose budgeting manual (Association of Community Chests and Councils 1931), deficit financing had apparently been quite thoroughly codified. The manual outlines all the familiar deficit financing regulations, which also appear in subsequent revisions published in 1942, 1955, and 1967 (Community Chests and Councils 1942; United Community Funds and Councils of America 1955; 1967). Additionally, in 1940 the umbrella organization published results from a survey of chest executives on common practices in budgeting and allocations ("Basic Principles in Chest Budget-Making: Report of a Referendum" 1940). The data show widespread support for considerable authority to control member agency operations.

An important feature of deficit financing was that the entire network of organizations benefited when individual agencies earned revenue from non-chest sources. Extra money gained by an individual agency would mean a smaller deficit to be filled by the chest, leading to a smaller budget-balancing allocation for that organization but amounting to additional money for the collective reserve fund and for special project grants: “Thus the greater the amount of support each agency generates, as a result of carrying out its service program, the greater will be the pool of funds for all services in the community” (United Community Funds and Councils of America 1965a, 4). Such was the cooperative logic of deficit financing: Individual effort in procuring resources served community-minded rather than agency-minded interests. For this reason, chests encouraged member agencies to maximize income from service fees and member dues to spread the “deficit dollar” further (Ormsby 1965, 333).

A second important feature of deficit financing was that it resembled an intraorganizational resource flow, whereby a central administrative unit can reallocate funds among functional divisions according to fluctuating priorities. The principle that individual agencies were subordinate to a community-service hierarchy also manifested in professional training at schools of social work, where chests and councils maintained an outsized influence (Johnson 1955, 108). Because of this influence, training in agency administration was subsumed in the broader curriculum of community organization, reinforcing the idea that individual agencies were units in a larger enterprise rather than independent enterprises (Spencer 1959, 26–27). Thus, in terms of their administrative coordination and their pedagogical influence, chests deployed “community” as a rallying call against agency mindedness and as a justification for restricting agency autonomy. Although chests extolled this system as “a voluntary sharing of sovereignty, in which all parties concerned recognize that overall needs and objectives transcend the interests of any one organization" (United Community Funds and Councils of America 1955, 7), the administrative demands of deficit financing are better understood in terms of the domination often ascribed to the state in current literature. In this case, however, the community served as the source of control, as summarized by sociologist Arthur J. Todd (1932):

> In so far as the community chest assumes … the function of community planning, it must necessarily adopt the principle that the interests of the community are paramount over the interests of individual agencies participating in the chest. There are no natural rights which a social agency is entitled to plead as against the ascertained rights and interests of the community. (479)

The Impact of Public Welfare Spending

Contrary to notions of a halcyon communitarian past, I have shown that cooperation under the Community Chest existed in tension with the independence of NPOs and was contingent on material incentives. Moreover, while the image of community as a zone of autonomy motivates suspicion toward government funding, the case presented in this chapter shows that community served as the symbolic justification for a highly centralized and restrictive organization of social service financing and planning.[13] Smith and Lipsky's (1993) often-cited claim that, because of government contracting, "nonprofit agencies have lost control over the central aspects of the way they provide services" (120) clearly does not take into account this important history of community-rooted control. In this section I take my critique one step further, arguing that government funding promoted organizational autonomy in the nonprofit sector.

Government Funding and the Dilemma of Deficit Financing

[13] Barman's (2006) excellent historical overview of the Community Chest demonstrates that the image of community played a comparable mobilizing role vis-à-vis donors (see Chapter 2).

Although the annual campaigns of community chests (or United Ways, as they were increasingly called in later years) yielded increasing returns from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, United Way executives such as President Lyman Ford recognized that the Great Society heralded a significantly larger human service sector that would require much greater scope in financial resources:

> Movement towards the Great Society means that our nation has decided to have the kinds of services needed by people and to have them in abundance. Some of these are services afforded by United Fund agencies. The question is not whether such services will be provided but whether the voluntary agencies will be able to keep pace with demands. (Ford 1966, 11)

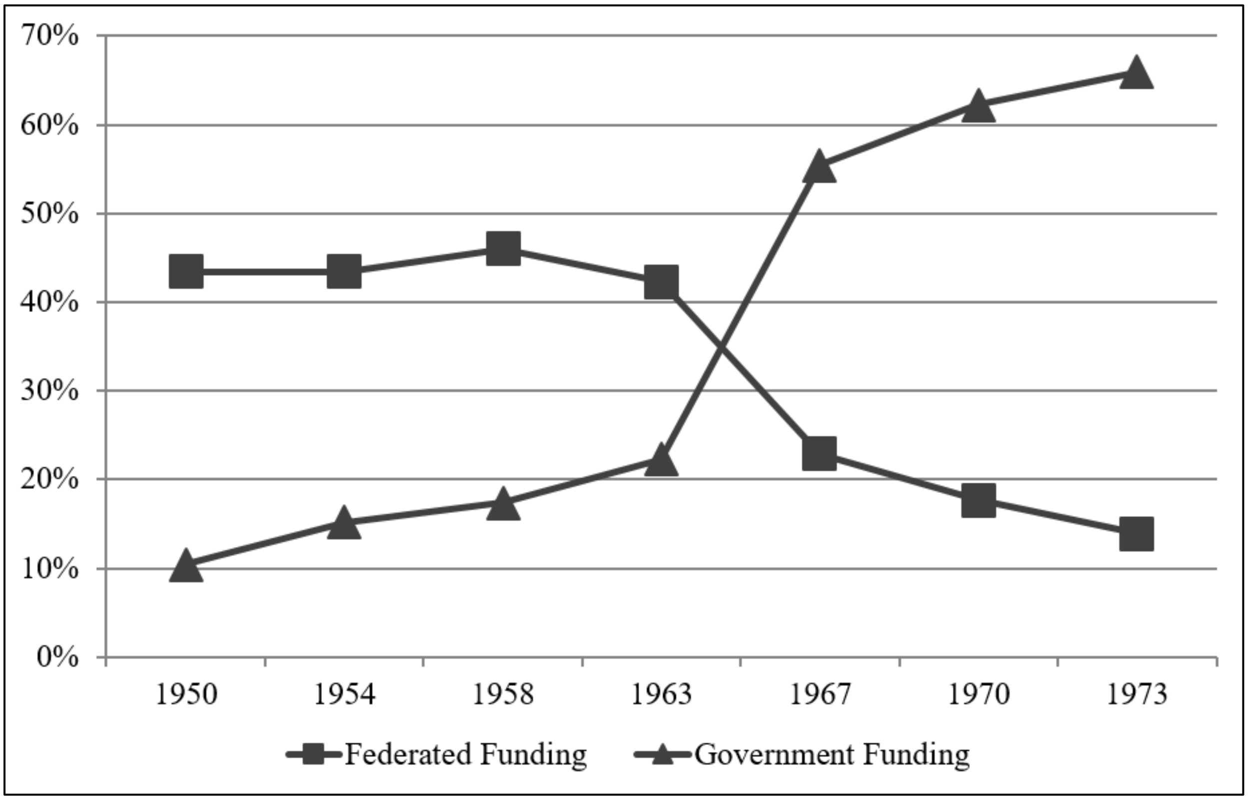
Keeping pace with demands clearly entailed tapping public funds, which represented the largest potential resource. Under deficit financing, however, acquiring government grants and contracts proved problematic. As explained previously, deficit financing created a relationship among agencies in which an individual organization's efforts to earn money from non-chest sources benefited the entire network rather than that organization. Given the centrality of monetary incentives in financial federation, however, it is small wonder that deficit financing was widely recognized for its disincentive effects. By prohibiting the retention of earned income for an organization's own use, deficit financing tended to dampen the entrepreneurial search for non-federation revenue in the first place (Hathaway 1951, 260; Kalamazoo County Community Needs and Resources Survey Committee 1969, 126; Kruse 1962, 80; McDonald 1961, 24; Tierney et al. 1973, 12).

Because of its distinctive effects, deficit financing had long been connected to a status quo arrangement, in which "community planning bodies … merely 'split up the pie in the same old way,' innovating only with what new funds were available over and above this usual allocation" (Warren 1965, 122). By the mid-1960s, the status quo was no longer sustainable, as the massive new pool of resources (see Figures 3.5–3.7) emboldened United Way-affiliated agencies to lobby for changes in the deficit financing system (note the highly symmetric appearance of the graphs in Figures 3.5–3.7, which shows that government funding was the primary source of new agency revenue). For example, the allocations committee of the United Fund of Philadelphia reported in 1961 that it was experiencing "pressures to retreat from [its] deficit financing role" due to grants issued by the Philadelphia municipal government (United Fund of the Philadelphia Area 1961, 3).[14] As another example, the Community Fund of Chicago began acquiescing to mounting agency agitation for greater independence as early as 1965, when the board decided to allow member agencies to retain $5,000 in year-end operating surplus (Community Fund of Chicago 1965a) and to seek government funds for proposals under the Economic Opportunity Act without requesting permission beforehand (Community Fund of Chicago 1965b).[15]

[14] Under conventional deficit financing protocols, the United Fund of Philadelphia could cite new government grants as a reason to shrink allocations to recipients of such funding, but municipal officials backed agency demands that the Fund not consider such grants when reviewing member needs for allocations planning. I was unable to find a record of the Fund's decision on this particular issue, but the allocations committee does acknowledge that this situation raises "very serious questions about the Fund's future role … in carrying out community planning objectives" (United Fund of the Philadelphia Area 1961, 3). The United Fund of Philadelphia transitioned away from deficit financing in the 1970s, acknowledging in its 1973 annual report that the expansion of governmental social programs had "put to the test and sometimes strained, dislocated or even broken the traditional relationships between the federated fund-raising unit and the operating agencies to which the funds are channeled" (United Fund of the Philadelphia Area 1973, 2).

[15] An internally produced account of the United Way of Chicago's history confirms that "government and other sources of revenue" led to "pressures for greater agency latitude" in the mid-1960s (United Way of Chicago 1992, 20). Among the policy changes listed in the Fund's 1969 annual report is "elimination of the concept of allocating Fund money to achieve balanced agency budgets" (Community Fund of Chicago 1969, 4).

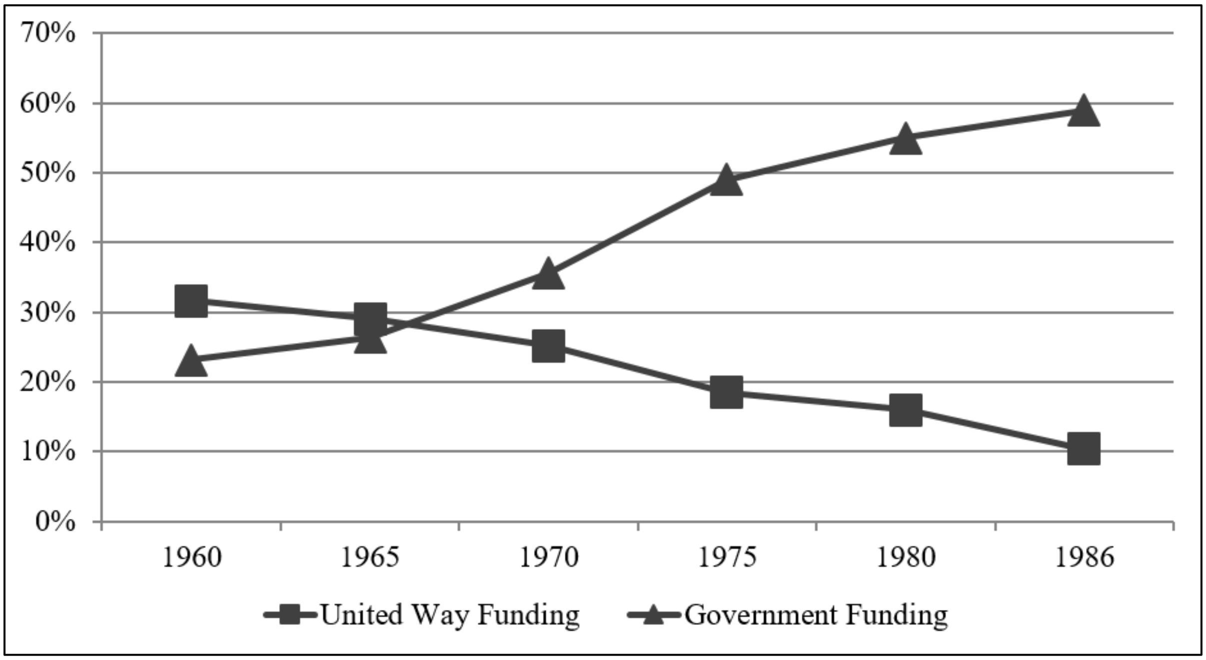
Figure 3.5. Federated and Government Funding of NLN-Affiliated Voluntary Nursing Agencies (Percent of Aggregate Income)[16]



Source: For 1950 and 1954, NLN 1956, 577; for 1958, NLN 1960, 274; for 1963, NLN 1965, 70; for 1967, NLN 1969, 41; for 1970, NLN 1972, 189; for 1973, NLN 1975, 2.

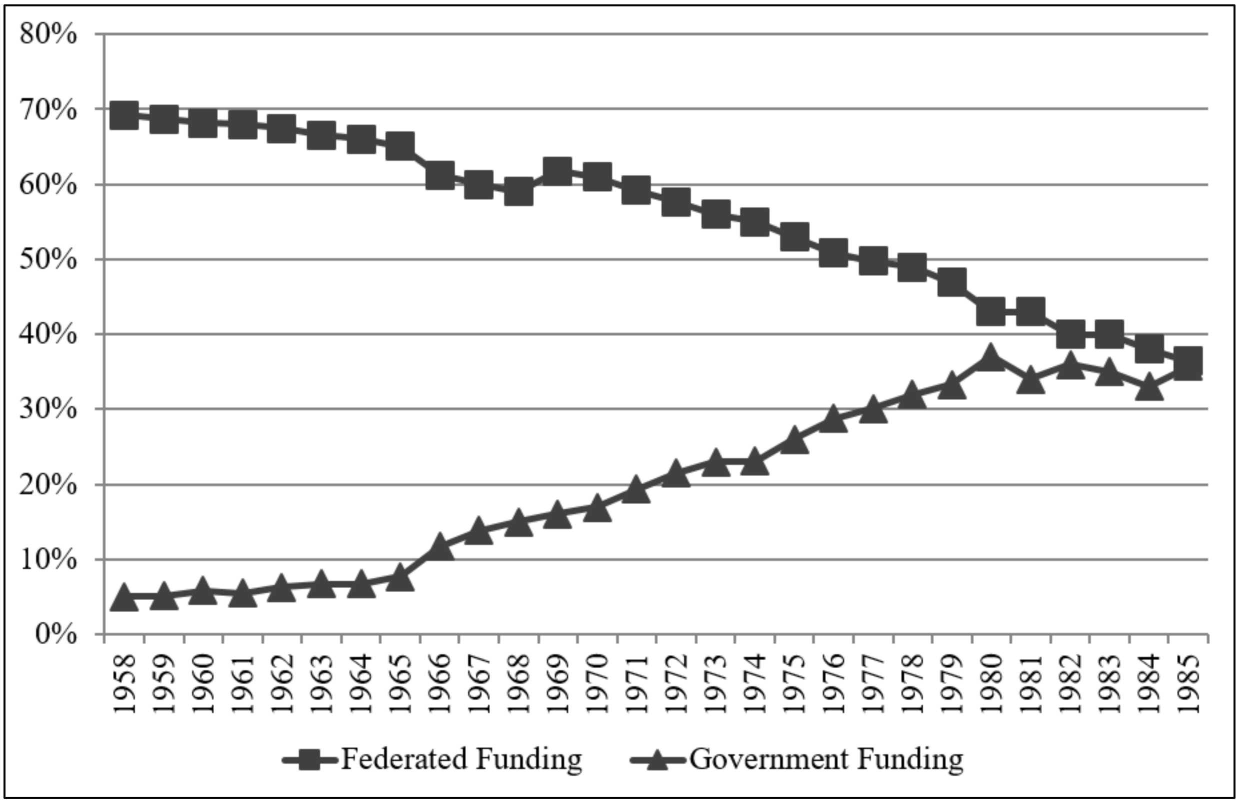
[16] The category "Federated Funding" includes sectarian groups such as the Jewish Federation, but the overwhelming majority of funds derive from the United Way and its predecessors.

Figure 3.6. United Way and Government Funding of CWLA-Affiliated Voluntary Agencies (Percent of Aggregate Income)



Source: For 1960-1975, Shyne 1978, 14; for 1980, CWLA 1981, 5, 9; for 1986, Malm and Maza 1988, 10, 24.

Figure 3.7. Federated and Government Funding of FSAA-Affiliated Voluntary Agencies (Percent of Aggregate Income)[17]



Source: For 1958-1979, FSAA: various years; for 1980-1985, Wellford and Gallagher 1988, 67.

Events in Philadelphia and Chicago reflected general trends, as evidenced by a manual on best practices for securing non-federation income released by the United Way national headquarters in 1965. Acknowledging that "government is increasingly following the practice of making project grants to voluntary organizations" and that "agencies need more incentive for securing increased income from [non-United Way] sources," the report encouraged local affiliates to

[17] The category "Federated Funding" includes sectarian groups such as the Jewish Federation, but the overwhelming majority of funds came from the United Way and its predecessors.

"make agreements that would enable high priority or 'growth' agencies to have the direct benefit of all or part of such increased income" (United Community Funds and Councils of America 1965a: 10–11). Shortly thereafter, the national United Way organization established the Management and Community Studies Institute (MACSI) to guide federations through the transition to means of planning and allocations besides deficit financing (United Way of America 1977, 224).[18]

By the mid-1970s, decentralization in financial federation networks was readily acknowledged and very clearly attributable to the influx of government funding for social welfare, as indicated by a 1974 memorandum circulated by the director of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County:

> Historical conditions and funding patterns have changed significantly, especially during the past two decades, with the emerging role of government in financing and providing community services a dramatic feature… . Given these circumstances, United Ways elsewhere have begun experimentation with alternatives to classic deficit financing. (Rabinowitz 1975, 562)

In the same year, executive Stephen F. Keating proclaimed at a major organizational conference that "no longer can we shut our eyes to the *fact* of all the [non–United Way] dollars" and called for greater acceptance of the new situation:

> At one time, our own movement lived and died on certain "truths" — "One campaign once and for all"; "Family of Agencies"; and "The Deficit Financing Principle." In simpler times with lesser needs and smaller amounts of money involved, these immutable fundamentals were indeed real and practical. But I believe most of us would grant that new attitudes are emerging among most community leaders today. (Keating 1979, 22)

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[18] For example, the United Way of St. Paul initiated a study in 1972 on new allocations policies, the concluding report of which states that "MACSI urged the Task Force to consider the possibility and desirability of removing controls (except those relevant to fund-raising) from agencies under certain conditions in order to eliminate or reduce, where feasible, the disincentives of allocating by the traditional deficit financing method" (United Way of St. Paul Area 1975, 11).

There is no central and comprehensive archive of local budgeting manuals allowing for an analysis of how decentralization in budgeting policies diffused across the country over time. However, general purpose budgeting manuals published by the United Way headquarters and its predecessors confirm that major changes in budgetary policy had occurred by the mid-1970s. Whereas the 1931, 1942, 1955, and 1967 manuals treat the budget-balancing allocation essentially as orthodoxy (see note 10), the 1975 manual mentions deficit financing as one option among other allocation policies and also signals a reduction of other restrictions. For example, earlier manuals treat the remission of surplus revenue as standard practice, but the 1975 edition states that "*in some instances*, amounts accrued from unexpended appropriations and unanticipated revenues are transferred at year-end to a reserve fund, rather than treated as surpluses" (United Way of America 1975, 21; emphasis added).[19] The 1975 manual makes no mention of policies concerning individual fundraising, again suggesting substantial diminution of control over member agencies. Indeed, executive Paul Akana states in a memorandum circulated in 1976 that the latest manual indicates greater awareness of "the reality that agencies are independent, autonomous, separately organized entities—not only free to make their own decisions but perfectly capable of doing so" (Akana 1979, 45).

In summary, the stability of deficit financing was predicated on a social context in which the Community Chest, or later the United Way, stood as a dominant financial player in the voluntary human services. The War on Poverty dramatically altered this social context, compelling the United Way to allow and even encourage member agencies to pursue government

[19] The 1967 manual qualifies its explanation of the surplus return policy with a caveat encouraging federation administrators to ensure that agencies "have the incentive for prudent and frugal management," evidently a reflection of incipient instability in collectivist budgetary policies (United Community Funds and Councils of America 1967, 12).

grants and contracts to remain a relevant player in the human service sector. However, supporting agencies in their pursuit of government funding required that United Ways compromise on traditional budgetary conventions of deficit financing to incentivize the acquisition of non-federation revenue.[20]

The lead alternative to deficit financing was a more market-oriented purchase-of-service system, whereby a local United Way would tie funding to specific services proposed or rendered. Because under purchase-of-service local affiliates would fund services rather than support balanced budgets for entire organizations, it followed that member agencies would be freer to fundraise and plan programs individually rather than restrain their autonomy as administrative units in a community welfare hierarchy. A local United Way would act more like a standard, community-based grantmaker, one funder among many in a larger philanthropic market and grants economy.

Discussion

The study of the nonprofit sector has been animated by a theoretical trinity of social domains in which the *community* stands for solidarity and grassroots organizing, the *state* symbolizes hierarchical control, and the *market* signifies competitive self-interest. Furthermore, the assignment of NPOs to the realm of community is not merely an analytical distinction.

[20] Government funding often carried its own expectations regarding interorganizational relations, but these standards never came close to the centralized control that had traditionally prevailed in United Way federations. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (predecessor of today's Department of Health and Human Services) did undertake far-reaching experimentation in coordinating public and nonprofit human service agencies, a project dubbed "Services Integration" (for an excellent insider retrospective see Yessian and Lang 1981). However, the extensive evaluative literature resulting from this experimentation indicates disappointing results (Department of Health and Human Services 1991,0 6).

Because these organizations have long been thought to encapsulate civic vitality and social capital, their association with community dynamics reflects strong intellectual and ideological attachments to institutional expressions of voluntarism and communitarianism. As a result, government funding of NPOs receives special attention for the same reason that NPO reliance on service fees does: The blurring of sectoral boundaries causes concern over the loss of the nonprofit sector's unique character and function.

With respect to government funding, concerns about the loss of nonprofit character entail an organizational level of analysis and implicitly presume a history of autonomous, voluntary action contrasting strongly with the state's centralized instruments of control. Yet historical analysis is conspicuously wanting in this area of inquiry, and an understanding of nonprofit organizational character must consider the web of interdependencies in which all organizations operate. To advance a farther-reaching perspective, this chapter provides an overview of the emergence and decline of centralized finance in charitable interorganizational networks, specifically in the flagship philanthropic institution of the Community Chest. By adopting a historical and interorganizational frame of reference, I can scrutinize foundational assumptions about NPO behavior that inform present-day notions of normative state–nonprofit relations.

To review, I have shown that the community orientation of the nonprofit human service sector has been perfectly accommodating of hierarchical administrative structures. Faced with an intractable conflict between organizational autonomy and the ideal of intensive interorganizational cooperation, the Community Chest accomplished centralized service coordination by establishing resource dependence in the name of consensus and cohesion, using monetary incentives to manage tensions between independence and cooperation. I have also shown that the marked increase in government funding for social welfare beginning in the 1960s dramatically altered the resource environment of voluntary human service agencies, rendering centralized control through financial federation increasingly untenable. This last finding leads to a rather contrarian conclusion: In this particular historical case, government funding *promoted* nonprofit independence by undermining the authority exercised by local *community* institutions.

Implications

Although this chapter provides new historical dimension to organized charity in American society and challenges the narrative about the effect of government funding on NPOs, I have not presented any groundbreaking discoveries from the perspective of organizational theory. Instead, I have simply demonstrated that NPOs are subject to fundamental and uncontroversial rules of resource dependence in interorganizational relations. Emphasizing the resource environment and the conditions attached to resource flows rather than the presumed institutional significance of funding sources as posited by the state-market-community triptych, we find that public money can increase management discretion given the proper social context.

The major theoretical takeaway, then, is that the tendency to describe the nonprofit sector in lofty terms as a conduit for a community logic has obscured grounded organizational principles that have proven their predictive merit. A more conventional resource dependence perspective helps to normalize NPOs as agentic actors struggling to secure the resources and legitimacy that they require to survive in competitive and evolving environments (cf. Bromley and Meyer 2017). Here I echo Nicole Marwell's argument that scholars have focused excessively on community-based organizations as local sites of individual socialization and community integration while not paying enough attention to how these organizations are "actors embedded within broader economic and political fields" (Marwell 2007, 24). Likewise, the tendency to associate government funding with state domination has caused authors to overestimate the controlling influence of this resource stream while underestimating the transaction costs linked to other sources of funding.

Notably, there is growing attention to how private benefactors are driving agendas of community development (e.g., Arena 2012; McQuarrie 2013), constituent representation (Levine 2016), and public agency policy (Suárez and Esparza 2015). This research presents an opportunity for scholars of nonprofit organizational behavior to take fuller account of how large private stakeholders may match or even exceed their public-sector counterparts in shaping the goals and strategies of grantees (Small 2006, 278). Greater sensitivity to the controlling influence of foundations, corporations, and other private grantmakers would enable a more nuanced community-level perspective on interorganizational relations in social welfare planning and provision.

An additional takeaway from this chapter follows a tradition of critical literature addressing the romanticization and theoretical underspecification of community (Brint 2001). Because social scientists have shown a perennial tendency to sentimentalize local community dynamics (Thomson 2005), there is an ever-growing body of scholarship reminding us to take proper account of communities as incubators of hegemony. However, power in community settings is often conceptualized politically in terms of elite decision making or the pluralist jostling of local interest groups (see Collins 2010) rather than in terms of emergent organizational processes stemming from the complexity inherent in collective undertaking. Indeed, to the extent that community chests have been discussed as instruments of social control, authors have concentrated on how elites at the helm of the movement determined the legitimate institutional parameters of charity by directing funds to those organizations that “reflected both the conservative interests of the business community and that appealed to the general population" (Barman 2006, 23).[21] Of course, this aspect of control is extremely important, but focusing on it exclusively suggests that chests exercised their influence by *withholding* funds from specific organizations. As I have shown, the act of allocating funds played an equally important role in maintaining community control, specifically regarding the administrative project of building programmatic cohesion among autonomous charities.

This chapter invites us to consider how mechanisms of community control arise both politically through the competitive clash of interest groups or through the domination of elites *and administratively* through the unavoidable organizational complications of maintaining collectivity. Insofar as community involves a meaningful degree of cohesion among autonomous actors with particular agendas and priorities, hierarchy and domination will arise in part to manage the complexity inherent in orchestrating such integration. In this way, social control is integral to community, not just as a political eventuality but also as an organizational necessity.

[21] This perspective aligns with a broader take on NPOs as servants of elite interests (e.g., Salzman and Domhoff 1983).

CONCLUSION

In the 1950s, alongside the birth of organizational sociology, social scientists began to ruminate on a "general theory of administration" (Litchfield 1956). While not dismissing the contextual details of distinct organizational settings, many of these scholars began calling for greater attention to common elements in administration. This reassessment posed a fundamental challenge to the traditional conception of administration in social work, which was presented as inextricably intertwined with the technicalities of direct service (Dunham 1939, 16; Gartland 1943, 21; Kidneigh 1950, 57). Nevertheless, recognizing the new discourse on administration and the need to take stock of implications for social work education, the National Conference on Social Welfare organized a task force in 1959 to explore aspects of administration common to the fields of social welfare, business, and public administration. Presenting a summary of one of the committee reports, sociologist James Thompson remarked on resistance among professional groups to the idea of administration as a generic practice:

> A serious impediment to the most effective allocation of administrative talent in our society is the parochialism which we see in each field. The traditions behind such parochialism are strong. We are told that the individual who has "never met a payroll" could not possibly administer a firm. It is said that he who has never taught classes certainly could not administer a school, and one who has not done casework could not possibly qualify as a social welfare administrator. (Thompson 1962, 200)

In sociological terms, Thompson was illustrating the "cultural embeddedness" of organizational activity, or the ways in which beliefs, ideologies, and rule systems define organizational interests, identities, and strategies (Zukin and DiMaggio 1990). Organizational scholars have long recognized that the professions are key mechanisms for embedding individual and organizational behavior in broader cultural constructs (see Thornton 2004, 90), as evident in Thompson's observation about professional resistance to the idea of administration *in vacuo*. Yet authors have also noted that the closing decades of the twentieth century witnessed a reformulation of cultural standards of administration in professional service domains, perhaps best illustrated by the meteoric rise of education in general business administration (Daniel 1998). As Hinings (2005) summarizes, “the basic theme…of the past 25 years of study of professional organizations is that of the encroachment of corporatism or managerialism on professionalism, seen as the two logics competing for dominance” (183).

Marketization as Organizational Disembedding

As argued in the introduction to this dissertation, much of the scholarship on the ascendance of managerialism as an institutional logic puts forward an oversimplified operationalization based on surface-level material phenomena rather than underlying cultural–cognitive phenomena (Haveman and Gualtieri 2017, 26). While I do not wish to downplay the empirical utility of noting material organizational features, I argue that scholars should attend to the priorities and meaning systems that motivate policies and practices. As also argued in the introduction, I claim that Gouldner’s (1957) individual-focused typology of organizational and professional commitment can be applied to this more cognitively oriented institutional analysis of managerial trends in professional service domains. From this perspective, the rising tide of managerialism comprises not only the quantitative increase in practices associated with for-profit business but also the qualitative shift from professional to organizational schemas driving those practices. In reference to my previous mention of sociological research on embeddedness, I argue further that we may characterize this qualitative shift away from professional schemas as organizational *disembedding*. This is the process by which organizations become atomized and self-interested agents, increasingly (though not necessarily entirely) disentangled from supraorganizational identity systems.

In each of the three dissertation chapters I have demonstrated a case of disembedding in the U.S. human service sector. In chapter one I showed that fee-charging, though treated as a straightforward indicator of profit motive in recent literature, actually reflected a professional commitment to promoting communal inclusiveness and destigmatizing receipt of social services during much of the twentieth century. In other words, fee-charging was previously embedded in a professional culture orienting the practice to public service. With the partial disembedding of human services from higher-order professional logics in the neoliberal era, fee-charging became more recognized as a trapping of competitive and prudent organizational financial strategy.

In chapter two I showed that provider-driven outcome evaluation (POE) did not come about simply as a response to performance-based payment systems in the late twentieth century. It began as an effort to build professional legitimacy. Neoliberal policies centered on organizations as individual producers of social welfare reconstructed POE as an organizational tactic to win resources in a competitive market. The upsurge in POE in the late twentieth century grew out of this new organizational framing of outcome evaluation.

Finally, chapter three follows the previous two chapters in showing that tracking surface-level organizational features does not suffice for understanding institutional logics. In particular, the chapter demonstrates that government funding is not necessarily a carrier for a hierarchical "state logic" that suppresses operational discretion in the human services (as authors have often assumed in prior literature). In fact, public funding boosted agency autonomy beginning in the 1960s by destabilizing centralized fundraising and service planning networks in the nonprofit sector. Unlike the previous two chapters, however, this section of the dissertation emphasizes the historical rootedness of the tension between social work's professional logic of occupational solidarity and the persistent reality of competitive self-interest at the organizational level—what social workers once called "agency-mindedness." While the human service field has likely become more competitive since the 1980s, it is necessary to recognize that professional logics of cooperation have long contended with the reality of agency-mindedness. To be sure, neoliberalism set important changes in motion, but it also stimulated organizational commitments that had existed in prior decades.

In addition to explaining managerial trends in the late twentieth century, the concept of disembedding helps to contextualize the rise of the market as an organizing framework for social welfare provision, since market actors are typically depicted as self-interested and atomized agents (Podolny and Page 1998; Powell 1990; Uzzi 1997). To the extent that embeddedness constrains market activity, processes of disembedding facilitate marketization by reconstructing organizations as increasingly insular and self-driven agents. To be clear, my argument is not that disembedding entails a decline in professional affiliation among individuals; rather I argue that disembedding is a process by which organizational strategy stems less from professional values and more so by insular organization-centric priorities. This is an important addition to sociological literature on the market's advance in modern society, as such literature has generally focused on the growth of businesslike practices in previously non-commercial arenas (Reich 2014; Thornton and Ocasio 1999; Turco 2012); the economic valuation of formerly non-monetized entities (Almeling 2007; Healy 2006; Zelizer 2011); and the growing prominence of deregulation, privatization, and financialization in national policymaking (Krippner 2011; Prasad 2006). As organizations in modern society have taken on the imagery of independence, agency, and empowerment (Bromley, forthcoming), it is necessary to expand sociological conceptions of marketization beyond organizational behaviors to include the more identity-oriented process of disembedding.

Future Research

Although this dissertation has examined organizational disembedding as a field-level historical process, the concept lends itself perfectly well to analyses of present-day variance in organizational characteristics and behavior. Just as Brickson (2007) found that for-profit firms may have individualistic, relational, or collectivistic identity orientations, so too can future research investigate how nonprofits vary according to such a typology.[71] Such research may adopt the interview-based approach that Brickson pursued, or it may consider other methods for gauging affiliation in professional communities (e.g., organizational membership in national associations such as the Child Welfare League of America).

Such research would be a useful complement to existing scholarship (especially in the public administration field) on how nonprofits partake in network forms of collaborative governance (for a review see Marwell and Brown, forthcoming). While research on network governance emphasizes *structural embeddedness* (i.e. embeddedness as measured by participation in transactional networks), a more culturally oriented research agenda would follow Brickson's work on identity to uncover how organizations vary in measures of communal affiliation. To my knowledge, there is little, if any, research exploring how such measures of

[71] According to Brickson's (2007) typology, an individualistic orientation applies to an organizational self-conception as a "sole entity atomized and distinct from others"; a relational orientation applies to an organizational self-conception as a "dyadic interentity relationship partner possessing particularized bonds with specific stakeholders"; and a collectivistic orientation applies to an organizational self-conception as a "member of a larger group with generalized ties to other stakeholders in that group" (865).

embeddedness in professional communities predict important organizational behaviors, such as predisposition to participate in coalitions, to provide fieldwork settings for students, and to maintain egalitarian employment and service provision policies.

The value of such work lies not only in better understanding how professional embeddedness predicts consequential behavior, but also in how to formulate administrative training that resonates with professional values. For more than one hundred years, social work leaders have struggled to identify the role of administrative training in social work education. Insofar as the objective of such training is to increase the prevalence and influence of organizations that exhibit a professional identity and operate in accordance with professional ideals (as laid out, for instance, in the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers), research on the correlates of professional embeddedness and the implications of disembedding would help the profession to articulate specific prescriptions in education for future administrators, with respect to both internal organizational policies and external stakeholder relations.

Yet a research agenda on how professional affiliation affects organizational behavior in the present should not come at the expense of continued historical research on this subject. As I argue in the conclusion of each chapter, historical research has unfortunately held a marginal place in scholarship on the nonprofit sector, public administration, and social welfare systems. I hope that the articles published from these dissertation chapters will help to spark new discussions and perspectives not only on fee-charging, outcome evaluation, and interorganizational relations, but also on the general utility of consulting past conversations and insights to tackle present challenges.

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